

# THE POSTHORN

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ISSUE NUMBER 10

SEPTEMBER 2002

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## BRILLIANT, EXCELLENT

[www.pcsbranch.co.uk](http://www.pcsbranch.co.uk)

**THE RESPONSE** to our new web site has been amazing. Thank you for all your encouraging comments and suggestions.

The site was designed by Simon Fenwick and was uploaded onto the Internet by the web master Mick Mulley.

The guest book has proved to be very popular, with over 2130 hits and 71 comments left since it was installed. Most of the comments are constructive but there were some offensive and malicious comments that we were able to filter out.

Thank you also for your emails with further comments. It has amazed me just how many of you have computers out there. The downside, however, is that Alan Davies is going through his second childhood!

Look out for a complete face-lift with new features soon to be included on our site.

The general consensus of the **Annual Reunion** was also encouraging. Although the numbers were down slightly on 2001 some 267 members and guests sat down to some great food, great company and great time. Col Doug Swanson was the guest speaker and his talk was based around what an RE Postie was all about.

With thanks to Sue and Lyne we raised £600 in raffle ticket sales, so three lucky people left with £240, £180 and £120 (and a box of chocolates) more than when they came. The remaining £60 went into the Branch Funds.

Thanks to everyone who came for the weekend/ Dinner, especially the Committee [Rod, Norman and Ray Fenn, whose support I have had throughout the year] and to the Norbreck Hotel for their hospitality.

Next year's Reunion will be at the Northampton Moat House, Silver Street Northampton on 21<sup>st</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> March. See page 6 for further details. A big thank you to Maurice G Howard, Cliff Howes, and Vic Matthews for their contributions to this issue

of The Posthorn. A special thank you to Ted and Ann Jenkinson for their email telling me of their move to Cyprus fourteen months ago. Through hard work they have now got the house and garden how they want it. They have had a number of ex RE Posties look them

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up already and have had a 'mini reunion' involving three other couples. They really recommend retiring some where in the sun where nothing really gets done until late evenings.

Thank you also to those who sent copies of photographs, but please remember photocopies will not work and the quality of the scanned photos can only be as good as the original. In other words if the photo is of poor quality then the scanned result will be poor and probably won't be used. Don't forget you can send scanned photos via email attachments (save as jpg format – *not Coral format*) and you can also send your written contributions by email.



**Jim Steer**

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*Jim Steer*

## A NOSTALGIC LOOK AT LIFE IN THE R.E.P.S. AFTER THE END OF W.W.2

I volunteered to join the army in 1945 and a few weeks later I received my papers to report to No 96 P.T.C. Ranby Camp, Retford, Notts.

On completion of my Basic training, I requested posting to Royal Engineers, Postal Section and so it came about that shortly afterwards I arrived outside the Loading Bay at Queen Street, Post Office, Nottingham where I was directed to report to "the Officer in there". I went into a large empty office where a Lieutenant RE was sitting at a table, so I went up to him, saluted and gave my personal details, to which after he had returned my salute, he put out his hand and shook hands with me saying "Welcome to the R.E.P.S. We hope that your time with us will be enjoyable. You will be taken to the Postal School at Whatton Camp shortly, in the meantime, you will find tea, coffee and biscuits over there, help yourself and make yourself comfortable while you are waiting".

Now I had just finished training with the Rifle Brigade so after that experience, I began to wonder just what I had come to!

In due course transport arrived and off we went to Whatton Camp to be met by no less a person who became something of a legend in the R.E.P.S. namely C.S.M. Harold (Chad) Westbrook, who made it quite clear what he expected from us. Anyhow we settled down to our B.3 course with our Instructors Corporals Sadler and Lowman, who was known behind his back as the "Bishop" because he was a member of the Salvation Army. The course passed quickly and we were all posted to the various sorting offices in Nottingham. I arrived at Bulwell, Padstow Road Camp working at Daybrook. After a month or so I was posted back to Whatton Camp to take the B.2 course and, at the end of that period, I went to Queen Street Sorting Office working 3 shifts. The interesting thing was, when I was on the late shift (3-11) at 5.30 p.m. I used to take over from the A.T.S. operators and man the H.P.D. switchboard. It was a very pleasant time with plenty of variety off duty, a large NAAFI Club, Cinemas, Ballrooms etc.

