



HEADLINES

I am thinking that most of you, like myself, are still looking forward to the summer to make an appearance out of the rain, it does not look good this year unless you are freshwater fisherman, and even that is in doubt, I live on the edge of a very big salmon fishing river and the word is that there are not so many salmon around this year.

Over the last three months your committee have been very busy with the organising of events for later in the year with some updates shown below under "Forth Coming Events".

Membership, thanks to efforts and the benefits of having the Lyneham Guru Joe Williams on the Branch Committee, has started to increase and many more of the younger generations of Recovery Mechanic taking a keen interest in the Branch which is excellent news and hopefully will keep the veteran community more up to date with what is happening within the modern-day life of the Recovery Mechanic. Membership has now reached a figure of around 665, this is inclusive of some 31 honorary members. It may also interest you to know that after much research into membership locations that the highest number of the Branch Membership reside within the East and West Midlands, with that in mind and due to the short distances, we thought that we might have attracted more from the two regions to attend the annual ball in Lutterworth on 28 September.

Some of you may know that it is the intention of the Branch to go live by having our very own website where you as a member can access exactly what we are doing, book directly for any of the Branch events, go online, order and pay for any of the branch merchandise. Work is currently being carried out to create this, I am certainly not the person to give detail on IT matters but closer to the time of launching I may be able to persuade the Branch President (driving force behind the idea) to do an article on "Creating the Website".

The Branch get quite a few requests about visiting the Recovery Mechanic Memorial Wall which most know is located inside the security wire at Lyneham. Due to being inside the security wire it is not always easy to arrange a visit, Recovery Training Wing at Lyneham, who are responsible for the Memorial Wall do an excellent job of accommodating visits and go above and beyond to satisfy requests from members, but it is not easy nor sometimes convenient or possible to meet every request. With all this in mind there is a bit of collaboration going on between Recovery Training Wing, REME Museum and the Branch to bring to fruition a plan to have an annual pilgrimage which would involve a set date open to members to attend should they have the desire to do so. More information will be published on this topic should it be acceptable to all parties.

We always struggle to get articles for the Newsletter, and we appeal to you all, please consider doing an article, telling a story, for future Newsletters. It would also be interesting to know your thoughts on how often you would like to see the Newsletter published, stick with quarterly or go half yearly. Answers on a postcard to chair.recymechbranch@gmail.com

Stay Safe

BC



OBITUARIES – RECOVERY MECHANIC

ON BEHALF OF THE

**RECOVERY MECHANICS BRANCH
REME ASSOCIATION**

**WE REGRET TO ANNOUNCE THE
PASSING OF:**

“Andrew Davis”

Our thoughts and prayers are with family members at this sad time.



Those we love don't go away.
They walk beside us every day.
Unseen, unheard, but always nearby.
So loved, so missed, so very dear.

ON BEHALF OF THE

**RECOVERY MECHANICS BRANCH
REME ASSOCIATION**

**WE REGRET TO ANNOUNCE THE
PASSING OF:**

“Malcolm Appleton”

Our thoughts and prayers are with family members at this sad time.



Those we love don't go away.
They walk beside us every day.
Unseen, unheard, but always nearby.
So loved, so missed, so very dear.

Andrew Davis



Andy enlisted into the Army in 1978, joining the Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. He successfully completed basic training at Arborfield, Berkshire and went onto trade training at Bordon, Hampshire. After completing basic and trade training he was posted to 1 Corps Troops Workshop in Bielefeld, West Germany. Andy proved himself a competent tradesman and was a popular and well-liked member of the workshop. He was later posted to 7 Armored

Workshop in Fallingb. West Germany after completing seven plus years Andy returned to civilian life. Andy made many great friends in his Army life, many lasting over 45 years he will be sadly missed by all that knew him. AetM - **Frank Briggs.**



Malcolm Appleton – It is hoped to publish a eulogy in Newsletter Edition 14



COMMITTEE NEWS

The committee have enlisted some recent assistance in the form of Josh Fox, a Serving Member, who has very kindly agreed to help with Facebook and IT matters, your assistance is much appreciated Josh.

