



HEADLINES

Welcome to the 9th Edition of the Branch Newsletter, things are ticking along nicely within the Branch, we are still recruiting and still seeing our membership increase, at the last count we had 561 members, an absolute great effort by Ian and the committee chasing after new members in all 3 categories. During the committee's efforts it was found that some Reservist Units and REME Association Branches were not even aware of the Branch existence, these areas are now being targeted, so I believe we will continue to increase in membership.

We have had a bit of a re-shuffle in the structure of the Branch Committee, it is shown under the heading of Committee News within this Newsletter. Since the last Newsletter our Serving Committee Member, Dave Harcus unfortunately resigned, on behalf of the committee I thank Dave for all his work, input, and ideas during his tenure. We have now recruited a Serving Member who, without any prompting whatsoever, volunteered to join the committee as Serving Soldier Coordinator, so please welcome on board ASM Joseph Williams, we look forward to working with Joe, and we hope that this appointment will create an even stronger bond between the Branch and what is going on within the fold of the Modern-Day Recovery Mechanic – welcome on-board Joe.

Another committee change is that our Veterans Coordinator kindly volunteered to also represent Reservists, well done Steve, this releases Mark to concentrate on the Overseas Trip to visit the War Graves. We also created a new post within the committee of Welfare Coordinator, Billy Simpson, kindly volunteered to take this on in addition to being Cenotaph Coordinator, thanks Billy.

Having a Welfare Coordinator brings the branch more in line with HQ REME Association and fits in with the great initiative of REME Responders that many will have read about on REME Connect. Having a Welfare Member also means that we can possibly offer more to members during difficult and stressful times. Just a reminder, anyone who requires assistance should refresh their memories of what the Branch can possibly offer by going to the Branch Facebook page and under heading "Files" you will find documents related to such situations.

Whilst we have achieved great things within the Branch on membership, we still struggle when it comes to numbers to attend functions being organised on your behalf and yes, we do understand that the cost of living and all the other restricting factors around do limit people to what they can do, however, Mark has done a fantastic job in organising the Overseas Trip and Chris is well down the road of the organisation of the Bow Shackle Ball, in South West Scotland, both still have a few spaces left, so if you can, please consider attendance.

Enjoy the Newsletter and Stay Safe - BC



OBITUARIES – RECOVERY MECHANIC

Fenwick (Geordie) Brabben (no photograph available)

I met Geordie on my first posting in 1977 when I was only 17. He was a happy chap and a great wind-up merchant.

Geordie joined at a late stage (29/30), and just made it into the army age wise. Before joining he was Face-worker in the coal mines and when doing our normal daily recovery routine, he kept asking “Are you sure we are being paid for doing this?”.

One day we were sat in the Recy Section rest room and Geordie was about to go back to SEME on his 1st class course. Phil Maken (RIP) asked him if he was worried about anything and Geordie replied, “How do you do those EP things again?” Phil threw his arms in the air with gasps of ‘oh my God Geordie!’ and started to go through the EP process on paper when Geordie looked up at the rest of us with a big cheesy grin on his face, poor Phil had fallen for it.

We took a CHARV (no crane) down to the steam cleaning bay to clean the engine and gearbox. When done I jumped into the driver seat and Geordie guided me forward then reversed me up to a small building next to the steam bay. He then motioned for neutral and to build up the revs, me thinking we must be doing a neutral turn, but we didn't. Seconds later he got me to pull forward amid shouts and coughing from behind us. I hadn't realised (but Geordie knew) that the RD element (RSM, CSMs etc.) had recently moved into the small building and we had just filled it with exhaust fumes! The RSM emerged coughing, spluttering, and shaking his pace-stick, he was not a happy chap. He made us come back later to clean up the track pad marks on the road with toothbrushes!

Geordie was a great friend and mentor to me, not just about recovery, but about life in general.

Rest In Peace – Provided by Mike Cole.

Clive “Curly” Seymour (no photograph available)

Clive “Curly” Seymour, sadly passed away in early March 2023, many of our more senior members will remember Curly.

Curly took over from me at 6 in Munster, but we moved around to different units after that, but we always kept in touch. Curly was an old style Recy Mech, he liked everything to be prim and proper and after use of any piece of equipment it had to be put back in its proper place. The last time we did a job together was when I was doing my last few months at Bordon, they wanted me to promote me to WO11 but I said no, we had been tasked with clearing wrecks and old barges from a canal just south of Basingstoke, recovery equipment used on the day was a Cent ARV and Leyland We had a real mixture of a crew, cooks, welders, vms and some irks. Part of the job was to recover two 70 ft barges, kedge them over so that they could be re-plated. As you can imagine it was the normal dirty work and we were filthy by the end of the day. To get cleaned up Curly and I chatted up a couple of OAPs and asked if we could use their bath facilities, surprise, surprise, this was something that was permitted. ???