However, my mate Arthur Collis and myself decided to volunteer for overseas draft and it wasn't long before about 30 of us went to Barton Stacey in Hampshire and from there we were taken by train all the way back to Hull where we embarked on the "Empire Lance". We hadn't got a clue where we were going but 48 hours later we docked at Cuxhaven, Germany at 2200 hours and that night we slept in a large shed on the Dock. Next morning we were issued with dry rations and put on a train with wooden slatted seats and off we went across Germany until we finished up at Bielefeld Holding Unit where we were kept for a week while our documents were sorted out.

As is the case with transit camps you get all sorts of jobs to fill in the time. I had one that I wouldn't wish to repeat, until we were ready to move out, I was a guard on the Military Prison, but move out we did and finally got to our ultimate destination - No. 101 Z.P.D. Herford. We were

billeted in the town and worked in a large factory, which had been taken over called POGGENPOHL. I hardly had time to settle in when my name appeared on Orders "Posted to A.P.O. E.560, Berlin". Amid remarks like, "You jammy B- - - -" and "How did you fiddle that", it became obvious that Berlin was the best posting in Germany and so once again on the night train which arrived at CHARLOTTENBURG Station next day.

The Berlin A.P.O. staff was billeted for accommodation and rations with the Berlin Signals Squadron, Royal Signals but later we were transferred to H.Q. Brit Troops Berlin quarters.

The Building in which the A.P.O. was housed was a large detached house in its own grounds, the front part was three storeys but the rear part was a single storey flat roof section, this was the A.P.O. The Caretaker and his family lived in part of the front and on the first floor was a large room with a row of French windows opening out on to the flat roof. The interesting fact was that when the first A.P.O. troops took over, they found some reels of the film "Mrs Minniver" and it transpired that the large function room was used by Josef Goebbels to show "forbidden" films to his chosen friends,

The unit itself consisted of a Postal Officer (Captain), 2 Sargeants, one who was Chief Clerk, Postal Branch, 2 Corporals, 1 L/Corporal and six Sappers. In addition, we had 8 German females operating the teleprinter link 24 hours a day working shifts, also 6 German females on forward Sorting and 2 German males to do heavy work, loading, unloading etc. The R.E.P.S. staff did all the other jobs, Counter (2 positions), Inward sorting, Courier etc.

We had quite a bit of variety, once a week the French army and the Russians used to call for mail and then twice a week we took mail to the U.S. Army at their base in DAHLEM. The Russian transfer was a bit of a mystery. We used to get about six or seven sealed parcel bags which seemed to contain a large box in each one, the bags were addressed to the Baltic States, VILNA and RIGA and a Russian Officer and 4 troopers used to collect them, we never did know what we were handing over. When we went to the American Post office the guys on the counter couldn't understand why we didn't carry arms, they all carried loaded 45' s.

Life was very pleasant in those days. We had a large NAAFI Club with its own dance floor, a bar, cafeteria and a W.O. and Sgts Club. In addition there were two British Controlled Cinemas, we could also go sailing at the forces Yacht Club, horse riding through the Grunewald Woods, play tennis and of course visit nightclubs, which had been licensed as "in bounds".

In due course I received a fairly rapid promotion and within 12 months I had gone from L/Cpl to Sgt at Postal Branch.

Then on the 25<sup>th</sup> June 1948 (my birthday) the Russians decided to Blockade the City and the following day the first aircraft of the Berlin Airlift landed. It didn't really affect us a great deal other than re-organising our incoming and outgoing mail to liaise with the R.A.F. at Gatow.