Furthermore, also recently, the committee have engaged with Nick Williams, Serving Member, who has very kindly agreed to work along with the Branch Merchandise Member to promote the Branch, your assistance is very much appreciated Nick.

FORTH COMING EVENTS

Overseas Trip – The Somme 13 – 15 September 2024

This trip is now fully booked with maximum numbers for the bus that has been booked. If there should be a cancellation and you are interested in joining such a trip you should contact Mark Omahony at the following email address events.rechmech@gmail.com and have your name added to a reserve list.

Bow Shackle Ball 28 September 2024

Your committee members are busy putting final details together for this annual event. Over the years it has been a great success, and this year the dates of the event fit nicely with the REME National Memorial Day being held at the National Memorial Arboretum where the Branch shall be participating in parading the Branch Standard. If you are destined for the Arboretum on the 26 September why not consider extending your stay in the region and check out the Bow Shackle Ball, there are still a few places left, you could also attend the Annual General Meeting, have your say, it is held on the Saturday morning of the Ball. Below on page 4 is a reminder of the event along with how to make contact should you feel like having a weekend away, have a look and see what is available.

Branch Calendar 2025 – Closing date for photographs 08 August 2024.

The Branch President puts great effort into producing a calendar for the members each year (along with many other things). To ensure that this can be made possible he requires photographs of recovery tasks which shall be the main feature of each monthly page. The aim of the calendar photos is to have a mix of old-time equipment photos along with the modern-day equipment's. Whilst all photographs are welcome old and bold photos of tasks from yesteryear are in short supply, so come on you elder statesmen, get the albums out and submit a few of your best. Photographs with no recognisable faces showing would be best (data protection), but faces can be blanked out during the editing process. Any submissions should be sent either directly to lohndsibley61@gmail.com or recymechbranch@gmail.com.



NEWSLETTER

RECOVERY MECHANIC BRANCH

REME ASSOCIATION



RECOVERY MECHANICS BRANCH

BOW SHACKLE BALL

Friday 27th - Sunday 29th September 2024

staying at the **Best Western Plus Ullesthorpe Court Hotel & Golf Club, Frolesworth Road, Ullesthorpe, Leicestershire, LE17 5BZ**

YOUR WEEKEND PACKAGE INCLUDES:

Bed & Breakfast. AGM Saturday morning. Gala Dinner Saturday Night 28th September 2024. Raffle. Auction.

2 Night Package Double Room	£290 per couple
1 Night Package Double Room	£190 per couple
2 Night Package Single Room	£225 per person
1 Night Package Single Room	£135 per person
3 Night Package Double Room for NMA 26 th	£390 per couple
3 Night Package Single Room for NMA 26 th	£315 per person

DEPOSIT: A non-refundable Deposit of £20 per person is required at the time of saying yes to attending the Bow Shackle Ball.

PAYMENT: Full Payment is due by 3rd August 2024, staged payments accepted before this date, contact us for more details.

Pay Direct into our Bank: Lloyds Bank, Recy Mech Branch, Sort Code: 30-99-50, Account Number: 84352668 Please use BSB24 as the payment reference.

Please note that the REME Memorial Day at National Memorial Arboretum is on the Thursday 26th September 2024 before the Bow Shackle Ball on the Saturday 28th September 2024. The NMA is local to the Hotel and member can take advantage of a 3 night package if they wish to attend the REME Memorial Day.

All enquiries email: Chris Zeil
treasurer.recymechbranch@gmail.com

OTHER DATES FOR THE DIARY

WO & SNCO Reunion Lyneham – 11 – 12 October 2024 REME Memorial Day at the National Memorial Arboretum – 26 September 2024.

HAS ANYBODY SEEN...

This section of 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

FIRST RECOVERY JOB

On my very first real recovery job I accompanied my Sgt, Roy Allan. Taking the Leyland and a heavy trailer we drove to the Lunenburg Heath to recover a British soldiers wrecked Ford Escort.

