HEADLINES

Welcome to the tenth branch newsletter, that's right the tenth!! It doesn't seem possible we have been going for 3 years on the Corps birthday. This just happens to coincide with the weekend of this year's Bow Shackle Ball. So, to commemorate the Corps and our birthdays we will be having a birthday breakfast on Sunday 1st Oct at the Dumfries Veterans Garden. These guys have been immense so far, nothing seems to much trouble. Their attitude is an absolute credit to them and the breakfast look pretty good too, can't wait. It seems a very fitting way to bring the Bow Shackle Ball weekend to a close, I hope to see everyone who attends the ball enjoying a hearty breakfast before heading off home.

In July I attended the SNCO Recovery Mechanics Reunion held at Lyneham. I can honestly say that it was one of the best I've attended in recent times. The meal is the best food I've eaten in any mess, anywhere, the staff and service as always was fantastic. Attendance seemed to be up this year which is really great to see, and we had some celebrities there as well. Our latest commissioned Recovery Mechanic, Captain Tony Cottee, many congratulations to Tony on his commission. And not only did we have the new ASM Recovery, WO1 (ASM) Joe Williams but also 8 Training Battalions new RSM, WO1 (RSM) Rob Lord, who, if you hadn't guessed is also a Recovery Mechanic, massive congratulations to you both. However, as always, these functions don't organise themselves, so on behalf of everyone who attended an enormous thank you to all the people that made it possible and especially the lead protagonists Sgt Al Jones and Sgt Michael Banfield, you're a credit to the trade Gents.

I know that in recent years attendance at the SNCO reunion has been down and that there are several very good reasons for that, including lack of certainty over accommodation and the fact that a large number had never served at Lyneham. The bedspace issues haven't gone away but the team have worked hard to ensure that the accommodation is very local, reasonably priced and that free transport is readily available. Recovery training is conducted differently these days, no, it's not the same as when you did it but it's just as good and the team are as dedicated as any from past years to ensuring that all the students are absolutely ready to become the next generation of outstanding Recovery Mechanics that can carry on the immense legacy, they have inherited from you all.

Like it or not Lyneham is now the home of the Corp and it's our home, so come and see for yourself what it's like, how the training has changed, the weekend is just like you remember but at the same time its different, it has evolved, so why not evolve with it, see you there next year.

Cheers

John

OBITUARIES – RECOVERY MECHANIC

Colin Hall

The Branch have been informed and are extremely saddened to hear the news of the passing of Veteran Recovery Mechanic Colin Hall.

RIP, Arte et Marte

Ceon Jermain Thomas - 1983 - 2023

The Branch have been informed and are extremely saddened to hear the news of the passing of Recovery Mechanic Ceon Jermain Thomas at the age of 39 years.

RIP, Arte et Marte

Steve Raine

The Branch have been informed and are extremely saddened to hear the news of the passing of Veteran Reservist Recovery Mechanic Steve Raine.

RIP, Arte et Marte

Tony Coleman

The Branch have been informed and are extremely saddened to hear the news from Mr Ray Coleman of the passing of his dear brother, James Anthony Coleman, Veteran Recovery Mechanic, who passed away at the age of 62 years.

James Anthony, s funeral was held at Anfield Crematorium, Liverpool on 5th July 2023, a bugler sourced through REME Charity was present at the funeral.

RIP, Arte et Marte.

Eric Johnston – 09.01.1947 -23.05.2023

The Branch have been informed and are extremely saddened to hear the news of the passing of Veteran Reservist Recovery Mechanic Richard Eric Johnston at the age of 76 years.

Richard Eric, s funeral was held at Darling Crematorium on 14 June 2023.

RIP, Arte et Marte.

George Ferguson Gowland – May 6, 1962 – July 17, 2023.

It is with profound sadness and heavy hearts that we announce the passing of George Ferguson Gowland.