The canal still exists and is still in use today, when I learned of Curly, s passing the above task we carried out immediately sprung to my mind, I don't really know (remember) anyone



that worked with him, we seemed to be on a different work circuit than others, but what I do know is he was a great bloke, a real professional Recy Mech, a very good friend who I am sure will be very sadly missed by family, friends and those who knew him.

Rest In Peace Clive. – Provided by Ted Beard



Brian Curry - 20.09.1947 to 28. 03. 2023

I met Brian when I did my last year attached to 124 Recovery Company in Newton Aycliffe in 1993, he was a TA B3 Recy Mech who had re-traded from driver. I then lost contact for many years as I had to go and work for a living. My next meeting was when I joined the SW Durham branch of the REME Assn. We shared a few stories had a few beers and met up at our meeting every month after that.

Brian was a staunch supporter of both the Assn. and mostly the bar! Our annual soiree down to Eden camp veterans' parade was a favourite with Brian, always the first in the NAAFI bar.

Brian had his own place at the bar on our meetings and indeed when he had passed, we moved his chair away from its usual place at the bar as it looked strange with him not sitting there.

RIP old friend AeM – Provided by Steve Robertshaw.

Andy James (belated entry from Edition 8 Newsletter) (no photograph available) At the age of 18, Andy applied to join the British Army and began an illustrious military career. 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 made many good friends and formed a tight bond, specifically with mates Jase, Paul, and Smudge.

Andy and his mate Jase went on to forge a particularly close friendship serving together. They worked on the principal "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. Jase 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.

Genuinely is an over-used word but in 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 came into contact with, 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. Andy will be very much missed by family members, friends and those of the community that knew him.

Rest in Peace – Provided by Les Langley.





COMMITTEE NEWS

The Branch latest committee meeting was held on Thursday 11 May 2023 where various items were discussed. Three of the items discussed were:

1. The Bow Shackle Ball in Dumfries on 30 September 2023. As reported on the Branch Facebook page we have the following opportunity for those interested:-

"Your View Matters"

For those attending the Bow Shackle Ball on 30 September 2023 and those who wish to join us, I am sure you are aware that the following day, 1 October is the Corp Birthday. We are considering having a Birthday Breakfast on the morning of 1 October. Rather than have it in the hotel we have the opportunity to have it in the Dumfries Veterans Garden Hub with a catch. We would call it a Field Breakfast as the Hub does not have real cooking or seating facilities, the building is an old stable block and workshop whereby you line up and Q for bacon, egg, sausage butties, a cup of tea or coffee, the idea is to bring back the memories of yesteryear as many Corp Birthdays were spent in the field, there is nothing fancy about it, just as we would have done on exercise. A poll was created on the Branch Facebook Page to collect the numbers on who might be interested, if you are going and not yet voted on the poll, please do so or should any member who would wish join us at the ball and breakfast, but not yet registered to go, please make contact through the Branch normal email recymechbranch@gmail.com.

2. The Branch Overseas Trip to visit War Graves and Menin Gate, happening over the weekend of 15 – 17 September 2023.

This is shaping up to be a fantastic and what will be a very memorable weekend for those attending, something that I am sure is very close to all our hearts. At time of publishing this Newsletter very few spaces remain, should you be interested in filling the last spaces, (first come, first served basis) please make contact through the Branch email recymechbranch@gmail.com.

3. Branch Committee Restructure.

As stated in the Headlines, during the months of April and May the Branch a restructuring of the committee took place, including adding a Welfare Member and also reassigning of duties throughout the various post, we believe the changes made will better serve you, the members. You can view all the restructuring by going to the Branch Facebook Page and click on Files, look for The Branch Rules, updated 16 May 2023, pages 4 – 7. Below shows members of the current committee and their roles. All can be contacted by using the branch email, recymechbranch@gmail.com Page 5 shows the new structure and names of the people who occupy the posts.



