MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Here we are, a quarter of the way through 2021 already, time flies when you're having fun or not! As I'm sure many of you have, I have had my first dose of the vaccine with my second jab due in early May. Despite the well-publicised reservations about having the vaccine, some well-founded but mostly about the ravings of mad men, I was overly excited to get mine and am really looking forward to having the second dose. I know this won't make me invincible, but it certainly feels like it will and after what we have all endured over the past year it's a really good feeling to have.

This last year has been life changing and I have found myself reminiscing much more than normal, small things seem to bring back memories of happier times. I find myself sitting with a glass of something and I'm whisked away to Soltau or BATUS or somewhere, remembering the people who I was with and situations that I found myself in. Some time ago I put together the memoires of Wally Waller, for those that didn't know him, Wally was a retired Recy Mech who actually invented the Tools Recy Mech. He had begun writing his memoires but never had the chance to finish them before he passed away. I was asked to put them into some sort of order, which I did, and it was enjoyed by his friends and family. We have lost far too many friends over the years and some of these memories will go with them.

This got me thinking. We all have at least one good story (most of us have many more) which deserves to be kept for posterity, so I propose to compile your stories into a book along the lines of "Don't cry for me Sgt Maj", a book that came out after the Falkland Campaign (if you haven't read it you really should). What I need is for you to share your stories. They can be about recovery camps, jobs, postings, friends, or enemies, they can be about anything from your service and in the best traditions of the trade "Never let the truth get in the way of a good story". However, please remember the following:

- It can be as long of as short as it needs to be and if it's only a sentence that's fine. You can write as many as you want.
- We are famous (or infamous!) for our banter and micky taking, this is fully encouraged in the stories however please don't overly embarrass or humiliate others. I'm sure we all have tales like this, but this is not a platform for revenge it's about sharing what's good about our trade.
- All entries will be scrutinised for content and the editor (me) will decide what is suitable and what isn't. The editor's decision will be final and there will be no recourse.

If you are a budding Bernard Cornwall or JK Rowling and would like to submit a story for consideration, then get typing. Please use MS Word wherever possible, if you don't have Word then other formats are fine, even handwritten if need be. Once your masterpiece is complete send them to Generalbranchbiz@gmail.com.

Happy reminiscing and writing, I look forward to reading each and every one of them.

THE COMMITTEE

As a committee we keep in touch regularly through Zoom meetings and our own WhatsApp account. We use each opportunity to discuss ideas that have been put forward by members and look ahead at what we might be able to do when we get the all clear from the restrictions imposed on us by Covid-19.

Chris Zeil, our secretary, and chief designer has come up with yet another great idea and designed a, what could become a “Branch Tie”. The design supports our pin badge logo, we feel that the tie and pin complement each other. Below is a photograph of the tie.

As an organisation who are not exactly in the “we have loads of spare cash available” category, we are inviting members to view the tie and let us know if it were something that you would purchase. In the event there is sufficient interest we could go ahead and place an order, the larger the order the cheaper the cost. This would also apply to the provision of a branch Polo Shirt.

Talking of cost, it is proposed, if we go ahead, that we purchase silk rather than polyester, this does of course up the price.

The prices for the ties would be as follows:

If we purchase 30 to 35 ties the price to members will be £24.00, plus P&P.
If we purchase 49 of the ties the price to members will be £20.00, plus P&P.
If we purchase 50+ ties the price to members will £16.00, plus P&P.

Polo shirts can also be made available if we can muster the required interest. They would be priced as follows:

If we purchase 30 shirts the price to members will £14.00, plus P&P.
If we purchase 40+ shirts the price to members will be £13.00, plus P&P.

The shirt shown below is just a made-up example and not necessarily what the final version would look like, nor the colour, it also would be good if those of you who have an interest in purchasing a Polo Shirt could state preference of colour when replying?

Should there be sufficient interest in the Tie and Polo Shirt we could then consider forging ahead with our own brand and take a look at Tee Shirts, Sweatshirts and Hoodies etc., it is your branch folks, given sufficient interest we can have what we wish.

Those who are interested, could please reply to our branch email address recymechbranch@gmail.com, for the attention of Chris Zeil?

OBITUARIES – RECOVERY MECHANIC

Taken from REME Association Scotland Facebook page.

February 2021: 23101123 Sgt Harry Boyd Ex Recy Mech. Harry was a Recovery Mechanic between 1956 – 1980m mostly with LADs in BAOR, he also done service on HMS Intrepid and at the Maze NI. Harry did not appear on our members list. **RIP Harry**.

ASSISTANCE

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.

Anyone wishing to make contact, for whatever reason, please do so by using the branch email address: recymechbranch@gmail.com".

SOME USEFUL TELEPHONE & EMAIL CONTACTS

REME Connect	Tel: 01249 894507
REME Association	Tel : 01249 894524 / 01249894507
Royal British Legion	Tel: 0808 802 8080
Service of Remembrance (R Albert Hall)	Tel: 02070877929
SSAFA	Tel:0800 731 4880
Combat Stress	Tel:0800 138 1619
PTSD	ptsd.org.uk
Help for Heroes	helpforheroes.org.uk
Service of Remembrance (R Albert Hall)	festivalofremembrance.seetickets.com
REME Association Recovery Mechanic Branch	recymechbranch@gmail.com

Additional numbers and email addresses can be found on our Facebook Page under the tab"Files".