*Continued on next page*

## Contribution from Maurice G Howard...

I was conscripted into National Service on the 4th August 1949, at Cove Farnborough (if I remember correctly) as 262 party and was later re-designated 49.15 party. If my memory serves me correctly we were in the 'spider' at the bottom of the passageway and backing onto the railway to Southampton. My number being 22167942.

Being 'Postal' after the 'basic training' of 4 weeks I was posted to the Army Post Office in Knightsbridge, London and 8 Lennox Gardens became my home for 4 weeks. Further foot training was the order of the day and we undertook the 'slow march' within the sorting office complex supplementing this training at the Chelsea and Horse Guards Barracks. Our mess was in Belgrave Square, and here I must tell you a little story of about five Sappers who, after crossing over Brompton Road, were approached by a troop of Household Cavalry. In awe they were transfixed by such a sight, not realising their posture and their requirement to give the officer a salute. Well with all that blarney who was the officer the leading guy (officer) bringing his hand up to bring his troop to a halt and exclaiming "Don't you lot salute officers then?" Well, I ask you? What pertinence!

We were moved to Victoria and Edon Place until 9th December when, on draft, we moved to Liverpool and embarked on the Empire Pride - destination unknown in those days. We slipped our moorings in the late afternoon early evening to the strains of 'Now is the Hour' by the company of the whole ship. We sailed down the Mersey and into the Irish Sea on the morning of the 10th December. At about 0500 we were bidden over the Tannoy System, "Those guys wishing to see the last of the U.K. and say their farewells should come up on deck now as the English Coast was fast disappearing into the murk of a British winter."

Later that day in the Bay of Biscay we were to lose the use of one of the ship's engines and so we limped down to Gibraltar at reduced speed. On arrival at Gibraltar maintenance crew came on board and repaired the engine. That evening leaving Gibraltar and entering the Med. we were met by a horrendous storm. The bow of the ship dipping into the waves that were multi story high, the stern coming out of the water and the screw whirring to a crescendo and then crashing back into the water, the ship taking on water down the hatches where the troops quarters were awash, kit being washed from one side of the accommodation, and of course the seasickness of the guys was to be seen. As we approached Valletta Malta to be advised over the Tannoy that we had experienced the worst storm the ship had ever encountered. We did to in Valletta Harbour to have the ship repaired.

We sailed a few days later for Suez and I will never understand why we didn't put into Tobruk and disembark then. We arrived at Port Said to the announcement that the master of the ship required a clean ship and that we should all disembark into the Transit

Camp there. I was not a very happy chappy on my first night on foreign soil with all the rumours and leg pulling going on. Quiet the opposite, the following day we re-embarked leaving Port Said the water like a mill pond a reflection of the ship mirrored on the sea we headed at last for Tobruk. But no, the engine decided to pack-up again and we once again entered stormy conditions. The 'Pride' not being able to enter the natural harbour of Tobruk, it was back to Valletta again where we were allowed shore leave and a few pounds 'credits' from our pay, and of course now Christmas Day aboard the 'Pride' our eventual disembarking at Tobruk 28/29 December 1949.

Our arrival at Tobruk amongst all the sunken shipping was a sight to behold, it was said that one could walk across the harbour without getting one's feet wet. I would perceive that could have been quite true. We were allocated 10 ton lorry's in which to climb aboard and commence the next stage of our journey heading into the desert, observing all the brewed-up armour we soon became accustomed to the sight and the novelty of our interest soon disappeared. After negotiating the hairpin bends of the Derna Pass we rested overnight.

The following morning took us up the West Pass of Derna. We were struck in awe as we travelled this road because the road was nearly non-existent being blasted away for about 3/4 of a mile and laying in the bottom of the waddy (valley) there was all this brewed-up armour laying about. (I learned only last year, while playing bowls and talking to an 'old soldier', that the armour was in fact German).