NEWSLETTER

RECOVERY MECHANIC BRANCH

REME ASSOCIATION



President:	John Sibley
Chairman:	Bryan Cronie
Funding & Merchandise:	Chris Zeil
Membership:	Ian MacDonald
Welfare:	Billy Simpson
Serving:	Joseph Williams
Veteran & Reservist:	Steve Robertshaw

Event Coordinators

Overseas Trip:	Mark Omahony
Bow Shackle Ball:	Chris Zeil

FORTH COMING EVENTS

War Graves Overseas Trip – 15 – 17 September 2023.

Bow Shackle Ball – 30 September 2023 – venue, Easterbrook Hall, Dumfries.

REME Birthday Breakfast – 1 October 2023 – Veterans Garden Hub, Dumfries

OTHER DATES FOR THE DIARY

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 has yet been requested through the Newsletter. The Branch has details of all members, and should you be looking for someone we can help put them in contact with you, for obvious reasons we cannot hand out details without prior permission of any individual you may be seeking to reunite with.



MEMBERSHIP SUBMISSIONS

Submitted by Graham Wilkinson

In late 1979 as I was serving at Det 12 Armd. Wksp. in Münster a group of enthusiastic (crazy) Recovery Mechanics me included, decided to build/customize an appropriate mode of transport for our upcoming Recovery Camp.

We acquired an old running VW Beetle; we then started to “chop” it and paint it to make it fit for purpose. We took it with us in the back of a 4 tonner to the Range, we drove/hammered it over all the tracks we could find.



We had to push it to start it a few times and when it stopped running, we towed it behind an ARV. Then when it finally gave up the ghost, we decided we needed to put it in a place of rest.

The pics tell the story as I do from my memories, these pics show good friends and fellow Recy Mechs who I served with and had unforgettable times. After all it is what Recy Mechs do!



You can just imagine it - Honest Sir – a big boy did and then ran away, honest! We chased him and managed to get his name, but he escaped again – I think his name was MaC something!!!!



The scribe is leaning on the shovel.
(I hope my mates don't mind me sending the photos)



Submitted by Ian MacDonald

7th Armoured Wksp REME, Bad (Good) Fallingbostal BFPO 38, this was my second posting in my military career, although my first posting in my new CEQ, as Recovery Mechanic. My previous job was REME Technical Clerk. I stood in front of the OC 12 AD Regt RA Wksp REME at Kirton in Lindsey, Major Mike Bowles, who said to me "Who did you upset to get this posting?" "Sir, I volunteered on the advice of my boss Pete Armstrong, who said to me it will be the making of me."

On the day that the IRA tried to assassinate the Prime Minister, the late Margaret Thatcher, whilst I departed the UK for BAOR, 12th Oct 1984, I arrived at the back gate late at night after getting the white bus from RAF Gutersloh to Bad Fallingbostal. My initial thought travelling down Queens Avenue was OMG! I reported to the guardroom and was told to be back here at 0830, in combats, with all my kit, as I was going straight on Ex Samsons Pride to join my platoon.

On the Friday night, I found a nice single man room open in the block, needless to say, on my return from Samsons I was kicked out of the room as it belonged to Tony "Shuggy" McGurk who sadly left us in 2016. RIP mate. After squaring my admin away, I got my head down.

On Saturday the 13th, Sgt Geordie Morgan collected me from the guardroom and took me to Soltau. I joined Samson's Pride as a class three student. My crew Cpl was Tyrone Rees. Ty made no bones about how we were going to be the best crew, we were awarded the best crew, and we got a plaque to prove it.

During my tour I was detached to BATUS as a Cfn working for Chris Vaughan, Andy Lees and Mick Davies. During this time, I was the first Recy Mech to use the brand new into service, Gucci, Western Star.

Finally, I was back in Fally, which strangely I had missed (you would only understand that statement if you had been posted there at the time, with the gang, Tim Collins, Kev Boulton, Jock Mullholland, Dean Bates, Willy Pexton, Andy Spiby, Tyrone Ress, Phil Ainsworth, Sam Oakley, Colin Hydes, Black Johnno, Mick Shennan and John Sibley). Now there are a few more tales I could talk about the last chap named, but that can wait for another time. Lol - there are a host of other names but far too many to mention. I was also fortunate enough during my time at 7 to become accomplished at filling out AFG 1771's and pushing a wheelbarrow down to the RAO's office to collect my dosh - along with Gaz Heys.

I also completed a tour of 46 NIRW in 1986/87, much to the displeasure of others, who never seemed to get away from camp, other than on exercise, which were plenty in the heyday of the cold war.

