

Bradbury Mercury



Our Chairperson's Letter

With the support of our committee and members, I hope to continue the good work of my predecessors and fulfil my duties as the new chairman of our club to the best of my abilities. I realise that, at times, it may seem to some of you that the committee doesn't appear to be doing anything, but I can assure you that a lot of hard work does go on behind the scenes and I would like to take this opportunity to thank each one of them for volunteering to help with the smooth running of our club. I also thank every one of our members because without your support our reunions would not take place.



Last year's reunion was another resounding success thanks to Dave and Lyn's organisational skills and to everyone else who gave their time and expertise to ensure we all had a marvellous weekend. The entertainment was superb and the skits on Sunday evening were hilarious courtesy of those brave souls Syd, Reme and Dave who had us roaring with laughter.

That said, I would like to remind you all that Tom is hard at it organising our next reunion at The Oxford Belfry. Please help to make this arduous task as simple as possible by booking early for both the recce (for those wishing to attend) and the main do in October. Please also ensure that you select and submit your menu choices when requested. These simple things help to ease the hassle and problems that can arise and must be dealt with by the organisers of our great reunions. We all enjoy our get-togethers so let's get behind Tom and give him the support he deserves.

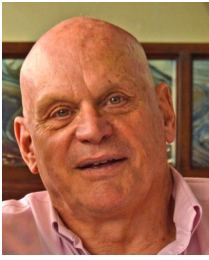
I am pleased to report that, thanks to Bill White's guidance, we are in the process of inviting our official VIP guests to this year's Gala Dinner and hope to be able to bring you news of acceptances in due course.

I hope that you have all enjoyed a wonderful Christmas and wish you a very happy and prosperous 2018.

Chris Abbott

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Jain's Ramblings



Ok, I have been trying to write these words for nigh on six months. As of now, the second week of January I have managed to write just over five lines. I keep thinking of things to say but when I sit down at the computer to enter them into MS Word I wonder what I was thinking about and realise I have completely forgotten everything I was trying to remember. Therefore, what I can do is thank all of you who submitted articles for the Mercury. I also appreciate that you trust me enough to edit your words. Rita and I were in the car one morning on the way to our Gym. My mind, not sure if I can say brain, was churning over. I said to Rita, "You know I always ask you for your opinion for decisions we take as a married couple? Where would we like to go for a holiday? or even what kind of shampoo and other hair products should I use." N.B. This does not include any polishing products. I have had too many of these old guys we see at the Reunion complaining of the glare when they meet me.

These last two years have/has been full of incidents, from planning the Stirling Reunion in 2016 to meeting friends who we have not seen for thirty years or more. Rita, as most you may know, was hospitalized on the morning of the visit to 16 Signal Regiment in Stafford. She has since made a good recovery and is back at the Gym. Last year we were at York for the Recce, only stayed for two nights before travelling on down to Taunton to see Rita's sister. Of course, as we left to come home I visited Sheppy's to stock up with a few bottles of their finest ciders. Two more reunions took place last year. In May I had a Facebook friend request from a Charles Abbott. Could only think of a Charlie Abbott. On checking the profile, I did indeed find that they were one and the same. Some you might have known Charlie, at 7 Sigs he was known as Charlie the Boot. Clicking on the yes button I was presented with a lot more suggested contacts. I sent out a few friend requests and was pleasantly surprised on how quickly many of the replies came back. Was contacted by Bert Lockhart who I had not been in touch with since the mid-seventies. We had a video link up on Messenger. He told me about a do at the Royal Hospital Chelsea involving ex 7 & 8 Sigs Rugby players. Needless to say, I went to that. It was a blast from the past, seeing people some whom I have never mind seen have heard off for about thirty years. One was Mark Neighbour who was

one of my L/Cpl Technicians in Cyprus in 1983, he ended up as the RSM at 9 Sigs. His replacement was Shaun Cook who was a Technician in Mike troop in my last posting before discharge. Our last Reunion of the year was held at Melton Mowbray. My last posting before my last six months at Blandford was Mike Troop, 28 (BR) Signals Regiment based in St Tonis Barracks Krefeld. The Troop boss when I left was Capt. John Phillips (TOT) who had been in the Tech course behind me at Catterick in 1967. He told about the reunion and we said yes that we would be there. Rita's friend Rose lives in Melton Mowbray so we saw her when we were there. I could recognise and remember names of most of the guys, but 30 years is a long time when your memories are of a Technician's who was in their late teens or early twenties. A few seem to have defied time whereas John Phillips just seemed to have lost his razor and/or the will to shave.

So what else is there to do? I have to end on a high note, so Rita asked me to tell you about her Bra listing.

Thought this would bring a smile to you all. Bras come in 4 types. The Catholic type supports the masses. The Salvation Army type lifts up the fallen, and the Methodist type keeps them staunch and upright. And finally, the Baptist type makes mountains out of molehills!

I have had received a lot of spam e-mail in the last year. One supposes to be a TV Licence rebate. This was really easy to disprove as we do not pay a fee for our Licence. This originates from somebody in Mali. I get ones saying I need to confirm a PayPal payment. They look real but any email saying that you are getting a rebate but just to check please fill in your bank details is NOT to answered. If in doubt check with your bank etc While I am on this kick, if you are planning to travel to the USA for 90 days or less you need to register for an ESTA. All eligible international travellers who wish to travel to the United States under the **Visa Waiver Program** must apply for authorization. <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/> Only go to this website. Any others might or might not register you but will charge you up to £75 for this dubious privilege. It only costs you \$14.00 for a ESTA valid for two years. N.B. One ESTA per person, but a family can do a Group ESTA.