George was born in Middlesbrough, England to George and Jean Gowland. He grew up in Billingham with his brother Darren, sister Debra and sister Tarnya who unfortunately would only be with them for a short time. At the age of 21 George decided to join the British Military, this decision offered him the opportunity to move around the world and in 1990 he was called upon to serve in Desert Storm,

It was in 2005 George and his family made the decision to make Ste Anne, MB, Canada their new home. It is here that he found the place that he often referred to as Peace and Tranquility.

Sadly, cancer became part of Georges life and after many years of living with this illness he is now at peace.

George will forever be remembered by his family and friends. He leaves behind his wife Angela, son Joss (Karyn) daughter Nadja (Dustin) as well as many other family members and friends around the world. As per his wishes a cremation has taken place and a Celebration of Life will be held later.

The family would like to thank Cancer Care Manitoba as well as the Southern Health Palliative Care Team for their support throughout this difficult journey – The Family

RIP, Arte et Marte.

Norman Smith – 1947 - 2023

It is with enormous sadness that I find myself writing this about a dear friend. As soon as volunteers were required to write an obituary for Norman, I jumped right in. I then had the realisation that I knew nothing about him other than he had worked at Bordon and had been a WO2 when he was serving. Not much when you are supposed to be writing about a man's life!

I had the privilege to serve at Bordon as an instructor, arriving in 1993. I was sent to "A" vehicles to work with several other SNCOs and a couple of civvies. The 2 civvies turned out to be Noddy and Norman, or Grumpy and Grumpier. As a newly promoted Sgt working alongside these 2 legends was daunting to say the least. It turned out that I was going to team up with Norman to deliver CHARRV and Warrior training. We worked very closely with Norm over the next 18 months, and I thoroughly enjoyed the experience. I got to know Norman very well during work, but it was our shared love of dogs and golf that I will always treasure. We used to meet up after work and walk our dogs across the recovery training area, Norm had Dodge and Buster and he adored them both. We would just walk and moan about pretty much everything, proper blokes' stuff. Our golfing exploits were always a laugh, we weren't very good, but we always enjoyed the round and the company.

He was an extremely private man, I know Norman was originally from the North East, that he was posted to SEME as a WO2 in the early 80's and he had a house in Bordon but I'll finish as I started and tell you that despite my willingness to write this I now realise that I knew so little about the man except to say that he was my friend and his passing is a great personal loss and will leave a huge hole in the heart of our trade. Our heartfelt condolences go out to Sharon, who shared so much of Normans life, to his daughters, Gill, Heather and Tracey, who have lost their dad and to the multitude of friends across the world whose life had been touched by Norman.

RIP my friend, Arte et Marte – John Sibley

David Brocklehurst - 15th September 1952 to 14th May 2023

Dave joined the Royal Marines at the age of 18 in 1970, but this wasn't for him and in 1971 Dave transferred to the army, to be precise, the REME and went to the Training Battalion and Depot REME, Poperinghe Barracks, Arborfield and joined 07 Platoon to complete his basic training. from there he went to SEME, Bordon and joined 321 Recovery Mechanics course. After completing his training Dave got his first posting, which was to 5 Fld Wksp REME, Soest, BFPO 106 and this is where I first meet Dave as a new boy just out of basic training. We had some great times there in the Recy Section. While Dave was in Soest he met Lesley through them being pen pals and on the 15th of December 1973 they married, and Lesley moved to Soest. In 1974 Dave was posted with promotion to L/Cpl to 14 Fld Wksp REME, Berlin, BFPO 45. While in Berlin Lesley gave birth to their first child Scott on the 8th of July 1977. Two weeks later they moved back to England to 9 Fld Wksp REME, Bordon, which was later that year absorbed by 3 Fld Wksp REME, Bordon. While at 3 Fld Wksp Reme Dave did a tour in NI at Armagh 1977/78 and a tour in Kenya. Dave left the army in April 1980 with the rank of Cpl and moved to Milton Keynes where he became an HGV driver. While there they had their second child Tracy, who was born on the 10th of July 1980. In 1984 the family moved to Hemel Hempstead and Dave carried on being an HGV driver. In about 1989 he then started a building business with his brother, but that stopped around 1991/92, Dave then worked for Golden West/Keystone, now Martin Brower, again as an HGV driver until he retired in 2017. Dave then cared for his wife Lesley, who had been suffering from arthritis for years and beaten cancer too. In February 2018 Dave contacted me on Facebook, it was a definite blast from the past, 44 years to be precise. We chatted about old times at 5 Fld Wksp and I mentioned ARV 7 at The Millers Hotel, Sibson and he said he would attend, and he did and that was the last time I saw him. On the 30th of December 2019 his wife Lesley passed away, Dave was devastated to say the least. Dave took up the hobby of swimming at the Holiday Inn gym in Hemel Hempstead and made lots of friends and was an active member of the local RBL Branch. We kept in contact on Facebook and the last message I had from him was in March 2023.I would also like to say even though I only knew Dave for a short period back in the early 1970's he was a true comrade in arms and a friend for life.