To exit this mountain range we arrived at a pass with a pinnacle of rock to the right of the road to enter a plain. The lorry followed a curving right hand bend for about

*Continued from previous page*

Electricity was cut off every night at 1800 hours because the Russians controlled the Power Station. We got round that by installing our own Generator. Our food was monotonous - potatoes, eggs, milk were all dried. Leave was postponed for a time until the airlift got fully organised, because the only way in and out of Berlin was by air. However, life went on much the same, to the annoyance of the Russians. I think this was the point where the civilian population really began to appreciate our being there; they certainly didn't want a Russian occupation.

So life went on and eventually my demob came round, I flew out from Gatow in a Dakota to Buckeburg airfield and then on to the demob centre at Aldershot (Woking) where I was issued with a Civvy suit, etc. I then went back to work at my local Post Office counter.

I look back and remember the Officer I met on my first day (Lt. (later Capt) Meatyard) and his words "We hope your time with us will be enjoyable". It certainly was. I wouldn't have missed it for anything. θ

**Cliff Howes**

at third of an mile and there lay this Panzer with its-gun still trained on the pass we had just a few moments before travelled through. We arrived at Benghazi APO to the announcement from the Orderly Corporal that we were not wanted at that place and time and that he refused to take us on strength, because of an A5 proformasextuplet that he would have to prepare just for 2 days - well who could blame him? I wouldn't either. A note for my record book shows that the homeward journey on the ' Devonshire ' took just 7 days and was uneventful- whereas the outward journey had taken 21/22 days.



**October 1950**

*Standing:* (Lofty) Whyatt, (Birdie) Partridge, Ron Barney and (Moe) Howard  
*Squatting:* Milad El Hamid (APO Driver) and Ron Evans [waiter Sgts Mess]

*The van is a 15cwt Chevrolet. Does anyone know what happened to the badge on the radiator?*

After performing my three years with the N/S reserve and about seven years later I reenlisted into the T.



and A. V.R (Postal and Courier) for which I undertook 13 years with the Reserve and received a Medal of Proficiency, performing duties in Mill Hill Barracks, Dusseldorf, SHAPE at Mons and NATO in Brussels.

Our exercises were always of interest and the use of helicopters for Courier work became the norm, providing a network of services to our forces in Germany and the Low Countries and all those countries associated with NATO.

I resigned with the rank of Sergeant and am now currently A Life Member of the Royal Engineers Association. I attended the 50th Anniversary of National Service Royal

Engineers at Brompton Barracks where about 4,000 men were ' On Parade ' . I hope that in my attending I somehow represented those who were unable to attend and be ' On Parade ' . What a splendid Corps!!!

More recently and last year it has been my honour to observe in our Nominal Roll of the ' Post Horn ' that Mr John Corrigan is now a member of the association. John, as WO II of no 9 L. of C. , greeted us at Benghazi APO. Our correspondence shows and confirms that he had on one or two occasions been chased across the Libyan Desert by Rommel.

In March/April 1950 the occasion of 48/15 party embarking for demob and a vacancy occurring in the Postal Orderly Room. I volunteered for the post - no I couldn't type and I had no experience of book keeping or knowledge of filing

systems, but under his guidance and instruction I persevered and I have been doing secretarial work ever since. (Now being secretary of my local Bowling Club).

Thanks to John his kind of discipline has remained with me the whole of my life and it is to his honour that I owe him this kind of respect.

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**Maurice G Howard**

Sapper Rooke, Sapper Cartridge, Sgt Major Corrigan, L/Cpl Parry, Sapper Barney, Sapper Rhodes and Maurice Howard

*The group photo includes John Corrigan (W.O. II) (centre) APO S/247 Benghazi. 1950*

## Contribution by Vic Matthews

I have recently felt that there has been a lack of interest in the part National Service men played in Malaya and Korea. However, I have been proved wrong by a series shown on the History Channel on the Sky Television Network. The series focused mainly on Korea and the 'Glorious Glousters', which proved to be excellent.

