

THE POSTHORN

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www.pcsbranch.co.uk

POSTAL AND COURIER WEB PAGE

One of the best...

A BIG THANK you to **SIMON FENWICK** who has recently redesigned the web pages for our Branch. The updated site appeared just before Christmas, complete with a musical Christmas carol. Simon designed the original web pages and he has now taken over as Webmaster for the site.

The Guest Book is still very popular and by the time you read this it will have been 'hit' nearly 6,000 times. [*Alan, do you know where the 'SHIFT' key is on the keyboard?*].

Thank you also to everyone who has emailed me over the last six months. I'm still not smitten on this computer highway consequently my replies are often late or not forthcoming. My New Year's resolution is to make more of an effort to become more involved in modern technology. However, I refuse to use abbreviations and lack of proper grammar just because it is an 'email' instead of a 'written' letter. [*Using abbreviations like 'u r 2 gd 4 me' is OK for kids but not mature adults! Your comments?*].

One thing that I do know is that I have had about seven viruses sent to me over the last few months, but 'Norton' has found and deleted them each and every time.

I am looking forward to our Annual Dinner Reunion on 22nd March and I am once again amazed with the interest shown by so many people. We are almost full so if you are interested in attending please contact me as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.

Please note that my new address is shown at the bottom of this page. I am still getting mail from you with my old address.

Thank you for your contributions towards this issue. Don't forget you can send Simon articles to be put on the web pages. There is a notice board, a PCS archive, recollections, photo board, In Memoriam, what's on, and more. However, any contributions must

be relevant to the PCS, not be offensive and will be the Webmaster's decision whether it is included or not. The quality of any photograph displayed on the site will be only as good as the original. Please send articles to pcsbranch@pcsbranch.co.uk

For all those members who do not own a computer or have access to the web I will try and put some of the articles in The Posthorn that appear on the web. This issue contains an article written by Hugh Jones describing his time in the Korea War and Egypt in 1953 and 'Recollections of Private Maureen Brown (nee Merritt) WRAC'

Finally, the membership now stands at **326** but this will be revised when members who have not paid their subs for three years will be deleted. Seven members still owe for subs from 2000, 26 members owe from 2001 and 81 still owe for 2002.

Thank you again for all your encouragement, kind words and enthusiasm over the past six months. See you in March. ☐



Jim Steer

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WRAC and the Pea Soupers (1953)

*Recollections of Private Maureen Brown (nee Merritt)
WRAC*

IN 1953 it was decided to include the trade of postal worker into the WRAC. The first batch of girls, after 5 weeks basic training at Guildford, were posted to Richmond Park, Kingston on Thames under the command of 12 Bn WRAC.

We travelled, daily, to Inglis Barracks, Mill Hill, to be taught how to sort 1,000 letters, by hand, an hour. How to tie them into bundles, breaking the string with a twist and a strong tug, with our fingers. How to tie up a sack of letters with string and a lead seal. Learnt the postage rates of letters, packets and parcels, airmail and surface, to the different BFPOs all over the world.

Armed with all this knowledge we were now able to deal with the real mail. We then travelled, daily, to Home Postal Depot (HPD/RE), which was situated in Raphael Street, London, near Harrods. It was originally a nightclub that was damaged during the war and was patched up for our use. There was no heating or modern facilities, we wore slacks and leather jerkins, and in winter worked in overcoats as well during the night shifts.

Our CO was Lt Col Reading RE, and in the beginning all the NCOs were RE, and we did exactly the same work as the lads. We worked three shifts round the clock: 0600-1400, 1400-2200 and 2200-0600, six days a week for a 48-hour week. In the build up to Christmas we started an hour earlier and finished an hour later, overlapping the shifts, making a 60-hour week. The night shifts were 5 weeks long and the other ten weeks with one week early and one week late alternating. There were no mechanical aids and a full mail sack is quite heavy. We soon learnt that two hands on the top of the sack, knee in the side, a heavy kick and lift and it could be thrown into the back of a 3-tonner.

The mail came from all the London Railway Stations day and night. We sorted it into airmail and surface and bagged it up to the various destinations. The airmail was flown from Heathrow daily and all the weights had to be phoned to the airport, before

You might be interested in this true story

(I have a witness)

Dusseldorf. It was in the late nineteen seventies.