Arte et Marte – Chris Zeil.

COMMITTEE NEWS

The Branch latest committee meeting was held on Thursday 10 August 2023 where a new media platform was trialled using Google, whilst there were the normal hiccups you would expect from a group of Recy Mechs, the platform in both sound and picture was very good and moving forward the Branch will be accepting and adopting this means for all meeting communications.
There was also much talk about the two coming events below, these are the highlight of our year and those attending are very much looking forward to them. There may well be spaces still available, so if any of them take your fancy, please get in touch via our central email address at; recymechbranch@gmail.com.

FORTH COMING EVENTS

War Graves Overseas Trip – 15 – 17 September 2023.
Bow Shackle Ball – 30 September 2023 – venue, Easterbrook Hall, Dumfries.

OTHER DATES FOR THE DIARY

Corps Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess Autumn Dinner Night – 14 September 2023
REME Memorial Day – Thursday 28 September 2023, at the Arboretum (NMA)
Service of Remembrance – 11 November 2023 – Albert Hall
Cenotaph – Remembrance Day Parade 12 November 2023 – Whitehall.

HAS ANYBODY SEEN…

This section within the Newsletter shall be included in each Edition. The idea being that membership who wish to attempt to contact Recovery Mechanics of yesteryear can appeal through the Newsletter for assistance. Just let us know through the pages of our Facebook Account or email the branch email address, recymechbranch@gmail.com who you are trying to trace, and we will include it in the Newsletter and hopefully someone can help you in your search.

Surprisingly this facility has yet to be used, whilst there have been a couple of requests for contacts on the Branch Facebook page, nothing yet through the Newsletter. The Branch has details of all members, and should you be looking for someone, we can possibly help, for obvious reasons we cannot hand out details without prior permission of any individual you may be seeking to reunite with.

MEMBERSHIP SUBMISSIONS

Belated Announcement & History

Cfn Michael David Anthony, Paternoster (Mick)

30/04/1941 - 20/04/2009

Michael Paternoster met Peter John Mitchell Pellereau in 1962 whilst working in a garage in Crowthorne, who was the Commanding Officer of 131 Parachute Engineer Regiment (TA), and Michael fixed his Hillman Minx, Michael also became friendly with the Commanding Officers batman Ken Jones, who encouraged him to join the TA. Michael had his medical on the 24/01/1963 at Kingsbury where he would be based and enlisted to join on the 31/01/1963 and would be in 131 LAD REME, attached to 302 parachute field squadron RE. Michael was a vehicle/Recovery Mechanic and did his training at Kingsbury and at 30 Command Workshop REME Mill Hill Barracks.
In late February 1963 Michael climbed Snowdon on an exercise and they stayed near Ffestiniog Railway in a Nissen hut. It was a foggy day, and they took a Humber 1 ton truck

up the mountain and the stub axle broke. Michael had to recover the Humber 1 ton truck with a Scammell, and tow it to 22 Command Workshop REME in Hadley Shropshire. Later, during the exercise Michael also fell down the mountain and had to ask a farmer for directions after getting separated from members of his unit.