As I have just mentioned, I did manage to spend some time in Fally, however, I never managed to get back from leave on time, and a certain LCPL had to pick up my duties, thank you JS.

So, the question to be asked is, was 7 Armd really a bad posting?

I have spent many an hour over a beer debating this. If you never had a posting to 7 Armoured Wksps, then yes it was totally crap, because that was the thinking in those days. However, those who served at 7 Armoured tell a very different story.



2014 the final reunion at 2 Bn REME

John Sibley and I returned in 2014 to 7 Armoured on what was the last official reunion, on what was a very emotional weekend. Yes, it was simply an excellent posting, we worked hard, and we certainly played hard. We were young Desert Rats, who are now old proud Desert Rats.



Work hard, play hard! Painting the B vehicle fleet to hand in and get our Gucci new Foden's. L-R Rear rank David 'Arthur' Williamson, Me, Craig 'Shirley' Holmes, John Sibley, Dean Martin Front Rank Ian Coulthard, ? Ritchie (VM), Willy Pexton

Thank you to everyone who made Fally the excellent posting it was.





Submitted by Steve Robertshaw

Recovery Camp's - Well, I thought I would do a couple of stories about BAOR Recy camps, we all have done at least one be it Rock Steady, Sampsons, Hard Pull or Winching Challenge., I personally loved them and during my career I tried to get on every exercise I could.

I started on an early Rock Steady from 4 Field Workshops held on Staple ranges as a young Lance Jack doing dump crew and teaching rope splicing.

For me it was just a brilliant two weeks hanging with a bunch of my mates doing the job I loved and drinking vast amounts of beer in the evenings. I think that first one cemented my love of the exercise and it stayed with me for all my career.

I am going to do something on Rock steady from 1974 (not sure it was actually called that then, but it was the 4 Field Wksp training camp). Next letter I will do Sampsons Pride the 7 Armd camp on Soltau and Rheinsalen Camp. Anyone who has stories Hard pull and Winching Challenge please feel free to contribute.

So one day in the spring of 1975 me and my fellow Lance Jack and best mate Terry Luckman were called into the MTO's office a Captain Ted Ailes, and were told to make lists of everything the platoon would need for a two week camp on staple ranges! we were to be camp Admin and dump crew, having no idea how to do this me and Terry just ordered everything we could think of, luckily in those days you asked, you got, so we ended up with trucks full of kit.

I was still a Cent ARV driver at the time back at 4 so I did a bit of teaching on it for the lads who hadn't done too much A vehicle work, indeed the next year the ARV bit me and I spent 4 months in BMH Rinteln but more of thar later.

Camp was set up in the Lager area and the ACC unpacked their cooks Bedford of food, then the beer tent was erected (priorities!) and while that was happening (long job, marquee not 12*18) me and T started dumping ready for the next day's tasks. This ended up as the first recovery job and done by us as one of the tasks was deemed unfeasible by the boss as we had managed to put an AEC ten-ton truck bridging a gully with only the front and back bumpers on the ground!

That evening was wintery cold and I washed my hair in our hot tent and without really drying it I rushed out as it was beer time, well I got about 30 foot and my hair froze causing me to pass out , luckily someone saw me go down so they dragged me into the bar and once my head had thawed I was fine and got on with the drinking.

Recovery training went well with everyone keen to have a go at the AEC wrecker that hadn't been around that long. Someone decided it would be a great idea to nose a Rubery Owen trailer around a cross country circuit, nightmare, though after spending ages practicing it stood me in good stead for jobs later in my career. The Leyland Wreckers were struggling to move around the area till we let most of the air out of the tyres to improve traction in the sand.

Those of you who know staple there was a boarding school next door, so we had young ladies in the bar in the evening too, for stories about that you need to be stood next to me



with a beer in your hand! Anyway, they had an outside pool at the school and one of the lads bet me and Terry we wouldn't break the ice and swim a length, well, it was for a crate of beer, so it was a no brainer, kept my head out of the water though. Bloody cold, we were blue when we got out, spent the next hour in the bar with the winnings, draped around a Kero heater.

The ARV incident came the next year on the next Recy Camp, I was riding on the front, Ginge Newlands driving through the trees and Ginge missed a gear and drove into a tree, said tree snapped off and fell on me! Totally my fault I should have driven and let Ginge sit up top. So, it turned out I had broken 3 lumber vertebrae and 3 bones in my arm, hilariously when I got to Detmold Krankenhaus, we had a language problem, so they took 10 x-rays of my foot and luckily for me one of my arms and one of my back. I was there for a week and the first thing the German doctor would say every morning was, how is the foot.! After a week of cabbage soup, I was shipped to BMH Rinteln where I stayed for the next 4 months, loved it.

