



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thank god that's over at last, 2020 is the worst year I can remember, and I was really hoping for a better 2021 but, so far it appears it's not materialising. Never mind I will just have to get on and make the best of it. Of course, that's what we have always done as Soldiers and Recy Mechs haven't we? We have always just got on with it no matter what "It" was, yes, we grumbled about it but at the end of the day the job got done and done well.

As you will have seen, the Army has been called upon yet again, organising the logistics for delivery of the COVID vaccines and with one of our own in charge. The boys were also called to Kent on Christmas Eve to assist in clearing the backlog of trucks parked up awaiting a COVID test before they could board ferries to France. I know that the NHS and other key workers have done and continue to do a fantastic job, but I do feel that, once again the troops are forgotten and the masses just assuming that we have nothing better to do! I continue to be immensely impressed and proud of the way our troops just get on with "it" no matter what "it" turns out to be

Before Christmas we had the incredibly sad news that we had lost a legend, Roger Jones MBE passed away after a short illness. I first met Roger when I was posted to Bordon as a newly promoted Sergeant. Roger was an Artisan Staff Sergeant on the long service list running the Corps historic vehicle collection. That post was due to be taken as a cost saver so one of Roger's last duties as a serving soldier was to write the job description for his job to be civilianised. Suffice to say he was the only applicant that filled the criteria for the post and the rest, as they say is history. Roger, famous for smoking his King Edward cigars once helped me to build a trailer. During a quick break whilst welding the frame he sparked up and we chatted about what needed to happen next, brew finished we continued. Unfortunately for Roger he forgot he had a cigar in his mouth, he flipped his welding mask down and almost swallowed the cigar whole, flipping the mask back up he gagged at the cigar and it flew across E shed, ever frugal he retrieved it and kept it for later. I laughed so hard a little bit of wee came out to be honest. Roger had the ability to get on with just about everyone, if it were within his power to assist someone he would, he didn't have to even know them. Everyone reading this knows the huge contribution Roger made to the trade over the years, I used the word "Legend" earlier, I find it's a word that's overused these days but not when its used to describe Roger Jones MBE. He was unique, there will never be another Roger, he was my friend and I miss him dearly.



THE COMMITTEE

We now have a full committee, a warm welcome to Steve Robertshaw, Ross Mellon, and Mark O'Mahony, thank you for volunteering your time to this very worthy cause.

The committee will now consist of a President and 7 members. We now have a representative on the committee from the 3 main sources of our membership, Serving Members, Veteran Members and Reservist Members. If a member from any of these sources wishes to communicate with the committee, for whatever reason, it is suggested that they contact the committee member responsible for their source. They are all contactable on the Recy Mech email, recymechbranch@gmail.com, You should also mention which source you are from so that your message gets to the correct person. The full committee is as follows:

President:	John Sibley	Chairman:	Bryan Cronie
Membership & Fund Member:	Bob Fullbrook	Secretary:	Chris Zeil
Communication's Member:	Matthew Lambert	Serving Member:	Ross Mellon
Veterans Member:	Steve Robertshaw	Reservist Member:	Mark O, Mahony





SECOND TIME ROUND, Part 1 - 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 PI Sgt

Why they chose this trade?

I initially started out my basic training in February 1996, on completion of that I moved to Bordon, Hants for Phase 2 training. I was soon sent to DST Leconfield, where I gained all my driving licences. I then started my training as a Vehicle Mechanic, it was harder than I thought it would be and was asked to re-trade, I was sent to Aldershot AFCO and had to look at alternatives! I had to think, fast!

I remembered having conversations with some of my friends who were doing their basic Recovery Mechanic course at the time, they were telling me that they got to jump in water up to their necks and recovered tanks using a CRARRV (I'd seen them down on the TTA!) and I thought "that sounds amazing!", so I was luckily enough to be allowed to stay within the Corps, and thankfully I passed the course. It was a Summer course, so that made it even better as all I remember is the sun blazing and extraordinarily little rain, and it was a blessing getting a wet job to cool down in after sweating hard on the CRARRV jobs.



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

Key highlights for me have been the Operational tours, I've been extremely fortunate, (or unfortunate depending on how you look at it!) that I've been involved in most of the deployments that the British Army has been involved in over the last 20+ years, Bosnia was an eye- opener, I was only 20 years old, only been a Class 2 about 2 months and my Sgt was posted to Cyprus and left. I was left in charge of the recovery post for that Area of Operation and did R&R cover for the Corporals, it was a steep learning curve, it was sink or swim, people were depending on us to keep the routes cleared, so I was pleased that I was successful in everything I was tasked with! I think that tour set me up for success on all my future deployments!

More on highlights and key experiences in Part 2, which will appear in Newsletter Edition 3

TO BE CONTINUED – WATCH OUT FOR PART 2 IN THE NEXT EDITION OF NEWSLETTER



THE STANDARD

In the first edition of the branch Newsletter the photograph of the Standard did not show the complete picture and some of the membership requested another photo showing the whole thing which is displayed on the right.