Michael went to RAF Abingdon and Aldershot where he attended a two-week parachute course, he parachuted from a balloon on Queens Parade Field. At RAF Abingdon he jumped out of towers and either an Armstrong Whitworth Argosy or Blackburn Beverley aircraft. After his training he was given his maroon beret and wings.
Michael took part in exercise 'New Venture' the annual camp held in Cyprus, he stayed overnight on 19th April in Ogbourne St George and flew out of RAF Lyneham on the 20th of April on a Bristol Britannia aircraft and had to stop at Anarka, Turkey before boarding another plane for RAF Nicosia in Cyprus. Upon arriving they boarded coaches bound for Tuxedo Camp in Dhekelia. There was only 60 Officers and men in the 302 Unit, and they were commanded by Major JAD Cameron TD.
The 131 Unit would be in Cyprus from the 20th of April to 4th May and during the first week Michael did his final parachute jump out of a Handley Page Hastings in Cyprus at Morphu.

Michael worked and maintained vehicles and equipment including series 1 Land Rover, RL Bedford's and Scammell Explorers, though they were assigned to Scammell's, the Pioneer with cloth doors, which was a 1939 model and a dilapidated Explorer. Michael had to recover a Land Rover that the Royal Green Jackets crashed into a ravine, with a Scammell and take it to a compound in Dhekelia. During the second week he took part in Operation 'Westward Look', 131 left Tuxedo Camp and moved to Akamas Peninsula and started road building to Aphrodite's, Bathtub and Fontana Amorosa. Michael also recovered a compressor that had rolled over into a stream using a Scammell. Michael drove the 1939 Scammell Pioneer; it broke down, they tried to repair it, however Captain RD Spray told them to leave it on the mountain, so they did.

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Michael helped tow a Fowler bulldozer with a Scammell and Dyson trailer. He also helped with floodlights for Operation 'Westward Look' The BBC covered the road building, and it appeared on Town and Around. Once Operation 'Westward Look' ended 131 left for the UK, Miichael arrived back on the 4th of May and went to Ogbourne St George, and the unit was dispersed and went home. In May and June Michael worked on various equipment's at 43 Command Workshop REME and CSS TDU

Submitted by Ian McDonald

Andy James – History of a Boy who made good.

It is perhaps ironic that someone who lived such a varied, wide-ranging life, and who steadfastly refused to be pigeonholed, should have spent his first 18 months living in a drawer! And yet that was where Andrew Charles James was cradled following his birth on 14th August 1970 in Nkana Mine Hospital, Kitwe, Zambia. Born in Africa but made in Wales!

Having just moved to Zambia, the James family, father Keith, Mother Joy and two elder brothers Ian and Mark, had literally the clothes they stood up in and a couple of suitcases. Money was very tight and, anyway, there was nothing to buy in the shops, so their early life in Kitwe was very much one of make do and mend and so a chest of drawers was the only cot available for baby Andy.

In childhood, Andy was educated in life and particularly sport, by a variety of friends and acquaintances both expat and local. As a result, Andy's ability to play sports was legendary and his ability to tell a local tale complete with authentic accents was spellbinding, as anyone who ever heard him recount the Zambian version of Little Red Riding Hood will agree!

Andy was well-known in Kitwe – of course he was – as a consummate charmer. At 16 he owned a beaten and rusty Fiat which had no opening doors. It was not uncommon for 5 or 6 young ladies to be squeezed through the windows for Andy to ferry them around town. His brothers could only marvel enviously but, as his mother said, "he was always trusted by the mums!" And, according to Andy anyway, that trust was unbreeched! Later, the brothers would holiday together in Tenerife, where Mark tried to teach Ian and Andy to dive amidst gales of laughter, shark attacks and of course plenty of beer!

At 18, Andy applied to join the British Army and began an illustrious military career.

Whilst stationed in Germany, Andy met Petra. They were married soon after and were delighted to welcome first Michelle and then Michael into the world.

There were lots of travelling and Michelle and Mikey recall long road trips full of singing along to favourite tunes and plenty of laughter, especially when Andy would get the words wrong on purpose and make-up his own versions, only to be firmly told-off by Michelle who also took delight in getting one over on her dad when he tried to get all directive about her messy room.