A Poem For Remembrance Day

Why are they selling poppies, Mummy?
Selling poppies in town today.
The poppies, child, are flowers of love.
For the men who marched away.

But why have they chosen a poppy, Mummy?
Why not a beautiful rose?
Because my child, men fought and died
In the fields where the poppies grow.

But why are the poppies so red, Mummy?
Why are the poppies so red?
Red is the colour of blood, my child.
The blood that our soldiers shed.

The heart of the poppy is black, Mummy.
Why does it have to be black?
Black, my child, is the symbol of grief.
For the men who never came back.

But why, Mummy are you crying so?
Your tears are giving you pain.
My tears are my fears for you my child.
For the world is forgetting again.

(Author unknown)

Iain Haldane.

When I was researching the Poem "The Fallen" by Lawrence Binyon I found many images with Poppies in pictures. The poem in the one shown above caught my eye. As you can see it says Author Unknown. I did some research and came across this site:- <http://marionsmeepings.blogspot.co.uk/2012/04/poem-for-remembrance-day.html>

It is a Blog called Marion's meepings. The blog had published the poem and it got this Reply from Anonymous on **November 11, 2012 at 8:57 PM**

*"My grandmother **Mary Link nee Gilbert** is the author of this but sadly we cannot authenticate. She was born Ashford Kent England 1891 and wrote this to answer her sons inquisitive mind. My mother taught this to all of us as children, like I have mine and my grandchildren. A truly remarkable and honest observation. And sadly, the world is forgetting again"*

It seems to be well known in the Royal British Legion, but that is not verified. Also reported to be popular down under especially on Anzac Day.

So if anybody can throw any more light on this I would like to know if any of the above is true or false.

Iain Haldane.

I came across this poem while I was surfing the web. I contacted the author and asked him for permission to reprint it in the Bradbury Mercury. I explained about how the Mercury came about. This is his e-mail reply. Yes it is in American English, again yes a bit of an oxymoron.

This is his reply.

"I would be honored for you to use the poem if you wish.

Please accept my sincerest thanks for your service and please offer the same to your compatriots.

Best Wishes. Jay Cantrell."

In Honor of D-Day

In the Northern part of Europe,
Where the Channel meets the shore;
There sits a lonely stretch of sand,
Once touched by the hand of War.

You can watch the tourists staring
As they try to understand
The bravery the men must have
To wade up on that strand.

Twenty-thousand men set off
From the coasts of Jolly Old England
Four thousand men would perish
And give to God their soul.

On Omaha and Utah,
Gold, Juno and on Sword,
Those brave Allied soldiers
Made their peace unto the Lord.

The men they hailed from Southern towns
Or cities in the North;
From London, Maine and Saskatoon
Ike called them to set forth.

The job was planned for many years;
Nothing left to chance.
The Allied troops were coming
To push the Germans out of France.

The chilled winds blew from the Heavens;
Icy rain fell from the sky;
But the soldiers still came onward
They would not be denied.

On Omaha and Utah,
Gold, Juno and on Sword,
The brave Allied soldiers
Made their peace unto the Lord.

The Germans held the high ground,
Their guns a harrowing sight;
The beach was fraught with peril
As the Allies did alight.

Men and comrades fell
When the Germans found their aim;
Some died there in the water
The rest pushed back their pain.

They shivered in the cold
But would not give into fear;
The Allied troops kept going
And gave their lives so dear.

On Omaha and Utah,
Gold, Juno and on Sword,
The brave Allied soldiers
Made their peace unto the Lord.

In the Northern part of Europe,
Where the Channel meets the sea;
Stands a solitary figure
On the coast of Normandy.

He sees the crosses in a row
Where the heroes now do lay;
They fell seven decades the past
On what history calls D-Day.

He takes his hat off slowly
To those who died and those who live;
To the brave souls, good and true,
Who gave all they had to give.

On Omaha and Utah,
Gold, Juno and on Sword,
The brave Allied soldiers
Made their peace unto the Lord.

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Home for war veterans to become £12m care village

Paul Britton

home into a care village extended over the west has always able to offer respite years, but has now remained the largest VITAL support for armed care to even more ex- become unsustainable recruitment area in the forces veterans has services personnel - a both com-mercially and UK. received a much first for the region. operation-ally to meet "Their needs are here needed boost after The care village will the needs of a modern now and will be for plans to transform a include 64 nursing care provider. years to come." nursing home into a home bedrooms with a The plans will see a £12.5m care village special dementia wing, phased demolition of have been given the 34 independent living the building to green light. Broughton apartments, a military accommodate residents House in Salford has support hub, gym, a and the creation of two been a final refuge for cafe, a hair salon and L-shaped blocks rising heroes for more than a meeting rooms, a to four storeys, with century - a care home memorial park with a and courtyard for those who have cenotaph and centrepiece. Work fought to protect us all. remembrance walls, could start early next Opened in 1916 to treat and landscaped year with a sched-uled soldiers returning gardens. completion date of injured from the In a first for the charity, 2020. horrors of the First the support hub will Broughton House chief World War, the home also engage with executive Ty Platten has evolved into a veterans living in the said: "While and unique healthcare community. women vary in age ex- charity for veterans in The former merchant's servicemen from those their final years. villa, which lies within a who served in the Now councillors in two acre site off Park Second World War to Salford have approved Road in Broughton, has more recently Iraq and plans to transform the been adapted and Afghanistan, the north



● Broughton House chief executive Ty Platten

This article is from the Manchester Weekly News 28th September 2017 and is reprinted by kind permission of the Manchester Evening News.

