



NEWSLETTER

RECOVERY MECHANIC BRANCH

REME ASSOCIATION



HEADLINES

Bryan Cronie, Chairman

At last, we are beginning to see some light at the end of tunnel (fingers crossed), things are opening and there are some green shoots of normality appearing. Whilst we must not take anything for granted but slowly, we can now focus on going forward and begin to arrange some activities within the branch.

Several requests have been made from membership about who in passing is entitled to have a plaque placed on the Recovery Mechanics Wall at Lyneham. The Wall at Lyneham has no connection to our branch, other than the fact that we practiced the Recovery Trade as regular soldiers and we as a branch place 100% support behind the fantastic initiative of the Lyneham Recovery Training Wing. We are committed to assisting the Lyneham Team in any way that we can in retaining The Wall, but the rules of who, if, why or what goes on the Wall is solely in the hands of the Lyneham Team.

By now those of you who ordered ties and polo shirts with the branch logo will by now have received them – what do think? Reading our Facebook page, I seen nothing but good remarks and compliments about them. They are unique, they are great quality, they make a statement about how far we have progressed, we have set the stage for others to follow, unlike when we served, we generally were following others, (only in convoys) When REME wants to impress, for sure photographs of Recovery Vehicles and Recovery Tasks are never far away, well, as a branch we continue to impress. A great big thank you to Chris Zeil for all his time, efforts, and hard work in design, ordering and posting out of all the merchandise that members have recently purchased.

A last chance has become available to rescue the RBL Branch, (currently redundant) should anyone wish to take this forward and form a committee. Notification has been given that should there be no interest in retaining the branch by someone stepping forward to run and administer it, there will be no option but to take it from being redundant to complete closure. Anyone wishing to do so should contact Jamila Hussain, Membership Support Officer, at the Royal British Legion, email: JHussain@britishlegion.org.uk.

COMMITTEE NEWS

Bob Fullbrook, Membership secretary

My role on the committee is the Point of contact for all those applying to join the branch and keep current members with a point of contact (I run the recymechbranch@gmail.com account) I maintain and update the Branch membership list and ensure that General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) rules are adhered to. Only 2 members of the branch have access to the personal information you supplied on joining, myself and the chairman.

I run the branch funds ensuring we only spend (or commit to spend) funds we have. As a committee we decided from the start to make the branch free for all Recy Mechs to join and only have a small balance held. This pays for the Pins for all members and ensures the Branch Standard is where it needs to be when required. All funds are raised by donations or sale of branch mechanise.





Steve Robertshaw, Veteran's member

We have lost too many of our veterans this year and despite such sad events it makes me proud that we can now partake in giving our fallen a proper send-off showing the flag as it were, we at the branch are always available with our Standard so if you have any information or queries please don't hesitate to contact us at the branch email address, recymechbranch@gmail.com As the committee are spread around the country, it is comparatively easy to move the standard around, please let us know if you need us.

Could I ask individual members to post photographs of their fallen comrades on the "We will Remember Them" site in the media section on our Facebook pages. The photos we have of us all getting together and drinking beer and having fun is brilliant, but we mustn't forget where we came from and the people who got us here. Especially having lost so many lads in the last couple of months. The photograph posted above is our Standard along with Durham REME Association Standard at the funeral of **Tony Stokeld**.



I have been posting advertisements to various events around the country that members might be interested in, and I know I'm missing out on some, especially on the recovery side of life. So, if something is happening near you and you want to advertise it, please put it on the Facebook site or send a link to me at the branch and I'll put it on for you.

Mark Omahony, Reservist member

Following the lifting of COVID restrictions in late spring, reservist drill nights started to see the return to normal training, moving from Team and Zoom platforms returning to the usual weekly parading and hands on recovery training which as we all know is what we enjoy and do the best... from all accounts this has been well received by the Recy Mechs with high attendances.

Sadly, some reservist Recy Mechs did lose their civilian jobs, but turned this into a positive for themselves and the trade as only we can by applying for deployments, supporting regular operations and ES tasks at home, and overseas, not forgetting the National Covid response, there is still plenty going on and opportunities everywhere for our reservist brothers and sisters.