Andy and Petra later parted ways but remained good friends and loving parents. Andy never lost his sense of childish fun, as we all know, and Michelle and Mikey clearly inherited this as

demonstrated when Andy took them to see 'Finding Dorey'. Not unusual for a father to do this of course, but they were 23 and 21 at the time and created mayhem with their loud enjoyment of the movie!

Andy's army career saw him rise rapidly. Indeed, never short of self-confidence, he claimed to have been the youngest ever to reach the rank of WO2 as a Recy Mech. Those present who served alongside Andy may recall somewhat differently! He went on to serve multiple tours of duty in Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan. Soon after being posted to Germany, Andy, Jase, Paul and Smudge formed a tight group, enjoying life abroad!

Jase and Andy were to go on to forge a particularly close friendship serving together. As Jase said, "If one of us was in trouble, then we were both in trouble." This bond continued beyond getting one over on commanding officers and into much more serious times when Jase recalls visiting Andy on operational tour after a very serious incident and supporting each other in the most testing of situations. He also recalls another, less-serious occasion when Andy, being such a strong swimmer, was the first to reach the submerged yacht of a certain deposed dictator. Diving down and using air pockets to explore the boat, he proceeded to fetch out dozens of presentation cases of crystal glass and engraved shotguns. The record is hazy as to whether some of these items may or may not have made their way back to Germany, stashed in a broken-down RMP vehicle being carefully recovered by the REME.

Back in civvy street, Andy met Fiona, a relationship that blossomed and they were married at Wellington College. Andy's new parents-in-law quickly took him into their hearts. The feeling was completely mutual (despite their RAF allegiances) and, to Andy, Jessie and Eddie became mum and dad. They surely held him in great affection for who else could have persuaded two Scottish pensioners to pay for upgraded tech every time he saw them, until their front room resembled the Battlestar Galactica.

It wasn't long before the pitter-patter of four tiny feet joined in the fun as Finn and Ollie were welcomed into the world. Andy, of course doted and wanted two things for them – to be brave and kind. Kindness of course he demonstrated every day. Bravery came in the form of adventure. At just 8 weeks old, the boys were loaded into the VW and toured Europe for two months. Fiona remembers that most of their time was spent feeding, but no doubt the continental sights made an impression too. The next adventure on Andy's agenda was world travel and so the young family packed-up and headed for Shanghai. Andy, as the main carer and stay-at-home dad, quickly established himself. His Chinese progressed rapidly, and he had soon mastered both 'yes' and 'no'. Luckily the boys did learn lots and Andy was never prouder than when the 3-year-olds, without thinking, helped shop assistants who grew increasingly impatient with the ignorant, lanky foreigner.

And adventure was the legacy Andy wanted to leave for the boys in the shape of another VW van, bought to transport them wherever they may roam. And peeking out from the dashboard, a tiny, blond-haired figure represents dad who will always be with them. And of course, Andy bestowed the gift of laughter and fun to all his children. Here he is in action,

coaching a 3-year-old Finn to tell his favourite joke of all time. Finn is sitting on Andy's knee and beaming from ear to ear at getting it right!

Genuinely is an over-used word but this case it is perfect, for Andy GENUINELY wanted to know you. He wanted to hear you, to see you, to understand you. It was vitally important to him that the people he met, in whatever way, no matter how trivial or brief, felt valued and cherished; felt happier; felt better; felt loved. For Andy loved people. And people loved him.

When Andy addressed the Remembrance Day assembly at Wellington Shanghai, he made an impression on the 500 people listening, they would never forget. Standing alone on the stage in blazer and medals, Andy made the unimaginable experience of war and of conflict understandable. In describing acts of violence, he brought a sense of peace to the audience.

Only Andy could recount the death of a friend to teenagers in such a relatable way. And only Andy could hold us spellbound as he described helping an elderly woman, a refugee in her own country, and the lessons that he had learnt from her. He was truly a remarkable teacher.