USEFUL TELEPHONE & EMAIL CONTACTS

REME Connect Tel: 01249 894507
What's On Your mind – WOY@REMECharity.org
REME Association Development Officer (Geordie Wright-Rivers) 07590848766
Corp Welfare Officer (K Redshaw) 07821655636
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](tel:08007314880)
Combat Stress [Tel:0800 138 1619](tel:08001381619) PTSD ptsd.org.uk
Help for Heroes helpforheroes.org.uk.
Samaritans 116 123
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"

PERSONAL 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

I am assuming that most of our readers are members of REME Connect and if so, will be aware of the programme "First Responders". We are very keen as a Branch to be of any assistance we can to support this great initiative. We do already have within our membership. volunteers willing to give assistance, however we would like to see more step forward and be willing to give up a little bit of their time, if and when required, to help out with any REME family member who is suffering, regardless of the reasons. We are seeking more volunteers, your assistance, should it be required would stretch beyond the Recy Mech



family, it would include any member of the overall REME Family within a reasonable distance of your area of residence. Equally, in the event that a Recy Mech required such services and we do not have anyone in that area, we can call upon assistance from others and can be assured that in any event it is REME assisting REME. If you are not aware of this programme or a member of REME Connect, may I suggest you join, its free, and if you feel that you could assist either join through the REME Connect website or contact the Branch email recymechbranch@gmail.com and register your interest.

Cenotaph Veterans' Parade – Hot of the press.



The Corps has just received notification of another bumper allocation of 100 tickets for this year's Cenotaph Veterans' Parade on Whitehall on **Sunday 12 November 2023**. As with last year, demand for places is expected to be high and will exceed allocation. Accordingly, all eligible REME veterans are asked to complete the simple form below in order to enter the ballot for tickets by no later than midnight on **Friday 30 June 2023**.

The ballot will then take place on **Monday 03 July 2023** with successful individuals being notified that day with a link to book tickets directly via the Royal British Legion portal. Those not drawn from the ballot will be placed on a reserve list and will be offered places as and when they arise.

Please note that the Royal British Legion portal will close registration on **Friday 25 August 2023**. E-Tickets will be issued over the period **30 – 31 October 2023**.

If you intend to go, apply directly, please go to the link below to join the lottery.

<https://remeconnect.org/cenotaph-veterans-parade>



AND FINALLY

I recently attended ARV 10, the All-Ranks reunion. It was, as always great to catch-up with old friends, see and speak to comrades I hadn't seen in ages, listen to tall tales and recount the "good old days". And because these events are wonderful whilst they are happening and fill you with abiding memories what's often forgotten is the huge amount of work that's has gone into organising them for you. Unlike a mess committee, as I'm sure we remember, are filled with people who have been, mostly "voluntold" to join, the people who arrange the ARV and functions like it are there for different reasons. It's not for the plaudits or glory, it's not to get that tick in the box for promotion, it's because they are driven by a selfless commitment to our trade and the proud traditions that are the envy of all other trades, in short, they do it for you all. Why? Because they understand the importance of coming together and how good it is for our continual mental wellbeing, they give everything so that you can all have the most memorable weekend they can possibly give you, they stick their heads above the parapet and say, "I care". Or it could just have been a happy hour that got out of control! Whichever it is, I for one salute them and thank them all for their outstanding contribution to those who attended and the whole of the trade. If you have never attended an ARV, I whole heartedly recommend that you do, it's open to any Recovery Mechanic, veteran, serving, reservists, keep your eyes peeled on Facebook for details of ARV 11, it takes place over the weekend of 5th to 7th Apr 24.

This year I had the singular honour of reading the Recovery Mechanic Role of Honour, the list of our brothers who we have lost. This hasn't been read since 2018 so the list was tragically long. I felt very privileged to be the one reading out such esteemed names of past colleagues and friends, some I knew well, others by reputation and some I'd never heard of but every one of them will be deeply missed by their family, friends and the trade. The list will be maintained by the branch, and I hope will continue to be read at the ARV in subsequent years as a fitting act of remembrance to all our fallen comrades.

I look forward to seeing you there (unless I'm on the list!) Arte et Marte.

Cheers

John



NEWSLETTER

RECOVERY MECHANIC BRANCH

REME ASSOCIATION