Despite the challenges faced during the last year, the reservist trade continues to recruit potential recovery mechanics, with lots of new faces applying and attending training at Northampton's 118 Rec Coy 103Bn REME. If this is indicative, then Reservist Recovery Mechanic recruiting remains as strong as it ever was.

The challenges we all faced this year has blurred the visibility of our branch to reservists somewhat, yet our reservist membership continues to grow slowly which is fantastic. With things returning to normal, the improved lines of communication this brings is expected to ramp this up as more reservists become aware of us.





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Finally... As the branch reservist member, it would be wrong of me (even though he's not yet a member but he's promised to join) not to mention and salute the retirement from the trade after 40yrs service an absolute 118 Rec Coy legend, stalwart, and advocate of the trade ASM Mark Richards.

After 40yrs of dedicated reservist service Mark has decided to hang up the tools Recy Mech for the last time and spend more weekends at home. I'm sure a lot of you know of him or have met him at some point through the decades either on reservist Recy Camps, operations in Iraq, Afghan or at the end of his stopwatch as the oldest and fittest 58yr old PTI in the Army.

Marks professionalism, experience and leadership will be missed by all the Officers, SNCOs, lads and lasses at 118 who wish him the very best and not to become a stranger from the 118 and the wider recovery mechanic families.

FORTH COMING EVENTS

The Eden Valley event, which was listed in the last Newsletter will now not be going ahead this year, but hopes to be back in 2022. Here is a list of events that are on:

1. WO, s and SNCO Recovery Reunion will go ahead over the weekend **15/16 October 2021**. It will be held at Lyneham and due to Covid-19 restrictions, I believe is limited to only 30 Veteran Member's, and there will be no availability of accommodation.

Anyone interested or may have enquiries on the event should directly contact:
Nicholas.murphy162@mod.gov.uk.

2. It is believed the Cenotaph Remembrance Parade will go ahead this year on **14 November 2021**. Anyone wishing to participate should directly contact:
Hayley.Bodman100@mod.gov.uk at RHQ.

3. Also recently received from Hayley at RHQ are details of an event that will go ahead:

Please find attached all the details of this year's NMA event which is now taking place on **Thursday 11th November 2021**. Please can you submit a complete nominal role to me by no later than **22nd September**, so I am able to arrange the catering with the NMA. Can you also include the name of your standard bearer if they will be taking part so I can pass this onto the Corps ASM? Anyone interested in attending should notify our Branch on our normal email: recymechbranch@gmail.com

4. ARV 9 Reunion will go ahead over the period **1st and 2nd April 2022**. People interested in attending should inform Dean Jordan and if requiring accommodation should directly contact Claire at Millers Hotel, quoting ARV 9, on +44(0)1827880223.

OTHER DATES FOR THE DIARY

AGM

The Recovery Mechanics Branch of REME Association are fast approaching our 1st birthday and as Branch Rules state we will be holding an Annual General Meeting (AGM) which is open to all members.





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This correspondence is your invite to attend the meeting. Should you wish to attend and/or have a topic of a constructive nature to put forward could you please let us know in advance so that they can be included in the Meeting Agenda. Please address all correspondence to our branch email: recymechbranch@gmail.com

The date for the meeting is Sunday 12 September 2021 at 1500 hours.

It will be a virtual meeting using the Microsoft Teams App. To join the meeting, you will require to download the Microsoft Teams App onto your computer/tablet/phone. Around 6/7 days prior to the meeting, all who have stated their intention to attend shall receive a link sent from our branch email address, just click the link and you will be accepted into the meeting. It is important that you let us know of your intention to attend so that you can get the link and that we know when all are present and that the meeting can begin.

We have 3 members of our committee who have given notice of their intention to stand down later this year. The AGM is an opportunity and the rightful place to seek replacement volunteers to fill the vacant gaps.