Lawrence Matheson

MEN Syndication

The article shown above was brought to my attention by Kerry Stylianou who saw it in the Manchester Weekly News. He asked me to include in it in the Mercury,. I told Kerry that we needed permission from the Manchester Evening News (MEN) the publisher of the Manchester Weekly News. After contacting the News desk of the MEN, I was graciously given permission to publish the Broughton House article by Lawrence Matheson MEN Syndication.

Home pledges to continue support for Armed Forces

Paul Britton

The only care home for ex-servicemen and women in Greater Manchester has signed a new covenant pledging its support to the Armed Forces community.

Broughton House in Salford last year celebrated 100 years of caring for those who have dedicated their lives to protecting their country.

The home on Park Lane provides residential care and support for ex-members of the Armed Forces - and is about to enter a new chapter in its proud and vital history.

Professor Sir Netar Mallick, chair of Broughton House, and Colonel Philip Harrison, commander of the British Armed Forces in the north west, signed the Armed Forces Covenant - a national commitment to those who serve or have served.

Greater Manchester's ten councils have already signed the covenant, pledging to put armed forces personnel and veterans at the heart of public services.

Senior officials from the Armed Forces attended the signing at Broughton House.

The covenant reads: "We recognise the value serving personnel, both regular and reservists, veterans and military families contribute to our business and our country."

A £12.5m plan to transform Broughton House into a unique 'care village' was given the green light last month.

The care village will include 64 nursing home

bedrooms with a special dementia wing, 34 independent living apartments, a military support hub featuring an advice centre, gym, treatment rooms, a cafe, a hair salon and meeting rooms, a memorial park with a cenotaph and remembrance walls and landscaped gardens featuring a bowling green and a bandstand - to help veterans of all ages and needs.

And in a first for the charity, the hub will also engage with veterans living in the community, supporting them in areas including health, welfare, education and social needs.

Professor Mallick said: "Broughton House was established by the community to serve veterans who needed help. The covenant is a vow to offer support to veterans from individual organisations such as us."

Colonel Harrison said the covenant also represented a pledge to keep the public safe, invest in reservists and support the cadet scheme.

He said he wanted Broughton House to mirror the Royal Hospital Chelsea, the home of the iconic Chelsea Pensioners, adding: "I am proud to sign the covenant. It is an expression of collective support."

Work could start early next year with a completion date of 2020.

Visit www.broughtonhouse.com to support the home's fundraising campaign.

This article is from the Manchester Weekly News Thursday 5th October 2017 and is reprinted by kind permission of the Manchester Evening News.

Lawrence Matheson

MEN Syndication

Donation to Broughton House by 60s-16ers Reunion Club



Broughton House, Salford, Manchester.

Kerry Stylianou

Christine and I recently visited Broughton House in Salford, Manchester, which is on similar lines to the Chelsea Pensioners, but takes members from all the Armed Forces, not just the Army.

Although we had known about Broughton House, it was an article in our local weekly paper that it was being renovated and upgraded, which made us take more of an interest in it.



Subsequently, I sent copies of the articles to Iain Haldane for inclusion in The Bradbury Mercury. Iain said we needed to get permission from the Manchester Evening News, the publisher of the article before it could be put in the Mercury. Iain contacted the editorial Staff at the Manchester Evening

News asking for permission to reprint the articles about Broughton House. The reply



came from Lawrence Matheson MEN Syndication seeing that it could be reprinted and to credit The Manchester Evening News.

Iain then asked if we could go to Broughton House to speak to them and take some photographs. These would be better than scanning the newsprint. I also asked our Committee if it was possible to make a donation from the Reunion Club. Dave Aldous said we could use the £200 that he would normally have used for a local charity as York Reunion Organizer, but hadn't used, and the Committee sanctioned it.

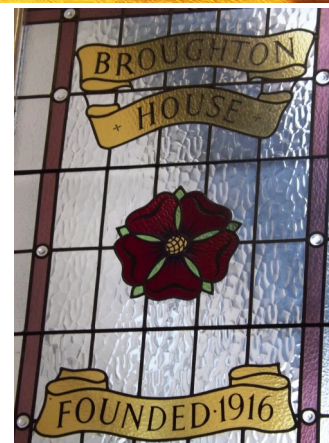


After a few phone calls we were invited to visit Broughton House. We signed in and were taken through to the foyer where every



possible Regiment and Corps Badges were on plaques on the walls. We were then taken to the first floor and were amazed at how much memorabilia were on the walls, in glass cases and every inch of shelving was used, plus uniforms, caps etc.

to be arranged after the alterations and refurbishment are complete.



I presented the cheque to the Chairman/ Manager, which was much appreciated (being a Charity). After having shown us around, we had a cup of tea and a chat, and they told us that sometime in the future they can accommodate about 20 of us for a meal. The date of the visit is



The Siege and Battle of Kohima



14th Army



2nd Division

Bob Cook

On 15th March 1944, Lt Gen Mutaguchi Renya, Commander of the Japanese 15th Army, launched his 3 Divisions across the Chindwin River. This was Operation U-Go and Mutaguchi intended to it to be the start of his 'March on Delhi'.

The Japanese intention was a pre-emptive strike at Imphal in Manipur State where Lt Gen William (Uncle Bill) Slim, Commander of the British 14th Army was building up his supply base there under IV Corps which was intended to be the lead in an offensive into Burma.

Two of Mutaguchi's Divisions, the 15th and 33rd were to strike South and West to encircle and destroy IV Corps and to capture the mass of stores and equipment already built up at Kanglatongbi just north of Imphal.