"Be brave; be kind".

Courtesy of Jase Clayton via Les Langley

Bisgrove Family Donation

Gratitude – On the morning after the night before (Recovery Mechanics WO & SNCO Reunion) at the REME Museum, I met up with the daughter and son of the late Nigel Bisgrove, Amanda & Darren. I had been contacted a couple of months earlier by the Bisgrove family to say that their dad had been a member of a syndicate and had won around £59 and that they wanted to donate it to the Branch in appreciation of the assistance provided by the Branch at the very stressful and sad time of their dads passing.

I made the family aware that I would be travelling to Wiltshire to a reunion, and did they think it might be possible to meet up somewhere, I suggested the REME Museum, but I would also travel to a place of their choice, anyhow the date was set, and location agreed, the REME Museum it would be at 1130 on the Sunday morning. Just like their dad, 5 minutes before parade time, Amanda and Darren, with their other half's appeared in the Museum car park at 1125. Alison, sister to Amanda and Darren, unfortunately could not be present on the day, but none the less, she was very much involved in the family decision of this magnificent gesture.

Over a coffee in the Museum Café, we talked and reminisced over days gone by and of their dad. Amanda had brought with her photographs of her dad that been taken throughout his career as a Recovery Mechanic, all great memories that they cherish, I could see the pride in their faces when chatting about their dad, I could see they both very much had their dads qualities, and those who knew Bis know what I am talking about, very conscientious and an individual who like things to be in order, to be done correctly, everything had to be in its correct place and always willing to go the extra mile.

We eventually got round to the cheque that Darren had been holding, his first statement was that the cheque value had gone up considerably, they now wished to donate a sum of £207.50., what can one say, indeed it sort of chokes you up. Why? Amanda, s daughter, Liane, had taken it upon herself to raise some money for the Recy Mech Branch in appreciation for what they had done for her grandfather. She designed a quiz, indeed a booklet of varying quizzes, which she charged her friends a fee of £2 per booklet with a prize for £30 for the person who gained the highest score, (I have been through all the quizzes and believe me I won't be getting the £30) as all can see, she clearly put a great deal of time and effort into doing this, what a gesture, something of course that her grandfather would have very much approved. The photograph shows Liane along with her grandfather.

In recognition of this magnificent gesture the Branch Committee have discussed the "Bisgrove Donation" which the Bisgrove family hope will benefit some other Recovery Mechanic families and agreed that we should "ringfence" the amount and call it the "Bis Fund", only to be used to directly help other families who may need assistance.

I am sure that we have all heard and contribute to the old saying about "respect" being a two way thing, well, I wish to categorise the word "gratitude" in the same way, the Bisgrove Family wished to show their gratitude to the Branch and they very much have done that, we thank you all very much, we wish to show our gratitude by simply saying, the Branch is always here for you.

The photograph shows Amanda and Darren handing over the queue outside the Museum. The reason they opted to meet up at the museum was down to the fact that they had in the past said one day we will go and pay a visit, this they did, and I can tell you they thoroughly enjoyed doing so**. Submitted by Bryan Cronie**

Sampson's Pride

Doubtless many of you older guys have done Sampsons and had the pleasure of residing on Rheinsalen camp in the Nissan huts. Certainly, all who were posted to 7 Armd will have. I had the good fortune to be involved in several Recy Camps there under the auspices of the late great Jim MacDonald.

As a full screw at the time to be honest it was just fun, fun, fun. One year myself and Dave Healy were bar men in the Nissan hut bar, well as you can imagine some serious beer drinking went on, we would get beer stock in for the week and next day we would be going back to Fally for more beer.

An inspired idea we had at the time was placing lots of A3 sheets of paper on the bar with plenty of pens, there was some interesting EPs on there to try and decipher next day!

One year we brought our ACC cook with us and it seemed churlish not to get him to make moonshine ready for the end of course party, so he knocked this stuff up and we coloured it

red using compo sweets and being of an adventurous nature I volunteered to try it out. We only had Styrofoam cups and imagine my surprise when I poured it into the cup, and it never slowed down immediately melting its way through the bottom of the cup! The answer, stronger cups and diluting it with screech lime pop crystals and water. Glad there was only enough for a couple of shots each or we would have been blind by the morning.