The available positions are:

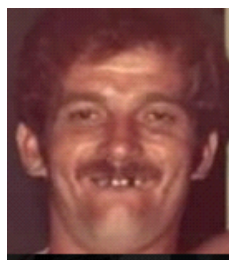
- Membership secretary – Responsible for membership and branch funds (See Bobs remarks above).
- Branch secretary – Responsible for organising committee meetings, agendas and minutes amongst other responsibilities.
- Reservist Member – Committee POC for all reservist members.

Anyone interested or would like to propose someone to join the committee (genuine proposals only) please notify us as soon as possible with name/s. Votes shall be cast during the AGM to elect the new members.

Look forward to your responses which should all be direct to recymechbranch@gmail.com

OBITUARIES – RECOVERY MECHANIC

Since our last Newsletter we sadly have had to say goodbye to 5 Veteran Recovery Mechanics, all very respected members of the Recovery Mechanic World. It is our intention as a unique Recovery Organization to publish within our Newsletter and Facebook pages the passing of any of our members or indeed any Recovery Mechanic who is not a member. So, if you are aware of the passing of anyone from our trade, please let us know so that we can include into media distribution, again through our normal email address: recymechbranch@gmail.com.



Don Newlands sadly passed away on 15 May 2021.

I only met Don on a couple of occasions during my service but believe that in his day he was one of the characters of the trade. Don came from Arbroath in Angus. He served a full 22 years and after retirement returned to his hometown of Arbroath where he sadly passed away on 15 May 2021. Don's funeral was held in Arbroath and was a very private affair. Some weeks later the Newlands family held a wake in Arbroath in





celebration of Don's life, which was attended by his family members, close friends and members of the local community who knew him.

I am sure I speak for the Recovery Mechanic world and send our condolences to the Newlands family. Rest In Peace Don – **Bryan Cronie**

John (Noddy) McLoughlin sadly passed away on 3rd July 2021



Again, we are in the extremely sad situation of saying farewell to a colleague and brother, what can one say about this unique man, legendary both within our trade and REME. Noddy dedicated his complete lifetime to the Recovery World, initially completing a full career within REME as a Recovery Mechanic, serving in many places around the world. After his colour service, Noddy became a Civilian Instructor at SEME, Bordon where he remained until retirement. He carried out instruction on all variants of recovery equipment, wheeled and tracked, every model the Recovery Trade has seen since his early days up until retirement. His instructional capabilities included all theoretical and practical elements of the trade.

As someone that knew Noddy from my early days in training right up until my retirement date and beyond, he was a character with skills, teaching methods and practices second to none. Some still serving and I would guess 99% of Veteran Recovery Mechanics will recall many memories and stories. The majority of those who knew him I am sure, will be ever grateful for the role that he played in their own career paths. Talking about stories I can recall two occasions that sum up his character. Having completed a task using the Cent ARV we were instructed to drive to the Whitehill end of the heath, close to the main road where the ARV was parked up and lunch was served in the Prince of Wales. The other occasion was during a task in the quarry area on the heath when the Brigadier turned up with who I believe was the first ever female REME Officer, to view what was going on, when they encroached too closely Noddy, very politely, "told them "Where they should go!!!! Such was the character of the man; I sometimes think that occasion on the heath was something that rubbed off on myself throughout my career.

Outside his normal work he was still involved around Recovery Vehicles, particularly his love for the Scammell 6x6. He restored an old machine, brought it back to life and travelled all over the country showing it at public Historic Vehicle shows, Country Fairs, Pageants etc., it was his passion.

For those who attended the WO & SNCO Reunions at Bordon and frequented the BBQs in E Sheds will have great memories of being there where Noddy faithfully and passionately assisted with the cooking and the never-ending supply of liquid.

First and foremost, Noddy is a huge loss to his family members left behind, he will also be a huge loss to many friends and the world of Recovery Mechanics, his contribution to our trade was enormous, his name will live on, and I am sure be heard mentioned frequently on all the various reunions that we attend – **Bryan Cronie**





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Craig (Vinny) Morelli sadly passed away on 13 July 2021.

Craig (Vinny) and I met at our first posting, which was at 14/20KH LAD. He was a B mech and I was a REME Clerk. Me being from Lancashire and him, a Yorkshire lad, hit it off straight away with rival banter! We shared the same room and the same sense of humour!

