

ROYAL ARMY SERVICE CORPS
&
ROYAL CORPS OF TRANSPORT
ASSOCIATION
AMPHIBIOUS BRANCH
NEWSLETTER

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116 Company Royal Army Service Corps
18 Company Royal Army Service Corps (AMPHIBIOUS)
And
18 (AMPH) Squadron Royal Corps Of Transport

President's Notes - David Pepperell

As an officer I had to accept that my career gave me great width or variety at the cost of depth. In other words I only spent a short time developing each new skill. My time with DUKWs was only 2½ years, split between Fremington and Singapore in the late 1960s, although I am proud I completed a B3 Amph. Course, semaphore and all. But so long ago it meant I had little memory of who I was going to meet in October last year at the reunion in Barnstaple, and my wife and I were quite apprehensive. In the event we were given such a good time in excellent company that we felt at home right away, and it was not difficult to accept Mike Ross's invitation to be the first President of the exciting new Association Branch he and his committee were forming. I am pleased to be working with such an enthusiastic group who share a lot of common history and that can honestly declare themselves to be 'small, but perfectly formed'. Thank you for the honour – I look forward to meeting you all again, and again!

2012 Reunion Mike Ross

Over the long weekend of 18th to 21st of October 2012 our Reunion was held at The Barnstaple Hotel, Barnstaple with over 120 attending. On the Thursday evening a Detachment of EX Junior Leaders held a Dinner Night, Friday morning saw about 50 paying a visit to Instow hosted by 11 ATT Squadron Royal Marines and most of us had a Cabby in the DUKWs, out in the estuary. We then moved on to Fremington Camp our ancestral home for possibly our last visit, before the site is redeveloped, but to date planning has not been granted for the site. Sadly Susan Peters was taken ill on Thursday evening having to return home on Friday morning with Taff, missing all the fun she is now fully recovered.

Saturday morning saw the more hardy of us on the Golf course and the Ladies undertaking some retail therapy in Barnstaple. On Saturday evening was the main dinner night with 120 seated it was a great success mainly due to Mike Ross's organisational ability

A BRIEF HISTORY of 18 COMPANY RASC

This article was first published in March 1959

The history of 18 Company, R.A.S.C., dates back to 1878 when it came into existence at Aldershot as No, 18 Commissariat Depot. It remained at Aldershot until 1902 but little is recorded of its activities during this period except that in 1889 the unit was redesignated a Supply Depot Company and in 1892 was split in two to form 38 Company. In October 1899 the unit embarked for service in South Africa. It is of interest to note that in November 1901 Dvr. Andrews was promoted to the rank of corporal for gallant conduct in the field whilst attached to "J" Battery, Royal Horse Artillery in South Africa.

In January 1901 men were provided to line the route for the return of Lord Roberts from South Africa and also later in the year details were similarly provided for Queen Victoria's funeral. For a period in 1902 the unit together with 38 Company was used as a Demobilization Centre for troops returning from the South African War.

The Company moved from Aldershot to Woolwich in 1902 and at the same time its role was changed to that of transport. In 1906 18 Company moved to London (Kensington) where it remained until the outbreak of the First World War.

In 1914, 18 Company went to France with the British Expeditionary Force as a Horse Transport Company in 4 Divisional Train, The unit is recorded as having remained in France until 1916 although there is no mention of its activities during this period. Indeed, records make no reference to the Company again until 1922 when it is shown as being at Chatham in a static transport role. Chatham continued as its home until 1939 when it was reorganized as a Motor Ambulance Company and proceeded to France with the British Expeditionary Force. Having been evacuated from Dunkirk in 1940 the unit sailed for the Middle East in 1941 where it remained in an M.T. role until 1946 when it was placed in suspended animation.