The Regimental Sergeant Major is not named but here are two clues to his identity :

1) He served with a famous Highland Infantry Regiment before transferring to The Royal Engineers, and 2) he has Para connections?

It was the evening of the Christmas Draw in the WOs & Sgts Mess. On arriving at the car park a car pulled in alongside me. It was the RSM. As we got out of our cars it was noticed that I was in Civilian Dress and he was in Mess Kit. I received a mild telling off (I was with my wife) to the effect that I should read instructions thoroughly.

My Wife and I got back into our car as we were considering whether or not to return after going home to change. Just then out comes the RSM in rather a hurry looking none too pleased as he shouted to me

"It's bloody informal!"

Joe Beedles

Thank you Joe. Any ideas to who this RSM might be?

despatch, in 'kilos' (no faxes in those days). It was unheard of for a truck to be late and miss a flight, and at night during the London Smog it had to leave earlier with two people, with lamps, in front of each wheel walking to guide the driver round the traffic islands and parked or crashed cars.

How many can remember being on early shift and running for the coach, which left on the dot of 0500, with a cup of tea and a bacon sandwich, because the cooks had overslept again?

I was on SOIII shift and my name, then, was Maureen Merritt. Does anyone remember me? □

The following may be of interest as it reflects the encounter that Maurice G Howard had with the Household Cavalry whilst at Knightsbridge. (The Posthorn September 2002)

I had been on guard at Gunsite Camp and was excused the first parade at Knightsbridge. We had to report at 09.00 after a guard. The guard that I had done had been on Wednesday/Thursday and as Thursday was pay day those on guard still had to go on the early shifts wagon in order to get our pay. Not wishing to lose the privilege of the later start two of us bought a paper and went into Hyde Park. While sitting there a column of horsemen approached us. We tried to ignore them, difficult really as they were Horse Guards in breast plates and plumed helmets, From the rear of the horses two officers detached themselves and rode over to us, One asked if we saluted officers in our army, we said yes and whipped them one up. They rode off then seemingly satisfied. When they began to return we got up and moved off.

Peter Dickson

Korean War and Egypt (1953)

Recollections of Hugh Jones

WE HUMANS are programmed to forget, that is nature's way, so no one needs to apologise for having a bad memory. I have no notes about my army service, not having kept a diary so I am relying on my fickle memory, but I endeavour to be as accurate as I can after 50 years.

In Korea during the war the airmail would arrive at Kimpo (K9) in the mid morning, from Tokyo I think, courtesy of the Royal Australian Air Force. From Kimpo it was taken into Seoul to the Army Post Office located in a bank in the Forward Maintenance Area. After sorting the incoming local mail for any mis-sorts meant for the Commonwealth Division. It was off on another milk run. The Commonwealth Division was located 20 miles north of Seoul on the Imjim river where it cuts across the 38 parallel.



Twenty miles may not seem to far a distance to travel when the road to travel is a modern four lane highway, but the Korean roads in those days were in poor shape having to bear the constant and incessant military traffic that never seem to stop, feeding and supplying the United States 1 Corps of which the Commonwealth Division was an important element. That highway was known as Route 3 in those days, which we took to Uijongbu, Route 3 continued going to the north east, but we went north on Route 33.

This took us to the Tokchon rail head and the NAAFI road house where there was always a welcome cup and a wad. We then had a choice of two ways of getting to the Commonwealth Division rear HQ at Fort George rear. Left through a pass between a hill range, which took us the rear echelons, and the rest area for the brigade that was out of the line and, the Widgeon crossing of the Imjim below the 38th. Up stream above the 38th was the Teal crossing. This is the very area of the battle of the Imjim the previous year when the Gloucestershire Regiment was surrounded by 63rd Chinese Army and taken prisoner.

Most times we went directly north to get to the Army Post Office.

While the process of exchanging incoming and outgoing mail, we would have the 'lunch' we brought with us. However, there were times when we had to make a side trip to the Canadian army post office at the 25th Canadian Infantry Brigade, then we threw away the lunch we brought with us. When I first went into the Canadian ORs mess the cook asked me:

"How do you want your eggs guy?"