Probably Soltau was the best training area for a Recy camp given its diversity of sites and the size of the place, we had some memorable water jobs too.

For you guys who never had the pleasure of Rheinsalen camp I must tell you the loos were very interesting to say the least! Generations of squaddie graffiti meant you had to try a different loo each time you went just to catch up on the news! Though a certain layby Lil was much mentioned.

The obligatory car crush on the open day wasn't as popular with the crews as you might think especially taking off and refitting the bazooka plates and then repairing the cosmetic damage a squashed car did to the ARV.

So, many generations of Recovery Mechanics have honed their skills and upgraded to class 2 on Soltau, and it's sad that its now a nature reserve and we can't use it anymore. Still, I would imagine there's a lot of metal detectorists who are going to call it the happy hunting ground for many years to come with all the bits of vehicles and kit we buried there!

Submitted by Steve Robertshaw.

Whatever happened to the Recovery Mechanic Royal British Legion Standard?

Many will remember the early days when the Recovery Mechanics made history (again) by becoming the first Trade Branch of REME to form and be accepted as a National Branch of the Royal British Legion (RBL), you will also recall that due to several issues the Branch in 2020 elected to leave the RBL and form the first Trade Branch of REME Association. So, what happened to the Branch Standard that officially was never used?

After having been dormant for a couple of years the current Branch Committee decided that something had to be done with the Standard that made history. The Branch President, John Sibley approached the REME Museum at Lyneham to see if they would be interested in having it, a profound "yes" was the answer. Friday the 21st of July was set as a date to hand the standard over to the Museum, fitted in well with the WO & SNCO Reunion at Lyneham.

The script in italics below put together by our President gives a summary of the history of the Standard, this was also handed over and will be used by the Museum to create a plaque of information that shall be displayed along with the Standard.

"The Recovery Mechanic Branch of the Royal British Legion (RBL) Story

The idea for the branch was first discussed in around 2017 by several veteran Recovery Mechanics. They developed the idea and in February 2018 had the Formation meeting. The meeting was held at Lyneham and attended by 28 serving and veteran Recovery Mechanics, the RBL National Branches District Chairman and the RBL Membership Support Officer – National Branches who acted as chairman for the meeting. A committee was voted in by those attending and so we had the very first trade based National Branch of the RBL, yet another proud example of how Recovery Mechanics lead the way.

So, we were an official branch of the RBL therefore we needed a standard. These are not cheap and took most of our branch funds to purchase but we were now the proud owners of our own standard. All it needed was to be blessed in church with a RBL representative in attendance and we could officially use it for parades, funerals et al. Sadly, and despite the committees' best efforts to arrange a mutually agreed date, it never happened and therefore, the standard could never be used.

Our branch had over 240 members and was seemingly going from strength to strength but the administration burden of running an RBL branch was too much to shoulder when all the committee had full time jobs. So, it was with a heavy heart that, in the summer of 2020 we informed the RBL that we would be closing the branch.

This standard has been gifted to the REME Museum by the committee and membership of the Recovery Mechanic Branch of the REME Association (the first trade branch in the Associations history) as a lasting tribute to the pioneering spirit of the Recovery Mechanic and to the service and sacrifice of all those who have gone before and those who continue to protect our nation."

Citation by John Sibley

The photograph shows, rear – Museum Curator on the left & Bryan Cronie Branch Chairman, holding the Standard left, Billy Simpson Branch Welfare Coordinator & John Sibley Branch President handing the standard over.