Mutaguchi was so sure that his divisions would capture these stores that his troops only carried 3 weeks supplies of food. Mutaguchi had fought the British before at the Fall of Singapore and during the battle for Burma in 1942. He had found that the British would retreat each time, leaving enormous amounts of stores and equipment. He had no reason to suppose that the British would not retreat again. So confident was he that he had his troops trained in the use of British weaponry in anticipation of their capture.

His third division – the 31st under command of Lt Gen Sato Kotoku, he send north and east with orders to cut the road between Dimapur and Imphal to prevent reinforcements coming to the beleaguered IV Corps. Sato was given just one order at this point and that was to cut the road to Imphal at a small Hill Station called Kohima.

It had always been Mutaguchi's intention to send Sato further west in response to firm suggestions that Indians would rise against the British in a popular revolt.

Facing Sato's approximately 16,000 men were just 1500 combatant troops and about 1000 non-combatants, all made up from a Hodge podge of men from a variety of units under command of the Kohima Garrison commander Col Richards.

Meanwhile, 2000 land miles away in the south west of India, the British 2nd Infantry Division under Maj Gen JML Grover MC had just completed some jungle training. After having been told that his division would not be needed, Grover was ordered to concentrate his Division at Dimapur prior to moving straight up the line to engage the Japanese. Grover was given just one order – 'to open the road to Imphal' before he could do that, he had to relieve the Garrison at Kohima which by now was under siege.

When Grover had received his orders to concentrate at Dimapur, Sato was just 50

miles from Kohima. Grover was 2000 miles away – the race was on. Sato reached Kohima on 4th April 1944.

The backbone of the besieged garrison was 4th Battalion, Royal West Kent Regiment (RWK). The RWK was a Territorial Army unit from the 5th Indian Infantry Division that had been airlifted from the Arakan in Burma where they had great and bitter experience of fighting the Japanese. They had just made it into the garrison before the road back to Dimapur was also cut.

Over the next 14 days the Japanese tightened their grip on the small besieged garrison, squeezing them into a smaller and smaller area. Artillery and snipers kept the defenders pinned down by day and by night attack after attack forced the defenders back. One by one, each small defended hill or mound fell to the relentless attacks. The body count mounted on both sides. The stench of decaying flesh and faeces was overpowering as there was no opportunity to bury the mounting heaps of bodies. Some of the most severe fighting was across the width of the District Commissioners tennis court.

The RAF tried to keep the small force supplied but had to drop in smaller and smaller areas with the result that a number of casualties were caused by the dropped loads. Inevitably a number of the loads also dropped outside the small perimeter and were welcomed by the enemy.

Meanwhile the 2nd Division were arriving at Dimapur by road, rail and air and as they did, they were pushed up the line. Grover had to make sure that his lines of communication were clear as he advanced and this entailed killing each and every Japanese soldier as he advanced. He could not afford to leave a single one. The Japs themselves just did not surrender. They fought to the death. They were dying for the Emperor and they believed there was glory in that.

The siege was breached on the 18th April.

The wounded and ‘useless mouths were evacuated down a steep hillside (they were all steep hillsides at Kohima) to waiting transport and taken to Dimapur. Over the next 2 days, the exhausted defenders were relieved in place by relatively fresh troops from the 2nd Division. The Siege of Kohima was over.

Sato had taken every height on Kohima Ridge except Garrison Hill and it was from this position that Grover began his 7-week campaign to rid the whole of Kohima ridge of the Japanese. He was aided in this by the enemy themselves as Mutaguchi had ignored the logistic of war, depending instead on captured stores as he had previously become accustomed to. Sato’s men were dying of starvation, thirst, disease and exhaustion, as well as the effects of Battle injuries. He was short of just about everything and in the middle of May he went over to the defence and finally in early June he ordered a withdrawal. For the first time in their history, a Japanese General had retired from the battlefield in the face of the enemy. The remains of the 31st Division retreated down the Imphal road closely chased by the men of the 2nd Division.

The leading elements of the 2nd Division in the form of 2nd Durham Light Infantry touched hands with the leading elements of IV Corps at Milestone 109 on the 22nd June 1944. The Battle of Kohima was over.

The fighting at Kohima was savage, it was unrelenting and it was hand to hand. Both sides fought to the death. The Japanese lost an unknown number but estimated to be not less than 7,000. The British & Indian troops lost about 4,200. Of the 4 Brigadiers in a British Division, 2 were killed by direct enemy action and 3 were wounded (work that out); 5 Commanding Officers were also killed by direct enemy action. When such senior officers are being killed, it’s a sure thing that the rank and file are being killed in great numbers.

2 Victoria Crosses were awarded during the

Siege and the Battle – both of them posthumously to LCpl Harman and Capt. Randle. Before it was removed from the British Army Order of Battle, the 2nd Division held a reunion each year in York. Now there is just a Kohima Memorial Day held each July. At the base of the main battlefield at Kohima is a huge stone monolith donated by the Naga hill people of Kohima and erected by the Divisional Engineers. On a plaque fixed to the stone is inscribed the Kohima Epitaph which should be familiar to all British soldiers, past and present.

**WHEN YOU GO HOME
TELL THEM OF US AND SAY
FOR YOUR TOMORROW
WE GAVE OUR TODAY**



The Kohima Ridge

The road to the left towards Dimapur; the road to the right to Imphal. The area of the Tennis Court is clearly seen. The whole area from the ‘pinch’ point to the apex is now a War Cemetery.

Of all of the regiments that fought at Kohima, only one is still featured in the British Army Order of Battle. The rest have been amalgamated or disbanded. That regiment is 2nd Signal Regiment .