In 1947 18 Company was re-formed in Germany as a Divisional Transport Company but was once again placed in suspended animation in May, 1948. For the third time in its history the company changed its role and was re-formed in 1950 as a Water Transport Company having amalgamated with 632 Company at Sheerness. For the next seven years 18 Company continued in this role; its activities were spread over much of the East Coast area from Newhaven to Tynemouth and flotillas were to be found at Dover, Woolwich and Grimsby. Two notable happenings during this period were in September, 1951, when a flotilla of ten fifty-foot G.S.Ls. made a very successful training cruise to Copenhagen and in February, 1953, when the Company operated an extensive ferry service between Chatham and Sheerness carrying foodstuffs, medical supplies and personnel during the East Coast floods. With the rundown of the R.A.S.C. Fleet 18 Company had to be disbanded in September, 1957.

The final chapter in the history of the unit to date has only just begun. On 1st June, 1958, 18 Company was once again re-formed, this time to be an Amphibious Transport Company. As 18 Company, R.A.S.C. (Amphibious Transport) the unit is now in the process of training at Fremington in North Devon in order to take its place in the Long Term Army. In its new role 18 Company has an important part to play and continues as it has done since 1878 to contribute to the many and varied activities of the Corps.

This article was first published in January 1961

By JOHN PORTER and BARRIE DAVIES

AT HOME ON LAND AND SEA

At Fremington the tiny Devonshire village that straddles the Bideford-Barnstaple main road it is a common sight to see a convoy of dukws squeezing their way through the narrow lanes. For Fremington is the home of 18 Company (Amphibian). Fremington has long been a centre of military activity, for the camp was formally occupied by American troops until 1958 when 18 Company moved in. The camp is built in the grounds of Fremington House, an old country mansion that is now the Officers' Mess. Being based in the heart of such a small village as Fremington, the personnel of the company and the local people have of necessity to be in close contact: no effort has been spared in getting to know the villagers, and many friendly contacts have been established, 18 Company is often called upon to give demonstrations to civilian 'organizations. Even while we were visiting the unit members of Devonshire police were being entertained. But Devon has more reason to thank the company than for mere make believe demonstrations.

During the great floods that caused so much damage in the West Country a couple of months ago, the men of 18 Company played a big part in rescue operations. A dozen dukws made a fifty mile dash through the night to Exeter where they spearheaded the rescue operations after five feet deep floods had swept through the streets of the Cathedral city.

A farm at Winkleigh was the scene of another dukw rescue act when two vehicles were sent there to rescue 160 sheep trapped by floods.

It took us very little time at Fremington to find that the work at the camp is interesting and varied. And one thing we discovered was that the men like being based at Fremington. Instance of this came from C.Q.M.S. George Southgate. He has spent twenty one years in the Corps and had previously served at the camp. With two years to retirement he was given a choice of where he would like to serve. He and his wife chose Fremington. The Q, who will return to his home town, Manchester, when he retires, told us he had done everything in the Corps except air despatch.

We were given the opportunity to drive a dukw on the training beaches and wondered at the way in which the men drive these large and cumbersome vehicles so confidently through the narrow streets of Barnstaple on their way to the training area. But Dvr, John Greenaway, eighteen-years-old and an ex- Junior Leader handled them expertly and, like the other drivers, was quite confident of taking them through the narrowest gaps. John's number two on his dukw was Dvr, Robert Read, also an ex-Boy. They have both been with the company for six months and took part in rescue operations at Exeter. hDvr. Frank Robinson is also an ex-Boy.

We spoke to Lieut. R. Stephens, a former policeman, who was in charge of the dukws that went to the aid of flooded Exeter. Lieut. S t e p h e n s thought it was funny to be working side by side with the Chief Constable of Exeter and smiled as he told how he and his men rescued a hundred girls stranded for nine hours in a flooded factory. He comes from a military family. His fa-

ther is a retired lieutenant-colonel. Born in India, Mr, Stephens saw England for the first time in 1950. A former lance corporal in the Tank Corps, he transferred to the R.A.S.C. on being commissioned. CS.M. Arthur Owen, has served twenty years with the Army and joined the company when it was formed. Father of two girls and a boy aged eighteen, he lives in a hiring at Westward Ho! C.S.M. Owen was particularly pleased that the company was receiving a number of ex-Boys; in fact, at the time we were there, they had twenty-eight in the company.