"Eggs?" I said, "Not that powered junk?"

"No" he said, "Sunny side up or easy over?"

Eggs of course meant plural so I said "Two".

Then I was asked how did I want my steaks. What followed was white bread with butter, plus fresh vegetables.

The Canadian cuisine was a closely guarded secret and it was not realised why there were eager volunteers to go to Commonwealth Division when there was a side trip to the 25th Brigade.

Early in the morning someone had to get up before reveille to meet the EUSAK express (Eighth United States Army Korea) from Pusan, at the Seoul railway station there was a stall giving out free coffee and doughnuts, no limit. That again was a closely guarded secret.

A telegram service was available to anyone who needed to use it. All it took was a trip to a British Army Post Office, I think it might have been 10 words for 1 shillings and 6 pence. (The basic pay for a national service man was 4 shillings a day, this might give some idea of the relative cost of a telegram). Another method was to select numbers, number one might have said "Happy birthday" by choosing a combination of numbers a sentence might be composed. I do not recall what the cost was.

These telegrams were sent with the mail to Seoul. When all the telegrams of the day had been collected they were then taken to a nice residence in an up class district of Seoul. That was the home and office of Cable and Wireless. There were perhaps four or more technicians there who wore officer's uniform, but no insignia of rank, just officer status. They relayed the telegrams to Hong Kong. One technician alone could have handled the work load we produced, so I guess they must have been engaged in some other activity, but I have no idea what that might have been. Our O.C. had the job of taking the mail for the British POWs in North Korea. He took the mail to Pamunjom and with precise timing entered a tent at the same time as a North Korean officer, to meet face to face at a table. Both to salute each other then exchanged mailbags.

If negotiating between the UN and the Communist were going smoothly the North Korean would be in a good mood. If negotiations were not going well, which was most of the time the North Korean would be downright hostile.

Continued on next page...

A sapper APO driver was cruising along going about his lawful occasions, perhaps pushing it a little. A god like voice booms at him, "Limey truck pull over" looking out of the rear view mirror a white jeep of the US Army military police can be seen. I seem to remember it was called "Safety Patrol". Anyway this Limey truck does pullover, then it is seen that this Military Police jeep has a metal pole with a load speaker attached to it. A speeding ticket is issued. The driver of the Limey Truck then takes an interest in the local mail coming from the US Army Post Office, and sure enough there is a notice to our O.C. informing him of the speeding infraction. Some how or other the O.C. never did see the infraction, it got lost. Myself, I do not think the O.C. would have taken any notice of the infraction, but it is best to be safe than sorry.

A lot of names I have forgotten, some I do recall. Ford, Ferguson, Bailey, Naylor, Napper, Laid law, Miloy, Walton, and Barnard. Not forgetting our Korean houseboat Bak Hyong-Woo and that gentleman of the first order Lt. AB Stuart RE. All things being equal a British soldier only served one winter in Korea, and seeing that I still had 2 more years to do on my overseas tour I was reposted. Not for me a cushy posting like Hong Kong or Singapore, it was out of the frying pan into the fire so to speak, my destination was Egypt, a pig of a posting - it was active service.

The first place of work was Gordon Barracks Moascar near Ismailia and the Sweet Water Canal. Moascar was the main garrison in the zone, but GHQ was in Fayid.

The Sweet Water canal was anything but sweet, it was the hosts of all kinds of nasties - drink that raw water at your peril. A loaded mail lorry went into the Sweet Water, no attempted was made to sort out the mail bags when they were pulled out, a torch was put to the unopened mail bags.

Whenever an inquiry came through regarding a missing letter or parcel, "It was assumed to have been burnt at the Sweet Water". After a while it was realised that more mail was assumed lost in the Sweet Water than was in fact lost.

While Moascar we were called upon to do garrison duty that involved practice alerts. When the alarm went off, we would grab our unload rifles jump onto a lorry and be driven to a road bridge over a railway line. That was our duty to protect should the Egyptians try to expel us by force.

During these exercises some officers had white armbands that made them invisible. A sapper on our crew was laying down with his rifle aimed in the firing posture. He was cocking the rifle and putting the trigger "Bang" he would call out. "What are you doing?" asked an invisible officer. "That Egyptian will not lay down" was the reply. So much for defending Egypt from the Egyptians.