Bob Cook sent me the article about the Battle of Kohima for inclusion in the Mercury. I must edit any article before placing it in the newsletter. I got curious as to why Bob had sent me this article, what was his connection to 2nd Division and Kohima? I remembered seeing photos he had posted on Facebook about Kohima. I contacted him and asked him if he would write a few words of explanation. He replied with the words shown below.

Iain Haldane, Editor

Bob Cook

My involvement with the 2nd Infantry Division Kohima Museum Trust.

It was while I was the chairman of Fulford (York) branch of the RBL in 2007, that I asked one of the branch members if he would step up as the Welfare Officer for the Branch. "No way" he exclaimed. "Just as soon as I get someone to take over the Museum, I'm off south to live near my children and grandchildren."

Stupidly I asked what Museum he was talking about. Even more stupidly I blurted out that I would do it. At 08:30hrs the following morning he rang to ask if I had been serious in saying that I would do the Museum!

Within 48 hours he had arranged an interview with the Brigadier to see if I was 'suitable', after all I was just a retired Warrant Officer (WO) and such posts were normally only given to Retired Officers (RO).

Having explained that my dad served with the 2nd Division in BAOR as well as my brother George (who many of you will remember). Then there was me having served with 2nd Signal Regiment. The Brigadier was almost impressed by this family line of service, but it was when he asked where I lived and on hearing that I lived within walking distance of the museum which is inside the Barracks in York, he said "Well that means that you won't need travel expenses then. You've got the job."

However, as I was just a retired WO, they would give the accounts to one of the trustees, despite that fact that I had already been running my own business for almost ten years by then. I was still sufficiently disciplined at this point to say, "Thank you Brigadier."

And so, the Kohima Museum passed from the hands of a short line of RO's who wouldn't scrounge, beg, borrow or steal to a retired SSM/RQMS who would do all those things in Big Letters.

The previous guy put his house on the market and moved south within two months and I've been doing it ever since. My connection with the Museum has taken me to Kohima nine times to lead small groups. It has taken me to Japan to meet with Japanese Veterans of the Battle. It has seen me invited to give talks to soldier and civilian groups, including a Keynote speech to open a conference of International Japanese to English translators. I get invited to The Japanese Embassy each year to a reconciliation reception.

Most of all the connection to the Museum has confirmed to me that the British Soldier through the ages has been and still is a remarkable weapon of war.

Of all the battalions, units and formations that fought at Kohima, only 2nd Signal Regiment still exists in the British Army Order of Battle.

For the Fallen

Poem by Robert Laurence Binyon (1869-1943), published in The Times newspaper on 21st September 1914

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,
England mourns for her dead across the sea.
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill: Death august and royal
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres.
There is music in the midst of desolation
And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds
uncounted,
They fell with their faces to the foe.

*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.*

They mingle not with their laughing comrades again;
They sit no more at familiar tables of home;
They have no lot in our labour of the day-time;
They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hopes profound,
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,
To the innermost heart of their own land they are
known

As the stars are known to the Night;

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain,
As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,
To the end, to the end, they remain.



Plaque unveiled in 2003 at Polzeath to commemorate the place where For the Fallen is believed to have been composed.

*Robert Laurence Binyon,
by artist William Strang.*



Laurence Binyon composed his best known poem while sitting on the cliff-top looking out to sea from the dramatic scenery of the north Cornish coastline. A plaque marks the location at Pentire Point, north of Polzeath. However, there is also a small plaque on the East Cliff north of Portreath, further south on the same north Cornwall coast, which also claims to be the place where the poem was written.

The poem was written in mid September 1914, a few weeks after the outbreak of the First World War. During these weeks the British Expeditionary Force had suffered casualties following its first encounter with the Imperial German Army at the Battle of Mons on 23rd August, its rear guard action during the retreat from Mons in late August and the Battle of Le Cateau on 26th August, and its participation with the French Army in holding up the Imperial German Army at the First Battle of the Marne between 5th and 9th September 1914.

On his 70th birthday in August 1939, Laurence Binyon explained that the idea for his most famous poem came to him on a clifftop at Polzeath in Cornwall: "The stanza 'They Shall Grow Not Old' was written first and dictated the rhythmical movement of the whole poem." The words of these four crucial lines beat sonorously in monosyllables, echoing the solemn, funereal drums of the second stanza. It is this sombre, repetitive rhythm that invests the fourth stanza with such enduring power when read aloud in public.

These words of the fourth stanza have become especially familiar and famous, having been adopted by the Royal British Legion as an Exhortation for ceremonies of Remembrance to commemorate fallen Servicemen and women.

Laurence Binyon was too old (45) to enlist in the military forces but he went to work for the Red Cross as a medical orderly in 1916. Some reports say that he was at the Front with the French Forces. He lost several close friends and his brother-in-law in the war.

This year on Remembrance Sunday Parade held in George Square Glasgow, Rita and I were in the crowd of onlookers as usual. Why was I not involved the Parade myself? Well that is a story for the next time we meet. We were shivering in the wintry Glasgow sunshine, well me not so much as I am used to Scottish winters and I had on my super warm Brown Suede Coat with sheepskin lining, scarf and gloves.

As I listened to these words, "**They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:**" I wondered who wrote them. I mean I have heard them over the years on various Remembrance Day Parades. But only this year did I even think of where they came from. So of course, I used Google to find out more about them.

During my searches I came across this web site: - <http://www.greatwar.co.uk/> I contacted them to ask for permission to publish their article about Lawrence Binyon in the Mercury. I received a very nice reply from Joanna Legg (née Parker). The website was created in 1998 by **Joanna Legg** (née Parker), **Graham Parker** (*Lieutenant Colonel Graham Parker, OBE (Retired)*) and **David Legg**.