It was early morning, cold and frosty. The two soldiers in it had got well pissed and driven straight ahead at a bend and into the biggest, widest oak tree in Germany. Both were killed outright. They had hit the tree head on, and the car was concertinaed to about half its length. It was an eerie and very real scene and the hairs on the back of my neck were standing. The very young and inexperienced me was taking it all in.

Roy was walking around the car, and I was standing at the rear he was mooching in the wrecked vehicle I was about ten yards away from him. Here Catch! he shouted and threw a trainer arching through the air towards me. As it was mid-flight and I prepared to catch it he shouted, 'There's a foot in it'. "Hell" I shit myself and jumped back avoiding the trainer. Roy thought it funny, he even stammered when he laughed.

I was on a learning curve. The army of course is for grown-ups. There was no foot.

We dragged the wreck away from the tree, gathered up the car debris and threw it inside the car then winched the car onto the trailer, strapped it down and drove back to camp.

I drove and I learnt that the trailer characteristics change with the load. The Leyland and trailer had a propensity to snake from side to side and it could be moderated with a speed and steering change.

Every day is a school day, in more ways than one.

We parked on the LAD square and the trailer on which the wreck was strapped was immediately surrounded by the LAD Vehicle Mechanics (VM's) imparting their professional opinions on the likelihood of the vehicle ever being made roadworthy again. In my humble Class three, brand new, Recy Mech opinion it was 'well knackered'.

Tyrone Rees

PS. Don't forget you can read more of Tyrone's stories in his publication "REME The Magnificent Bastards" available from Amazon

REMEMBERING THE D-DAY LANDINGS 80 YEARS ON.

6th June 1944 – D-Day

This marked the start of Operation Overlord. This was the beginning of the liberation of Western Europe and laid the foundations for the Allied victory on the Western Front during the Second World War. It became the largest amphibious assault in history with over 150,000 allied troops landing, unfortunately with over 10 thousand being injured with over 4 thousand sadly killed during the operation.



Fast forward 80 years on to early June 2024.

35 members of the Jaguar Land Rover's Armed Forces Community Network were involved supporting the Royal British Legion by helping some of the remaining D-Day veterans pay their respects to their fallen comrades. Some going back to Normandy to the beach where they saw such loss, some to the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire and some to the 'D-Day 80: Remembering the Normandy Landings' concert at the Royal Albert Hall. We provided a door-to-door service to the veterans who may not have attended otherwise. This was not a glorified taxi service as some of the press may have made out. It was low key and all of us supported it on a personal level. 6 drivers went on to Normandy to help with the veterans who went there.



Fred Ayton RN

I had the honour and privilege to help 2 veterans. The first was Fred Ayton from Harrow, London, who was going to Normandy. The second was Albert Barnes from Southend-On-Sea, Essex, who was attending the concert at the Royal Albert Hall. Both of whom are 98!

Fred served in the Royal Navy as a torpedoman on the HMS Sweetbriar. He told me that he joined up before being called up so that he would have a bit more of choice on what he was going to be. He was originally from Hammersmith and wanted to join the Navy to see the sea and serve on large ships such as destroyers, he also told

me he like the uniform. Instead, he ended up serving on the HMS Sweetbriar, which was a Flower class corvette at only around a thousand tons! During the landings his ship was out protecting the invasion fleet against submarines by laying depth charges. He also served in the Mediterranean. Of his experiences, he said he wouldn't change a thing.



Albert Barnes RASC

On Monday 3rd June, I pick Fred up from his Home in Harrow, and took him to his hotel in Portsmouth. That evening, I then took him to Southwick House, where a gala dinner had been put on for the veterans. Southwick House is where the Allied HQ was based during D-Day. The map is still on the wall in memory. Apparently, the steak that was laid on was "exceptional"!

Whilst at Southwick House I happened to bump into the RQMS who was responsible for the site and for the event. Who happened to be Chris Mountney who I knew from when I was 118 Rec Coy. I missed out on meeting Richard Hammond and being part of the group photos as a couple of us were being given a tour around the MoD Strategic Command Defence Experimentation & Wargaming Centre where they test various strategies with numerous scenarios (interesting stuff!), then having a brew in the Sgt Mess with Chris and a couple of colleagues.