After a time at Moascar it was off to RAF Fayid, which was the point in which airmail from the outside world got into the Canal Zone. The postal sorting unit was a combination of postal sappers and Air Force posties. The O.C. and the Sergeant Major were RE. About 50% of the postie crew were RAF.

From RAF Fayid the airmail was taken to Moascar for all units to the north. The milk run was a triple lorry affair during the height of the emergency. The first lorry was an armed escort, two armed guards in the front of the lorry one in the back. The middle lorry carried the mail, all were armed. The third lorry was the same as the first. The Egyptians tactic was to force a lone lorry off the load into the soft sand and shoot it up. There is safety in numbers. Later on when things cooled down it was reduced to two lorries for the mail run.



The next move from RAF Fayid was to the L.of.C Postal Unit in Fanara, mail was received from RAF Fayid for local distribution. The OC of this unit was also responsible for the Postal Unit with "O" Force in Aqaba Jordan. I was asked if I would like to go there as NCO i/c, so with two hooks I went to one of the best posting in my 5 years of army service. My pay went up to a pound a day, plus 4 shillings local overseas allowance, and no need to for a rifle.

A British merchant ship calls into Aqaba and one of its crew is an old postie from HPD. He goes into the APO and ask is Hugh Jones here? I had not see Bill West for 2 or 3 years when he took his discharge from the HPD.

Who knows what the odds are against such an encounter taking place. It was good to see Bill West in my mind he has to be the most Loveable scoundrel London ever nurtured, with a heart of gold. (Are you reading this Bill?)

Continued over page

Mail to Aqaba was twice a week as I recall from RAF Fayid. There was a daily flight from RAF Fayid to RAF Amman the capital of Jordan. A parachute mail drop was introduced for the days when there was no milk run from RAF Fayid.

Most times the drop was routine and on the nose to a marker on the desert floor. One time the drop was an over shoot miles up the wadi (valley) and it took an RAF Anson aircraft to locate it for us. Another time the drop was short and the parachute went in the Gulf of Aqaba, Saudi Arabian waters. That was a right off.

The only other event I recall was when the parachute failed to open. When the container hit the desert floor it bounced back up in the air, perhaps 6 feet, but left a crater about two feet. The parachute container was a right off, but the mail survived. In the batch there was a letter for me from home, with a picture of my sister, which I still have, and the picture still has a crease in it from the hard landing.

Soon my three-year overseas tour came to an end, and also my five years in the colours, it was back to Civvy Street with the civvy suit from a grateful army given to me.

After 50 years it looks like the government might award a General Service Medal for service in the Suez Canal Zone, by the time this essay appears in print the medal might have been awarded, or once again denied. □

Lt Col Howard Alexander Hughes RLC

T IS WITH regret that we report the death of Lt Col Howard Hughes. He was taken into Watford General Hospital in the early hours of Tuesday 19th November 2002, later being transferred to the Neurological Hospital, Queens Square London. Following a brain haemorrhage he underwent an operation but did not regain consciousness and on Wednesday 20th November passed away peacefully.

Howard Alexander Hughes was born in Ballymena (Northern Ireland) on 10th January 1955. He was educated at Gloucester House School, Poertora Royal School and Ulster University. He became a member of Portora Combined Cadet Force at the age 13 and achieved the rank of WO2.

He went on to serve with the following units/regiments:

North Irish Militia (TAVR) (rank Ranger, later 2Lt)

from Oct 73 to Sep 74

Royal Irish Rangers (rank Ranger)

from Sep 74 to Jul 75

Royal Air Force VR (rank Pit Off)

from Nov 75 to Apr 77

Ulster Defence Regiment (rank Lt)

from Apr 77 to Sep 79

Royal Army Education Corps (rank Capt)