Submitted by Bryan Cronie

ANYONE REQUIRING ASSISTANCE – USEFUL CONTACTS

Assistance for the Branch Membership will always be close at hand, we are all in this together, and here to help. In the event of any member experiencing difficult times, they must not hesitate to contact the branch. If we as a group cannot assist with a situation, we certainly know where help may be available.

relate the relationship people
01302347866
Relate

ssafa the Armed Forces charity
08002606767
SSAFA Forces Line

COMBAT STRESS FOR VETERANS' MENTAL HEALTH
08001381619
Combat Stress Military Helpline

shout 85258 here for you 24/7
TEXT 24/7
The Shout Text Service

NATIONAL DEBTLINE
08088084000
National Debtline

Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain
08009177650
Alcoholics Anonymous

GA
03300940322
Gamblers Anonymous

Respect Men's advice line
08088010327
Men's Advice Line
Domestic Violence

Seed EATING DISORDER SUPPORT SERVICE
01482421525
Eating Disorder Support

4-ALPHA
Alcohol Awareness
4-AlphaArmy@gmail.com

FRANK
03001236600
Talk to Frank

Cruse Bereavement Support
08088001677
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ROYAL BRITISH LEGION
0808 802 8080

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LIFTING THE DECKS What's On Your Mind?

REME CONNECT
remeconnect.org
01249 894507

THE REME CHARITY FOR THE REME FAMILY
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REME ASSOCIATION RECOVERY MECHANIC'S BRANCH

REME Association Recovery Mechanic Branch
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THE REME ASSOCIATION FOR THE REME FAMILY

AND FINALLY

Another 3 months have drifted past and during this period we have lost 8 of our Recovery Mechanic colleagues, at least what we have been made aware of and I don't think we will ever know the real numbers of how many of our colleagues have departed. The Branch are committed to searching and seeking out Recovery Mechanics, regardless of whether they are serving regulars, reservists or veteran's, the aim being to unite and become members of the Branch. The Branch Membership Manager, with assistance of other Committee Members have done a fantastic job of increasing membership to around the 600, but we know that there are still hundreds out there that we would love to recruit. Only by reaching out to the Branch Membership can we really have any chance of achieving our aim. In this Newsletter you will have noticed that under the heading Obituaries, the first 5 entries have not got much more than a basic announcement. The aim is to have a meaningful eulogy for all, the main reason you do not see this is because we do not have sufficient detail or contacts that allow us to, either offer aid to grieving families or get sufficient information to allow the writing of a meaningful eulogy. So, folks that is where you come in, we appeal to you to spread the word about the Recovery Mechanics Branch of REME Association, encouraging, all people of "Recovery Mechanic" status to join the Branch, it is free. The more members we have, the more detail we will have and that will allow and afford opportunity to achieve the aim of a meaningful eulogy for all.

Linked to the above request of the membership and taking every opportunity to increase numbers we would also like to see increased numbers at the events organised by the Branch, the committee and volunteer event organisers work hard on your behalf to bring you the opportunity to reminisce about the old times, meet friends that you have not seen for years, offer you the old style functions that I am sure you talk about every time you go out for a pint, additionally by rotating the function venues it can also offer the opportunity of a weekend away in varying parts of the UK. The Bow Shackle Ball (thanks to the main organiser Chris Zeil) has been a great success, and this year I am certain will be no different, probably getting a bit late for attendance this year, (I do believe there is still a couple of spaces available) so start planning now for 2024, make it your intention to attend. We also have over 30 members travelling to visit War Graves on the other side of the channel in mid-September, another weekend away that shall surely bring back many memories to all and allow all who attend the privilege of paying their respects to those who made our existence possible. This event has taken a great deal of organising, planning and bringing all various parts together, a big thank you to Mark Omahony for his time and effort. If anyone out there think they could/would like to organise an event for 2024, please contact the branch on our central email address at: recymechbranch@gmail.com.

The humble Recovery Mechanic has created a monster when it comes to camaraderie, we have never lost the belief that we are one for all and all for one, we would not be who we are without you, the membership, and your support, we look forward to your continued support in the future and your assistance to the Branch Committee to help increase membership numbers. To those attending the Overseas Trip and the Bow Shackle Ball – see you there, to those not attending – start thinking about making it your intention to attend at least 1 of the Branch functions in 2024.

Stay Safe

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