FUTURE EVENTS

In the last Newsletter we featured an event on Eden Camp, a museum near Pickering in Yorkshire that has an open day each year which also includes a Veterans March. The open day is scheduled for the first week of September, first Sunday I believe. We still await the green light for it to go ahead, but it is hopeful that restrictions due to Covid-19 will by then be lifted. If it goes ahead, we see it as the earliest opportunity for a get together. Possibly a meet up somewhere on the Saturday night (with wife's, girlfriends, boyfriends etc) and then attend the function on the Sunday. We again ask the membership, who would be interested in attending such a function? We only require positive answers of interest. Those who are interested, could you please reply to our branch email address recymechbranch@gmail.com, for the attention of Steve Robertshaw.

Moving on, the 1st of October 2012 marks our Branch 1st anniversary, and of course the Corp birthday. It is our intention now of parading our standard at the Arboretum on Saturday 2nd of October to celebrate our first birthday, this is of course assuming that we are all free from Covid-19 restrictions. Could we again have a show of hands to what interest there may be in such an event? Those of you who are interested, could you please reply to our branch email address recymechbranch@gmail.com, for the attention of John Sibley. Not to miss an opportunity, how many people would prefer the occasion to be on Sunday 3rd October, allowing a possible gathering on the Saturday night, 2nd October? Please state preferred date in your reply.

Looking ahead to Remembrance Sunday 2021 and again if Covid-19 restrictions are all lifted, there has been a proposal by Bob Fullbrook that we consider attending three events allowing people to commemorate the event in various locations. The three locations suggested are:-

a) Cenotaph London.
b) Lyneham Recovery Wall.
c) A location where a fallen Recy Mech belonged**.**

An advantage of this is that we can parade our standard at either b) or c). The RBL Parade at the Cenotaph only has Legion Standards on parade. Nothing has been confirmed on numbers for such events but please remember that now we are a REME Association Branch and not RBL, we will not be allowed the same numbers in London as we have had in the past. Just as a matter of interest could we please have another show of hands, could those of you interested in going to the London Cenotaph please show your interest by emailing the branch email address, recymechbranch@gmail.com and mark for the attention of John Sibley.

Hopefully, the Service of Remembrance from the Royal Albert Hall on the Saturday prior to the Sunday Parade will also be going ahead. Anyone who has not attended this event really should make the effort, certainly one of the most humbling events I have ever attended. Anyone wishing to attend must source

their own tickets through the Royal British Legion website. Generally, tickets for this event go sale around early August and if you want one you must be sharp of the mark.

Jumping ahead now, during our last meeting we discussed holding another event like the Poppy Ball which was held now almost two years ago and was an extraordinarily successful and enjoyable event. We made the decision that we would not risk attempting the organising of such this year, rather wait until 2022 when we can, hopefully, be sure that there will be no Covid-19 restrictions around. We have already two volunteers to take on the task, thanks to Chris Zeil and Mark O,Mahony. No decision was made on the location of the event, but wherever it is we may well call on members local to the event to assist at some point.

OTHER DATES FOR THE DIARY

For those who partake in the Recovery World Social Events, a couple of dates to jot down in your diary.

WO & SNCO Reunion – I believe the following dates still stand, **23 – 25 July 2021.**

ARV 9 – Dates for this fantastic function have now been moved to **15/16 April 2022.**

MEMBERSHIP AND FACEBOOK

The Branch continues from strength to strength, current membership stands at 257.

Just a reminder - Anyone wishing to join or are proposed to join must be a serving/retired Recovery Mechanic or an individual who has in some way excelled in going above and beyond for the benefit of the Recovery Trade. All new applications and proposed members will be considered for approval upon receipt of the correct paperwork.

Facebook continues but I fear not as much use as we expected, so come on all you budding stars out there how about a bit of banter, some photographs or just pull up a sandbag and tell us some of your war stories!

Any members out there who have not yet joined the Facebook group can do so by going the following link: https://www.facebook.com/groups/866652946839259/

Materials for Newsletters and suggestions to the committee are as usual always welcome from the membership. If there is something you wish to put forward, please do so by sending it to the branch email address at recymechbranch@gmail.com.

SECOND TIME ROUND, Part 2 - BY ROSS MELLON

Name/rank/battalion/dates of service/current position

Ross Mellon, Sgt, 3 Armoured Close Support Battalion REME, Feb 96 – Feb 2019, Oct 20 – Present, Recy. Pl Sgt

We continue the story of Ross Mellon from where it ended in Newsletter Edition 2

Highlights or key experiences of career (trade) to date (the learning moments) (continued)

Last line from Part 1, I think that tour set me up for success on all my future deployments:-

Whilst in Iraq on TELIC V, we were deployed to Shaibah Logistics Base (SLB) as part of 7 Transport RLC LAD and we were tasked to resupply the Battlegroup operating out of Camp Abu Naji (CAN) in Maysan Province, on one mission we were contacted with IED and small arms fire near to CP Danny Boy (of PWRR fame), instead of following our drills and driving through the kill zone, the convoy dismounted and returned fire! My top cover got an unconfirmed kill of an enemy who was 40 metres from our location!