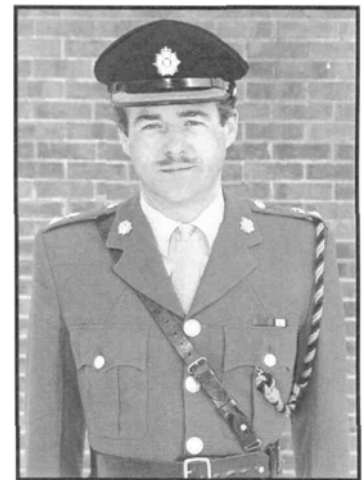
from Sep 79 to Sep 83

Royal Engineers (PCS) (rank Capt - Maj)

from Sep 83 to Apr 93

Royal Logistic Corps (PCS) (rank Maj • Lt Col)

from Apr 93 to Nov 02



During his career he served in Northern Ireland, England, Germany, Falkland Islands, Saudi Arabia and Hong Kong. He was awarded the General Services Medal (NI), Gulf Medal (Clasp) and Knight Order of St John. His interests included adventure training pursuits, music and freelance writing. He was very actively involved in many local and national charities and in particular The Army Benevolent Fund.

The family of Col Howard had a private family service in Northern Ireland, which took place on Friday 29th November 2002. It is also a wish of the family that a Memorial Service be held at Inglis Barracks at the beginning of this year.

The PCS Branch extends its deepest sympathy to Col Howard's wife and family.

*(Extracts from **Post Notes**, the official newsletter of the Defence Postal and Courier Service).*

To read what has been said about Col Hughes on our web site please turn to page 8

www.pcsbranch.co.uk

THE ARMY POSTAL SERVICE

RECEIVED MY calling up papers for the army to report to Dreghorn Barracks, Edinburgh on the 7th.February 1945. After doing my initial training I was sent to the 'Home Postal Centre' at Nottingham. I had hoped to join a Scottish Infantry Regiment, but when I enquired why I was being enlisted in the Royal Engineers, the reason given was that I had been a temporary postman at the time of my call up. The Army Postal Service urgently required replacements for those about to be discharged

After spending the first night in a provisional billet in Nottingham, we were taken to camps about twelve miles from the city. This was one of the many training camps in and around Nottingham. We were involved in learning how to serve in a field Post Office, in the event of any of us being sent overseas. Since the classes usually only lasted during the mornings, we had various exercise periods, which included football, etc. in the afternoon.

There were ATS camps at Chillwell, Bulwell and Beeston and some other places in and around the city. Many ATS were employed as sorters, connected to the Home Postal Centre at Nottingham.

When we eventually finished our training we were moved to a camp called Adbolton, from there we were transported by bus each day into the city to work in a sorting office opposite the Nottingham Canal. The office was a disused lace mill called 'Hicking's Letter Office."

The ATS worked on sorting frames upstairs. We did the heavier work on the ground floor bringing in the bags of mail that came to us from all over the U.K. This went on all the time as we worked in three shifts of eight hours each. When the bags arrived from the civilian offices they were carefully opened and any registered mail put safely away. The rest of the letters and post cards were then put in baskets, which were taken upstairs for A.T.S to sort for dispatch to London for overseas. The afternoon shift loaded the bags of sorted mail on to the army trucks and took them to one of Nottingham's Railway Stations. There was also airmail and surface mail coming in from the troops posted overseas that was sorted and sent to the civilian post offices. There were parcel-sorting offices in separate buildings throughout the city.

Nottingham is a lovely place and there was always plenty to do in our spare time. Cinemas and theatres were well in evidence, although I'm told there are not so many now. There was a NAAFI club in one of the side streets. It was quite a big place several stories high with a lounge and dance hall on the ground floor. Dancing in the afternoons and evenings proved most popular with all members of the forces. There was a self-service canteen upstairs where meals were

available at most reasonable prices most of the day and evenings.

Most of us were sorry when we were told we were being transferred to an army camp about halfway between Birmingham and Coventry. The name of the camp was 'Packington Park.' Not far from the village of Meriden, which we were told was the very centre of England. It was not so easy getting in and out of the cities but we had the choice of these two places. We used to overcome the transport difficulties by sometimes waiting at traffic lights where the lorries had to stop when the lights were against them. The drivers were none too co-operative at giving us lifts, so we used to jump on the back of the open lorries and get off at the roundabouts near the end of the road. This was a dangerous practice, as sometimes our unofficial transport would take the roundabouts quite quickly, however, it was a risk we thought well worth taking, and we never heard of anyone having an accident. There were no motorways such as we have today and the traffic was much lighter. It was still a long trail up to the camp from the end of the main road.