He was a very funny lad, who hardly lost temper. Very determined but laid back. We had some memorable times together (far too many to go through here!). I stayed at his home in Marsden on leave at times and he stayed at my parents in Accrington. We were, inseparable and a double act to the rest of the lads! I knew that he would do well when he re traded to Recy Mech. He found new vigour in a new challenge. I, myself re traded to Rec Mech the following year (this was always in the plan!) Craig was posted to 5 Armd in Soest soon after and, although we had a few beers now and then and a few Recy camps we lost touch.

Fast forward quite a few years to civvy street and the marvel of social media, we reconnected!

I'd always considered Craig as a lifelong friend, and was delighted to see he had forged a successful career in the Corps and gone on to a jet setting career in civvy street - **Dave Wright**



Lee Lawrence sadly passed away on 21 July 2021

Many of us had the honour to befriend and work alongside our fellow Recovery Mechanic Lee Lawrence. He has made countless friendships throughout his time serving in the REME. His cheeky northern charm easily brightened up a rainy day. There is no doubt that he will be talked of, missed, and remembered by all who loved him so much.

Lee was a dedicated and professional tradesman who gave it his all on every recovery tasking. He will be remembered for his strong mindset, and notably his outstanding performance on Op Herrick 19. This is such a sad and unexpected loss to the Recovery Mechanic brotherhood. We would like to give our condolences and support to his loving family - **Nick Swithenbank**



Tony Stokeld sadly passed away on Tuesday 27 July 2021.

Tony served as a recovery mechanic from 1974 until he retired in 2000ish. Tony was always an active member of the Southwest Durham REME association with the organisation of numerous events. For those who knew Tony, he has not been well for the last 8 years suffering with PCP. This degenerative disease (Progressive supranuclear palsy) which is a late-onset degenerative disease involving the gradual deterioration of specific volumes of the brain.

When Tony had been diagnosed with PCP, we organised fund events raising monies for the charity.

Tony always remembered the good and funny times that we all had and could always relate to the specific incidents that made us all laugh. I'll miss the stories that happened from the Welsh locations where we told the guys they were getting paid in Welsh Gwimps, to the





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helicopter landing pad story, and the beer storage in the 1098 boxes, and Lambsdown lane sign, (which was a warning sign, and not the name of a lane).

Tony always attended association events and never missed any, the National Arboretum where he had an all-terrain electric powered wheelchair, and the Eden camp 'All services Parade'. He will always be remembered for assisting in the correct method off fastening the REME tie on armistice day - **Phillip Rolfe**.

HAS ANYBODY SEEN...

This is a new section within the Newsletter which shall be included in each Edition. The idea being that membership who wish to attempt to contact Recovery Mechanics of yesteryear. Just let us know through the pages of our Facebook Web 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 help you in your search

MEMBERSHIP SUBMISSIONS

SECOND TIME ROUND, Part 3, (now completed) - BY **ROSS MELLON** (continued from Newsletter Edition 3)

Advice to others in considering it / why you should try it

My advice is that the opportunity for travel and adventure is high within the REME, wherever the Army goes, it's got to take vehicles with it, so in turn, the need for Recovery Mechanics. Everyone loves seeing a Recy Mech, whether that's because your CR2 is stuck in a bog in BATUS or you've been IED'd in Afghanistan, the Recovery Mechanic will sort it out! No two jobs are ever the same and sometimes the tempo can be quite high, best job in the British Army, by far! But I would say that wouldn't I?

Future goals/aim within trade (specific or general)

I'm part of the re-joiner programme, I served for 23+ years and left in 2019 as a Staff Sergeant, I re-joined as a Sergeant, so naturally one of my objectives to be promoted again to Staff Sergeant, and maybe make it to WORM, as that was something, I was unable to achieve the last time round, we'll see!



When I left, I was first employed as a Lift Engineer and travelled across the North of England, fixing, and inspecting passenger lifts, some of the mechanical skills I had attained in the REME held me in good stead, but it was incredibly dull and lonely job, you literally didn't talk to anyone all day, every day!