Cpl. Derek Walley (27). who spent three years with Water Transport as a marine engineer, is a dukw driver, but when we saw him he was walking around with his leg in plaster. He broke it playing football for the company team in September. Cpl. Walley has also played football for Barnstaple • Town and plays cricket for the town too. A crack tennis player, he is going in for the Army tennis title this year. Pte, Jim Thomas (22). though a lorry driver in civilian life, is the C.S.M/s clerk. A burly 13 stone rugby enthusiast, he plays for Barnstaple as the company hasn't enough players to raise a side. But Jim hopes to organize a team for the Corps sevena-side competition This year. He is just getting back to form after being out of the game for half a season with a broken thigh. Sgt. Cliff Cooper (31), who has seen twelve years in the Middle East is N.C.O. in charge of the M.T. Section. Sgt. Cooper, married with two children, is an amphibian trained instructor

Cpl. Ronald Short, the documentation clerk, is a twenty - four - year - old engineer from Peterborough. Also in the documentation office is Pte. Dan Chandler (22). a carpenter. Assistant chief clerk, CpL Taffie Pugh (26). a Regular soldier with eight years service, has been at Fremington for two years. The despatch clerk, twenty one-year-old Pte. Brian Champion, is married and lives in Middlesex. Cpl. Tom Mead was with the company from 1952-54 and came back to dukw driving nineteen months ago. A former Welsh Guardsman, he joined the* Corps in 1948. Another ex - guardsman, this time the Scots Guards. is L/Cpl. John Lambie (24), a dukw driver who joined the Corps in 1958. L/Cpl. Bill Boyd (28), a keen rugby player from Wigan, is ex-Royal Horse Artillery. He has been with the company for eighteen months. Dvr. Ernie Gallagher (23), is a re-enlistment and comes from Motherwell.

Officer Commanding 18 Company is Major N. I. B. Speller and we extend our thanks to him for giving us the run of the camp during our stay and helping us in every possible way, At Fremington we saw plenty of signs of the floods that had recently devastated the countryside and our visit coincided with gale force winds, ominous -skies and heavy downpours. While we mere landlubbers found our frequent soakings most uncomfortable, the men of 18 Company took them in their stride probably because this was the kind of weather they enjoy just the weather for dukws.

Association News

During the last reunion all the Lads got together for a meeting and decided to form an **Amphibious Association for all who served in Fremington Camp**. I am delighted to inform you that we now have an Amphibious Association which of course is registered with the Headquarters at Deepcut. Already we have 56 life members and my aim is to increase this number to 75 plus by next May.

We also have a full committee with Colonel David Pepperell as our President. The committee shall be meeting in May this coming year to discuss matters for our next reunion which is called “**Land and Sea**” and will take place in Barnstaple during the month of October 2014. As many of you know, we have had well over 120 attend the last three reunions. The idea of forming an association was to enable our reunions to apply for a grant from the RASC RCT Association Headquarters. It is my intention to apply for a large sum to offset the cost of our next reunion.

We need your help. By becoming a member of our Association we will have the numbers to place a strong case for a sizeable grant in 2014. I understand fully that some of the older generation of servicemen are unable to travel these days for our reunions but, for a £6 cheque made payable to the RASC RCT AMPH ASSN Branch would boost our numbers and you will receive the Bi annual copies of the Waggoner.

Please see the member's application attached for your perusal and action. Finally, I do apologise for this letter but I have now run five reunions and got things moving in our family of ex-service men RASC/RCT/REME/ACC. Please join; it's a life membership for just £6 pounds.

Mike (Taff) Ross

WEBSITE

To keep up to date with events and news please visit **Your** website @ <http://18coyrasc.btck.co.uk/> if you do not have access to the internet why not ask a friend or neighbour to help

The Waggoner Magazine

If you are not a life member of the association either our branch or your local branch and your details are not held at the association HQ you will not receive the twice yearly free copy of The Waggoner sign up now.