Matt Hancock, Chris Mountney, Pete Whittenbury (JLR)





The next day Fred was in the party of numerous other D-Day veterans who paid their respects in France at various remembrance events. On Saturday 8th June I returned to Portsmouth to pick Fred up from the hotel and take him home again. I could have spent forever listening to his stories from both his service in the Royal Navy, and life before and after.

The second D-Day veteran I met that week was Albert. Albert served in the army in the Royal Army Service Corps, as a driver. He was among reinforcements sent following the invasion and landed on the Mulberry Harbour. He drove the amphibious DUKW (more commonly known as Duck) ferrying supplies and troops from the beaches inland and transported the wounded back.



I had the honour of taking Albert, his daughter and grandson to the Royal Albert Hall to see the D-Day 80 concert on Thursday 6th June. The actual 80th anniversary. As it was in Central London I decided to go the scenic route, going past as many iconic sights as possible to help make the evening even more memorable for the family.

Royal Albert Hall

The concert was brilliant, the TV coverage on ITV didn't do it justice, the stories and general banter in the car will be something I will never forget. Albert even invited me to join him for a Fish and Chip supper, unfortunately it was 11 o'clock at night and nowhere was open!

It was a great honour and privilege to help Fred and Albert attend these events, and to walk in their shadows. Especially considering they were both only 18 at the time of this historically significant event all those years ago. I will always remember the sacrifices that were made to allow us to enjoy the freedoms we have today. Their memory will live on.



Albert Barnes & Matt Hancock



Fred Ayton & Matt Hancock





Whilst supporting the National Memorial Arboretum event one of my colleagues, Niel Aveyard (Captain at 118 CS Coy), met a 99-year-old Recy Mech who was involved with the Normandy landings, Lewis Rose from Derby. I am liaising with Niel to arrange a visit to meet Lewis at some point soon.



Lewis Rose & Niel Aveyard



Some of the 20 JLR vehicles used to support the veterans going to Normandy

Matt Hancock

The REME Association





As you all know we are all part of the REME association from the first day of joining the Corps and indeed if you are reading this you have become a member of the Recovery Mechanic's Branch.

I would like to mention my experience with the Association.

I joined in 72 and to be honest I wanted nothing to do with it, most especially the £3 they took from my wages to pay for it!

In those days there wasn't much a young Craftsman needed to know about the Assn, just a page at the back of the Craftsman magazine showing a bunch of old dudes having a get together. Well fast forward 52 years and guess what's in the back of the Craftsman there's pictures of a bunch of old dudes having a drink!

Is that all we must look forward to then? Not at all, you can take or give as much time you have available, personally the Association takes up most of my time now I am retired. Of course, as a serving soldier or working having left the services, there isn't much time for the Association and I get that, I had nothing to do with the Corps till I retired so I missed out on lots of events I actually would have taken part in had I known about them.

So, there was an Ad in the local paper re a meeting of my local branch of the REME Association (SW Durham) and I decided to call in and give it a look to see what went on, well I enjoyed it so much I have never looked back and I'm proud to say I am now Chairman of the Branch.

What this involves is sorting out events for the branch and the logistics that go with it, something I am glad to do though it's a bit of a trial sometimes. Probably your local branch will have a regular meeting and a summer and winter event to take part in. On top of that there are special outings, perhaps a breakfast club, and of course there are always national events to take part in if you are available.

SW Durham members and I go to the Veterans Parade every year at Eden Camp which I heartily endorse as it's a great day out. Luckily for SW Durham members we are quite close to two other branches (Teesside and Tyneside) so we meet up every three months or so to shoot the breeze and drink beer, both admirable pursuits!

It's a way of bringing back the camaraderie we all had while serving, and it brings with it a lot of pride wearing your blazer for events or just a corps polo when you get together.

Our Recovery Branch is the next step up of course, this keeps me the busiest as I look after Membership and Merchandising till our website is launched when I'm hoping for a bit of a breather from admin! Seriously I love being part of the REME Association and I can't emphasise more how much enjoyment there is to be being a part of it.