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My next job was as a repair/rebuild engineer for Finning CAT and that interesting as it was very technical, however I was keen to learn and yet again my engineering background helped massively, crane operations and manoeuvring heavy plant are just two aspects that were beneficial for the role and my actual spanning skills soon returned. However, COVID-19 was something that none of us could have predicted and I was the last man in at the depot....



Thankfully, a good friend and serving Warrant Officer asked if I would be interested in re-joining on behalf of APC. I deliberated with my wife and thought that it would be for the best, as she could tell that I missed the life and the lifestyle. I've been back in nearly 2 months now, and it is by far the best decision I've made in a long time. The grass may be greener, but if you're good at something, stick at it!

HM Forces Business Awards



I was a finalist at the HM Forces in business awards on the 23rd of June this year. The awards are a charity event in association with SSAFA which recognise service personnel that have made an impact in business for a variety of reasons. There are 15 different categories and have 10 finalists in each one. I was in the "Service Leaver of the year". I was chosen by a judging panel that includes a Lt General, Some Sirs, and a multitude of MBE, OBE and CBE's who are themselves involved with business and charities. This is an extract from the event director "the judging team look to identify service leavers who have succeeded and thrived in second careers across a wide range of sectors, particularly those who have applied their military-gained skills and values to advance and add value to businesses and industry, as well as engaged in supporting other service leavers with advice, guidance and mentorship". I was invited

to attend the awards evening at the O2 Arena which this year due to Covid was restricted to 1000. It was a black-tie event and hosted by TV personality Jacqui Oatley – **Geordie Sutherland**.

USEFUL TELEPHONE & EMAIL CONTACTS

REME Connect Tel: 01249 894507

REME Association Tel : 01249 894524 / 01249894507

Royal British Legion Tel: 0800 802 8080

Service of Remembrance (R Albert Hall) Tel: 02070877929 SSAFA [Tel:0800 731 4880](tel:08007314880)

Combat Stress [Tel:0800 138 1619](tel:08001381619) 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".

ASSISTANCE





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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

AND FINALLY

John Sibley, President

I feel compelled to use this very first "And Finally" to remind all our members of a couple of important points regarding the formation of this branch.

Firstly, it has been no secret that the downside to joining the REME Association as a branch meant that we would undoubtedly be allocated fewer places at the Cenotaph than we would if we had stayed with the RBL. However, like all other REME Association members you can apply through the Association at RHQ REME for a place at the Cenotaph. Clearly and for reasons beyond anyone's control we couldn't march last year, so the personnel who had their names down for that march will take precedence this year. After that we will be on the front foot for places but remember that the Association usually gets around 80 spaces so not everyone is going to get a place, but rest assured our committee will be completely fair and transparent when or if it comes to a ballot. Also, if you remained a member of the RBL you can still apply through them for a place.

Secondly, as mentioned earlier in the newsletter we will be having an AGM later in the year, this is your chance to speak up about any issues you have and if you feel that you can contribute to moving the branch forward why not volunteer to serve on the committee, there are 3 places up for grabs. Please remember that everyone who serves on this committee is a volunteer, they are not doing so because it gets them extra brownie points on a CR, they do it because they want to give something back to the trade, helping to maintain the Esprit de Corps we so are famous for. So when you are about to hit the keyboard because you feel things could have been done better or that you could have done them better remember, it's not you who are making the decisions because you haven't put your head above the parapet, so please don't be negative. Be supportive and offer help if you think you can after all that's what this trade is famous for.

Lastly, I can't go without mentioning my first instructor at Bordon, Noddy McLoughlin. He taught me Leyland on my class 3 before being removed as he wasn't a VM (that's another story) but he finally bounced back and taught me Chieftain ARV on my class 1 and he mentored me when I returned as an Instructor. You didn't always see eye to eye with Nod, but you always knew where you stood, he never changed, always outspoken and not frightened to give his opinion. Legend is a word we hear a great deal these days about all sorts of people but for me Nod was a true legend of our trade. He will be sadly missed by both his families, rest easy my friend.