We were taken in trucks to various sorting offices; one I recall most readily was beside a railway line at Sutton Coldfield.

Branch Ties

I STILL have a number of Branch Ties available for sale.

The cost per tie and including postage is £7.45. Please send a cheque [made payable to 'JR Steer'] to:

Contact on

jimsteerpcs@yahoo.co.uk

(for Web edition)

If you are going to the Reunion in March you can save 45p, as I will be bringing some ties with me.

Jim

We were not sorry when our next transfer took us to London. At this time, around the beginning of 1948 much of the work of the Army Postal service was being transferred to the civil Post Offices. There was only one sorting office off the Brompton Road at the top of a side street almost opposite Harrods.

We were put on permanent night shift to which we did not object as we were given an extra night off each week. I enjoyed the experience of living in the West End of London. The army had requisitioned some of the grand houses in Chelsea and Eton Place in Belgravia and we had the free run of them although we could not expect any great comfort, naturally it was all pretty basic in fact we were lucky to have such facilities as were provided.

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PCS Branch Annual Dinner and Dance Reunion 2003

NORTHAMPTON MOAT HOUSE

Silver Street, Northampton NN1 2TA.

Tel: 01604 739988. Fax: 01604 230614

Repeat of the directions printed in Issue No 10

Please note a couple of new roundabouts have recently sprung up on the A45

FROM MI SOUTH

Exit the motorway at Junction 15A, following signs for A43/Services. Go straight over the first roundabout. Turn left at the 2nd roundabout, signposted A43 Northampton/Kettering. Travel along the dual carriageway, going straight over the next roundabout signposted A45 Coventry. Go straight over the next roundabout passing Sixfields Leisure Complex on your right. Turn right at the next roundabout passing UCG cinema on the right. Go straight over the next two roundabouts passing Homebase on your left and Beacon Bingo on your right. Go straight over the next three sets of traffic lights passing the Train Station on your left. Straight over the next set of lights. At the next set of Traffic Lights, turn left onto Horsemarket but veer into the right hand lane (onto the slip lane). Cross over the road, and turn right onto St Katherine's Street. Turn immediately left onto St Katherine's Terrace into the Hotel car park.

DIRECTION FROM MARKET HARBOROUGH A508

Keep on the A508 all the way passing through Kingsthorpe. Driving through Barrack Road you will pass Royal Mail on your right. Pass the Mayorhold Car Park on your left. Straight over the next set of traffic lights. Pass the Hotel on the left. Turn left into St Katherine's Street. Turn immediately left into St Katherine's Terrace into the Hotel car park.

FROM MI NORTH

Exit the Motorway at Junction 16, following the signs for Northampton. Travel along a dual carriageway for approximately 2 miles. Go straight over the roundabout, passing UCG Cinema and Sixfields Leisure Complex on your right. Go straight over the next two roundabouts passing Homebase on your left and Beacon Bingo on your right. Go straight over the next three sets of traffic lights passing the Train Station on your left. Straight over the next set of lights. At the next set of Traffic Lights, turn left onto Horsemarket but veer into the right hand lane (onto the slip lane). Cross over the road, and turn right onto St Katherine's Street. Turn immediately left onto St Katherine's Terrace into the Hotel car park.

DIRECTION FROM BEDFORD A428

Follow the signs for Northampton staying on the A428 all the way. Pass Becketts Park on your left and Northampton General Hospital on your right. At the traffic lights, turn left into Victoria Promenade, passing Morrisons Supermarket on your left. Go straight over the mini roundabout. Straight over the next set of traffic lights passing Carlsberg Brewery on the left. At St Peter's Way roundabout, (Gas Station straight ahead of you), take the last exit. Straight over the next set of traffic lights, keeping in the right hand lane. Go into the slip lane signposted Hotel. Cross over the road, turning right into St Katherine's Street. Turn immediately left into St Katherine's Terrace into the Hotel car park.



Our mess was in one of the big mansions in Belgrave Square. It must have cost the Government a fortune putting these buildings back in order again when they were handed back to their rightful owners. It was not so much wanton vandalism that destroyed some of the apartments but there were some unfortunate accidents!