Radio 4 have run programmes where ex-national service men were interviewed, including many celebrities, who spoke of their time in both the army and RAF.

Also some newspapers have shown an interest in the services. The clip shown here is from the Daily Mirror but many others have run debates on whether National Service should be brought back in some form or another. Would it work?

I personally don't think so as teenagers of today are as malleable or docile as they were in my day. They would certainly not be prepared to give up two years of their lives for no good or apparent reasons. But the Army has also changed; it's no longer geared up to deal with reluctant recruits.

Writing this has brought back to me a time when they could. This is probably a bit over the top but I got out an old photo of myself and tried to step back in time. It's a black and white snap of a working class boy circa 1950's. He left school at 15 and enters a void until he is 21, when he can start earning full pay. National Service cuts a long dark shadow – the only ways out was to fail the medical or 'go missing'. This eight and half stone and round-shouldered lad passed his medical and was fit for service, along with thousands of others. 'Amazing!!'

November 1952 saw him, with a couple of others, with new travel warrants and being packed together to meet a new surreal world ruled by robots.

WELCOME to Camp RETR 6 Norton. Roused at 5.30am to shouting and the beating of pokers on pot-bellied stoves? Rushed out onto the square dressed for PT. Boots and socks. Then around we go in hat formations, following our footprints in the thick

### CALL-UP BACKED

FOUR out of five men who did National Service think it should be brought back.

The finding is in a study by the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) forces' help group.

A spokesman said that half of those surveyed thought it would instil values in young people while 10 per cent believed it would reduce crime.

The survey quizzed 166 men aged 60-75 and showed more than half had done National Service.

Most said it helped equip them for life but six per cent called it a waste of time.

A tenth said having served their country they were disappointed that now, later in life, they were struggling to make ends meet and a fifth were worried about not having enough money.

crunching frost, which covered everything including us. The Malvern Hills beautiful but remote. The moon has a halo, the stars shine bright. No time to take it all in. Robots bay for our blood, whirling us faster and faster. We leave vapour trailing making patterns like red arrow jets. TWO WEEKS!!

On to No1 Malvern Wells. Oh! What a civilised place. Covered walkways, white tiled toilets and a cookhouse with seating four to a table, and cobs of bread in baskets, toast and marmalade. Is the food better or am I just getting used to it? I'm addicted to Army tea – is it true about bromide?

Blanco! Brasso! Bloody Bullied Boots!!! 303 and the Bren, of which the smallest part has the longest name. You can't find it when blindfolded and they call you some even longer ones! Bed packs, kit checks, fatigues and guard's ablutions, inspections, Jankers! More guards. There are also morons who sneer at your efforts and rubbish your kit. We have become expert at saluting, farting and marching. We can even fix bayonets and charge, stun grenades, sten guns, live rounds and targets – we play with dangerous boy's toys. Oh that mind numbing shouting and stamping of feet. 'Lights out' we are so shattered, we don't count sheep.

Lucky us – a Christmas break. Coaches to Victoria laid on. I bribe the driver to let me off at Shepherds Bush – only a mile to walk. At 70 paces a minute there's no shortage of breath. Dress No1, BD boots, gaiters, greatcoat and gloves. What a shock when I see my reflection in passing shops. Then family staring, poking and prodding and Mum fussing over what I had been fed. Dad coming home early giving me a hug (that's a first) and taking me out for a drink. Unable to get in my civvies we went up the pub and met a couple of other sprogs. What a party!

The locals in that pub treated us three stooges like heroes home from a war. Heads patted, backs slapped, hands shaken until they were sore, and kissed by girls – old and young.

Someone once said that we all get fifteen minutes of fame. This night was mine. To be treated like that today I would have to score a cup winning goal or beat Mike Tyson to a pulp. A bonus for me was that I was able to form a bond with my father. Over the years it became knotted and frayed, needing lots of repairs. But at that time it was like a thick gold chain.

