



SMALL ARMS SCHOOL CORPS COMRADES' ASSOCIATION

1853

Issue No 1

RETIRED MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER

December 2011

This is the first newsletter to be published that is focussed towards the non serving members of the Comrades' Association or those who are still serving but who have transferred out of the Corps. The intention is to publish two such newsletters each year; one in June and the other in December, I hope you consider it worthwhile.

As most will be aware I am the point of contact for all non serving members of the Comrades' Association. Specifically to establish and maintain contact with the members, to plan the annual reunions (please see page3) and to assist in the coordination of the Remembrance Weekend at Hythe.

Please note that I work from home in York, not HQ SASC. There are occasions when I will be away from home for up to 6 weeks; therefore can I suggest that you contact me by email. If that is not possible please telephone; however, if I don't respond within 48 hours and it is urgent please contact the Adjt SASC. My contact details are shown at the bottom of each page

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HEADQUARTERS SASC

HQ SASC is going through a period of change; some have already taken place whilst others are due over the coming months. This will bring everyone up to date with personalities and where appropriate their specific responsibility to the Association

CO SASC (01985 222397) - Lt Col John Whitchurch.

SO2 Trg (01985 222366) - Maj Kev Sandison, also OIC Wpns Collection but with no Association responsibilities.

Adjt SASC (019085 222220) - Captain Mick Ronan, also Regimental Secretary but with no specific responsibility for non serving members of the Comrades' Association, except where there is a need to seek support from the Army welfare organisations. Mick is posted in the New Year and will be replaced by Captain Kieran MacMahon.

Corps RSM (01985 222496) - WO1 Andy Owen, also the Assistant Regimental Secretary with specific responsibility to the SASC Shop. The RSM has been selected for commission in mid 2012 and will be replaced by WO1 Mark Douglas.

Clerk (01985 222612) - Belinda Alley, answers all the questions.



CONTACT LIST

Thanks to the feedback that I have received the contact list of non serving members is somewhere near being up to date. Unfortunately there are still quite a few names and addresses missing but I am hopeful that this situation can be resolved over the coming months. I have attached or enclosed a copy of the most up to date contacts/location list. If you notice that someone's name is missing or their contacts details are not shown and you have some information will you please let me know.

The contact list shows email addresses, town and county of residence. It does not give full address details or telephone numbers. These are available on request from me. If you want your address and phone details published please let me know and I will publish them in the next newsletter.

In addition to the contact list I am also collating a list of everyone who has ever served in the Corps, this is taking some time and it is likely that it will never reach completion but I'll give it my best shot.

DETAILS TO FOLLOW

In order for this newsletter to be worthwhile it has to be informative. It is aimed at the non serving members of the Comrades' Association to provide a means of keeping in touch and to do that I need your help and input. Family news items, change of address - almost anything you like, which need not be directly related to Corps matters

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NOTICE BOARD

Sally Fogwell. Many will be aware that Sally has recently moved from Warminster back to Hythe. Sally's new contact details are:

26 Captain's Court, Stade Street, Hythe, Kent, CT21 6ED
Telephone: 01303 260467

Alan Stockley. Alan has informed me that Chris has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer on top of progressive kidney failure which means that she will soon be put on dialysis.



Armed Forces Veterans' Badge. Full details of how to apply for your Veteran's Label Badge can be found on line or by telephone at: 0800 169 2277 (UK only) or 0044 1253 866043 (Overseas)

http://www.veterans-uk.info/vets_badge/vets_badge.htm

Donation to Corps Funds. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the generous donation to the Corps funds made by Captain (Retd) Gordon (Mitch) Mitchell. Mitch retired in 2004 and has since established his own company offering specialist training services and security solutions in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Old Comrades' Association Standard.



The Old Comrades' Association Standard last used in the early 1990s and currently housed in the CO's office at Warminster will be laid up in the SASC Chapel of the Warminster

Garrison church on Wednesday 22 February 2012, where there will be a short service to mark the occasion. All serving and non serving members of the Comrades' Association are invited to attend the service, which will be followed by a social gathering. Details will be promulgated in due course.