For more details look at:- <http://www.greatwar.co.uk/howeare.htm>

“Gentleman Jim” and “Escaping The Ordinary”

You might be interested to see below the letter from Reunion Club member, Lorna Almonds-Windmill to the Editor of the Daily Telegraph. It was printed in the newspaper on 27 December 2017. Lorna served in 16 Signal Regiment from July 1965 until October 1968. Her letter responded to a Boxing Day article by Ben Farmer about a “legendary” compass which Paddy Mayne had ripped out of an enemy aircraft. In the article, he said: “The compass was handed to “Gentleman Jim” Almonds, another of the original complement of the SAS, who was to fix it to a Jeep for trial tests. Almonds was renowned for his engineering skills and helped the fledgling SAS adapt much of its equipment for special missions.”



Lorna Almonds-Windmill

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SAS compass trophy

SIR – I was grateful to Ben Farmer for acknowledging the engineering skills of my father, “Gentleman Jim” Almonds (“Uncovered, the compass that proves truth of an SAS legend”, report, December 26).

My father was the only member of “L” Detachment 1st SAS to keep a contemporaneous diary, and he lived to the age of 91 (Obituaries, September 13 2005). So the compass and its story are well known in my family.

Paddy Mayne gave the gyro compass (which he had torn out of a C42 enemy aircraft during the raid on Tamet airfield in Libya) to my father, his troop sergeant at the time, with a request that he modify it so that it could work in an SAS jeep.

In those early days, the SAS had to use a sun compass for navigation, because the metal of the jeep interfered with a magnetic one. But using a sun compass meant frequent stops for sightings and adjustments. So a gyro compass on a vehicle would have been a boon.

The compass has been in my family’s possession ever since. If one blows into it very hard, a slight flicker of movement appears on the dial. It was designed to be kept working from the “bleed” of an aero engine, and the exhaust from an SAS jeep cannot compare with that from an aircraft engine, so the adaptation couldn’t be done.

We hope the National Army Museum’s Special Forces exhibition, to which we have lent the compass, will be a huge success.

Lorna Almonds-Windmill

Norton St Philip, Somerset

Readers might also like to note the following details of Lorna’s new **E-Book** SEQUEL to ‘Gentleman Jim’ – ‘Escaping The Ordinary: How a Founder of the SAS Blazed a Trail at the End of Empire’. The book has a Foreword by Sir Ranulph Fiennes, OBE.

The book’s publishing details are: “Escaping the Ordinary: How a Founder of the SAS Blazed a Trail at the End of Empire” E-Book, £4.99 ISBN 9781788030670. Publication date: 18 January 2018. Available for download worldwide from all major E-book retailers, including Amazon, Apple, Google Play, Kobo and Nook onto laptops, iPads and tablets, Kindle and computers.

Links for ‘Escaping The Ordinary’: On Facebook search for “Escaping The Ordinary”.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JhyBeZdUXVE&feature=youtu.be>

https://www.facebook.com/Escaping-the-Ordinary-156641508432833/?modal=admin_todo_tour

https://twitter.com/LornaAW_author

Twitter link for Lorna: - @LornaWA_author.

60s-16ers Gala Dinner



Mercure Hotel, York, September 2017



Ladies who served in 16th Signal Regiment in the 60s.

The Gala Dinner for the 60s-16ers Reunion Club was held in the Mercure Hotel York on the evening of Saturday 30th September 2017. The following is the Grace produced and delivered by The Reverend Frances Canham, Wife of Colonel (Retd) Terry Canham Regimental Secretary.

For finest wine and time to dine with friends both
new and old;

For Chicken, Beef or Hake and starters hot and
cold.

For heads and hands that made the plans for all our
delectation;

We thank you, gracious Lord at our 16er's
celebration.

For all the years we've lived and served; and
laughed and loved – (or hated)!

For all the understanding of those on whom we've
grated!

For all who cared and all whom shared in
memories we treasure

We give you thanks O gracious Lord, in extra
special measure.

For fellowship and comradeship and good old days
to relish,

For news to bring and lamps to swing and stories to
embellish!

For those we see and those we miss and colleagues
now departed;

We give you thanks, O gracious Lord, for all your
gifts imparted.



Over the Top

They huddled closer together, finding solace in their camaraderie.

It fell to Corporal Smith to say it, "You are our Captain, and as such, it must fall to you to be the one to lead."

His heart sank, he had led them so many times before, but this one was different, he knew that the consequences could be horrendous if his leadership skills failed him now.

His squad was now a tight formidable unit, honed through many brutal and bloody clashes. He had watched many soldiers pay the price of failure, watched them fall by the wayside, as they were unable to cope either physically or mentally by the challenges and trials set before them.

He looked at his squad with pride, but also felt a certain fear and trepidation. He knew that the effort of repelling the constant attacks, and then making that final brave and foolhardy advance had "won the day" against their formidable foes. However, this night action that they now faced was totally different. This was something most of the younger soldiers had never experienced.

His main concern, that their discipline may not yet be sufficient, or their ability to act in a cohesive formation would be impaired due to fatigue, fear, or even, the heady mix of celebration and bravado due to today's victory. He feared, that the ultimate shame may occur, the fact that soldiers under his leadership would refuse, or fail to perform at that critical moment.

He could see and sense the nervousness of the younger men, they realised that their names could be forever etched in the Regimental Annals as either unsurpassed heroes, or, as a bunch of inept, ill disciplined wasters.