If you could put that feeling in little packets I'd give them away to the kids who hang around street corners. They would need no other stimulants.

The two years I thought had been stolen from my life were an investment for me and I still live on the interest.

I said this would probably be over the top!

**Vic Matthews**

*Thank you, Vic for this contribution. Ed*    **θ**

# PCS Branch Annual Dinner and Dance Reunion 2003

## NORTHAMPTON MOAT HOUSE

Silver Street, Northampton NN1 2TA.  
Tel: 01604 739988. Fax: 01604 230614

**THE ANNUAL** Dinner and Dance will be held over the weekend of Friday 21<sup>st</sup> to Monday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2003.

We have been allocated 130 bedrooms out of the 145 available. The cost is as follows:

1 nights stay £45.00 per person Dinner, Bed & Brkfst

2 nights stay £85.00 per person Dinner, Bed & Brkfst

3 nights stay £99.00 per person Dinner, Bed & Brkfst

A deposit of £20 per person is required.

The Gala Dinner (Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup>) is £18 for non-residents of the hotel.

### Please Note:

- i Bookings will not be accepted over the telephone.
- ii You must use the official Booking Form especially printed for our use by the hotel. If you have not received this form with *The Posthorn* please write to Jim Steer enclosing a stamped address envelope.
- iv Confirmation of bookings will be sent to you, after sending your deposit, if requested.

Further details in the next issue of *The Posthorn*

### Directions

#### 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

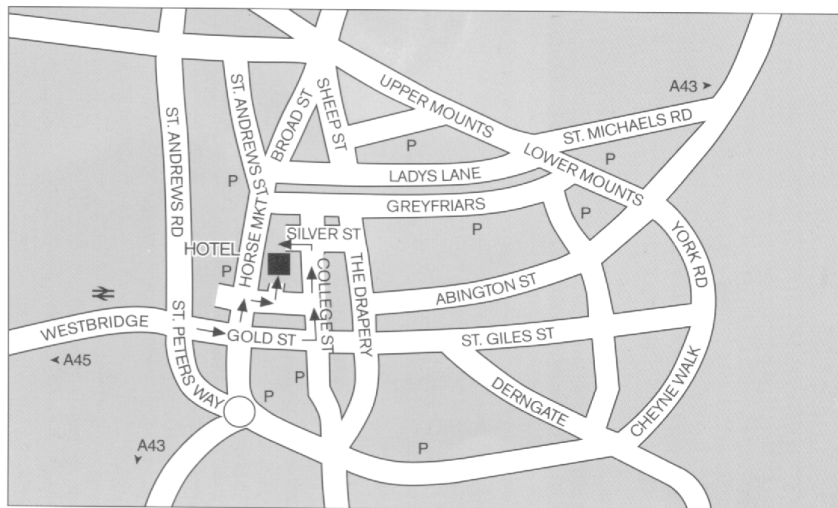
Keep on the A508 all the way passing through Kingsthorpe. Driving through Barrack Road you will pass Royal Mail on your right. Pass the Mayorhold Car Park on your left. Straight over the next set of traffic lights. Pass the Hotel on the left. Turn left into St Katherine' s Street. Turn immediately left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



## REST OF THE NEWS

### I.D. Cards

HQ REA have been contacting Branch Members requesting a photograph so that they can be issued with their ID card. If you have received a letter requesting this please respond. If you intend to go to any veteran's weekends, which tend to be held in various military establishments, you will be asked for your ID. The ID must have your photograph. Thank you.