To add to our woes a DROPS had suffered substantial damage and a MWAD carrying a substantial amount of aviation fuel! (unbeknown to anyone bar the crew) had suffered shrapnel damage that had severed its airline under the bonnet. As we started to extract, it then became apparent that the MWAD was in trouble, so we drove in front (we were the only military personnel still in the kill zone at that point!) rounds incoming and flying everywhere and hitched up in record time! The brakes were binding but not locked on, the convoy failed to RV as per their SOP's a Kilometre down the road, so we had to truck to CAN on our own, it was over 30 Kilometres away, that was a honking day out, one that I think about daily! The only good news out of it was both Cfn Adam Caveney and I were put forward for a gallantry awards, unfortunately for me the RLC CO wasn't a fan of the REME and said to my OC LAD to only pick one to put forward, so Cfn Caveney was awarded a Mention in Despatches (MiD). Disappointed that I wasn't recognised? Naturally, who wouldn't be? Am I proud that we did our job to the best of our abilities under the most extreme of situations? Yes, for that is the business we are in, getting the job done, no matter what!

Opportunities this trade has given them (ops/exs/training/qualifications)

The opportunities this trade has given me are immense, I've lived in Germany for over 10 years in Hohne, Fallingbostel and Hameln, exercised in Poland, Kenya, France, Canada, Cyprus and back to Germany too, plus other locations. I have been deployed on 8 operational deployments including Kosovo, Northern Ireland, multiple Iraq's, and multiple Afghanistan's. I've served in a broad spectrum of units ranging from Infantry and Artillery to Royal Engineers and Cavalry. I've been fortunate to have been in the Army whilst we were at an extremely busy period, not many will have had the opportunity to do as much as what I've been afforded.

Training wise I've had opportunities to train on a range of vehicles as even the SVR was new once upon a time, I was glad that I bothered to gain my NVQ Level 3 in Engineering and my City & Guilds Level in

Engineering as that is the minimum requirement required for any role within the civilian sector, something that we'll come onto in a bit. Below are a couple of photos taken whilst in Afghanistan.

TO BE CONTINUED – WATCH OUT FOR EPISODE 3 IN THE NEXT EDITION OF NEWSLETTER

WHEN I WAS A BOY BY – TREVOR SHEPHERD

Sent in by Trevor Shepherd, who has been reminiscing about his days as a boy and when he first ventured out from Bordon to the Roundabout Club in Aldershot. The picture shows Recovery Mechanic Course 299 on route to their end of course piss-up. After a whip-round and a count of the proceeds from scrap from the heath the course really splashed out, hiring a stretched limo. They almost struck disaster at the Farnham roundabout when the driver was doing excess speed and almost lost a few from the upstairs deck.

Trevor is first left in the front row of the upstairs deck. The night ended with the course going for a swim in Kingsley Lake. Also notice the keen eye of the law in the background.

THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM BY – STEVE ROBERTSHAW

The National Arboretum

I realise that most of you all have already been to the National Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire but here is some information and a couple of pictures from the last twice I have been if you haven't.

Firstly, let me say that it is an all-day event as the place itself is huge, if you are walking round be prepared to spend a long time on foot. Having said that there is a noddy train that runs around the grounds, this is fine though you don't get to see as much as you would walking, we took the train the first time as Jack Stapleton (RIP) couldn't do the long hike, this was part of the reason I went back as I had missed lots.

Stacks of parking is available so that is not problem, on entry there is a large reception area with the shop on your right, straight on is the café and to the left is an area for visiting exhibits. There is also a new building that wasn't finished when I was there so I'm looking forward to checking that out next time I go, hopefully later this year.

It's worth getting a map at reception as the first time I was there I missed a large part of the area just by not knowing it was there. There seems to be stuff going on all the time so it's worth checking what's on and when so you can go for a look. There are also buggies available to hire at reception if you feel the need.

The REME memorial is a bit underwhelming compared to some but it's still rather good, as well as the obvious memorials there are a lot of private ones, check the trees around our site.

The first time I visited it was with the guys from that years ARV and it's good to walk around with your buddies though the next time I went there were only four of us, so we had more time to look at each memorial. This year (or maybe next) we will be going back to check the exhibits out I'm sure.

One thing I should mention is the weather, if it has been raining a lot the pathways around some of the sites get flooded and you miss a lot if you can't walk on the grass.

The Café is a godsend for sore feet though it's quite expensive I thought, still it's worth it just to put your feet up. Last time we visited we stayed in Burton, some cracking pubs there, should they ever open again. Check it out, https://www.thenma.org.uk