The first outing for our Standard was at The Recovery Mechanics Wall in Lyneham, where Bob Fullbrook done the Branch proud by displaying and lowering the Standard on Remembrance Day, well done Bob.



The Standard has now been in use on two occasions. As many of you will know the Standard was again in use at the incredibly sad occasion of the funeral of Roger Jones MBE.

EDEN CAMP – AN OPPORTUNITY - BY STEVE ROBERTSHAW

Eden Camp 2021

Hi Veterans & Members, I wanted to show you something I've been involved with for the last few years (pre COVID-19)

Eden Camp is a museum near Pickering in Yorkshire consisting of a series of Nissan huts each with their own theme from all aspects of war over the last 100 years. Scattered around outside of the huts are various large pieces of kit from tanks to jeeps, they also have a doodlebug! As a backdrop to a veteran parade, it is excellent and occurs annually. The parade is full day event consisting of a look





around the museum (brilliant by the way) a veteran's parade and then a few beers in the NAAFI, there's live period music too. So, all in all an excellent day out. The only problem I had was getting to see everything in just one day.

Now that we are a fully formed branch with standard and all the trimmings, I am putting this out to see if members would be interested in attending such an event? Everyone marches together as a group with Standards displayed, there is no hierarchy, just a group of veterans marching all together, a great opportunity for photo shoots before, during and after the parade.



Due to the current situation of Covid-19 I haven't had any confirmation of this year's event yet, but as it is usually held on the second Sunday in September, I'm hoping for things to be better by then. Once lockdown is over, I should find out if this year's parade is going ahead. (We should all have had the vaccine by then).

Once I know for sure I will contact everyone and gather numbers, I will do this as soon as possible as some of you may need accommodation as it's at a premium in the local area. Have a look at the website for more info, above are a couple of photos from the 2019 parade.

<https://www.edencamp.co.uk/events/all-services-parade-and-service/>

FACEBOOK FEEDBACK BY - MATT LAMBERT

So, as we get settled into the year 2021. (the best way we can) I have put together a quick update on our Facebook Group.

Overall, it is proving to have a positive impact, enabling group discussions, and allowing all to feel inclusive and a platform for us all to share thoughts, ideas, our feelings, and insights. It is also proving beneficial for the sharing of information and support for our membership.

Recently the page has become a place for remembering absent friends with the introduction of the 'gone but not forgotten' photo album and supporting Charitable donations for Recy Mechs by raising awareness, I would like to thank you all for sharing your photos including those of Remembrance Day, they make a real difference to the group and the page.

To date it has been necessary to remove 2 post from the Facebook page which were found not related to the nature of our organisation, as we are all aware, the webpage is there exclusively for use by our membership and not a platform for non-member comments or sales pitch.

Should any members wish to join the Facebook Group go to the link below:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/866652946839259/>

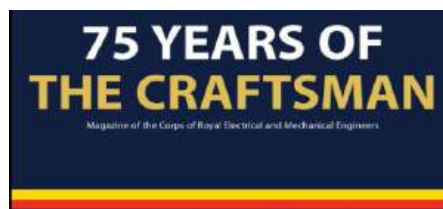


THE PHOTO GALLERY

I am sure that by now lots of the members have found the Photo Gallery on the Branch Facebook page. The purpose of the gallery is of course to place photographs which members wish to share with the membership. Whilst there are no hard and fast rules about what photographs can or cannot be placed on the gallery, we ask members to "think before posting".

Ideally the sort of material the branch would like to see are photographs related to branch activities. Such items as: Golden Oldies related to trade, be it people, functions, recovery tasks etc. - Photographs from Remembrance Day parades and events - Modern day Recovery Training and Technics - Recovery Camps - Attendance of members at Branch social activities - Photographs in remembrance of Branch Members who have passed. The list goes on, but whatever it is, please try and keep related to branch activities.

REME ASSOCIATION NEWS – REME CONNECT



REME Association have successfully launched the REME Connect Platform which will eventually replace the current REME Charity website, lots happening, plus the Craftsman Magazine celebrating its 75th birthday. Go online, read the latest Association Newsletter and details on REME Connect. Type REME Connect into your preferred search engine or follow this link <https://remeconnect.org/>

THE BRANCH/NEWSLETTER MATERIAL/SUGGESTIONS/ASSISTANCE

The Branch goes from strength to strength, current membership stands at 224, with more in the pipeline. 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, such an individual may be elected as an Honorary Member. All new applications and proposed members will be considered for approval upon receipt of the correct paperwork.

Material for our quarterly Newsletter is always welcome. If you have a story to tell, be it a Golden Oldie, a Modern Drama, a Good Deed Done, Recy Mech does Good, Life & Times of a serving or former Recovery Mechanic, Difficult Recovery Tasks, Social Events, photographs with the story behind them etc. etc. or anything linked to the life of a Recovery Recovery Mechanic, we want to hear from you.

Suggestions from the membership are most welcome. Should you have a suggestion that you feel would be for the good and benefit of the branch we need to hear from you.