### Branch Ties

I have obtained a further 50 Branch ties from Corps Enterprises. The cost is £7.45 including post and packing. To obtain one of these ties please send a cheque made payable to **Jim Steer** to 49 Middleton Drive, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN23 6HD

### Unable to get in at the M oat House for the reunion in M arch 2003?

Try the Ibis Hotel across the road. The cost is £ 35 per person. Telephone 01604 608900 for further details

### Change of Address

Thank you to those members who have notified me of their change of address, however, some of you are still not informing me. Recently one of our members passed away and we had problems trying to find out details.

### Branch Subscriptions

Some time ago I sent each member a letter with their details we hold on a database, asking for any errors to be corrected. Thank you for all the replies and the errors have been corrected. The letter also contained information about how up to date you were with your subscriptions. However, 54 members have still not paid their 2001 subscriptions. A small number have still not paid their subscription for 2000. Any member who has not paid their 1999 subscription has now been deleted from the database. **Please bring your subscriptions up to date.** Your subscription goes to producing *The Posthorn*, stationary and other admin costs. Some of you who paid your subs in Blackpool this year were paying for 2001, as we did not have a reunion last year.

### Photo gallery (*The Posthorn* issue 9 March 2002)

The sapper amongst all those ladies has been identified as a very young Tommy Martin, and Tony Belzire (formerly Belcher) also recognizes Joyce Fox.

### Lost Trials

Does anybody know the whereabouts of Pete Bond, Les Dagley, Benny Hannan, Mick Harvey, Colin Hough, 'Monty Montgomery', Baz Payne and Jim Wilson. Any information please contact Jim Steer

### Association Annual Dinner

The Annual Dinner of the Association will take place at the Victory Services Club on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2002. Reception will be at 18.00 for 18.30. [Bar opens 17.30].

The cost of a ticket is £18. Cheques made payable to RE Association and sent to Jim Steer no later than 10<sup>th</sup> September 2002.

### Last Post

It is with deep regret and sadness that we report the deaths of the following Branch Members

W477866 SSGT **MAGGIE JOHNSON** on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2002 in Bristol.

23682360 SGT **JOHN ROBERISON** on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2002 in Preston, Lancs

23532640 WOII **BRIAN LOWE** on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2002 in Letchworth, Herts

### Book Review

*The Royal Engineers and the National Service Years, 1939-1963, A Military and Social History*

Eric Pegg has compiled the book from facts and memories of 140 National Service sappers during 1939 to 1963. It contains accounts of all the RE training camps, postings in the UK, postings abroad, the suicides, the murders, the bullying, the rolls of honour, and tells what it was really like - not like 'Lads Army'.

The book cost £17.75 (plus £4 pp) and obtainable from Eric Pegg 14 Reginald Street, Burwood Christchurch, New Zealand 8009.

### RE Museum

Sir Iain Vallance at the RE Museum, Chatham, opened the Army Postal Services 1939-45 display on Friday 10 May 2002. Jim Steer attended as the representative from our Branch.

In his opening speech Sir Iain said: "Throughout the War, the work of the APS can be seen as the Service's 'finest hour' for, against the odds, the APS succeeded in establishing and maintaining a thoroughly professional service that came to be relied upon by troops and their families back home."

He went on to say how important the APS was to maintaining the morale of the not only, the troops but, the nation as a whole, because the service provided a link between the home and front lines.

The display is contained in three cabinets in the WW2 galleries and shows the activities of the RE (PS) and ATS during WW2.

*Continued on next page*

## **RE Museum (Continued)**

It contains photographs and drawings from WW2, plus the Nazi, Italian and Burmese date stamps captured during the war.

There is also on display an ATS tunic worn by an ATS woman who served at the Home Postal Centre RE, Nottingham. Other postal displays in the Museum include a Victorian, WW1 and a Post-War. Please do go and visit the Museum.