He could see the various signs of the jangling nerves, the beads of sweat forming on the foreheads and top lips of the younger men, the stoic gaze into the mid distance of the older, more experienced men. As these Old Sweats relived similar past adventures, the potential for utter disaster still hovered above them.

He tried to lighten the atmosphere, "Frank, what did that German say after today's altercation?"

"I am not certain" Frank replied, "I only have a basic grasp of German, but I think it cast aspersions on all of our mothers, our ability to procreate, and for some weird reason, our ability to drive."

"Billy, you had experience of this type of "Night Do" in the lines at Vimy, would you care to share your thoughts with the rest of us?"

Billy replied, "This is regarded as the most important aspect of the **Warrior Code**, even more important than any skirmishing, fighting, punching, kicking, biting or even severe injury. To have been successful on the field of battle, or any great trial, and then go on that same night to stage a devastating surprise action is regarded as the epitome of manhood, the sign of a true warrior."

"The secret of success is to trust in your Comrades, to know that they will be trying their best to act as a unit, working to maintain discipline, hoping that this will help overcome any faltering steps, or actions, that may arise due to any individual's personal misgivings."

He recognised the calming effect these words were having on his men as they visibly relaxed.

He addressed them in a lowered voice, "Men, zero hour is upon us, you must all search within yourselves, for that very last vestige of courage. If you do your best, then that is all I can ask. There are many more soldiers in close proximity who are not part of our group, who even when the action starts, will find time to criticise and castigate our performance in this moment of potential triumph. It is important that individually, and as a group, we ignore any and all of our detractors, and concentrate on treating this as any other military exercise. I would stress that the light levels are poor, there are many physical obstacles that present their own form of danger, and this, is without the fire and potential explosions from the main event."

"I would re-iterate once again, protect your weapons at all costs, they are your most important piece of equipment."

He checked his wristwatch, a last fleeting scan of his men, the expectant faces, some with now a hint of a smile. He surveyed the landscape, looked at the nearby soldiers in their various groups. He then ran through his mental check list, watched as the second hand swept round and touched twelve, He understood and realised that all of the times he had been "Over the Top", would now stand him in very good stead.

Reme raised his whistle, blew three quick blasts, and shouted,

"In celebration of winning the B.A.O.R. Rugby Cup"

"We give the 4 Square Club, a Full Monty, Ay Zigga Zigga Zoomba"

Rabbie Gurns

Submitted by Bill Jack.

Bill Jack, being old school, contacted me via the telephone before sending me the above words of wisdom. Seemed to be aimed at Reme. I can only hope he (Reme) can understand wisdom. I had a flashback there and wondered why I was writing about cricket. I had a slug of Port, calmed down and realised that Wisden is about cricket, wisdom is what us auld yins are supposed have got to be able to teach the grandkids how not to misbehave.

Iain

THE NOT FORGOTTEN ASSOCIATION

From Comradeship To Challenge™

Keith Harding.

Christmas Party

Rose and I have been attending the Surrey Heath Veterans association, over the last three months we have been introduced to many of the charities that help veterans.

On our last visit we were asked, "Would you like to go a Christmas party". Always up for a free food, we jumped at the chance and said, "Yes please." Okay we will put you forward.



We received a letter with invitations and instructions. Quite surprised we found ourselves invited to St James Palace for afternoon tea. The Not Forgotten Association (NFA) hold Christmas Teas for veterans of all three services during the Christmas period. The NFA also organise many events throughout the year for disabled veterans. We attended the Christmas party on the 7th Dec 2017. Travelling on a train for the first time in 20 years, there was no steam, no soot, no clack, clack, clack. Took a taxi from Waterloo to St James Palace, heavily guarded by police.

We had to take our passports and a utilities bill, plus driving license. We had a great time with carols from the Portsmouth Army wives, magicians, people singing Christmas songs. The Duchess of Gloucester made a visit speaking to many the 300 veterans present. We then returned home by train, very smooth. We travelled first class, so we had a seat. It is now Saturday evening and we have slept for most of Friday and Saturday morning. We are told the photos are on social media. We have not seen them yet.

You will have to look on Twitter, and put in the royal party.

There are 299 Photographs of the December party on the NFA website.

The URL for the NFA is: - <http://nfassociation.org/galleries>



Sports Report: Audrey Grainge returns to Lawn Bowls. Completes a successful season after returning from injury.

Audrey Grainge

After three years of health problems first my eyes and then my knee injury and replacement I have got back into bowling. I have had an amazing season and thoroughly enjoyed playing lawn Bowls. Over the season I have entered five competitions. Winning the Mixed Singles one-day competition and the Ladies Knock Out competition. I was also in the team who won the Mixed Fours competition. I came runners up in both the Mixed Pairs and the Ladies Singles One Day competition. All in all, I had a successful season on the bowling green.



Another highlight of my year was being awarded my Honour Badge for services to the Royal Signals Association for the 15 years as Chairman of the Middlesbrough Branch. It was presented to me at the 60s-16ers Gala Dinner at York in September 2017 by Colonel (Ret) Terry Canham.



Slimming Report: Kerry and Christine Stylianou a shadow of their former selves.

Why we decided to slim.

Our reason for slimming was that we both saw that we had put so much weight on we had become obese. Walking for me became difficult and neither of us could do things we wanted to, especially me, so we decided to do something about it. We joined Slimming World and started an exercise program, mine harder than Christine's as I had much more weight to lose. I weighed in at 18st 10lb, at 5' 6" I was wider than tall, I am now 11st 7lb and have gone from size XXXL to Medium. Christine started at 11st 3lb and is now 8st 7lb and has gone from size 18 to size 10 dresses.