After three months in London my group number (72) came up, and I was forthwith demobbed. I went back to civvy -street having seen many places I would have otherwise missed. I did not get the chance of serving abroad, although I applied for an overseas posting before we transferred to London, I got as far as embarkation leave but when that was over the posting was cancelled. Obviously the reason was that it was too near the time for my demob.

Back home I soon got temporary employment in the local G.P.O. I applied for a permanent job but was told there was nothing available and that I would have to go to Glasgow if I wanted a full time job- I was never unemployed for long. I began work as a Home Service Insurance agent and was employed in my home- town with the same company and retired after forty years.

Sapper Smart, G

The PCS Branch Homepage's tribute to Lt Col Howard Hughes

HOWARD, an Ulsterman, raconteur, musician and author was a man who lighten the world and as he would say, was never short of "good crack". He joined Postal from the Royal Army Education Corps in the early 1980's. He served in BAOR, Northern Ireland, Hong Kong, the Directorate, The Gulf War and lastly as CO BFPO London. While in the Directorate as the Staff Captain he did much to organise the interviewing of WW2 Postal veterans for the writing of *Mailshot* the official history of the Service. It was during that time he also became very friendly with the late Terence Cuneo, the artist and arranged for Terence to execute the painting of *Post Call - Guards Armoured Division 1944*. In a booklet called *The Cuneo Connection* he wrote of the occasion; *"In 1986 I took him [Cuneo] down to Bovington in Dorset to visit the Tank Museum in order to make sketches for the Forces Postal Service's last commision. This was to show the RE PS in support of the Guards Armoured Division during the advance though the Low Countries in 1944 and Cuneo needed to make working drawings of the vehicles used at the time. He worked hard all that morning but at lunch time I managed to prise him away for a bite to eat. Knowing the area well I decided to take him to the 'Frampton Arms', a charming little pub situated beside a railway crossing and which I knew housed dozens of prints of Cuneo's train*

paintings. It was a roguish thing to do but I refrained from telling him that his fame had preceded him to this sleepy little corner of rural Dorset. His reaction on seeing them, I guessed, would be worth witnessing. On entering the pub he looked around with interest, his eyes sweeping the walls of pictures. 'Aren't they wonderful?' he said with feeling and then suddenly the penny dropped - 'My God', he cried, 'they're all mine!' Needless to say the landlord, a life long Cuneo fan, was quite delighted!" - a story that is so typical of Howard and a small illustration of his glorious sense of fun.

Early this year (2002) he published his first book, *On Laughter-Silvered Wings*, a biography of his friend Captain Paddy Kirkwood, a wartime RAF pilot. Just before he passed away he had completed his history of Postal during the Gulf War and was raising money to get it published.

His generosity as a person, which he extended to both the Service and his friends, was well illustrated by his involvement in raising money for the Army Benevolent Fund and the starting of the annual Cuneo Memorial Dinner at Mill Hill as a money raising vehicle for that purpose.

Howard Hughes died on Wednesday 20 November 2002 of a brain haemorrhage. He was taken ill on Tuesday night and passed away on Wednesday morning (20 Nov). He leaves his wife Angie and their three children. He was much liked by all ranks and as some of the tributes on the Postal websites said "he was a kind and gentle man who touched and influenced the lives of all who knew him and will be greatly missed by all of us who were privileged to know him".

REA BENEVOLENCE

THE HIGHEST priority of the REA's work is towards benevolence. Benevolence is defined as 'severe financial distress' and the number of cases handled by the REA and other charities shows there is still a great need in the former military community.

During 2001 the Association continued to assist "serving sappers, former sappers, wives, widows and dependant children"

Nearly 2000 cases were handled with assistance being given to over 1050 members. Most went to the disabled in the form of chair lifts, electric chairs and bath lifts. The total cost was £388,500 and included £76,000 for weekly allowances and £15,000 for special grants over the Christmas period.

Change of addresses required...

Does anyone know the new addresses of the following members who have failed to notify me of their change of address:

Mr BR Levey formerly of Rochester, Kent?

Mr A Pemberton, formerly of Co Durham?

Mr SJ White, formerly of Stretford Manchester?