The Post War display is the next big project. We are looking for a WRAC uniform for that display - are there any givers out there? -Contact me on [fenwicksc@aol.com](mailto:fenwicksc@aol.com)

**Simon Fenwick**

*MOD WEBSITE PAGE as at 15 Feb 02*

### **Taxation of attributable Army Invaliding Pensions**

**The Ministry** of Defence has confirmed that, due to an administrative error, a number of Army pensioners in receipt of an attributable Invaliding Pension may have been mistakenly taxed. The Department deeply regrets the error and is working hard to identify those individuals who have been affected. Pensions paid to former Service personnel from the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force are not affected by this error.

The error only affects those invalidity pensions awarded to former soldiers for ill-health deemed attributable to their service in the Army. Those individuals who have been wrongly taxed are eligible for a refund from the Inland Revenue, as are widows of deceased pensioners who were wrongly taxed during their lifetime. The error was first identified in 1998, and since then the Department has been working hard to identify from its files where possible those affected. We have also sought the assistance of ex-Service organisations and War Widows associations in publicising this matter. Although we believe the majority of those affected have been identified, we are keen to find those so far missed and are planning further publicity.

The following questions are designed to help individuals decide whether they are entitled to a refund of tax from their or their spouse's Army Invaliding Pension from the Armed Forces Pension Scheme:

#### ***Were you (or was your spouse) in the Army?***

If yes, read on. If no, then this issue does not affect you, as the administrative error was not made by the Royal Navy or Royal Air Force.

#### ***Did you (or your spouse) qualify for a Service invaliding pension?***

In order to qualify for a Service invaliding pension an individual had to be medically discharged after completing a certain number of qualifying years. Up until 1945 only those Serviceman who served for more than 14 years qualified. After 1945, Serviceman still required 12 years reckonable service; this period did not reduce again until 1973 when it was 5 years and 1988 when it became 2 years.

#### ***Do you (or did your spouse) receive an Army Invaliding or Attributable Pension and a War Disablement Pension?***

A Service Invaliding Pension is paid when an individual is medically retired due to ill-health or injury, and is normally taxable. However, a Service Invaliding Pension is exempt from tax if the Service person was also in receipt of a War Disablement Pension from the War Pensions Agency - this is because the ill-health has been deemed attributable or due to their Service -and becomes a Service Attributable Pension. *If you (or your spouse) fit*

*this category, you may be eligible for a tax refund. See below for contact point.*

If you (or your spouse) retired before 1973 - when the Service Attributable Pension was introduced - retirement on grounds of ill-health did not have a specific pension under the Armed Forces Pension. However, in recognition of premature departure from the Services, pension benefits accrued were put into immediate payment. These pensions were normally taxable. However, as with the Service Attributable Pension, this pension would be exempt from tax if the Service person was also in receipt of a War Disablement Pension from the War Pensions Agency. *If you (or your spouse) fit this category, you may be eligible for a tax refund. See below for contact point.*

#### ***Are you (or was your spouse) in receipt of a Service Invaliding Pension, but not a War Disablement Pension?***

If the answer is yes, then you are not entitled to a tax refund, as the ill-health which lead to payment of the Service Invaliding Pension is not deemed attributable to Service.

#### ***Are you the beneficiary of an eligible pension and entitled to claim?***

Where both the pensioner and spouse are deceased, a tax refund can still be claimed by their prime beneficiary, should sufficient documentary evidence exist to demonstrate entitlement. This would include:

- confirmation that the pension was in payment and taxed;
- evidence that you are the beneficiary of the deceased soldier;
- evidence that the soldier was invalided from the Army for reasons attributable to Service.

*If so, see below for contact point*

#### ***Are you in receipt of a War Disablement Pension from the War Pensions Agency?***

If yes, then you should be aware that these pensions have always been tax free, and that you are not owed any refund.

#### ***What should you do if you think you are entitled to a tax refund?***

You should write to the following address, giving your full name (and that of your spouse if applicable) and Service Number, and mention this website as a reference source:  
**AFPAA(G) Pension Division MP480  
Kentigem House  
65 Brown Street  
Glasgow G2 8EX**

**Help Lines 0141 224 2351/2352/2353**

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