This article was published in May 1960

Headquarters.—Many readers will no doubt have learnt already from press reports of the tragic accident to two L.VTs. of 116 Company (Amphibious Transport) which occurred at Westward Ho! -resulting in the deaths of Cpls. Peacock, Quail and Young, all instructors in the Company. We extend on behalf of all ranks of the Corps serving in South-eastern District, our deepest sympathy to the relatives of these N.C.Os, . Cpl Quail was buried privately at his home in Swansea and, at the request of his relatives, the bearer-party was provided by N.C.Os. of 116 Company. Many of his friends attended the funeral. Cpls. Young and Peacock were buried at Northam, near Bideford, with full military honours. Although this accident cannot do other than cast a deep shadow over other activities of the past months, In the true spirit of the service "the show must go on"

This article was published in March 1962

They lose a ball but gain a record
DRIVER Haywood, 18 Company footballer, has a strong kick. But while playing at Fremington recently, he took a swing at the ball and it landed in Torrington — twelve miles away. But there's an explanation for this remarkable feat. The 18 Company football pitch adjoins the Barnstaple-Bideford-Torrington railway line. Dvr. Haywood kicked the ball out of the ground—and into the tender of the 3.23 train to Torrington Arriving at Torrington the startled fireman found the ball little use to get steam up so he threw it away—to touch ground for the first time in twelve miles. To make matters worse it was a new ball, but although 18 Company have lost a ball they've gained a record.

This article was published in October 1964

Last but not least L/Cpl. Kirk has just distinguished himself by trying to run 32 miles to Ilfracombe and back in 3 1/2 hours for a pound. It is alleged that he ran 25 miles in three hours and then decided that it was not worth the effort.

Branch Formation Meeting

On the 19th of October 2012 an informal meeting was held at the Barnstaple Hotel Barnstaple to discuss the formation of a National Amphibious Branch of the Association. Mike Ross opened the meeting and gave a brief summary of the proposal, Geordie Routledge gave a brief history of the RASC / RCT Association. All those that attended were in agreement that we should move forward and form a branch, over 30 application forms were handed out and Mike received most of them back before the end of the weekend.

Some of the advantages of becoming a branch are.

Easier access to funding from the Association.

A Bi annual newsletter (The Waggoner) Regular updates of RASC / RCT functions.

Update at 05/01/13 the Branch bank account has been set up by Mike he has forwarded members details to the. Controller You should all receive the December issue of The Waggoner Magazine in the post shortly. An interim Committee has been set up and this will be confirmed at the meeting in May. To date we now have 56 members with more on the way



Association visit to Aromanch Camp Instow North Devon, hosted by 11 ATT Sqn Royal Marines on the 19th of October 2012





Members having a cabby in the DUKWs, on the rivers Taw and Torridge estuary 19th of October 2012 photographs courtesy of 11 ATT Sqn Royal Marines





Above 11 ATT Sqn Royal Marines

Below possibly our last group visit to Fremington Camp





Dinner night The Barnstaple Hotel Barnstaple North Devon 20th of October 2012



THE ROYAL ARMY SERVICE CORPS
AND
ROYAL CORPS OF TRANSPORT
ASSOCIATION
AMPHIBIOUS BRANCH

Application for Membership

Name.....

Address.....
.....
.....

Tel No.....

Email.....

I served with.....

From.....To.....

Regimental Number.....

Date of birth.....

Life Membership Number

If known

If you are a active member of your local branch

Branch name.....

Life Membership Fee £6.00

Free to existing Life Members of the RASC RCT Association

Post To

Mike Ross
10 COULTERS CLOSE
GROVE GREEN
MAIDSTONE
KENT ME14 5SU

If you don't want to

Cut the back page

Off this magazine

Send your details to Mike

With a cheque for £6.00

Or your life membership number

This Newsletter is intended for distribution to Members who do not have access to the internet, all the information is available on your website, to save the cost of postage, if you do not require further issues please let Mike know, so that he can remove your name from the mailing list, if your postal address or telephone numbers need updating please contact mike

Mike Ross

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