We are both enjoying a new lease on life and feel fitter than we have done for a number of years.



The pictures tell the story, your mission, if possible, is to work out who is who and the before and after pictures. This started after the Stirling Reunion and was nearly complete by the York Reunion.



My wife and I walked past a swanky new restaurant last night.
"Did you smell that food?" she asked. "Incredible!"
Being the nice guy, I am, I thought, "What the heck, I'll treat her!"
So, we walked past it again.

Wreath laid at Axminster War Memorial on Behalf of the 60s-16ers Reunion Club.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

Axminster

November 12TH 2017

As if on cue the sun came out to shine on the Royal British Legion, Axminster Branch, for the Remembrance Parade and Service to the Minster Church.

This was, as usual, very well attended and the laying of thirty two wreaths was lead by Mrs Anne Sheppard, WRAC Royal Signals (Rtd), and culminated in all three services being represented. Anne Sheppard served in Germany in 16th Signal Regiment and is a member of the 60s-16ers Reunion Club. This is made up from Army and NAAFI personnel who served in 16th Signal Regiment during the 1960's.

The wreath laying was followed by a service of Remembrance in the Minster and that was followed by a three course Remembrance Day Meal in the Masonic Hall.



JOKE PAGE

Classes for Men

Note: These are classes for men offered at the local Adult Learning Centre. Due to the complexity and difficulty level of their content, each course will accept a maximum of 8 participants.

Topic 1: How to fill up the ice cube trays. Step by step, with slide presentation.

Topic 2: The toilet paper roll: Do they grow on the holders? Roundtable discussion.

Topic 3: Is it possible to urinate using the technique of lifting the seat up and avoiding the floor/walls and nearby bathtub? Group practice.

Topic 4: Fundamental differences between the laundry hamper and the floor. Pictures and explanatory graphics.

Topic 5: The after-dinner dishes and silverware: Can they levitate and fly into the kitchen sink? Examples on video.

Topic 6: Loss of identity: Losing the remote to your significant other. Help-line support and support groups.

Topic 7: Learning how to find things, starting with looking in the right place instead of turning the house upside down while screaming. Open forum.

Topic 8: Health watch: Bringing her flowers is not harmful to your health. Graphics and audio tape.

Topic 9: Real men ask for directions when lost. Real life testimonials.

Topic 10: Is it genetically impossible to sit quietly as she parallel parks? Driving simulation.

Topic 11: Learning to live: Basic differences between mother and wife. On-line class and role playing.

Topic 12: How to be the ideal shopping companion: Relaxation exercises, meditation, and breathing techniques.

Topic 13: How to fight cerebral atrophy: Remembering birthdays, anniversaries, other important dates and calling when you're going to be late. Cerebral shock therapy sessions and full lobotomies offered.

NOTE: Upon completion of the course, diplomas will be issued to the survivors.

The Counselling Session

While attending a marriage seminar on communication, Jim and his wife listened to the instructor declare: "It is essential that husbands and wives know the things that are important to each other. For instance, gentlemen, can you name your wife's favourite flower?"

Jim leaned over, touched his wife's arm gently and whispered, "Gold Medal Self-Raising, isn't it?" The rest of the story is not pleasant.

Bad Diet

A Doctor was addressing a large audience in Miami, Florida.

"The material we put into our stomachs is enough to have killed most of us sitting here. Red meat is awful. Soft drinks corrode your stomach lining. Chinese food is loaded with MSG. High fat diets can be disastrous, and none of us realizes the long term harm caused by the germs in our drinking water.

"But there is one thing that is the most dangerous of all, and we all have, or will, eat it. Would anyone care to guess what food causes the most grief and suffering for years after eating it?"

After several seconds of quiet, a small 75-year-old man in the front row, raised his hand and said, "Wedding Cake?"

The Mother-In-Law

A New Yorker goes on vacation to the Holy Land with his wife and mother-in-law. The mother-in-law dies. So the couple go to an undertaker who explains that they can ship the body home, but it will cost over \$5,000, whereas burying her in the Holy Land would cost only \$150.

"We'll ship her home," says the guy. The undertaker asks, "Are you sure? That's an awfully big expense and we can do a very nice burial here." The guy says, "Look, 2000 years ago they buried a guy here and three days later he rose from the dead. I just can't take that chance."

Billy Connolly Murals



I only became aware of Billy Connolly when we were at 7th Signal Regiment in the 70s. Dad had posted me a wee parcel containing two cassette tapes of His Double LP Album. There wasn't any accompanying letter to tell me what was on the tapes. So after putting in my cassette player and rewinding the tape I managed to find the start. From then on I listened to everything he made. Last year BBC Scotland along with Glasgow City Council commissioned three portraits of Billy Connolly to celebrate the comedian's contribution to the city on his 75th birthday. The artists are (from L to R) Jack Vettriano, Rachel Maclean and John Byrne. As well as being portraits suitable to hang on a gallery wall they were duplicated as 50ft murals on three buildings in the east end of Glasgow. I cannot to show you the actual portraits for copyright reasons but these photographs of the murals are still available to see in Glasgow. Located (from L to R) Dixon Street, Gallowgate and Osborne Street. They show how they have stood the test of time (finished all off 9 months ago). The program Billy Connolly: Portrait of a Lifetime was shown on BBC Scotland. It was last broadcast on BBC4 on Wednesday 1st November 2017.

Check link for more details: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0535lq5>.

The words, comments and articles contained in this magazine are written by club members and are for the sole entertainment of club members and in no way reflects, the views or opinions, of the club

Any items for the August 2018 edition please submit by 30th June 2018



The 1960s 16 Signal Regiment Reunion Club

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