No Longer with Us. As many will know we lost four retired members of the Association this year, ex SSgt Bill Lewis died in February, ex WO2 Sid Taylor in May and ex WO1 Pete Blackburn and ex WO2 Brian (Doc) Halliday both in July. Also Mrs Evelyn May Barnett, wife of the late ex QMSI Billy Barnett GC, died at Folkestone in October.

RECENT RETIREMENTS

Lieutenant Colonel Will Paterson. Retired in November and has since taken a Retired Officer's post at the Cadet Training Centre at Frimley.

Major Craig Adams. Retired in the summer and is now living in Herefordshire.

WO2 (QMSI) "Howie" Howard. Recently retired and now living in Scotland.

WO2 (QMSI) Tony Foord. Recently retired and now living in Cumbria.

WO2 (QMSI) "Scotty" Monair. Recently retired.*

WO2 (QMSI) Paul "Charlie" Brown. Recently retired *

* Awaiting address details

ARTICLES FOR THE CORPS JOURNAL 2012

(Extract from Man at Arms 2011)

Articles for next year's Corps Journal need to be submitted by the end of April. Guidelines on the layout etc can be found on page 77 of this year's Journal. I am happy to receive your articles or they can be sent direct to the Corps Adjutant at HQ SASC.

Please note that whilst the guidelines deal with producing articles using MS Word this does not preclude those who can only submit typed or handwritten articles.

My thanks to Phil Thompson who has already submitted an article!

PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF YOU REQUIRE MORE INFORMATION

COMRADES ASSOCIATION WEBSITE



The website was designed and managed by David Cuthbertson. It is aimed at all members of the Association. The "News Section gives the latest news on promotions, Corps/Association events, anniversaries, weddings, births etc. So to keep in touch with the latest happenings and forthcoming events I would encourage everyone who has the means to log on regularly at

www.sasc-comrades.org

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN THE DEFENCE INDUSTRY

Captain (Retd) Gary Thomson, who is the Managing Director of G7 sme Ltd, has asked me to publish his contact details and encourage anyone interested to contact him for advice at gthomson@g7sme.com or phone 01432 379960

ANNUAL REUNIONS - THE OPTIONS

The most important issue facing the Comrades' Association is the future format of the Comrades' Association Annual Reunion that has traditionally been held at Warminster each July. As I mentioned in my first letter it is extremely unlikely that the Annual Reunion will be held at Warminster in the future. Therefore like so many Regiments and Corps we will now have to look elsewhere.

First we need to face up to the fact that attendance at the Annual Reunion and the AGM had dropped off at an alarming rate, with just a handful of non serving members attending. In particular many of those who had always attended have stop coming. There are many opinions as to why this happened and I am sure many more can be offered; however, we need to look forward and not back.

Over the last 8 months I have sent out several emails and letters to non serving members and to be honest I have not had an overwhelming response, many thanks to those of you who did respond. With that in mind I believe it would be fruitless to ask everyone for their opinions/ideas. So what are the options being considered?

The options are based on the following criteria:

- Where possible bring the reunion to the Comrades and cut down travelling time.
- Provide good quality, inexpensive hotel accommodation.
- Look for locations that offer a weekend away in a town or city that has plenty to offer a weekend visitor or with a Regimental background.

Having interrogated my database I now have a good idea of the geographical spread of where everyone lives. My proposal, which I have discussed with the Commanding Officer, is to hold three reunions in 2012, all of which will be subsidised by the Association.

The locations I have opted for are Bristol, York and Hythe. The reunion held at Hythe will be planned to coincide with the Remembrance Weekend in November and the other two in late May/June and September. There will be no restriction on how many of the reunions you attend, the more the better! I am hoping that by spreading the reunions over a 6 month period and by having three different locations that more of us will be able to attend.

The reason for choosing Bristol and York is that they offer plenty of things to do over a weekend besides just attending a reunion dinner, offering the opportunity to make the most of a weekend away. Also I have to consider the organisation and administration of each weekend, these locations meet

that requirement as I live in York and HQ SASC is not too far from Bristol. York and Bristol both have good travel routes by motorway and train. Bristol is well suited for those who live in Wales, the West Country, the South Midlands, and the Western Home Counties and even down to the South coast.

York offers similar travel routes from the North of England, Scotland, North Midlands, and the East Coast. In many cases a good number of us live within 2 hours of either location.