The photo at the beginning of this article is a meeting of our tri branch at the funeral of one of our members, this I am very much involved in and I'm carrying the Recovery Branch Standard. SW Durham Standard Bearer is there too along with Tyneside. It gives the family an immense amount of pride that the person who has passed had friends and associates who came to the funeral to honour their service.



So, to sum up, please think of joining your Local Branch and taking part in the events of your National Branch, keep your eye on the Craftsman magazine for Assn information. REME Connect, and of course the various Corps Facebook sites.

Finally, for the mean time follow the Branch Facebook site and as I said our website should be online soon along with all that entails.



Cheers – Steve Robertshaew



NEWSLETTER

RECOVERY MECHANIC BRANCH

REME ASSOCIATION



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.



01302347866
Relate



08002606767
SSAFA Forces Line



08001381619
Combat Stress Military Helpline



TEXT 24/7
The Shout Text Service



08088084000
National Debtline



Alcohols Anonymous
Great Britain
08009177650
Alcohols Anonymous



03300940322
Gamblers Anonymous



08088010327
Men's Advice Line
Domestic Violence



01482421525
Eating Disorder Support



Alcohol Awareness
4-AlphaArmy@gmail.com



03001236600
Talk to Frank



08088001677
Cruse Bereavement Support



0808 802 8080



Samaritans 116 123



Royal Albert Hall

Service of Remembrance
(R Albert Hall)
festivalofremembrance.
seetickets.com
02070877929



01904882053
Army Welfare Service



remeconnect.org
01249 894507



REME Association Recovery Mechanic Branch
recymechbranch@gmail.com



WOY@REMECharity.org
association@remecharity.org
07590 848766





AND FINALLY

"It's not the same Army I joined" That was said to me on my first day on my basic Recy Mech course by my instructor. "You won't have as much fun as we did", "you won't be as good as we were" are all quotes that various people have said to me over my career, I'm sure you have all experienced the same thing? But guess what, we did have as much if not more fun and we were certainly as good as they were, not only that, but we also pushed their boundaries, we took it to the next level. That doesn't mean we were any better it just means that we were of our time and not theirs. We want our successors to build on what we laid, move the trade forward. When I joined, Recy Mechs had just been able to achieve WO2, now look at us. We can be the RSM, we have more WO1's than we ever had previously, we compete easily with artificers, and we commission from the trade. Are today's Recy Mechs as good as we were, absolutely they are but they are very different because the Army and the world is very different.

Our world was one conducted face to face, over a desk, over a beer or over an NBC pack. Banter was easily understood because the tone of your voice and the look on your face said everything, ok sometimes people got a bit upset but you couldn't win them all, I guess. However, most of the time banter was banter because it was live. Today we all use social media platforms of various types but the one thing they have in common is that the words are written. On a social media platform, the written word is very 2 dimensional, unless you are Bernard Cornwall or Tom Clancy. It's not very descriptive because its purpose is conversational. However, because of this what seems like banter to some may be offensive to others. It's not intentional but it doesn't stop people being offended. The aim of our branch is to be an inclusive group for all Recy Mechs, from pensioners to teenagers, male, female or whatever else you may identify as, UK or commonwealth, if you're a Recy Mech you are welcome here. So, when you read a post on our platforms and decide to make a funny comment about it or the person who posted it "STOP, THINK before you CLICK. They are not standing next to you, you haven't been able to gauge their sense of humour, you may not even know them, you have no idea how they will react. Not everyone will come back at you via the platform, some may just not bother posting anything again or have anything to do with the branch. When this happens you've not been welcoming, you're not being funny, and you are not helping the branch to be inclusive. So, please be supportive of all our members, a post may not be "what it was like in our day" but that doesn't make it wrong today, it's a different world, so be tolerant and read the posts, you may even learn something.

If you have been offended by a post, please make sure you reply to the author and tell them. I am certain that this will result in an apology as the vast majority of posts by our members will be seen as banter. Please give them the chance to explain and if necessary, apologise for any offence caused. If you have no joy from the author report them to admin and they will deal with it, we have a zero tolerance to bullying on our sites so don't suffer in silence.

REMEMBER – "It's not what you write it's the way you write it".

John