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



THE RESERVIST BY - MARK O'MAHONY

Reservist membership is a potential growth area for the branch and as the Committees Reservist Representative and a serving member of 103 Bn, I am ideally placed to focus on the development of this area

My first experience of the 'TA' was in 84 during Ex Lionheart when following a successful recovery of a TM, my Leyland also became a casualty (poor VM crew driving, honest) and was itself recovered by a TA unit on the way 'forward'. I recall flagging down the TA crew commander, he looked 'proper old' (a bit like me today...how time flies). As a WO2, I went on to serve with REME reservist units as a regular SPSI at 2 Recovery Companies, 150 & 118. On leaving the regulars in late 2003 I became a full-time reservist with 118 Rec Coy, becoming ASM of the Coy and later becoming a Commissioned Officer.

Advertising of the branch is going to take various forms, contact through the REME Bn Recy Mech SPSI's to their troops, social media, and Facebook Groups such as the SEME Trg Wing and friends group pages, reunions, the Recy Mech jungle drums and of course Jonny Fulton who seems to know everyone. It is intended to keep all members updated with news updates on Reservist support to deployments, training, support during COVID etc.

My aim is to have reservist membership at 20% this time next year. I have already engaged with contacts at the Rec Coy's and received incredibly positive responses, the branch already has 2 reservists with another 6 persons wanting to join. All are very much looking forwards to meeting comrades not seen since GW1, Bosnia, Kosovo, GW2, Iraq and Afghan and other UN ops they have supported.



EXERCISE HARD PULL 19 - BY SGT D RADFORD PSI 124 REC COY.

On the 14th Sept 19, 102 Fs Bn REME kicked off the Recovery TTX Ex Iron Pull 19, although an Army Reserve Bn, soldiers from across the entire Army began to assemble ready to take part. The TTX was held out of Wathgill Camp and all training was conducted on Catterick Training Area. In total we had just over 100 troops, 52 of which were students so quite a decent camp was expected.

We had two syndicates of class 2 Recy Mechs preparing for their Class 1. Their training had been tailored to best prepare them for Class 1 training as we didn't want

to just "indirect them to death". DSEME have developed the Class 1 course over the years involving a lot more coaching/mentoring and complex recovery tasks. We had a DSEME instructor deliver the theory package for them before hitting the training area, this provided the students a great insight on what to expect when they arrive at DSEME. The practical training began slowly with the regular type jobs (some on the wet side) before ramping up towards the end. The Bedford on its roof in the pond certainly dropped a few arses, to their credit though, they all got stuck in and left the TTX better Recy Mechs than when they arrived.





The Jellies, 10 syndicates of class 3 Recy Mechs hit the training ground after the usual couple of days refreshing their theory knowledge. As with the Class 2 training, it began slow and ramped up. They had the usual 3 days on trailers, and we had managed to give them extra time on the SVR Heath phase. Great spirit and determination were on display throughout with the usual cheery banter you would expect from a bunch of Recy Mech's playing in the mud. The fact the weather was unusually kind for Catterick probably helped keep the smiles up. Again, all troops really leaned into the training and it was great to see the younger lads asking to have a crack at the harder tasks by the end of the training.



At the halfway point, a trip to Leeds Armouries had been laid on followed by a cultural tour of Leeds, City "the pubs". At the start of the day, I was a little anxious that we were about to unleash 50+ drunken Recy Mechs into Leeds however to my absolute amazement, no incidents requiring the Police or boxing ring cropped up and everyone made the bus home safe. A great day.



In all the TTX was a huge success, I seen some great prospects at all levels and passionately believe the future of God's trade will be in safe hands.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

For those who partake in the Recovery World Social Events, a couple of date to jot down in your diary. Let's hope that Covid-19 has departed from this world and allows the functions to go ahead.

ARV 9 – Dates for this fantastic function are **16 -17 April 2021**. (subject to the bug, getting a bit too close to call)

WO & SNCO Reunion – Dates a bit further away, so gives more hope, **23 – 25 July 2021**.

Let's not forget **Eden Camp 2021**, highlighted in Steve Robertshaw's article, dates yet to be released, but expected to be in September.



AND FINALLY, A MESSAGE FROM THE SCRIBE

Face masks are now almost a compulsory piece of Personal Protective Equipment, and rightly so, although sometimes when you are out and about, it is difficult to grasp which part of "wear a mask, keep 2 metres social distance" that some people do not understand.

For those of you who like to display the crest of the Recy Mech pin, Matthew Lambert has been busy and had a mask produced which proudly represents our branch. Anyone interested in purchasing such should contact Matthew direct on the following email address: lmattthew13@yahoo.com.



£10 including package and postage.

We are all very much aware that 2021 has really kicked off in the same vein as 2020 ended, extremely difficult times, with many suffering in terms of health, loss of jobs and facing financial hardship.

I am sure that our branch, a bunch of Recy Mechs, will do what we have always done, help where we can. However, first and foremost take care of yourself, your families, follow the rules, look forward to your turn at top of the list to receive the vaccine and hopefully we can come out the other end smiling and ready to get down to arranging some social activities.

Stay Safe

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