Additionally both have local airports nearby, Bristol and Leeds Bradford, so for those who live further away like Northern Ireland, Spain or Cyprus for example may be in a position to use low cost airlines.

Hythe has been chosen for different reasons but it also has pretty good travel routes by train and road and in addition to those living in the South East and East Anglia it will also cater for those who wish to maintain or forge new links with Hythe. At this stage I do not have dates and the like; I need to get some idea of the level of attendance I can expect before approaching hotels in each location.

The Annual Reunions will, in the main, be for non serving members of the Association; HQ SASC will not be putting out a three line whip for serving members to attend. The Commanding Officer, the Corps Adjutant and the Corps RSM will attend each reunion and I would not be surprised if the serving members of the Association who live nearby also attend.

The one difficulty that comes out of holding three separate reunions is the AGM, clearly it is not feasible to hold three AGMs therefore that aspect of the Reunion will need to be catered for elsewhere, see next page.

I have included a simple questionnaire with this newsletter. Can I ask everyone, no matter where you live to return the questionnaire to me, even if you put a big cross right through it - please let me have it back. It may be that you are unable to attend in 2012 but I would still like to know if by having more than one reunion you would be more likely to attend in the future. The key points are:

- Quality hotel venues with good accommodation, the cost of which will be subsidised by the Association.
- Regional locations offering a variety of things to do.
- Reduced travelling costs and times.

**PLEASE RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRE
BY 1 FEBRUARY 2012**

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THE AGM OF THE COMRADES' ASSOCIATION - THE FUTURE

In the absence of a Reunion Weekend this year's AGM was held during the serving members' Study Period at Chilwell in September that I attended. The Commanding Officer is acutely aware that a number of no serving members feel that with the demise of the Comrades' Reunion at Warminster they are being denied the opportunity to vote on decisions that affect the Association. Together we have discussed how the situation can be improved. The options we have come up with are to hold the AGM:

- at Hythe together with the combined Reunion/Remembrance weekend, or
- at Bisley on the afternoon of the Methuen, or
- at the serving members' Annual Study Period, as happened this year.

Regardless of which option is decided upon a draft Agenda will be distribute well in advance of the AGM giving everyone the opportunity to request a topic/item be included. Once the Agenda has been finalised it will be published together with a voting slip, after which time no additional items relating to the use of Corps funds will be allowed or voted upon. The voting slip will allow everyone, if they so wish, the opportunity to vote on any of the items on the agenda.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE LISTS THE OPTIONS, PLEASE INDICATE WHICH YOU WOULD PREFER - THANK YOU



REMEMBRANCE WEEKEND - HYTHE 2011



Both the Remembrance Parade and the informal social gathering on the Saturday evening were quite well attended, not only by those living locally but by some who had travelled some distance to be there. Just for once we were blessed with a bright, warm sunny morning on the Sunday. The Corps contingent made up a serving and non serving members led the way, with Reg Timblich in place as our left marker. (For those who remember the Town Hall is on the left for the march past).

On Saturday evening we met up in the WOs' and Sgts' Mess in Sir John Moore Barracks (old IJLB barracks). The fact we all manage to find the building was testament to our powers of navigation and the ability to drive round in ever decreasing circles.

Formed Up and Ready to Go!



Mick Cave, Roger Chater, Dolly Gray, Eddie Spiers, John Paterson, Reg Timblich

This was Colonel John's first function since taking command and it was good to see him and Kim together with their daughter Vicky and son Luke. Having spoken with Colonel John, the plan is to do things a little differently in the future. Notwithstanding the possibility of combining Remembrance Weekend with a Reunion Weekend I am going to look at the feasibility of holding the Eve of Remembrance social in a local hotel, where I also hope to be able negotiate a very competitive rate for rooms and if things go to plan this will become a subsidised event.



Whilst there is insufficient space to list everyone who attended the weekend I would like to mention Tom Colyer, who was 93 in November and pictured here in the uniform of the Yeoman of the Guard, Tom attended the social function together with his wife Edna. Also Mike Cave, RSM Netheravon, who made it back to Hythe for the first time in 41 years.

On behalf of the Commanding Officer I would like to thank everyone who attended and hope we can increase the attendance next year.

A list of those who attended, together with a photo gallery will be published on the Corps Website