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**26TH REGIMENT ROYAL ARTILLERY PAST AND
PRESENT ASSOCIATION**
Affiliated to the Royal Artillery Association
NEWSLETTER 2015/16

Dear members all,

A few words from our Chairman:

Chairman - Steve Wallis MBE

Firstly may I take this opportunity to wish all members of the Association and their families a Happy, Prosperous and Safe New Year and hope 2016 brings you all that you wish for. Secondly I would like to offer my thanks on your behalf to our Secretary, Tony Kirkpatrick, for his sterling work since taking over the mantle from Shuggie McTaggart.

Moving onto Association matters I would like to express my concern with regard to the attendance figures at the last reunion. Although there was representation present from most of the sub units a headcount proved the majority were ex Sandham's with gallant M Bty close behind. Two things worry me: Firstly the Association Committee consists of, and mainly always has, ex Sandham's members and I would like to ask for volunteers from other sub units to be representatives on the committee. Secondly individual sub units appear to hold their reunions in the same year as the Association and thus do not attend both. As Chairman of both the Association and Sandham's I ensure that our reunions are held in alternate years and ask all others to consider this to ensure maximum support for the Association reunions.

Moving onto the next reunion as I hope you are aware the Regiment is holding a "Regimental Celebration Weekend" in Mansergh Barracks Gutersloh over the weekend 23-24 July 2016. Due to the Germany draw down this is likely to be one of the last major events held and therefore it is proposed that we take advantage of the Regimental

invitation and ensure maximum attendance. Final details are to be ironed out however updates will be posted on both the Association website and the Facebook page.

Once again Happy New Year to you all.

Secretary - Tony Kirkpatrick

As many people will appreciate these are my first ramblings as the Association Secretary. Therefore I must before anything else, acknowledge the tremendous hard work and many long hours that Shuggie McTaggart put into his tenure as secretary. In his inaugural statement, Shuggie stated that he had a hard act to follow when taking over from Brian Henderson; equally Shuggie has not made this any easier for me. I am positive that all members will join me in a huge vote of thanks to Shuggie who invested so much time and effort into the association which helped to produce a vibrant and informative platform for one and all, as well as many good reunions. We all hope the future bodes well for you and the family Shuggie, very many thanks indeed.

So, why has Kirkpatrick taken over from Shuggie McTaggart? That's a good question, which I have actually asked myself! Here's a stab at an answer; firstly for those members that don't know me, in brief; I joined the regiment in Jan 76 – 16 Sandham's originally and was then posted in Aug 83 to JLRRA as a Tp Sgt at Bramcote. On return to the regiment in Oct 85 I was employed as the Sigs Sgt HQ Battery before a move to 17 Corunna as BCs Ack and Sigs Sgt. (Work that one out!) In Apr 88 on promotion to SSgt, I was appointed SMIS. In Sep 90, I then took up post as BSM 159 Colenso followed by a tour as the RQMS, before moving to 40 Regt as RSM. On commissioning and much to my delight, I was posted back to the regiment as BK Corunna from 96 - 99. So in conclusion having served in all of the original sub units as well as HQ Bty, I hold no favouritism other than to say I am extremely proud of having served with the regiment for the majority of my time alongside many of the finest "Gunnery" that the British Army has had to offer. Consequently I now feel it's my time to do my bit as a retired chap!

That's enough of that, and moving swiftly on.....

May I commend all members to read the minutes of the previous Executive Committee Meeting held at Copthorne Hotel Merry Hill Dudley Saturday 28 March 2015

<http://www.26thregra-asc.com/minutes/minutes.pdf>

It was some time ago now but, this was the first and only meeting so far that I have had the pleasure and duty of attending as Secretary. However, those minutes (linked above) will give a comprehensive insight, warts and all, to the discussions that took place that afternoon. Much of what is covered in this document is covered in those minutes. Consequently, reading this newsletter in conjunction with those minutes and the website

in general should bring all members up to speed with what is currently happening and what is intended for the near future during 2016.

The 2016 reunion I will add to under a separate paragraph later in the newsletter.

Turning to the Committee itself and to add to the Chairman's remarks concerning its membership, may I add two further comments please ; first, members will when reading the minutes under para 13 "Election of Officers" will note that there is a point of order which will be raised at the next AGM which is the establishment of an additional post - Assistant Secretary. Mick Topping has very kindly without hesitation, volunteered to step into this new post. Thanks Mick (a cracking example of altruism) and as a part of the business at the next AGM, we will be looking to vote that post in, with Mick as its first incumbent.

Secondly, also recorded in the minutes is the real issue of the advancing age of the committee. With no disrespect to any of our senior committee members, the reality is that none of us are getting any younger. For reasons of longevity there is a real need to recruit young blood onto the committee. Having a younger generation on the committee can only bring benefits. The door is open to any individual who has a voice and a set of ideas who is willing to sacrifice a little time for the good and benefit of the association and of course all its members.

To business in general, as mentioned in the "Latest Articles" box on the website members will hopefully appreciate that the association has waived, for the foreseeable future, the £5 membership fee. Members will also see a statement regarding the association tie. Reading the Financial Statement" in para 6 of the minutes members will see the current value of the associations non-public fund. Since that meeting the Association has purchased a laptop valued at £339.99. Although the funds currently remain reasonably healthy, it will soon diminish should we have need for any costly disbursements. The message to one and all is that the association is always in need of any form of charitable donations no matter how large or small. All donations can be sent to the secretary at:

11 Nantwich Road
Great Sutton
Ellesmere Port
CH66 2SJ

Alternatively donations can be handed to any member of the committee at association gatherings. All will be most gratefully received.

The Reunion Weekend 2016

Originally as advertised on the website we had intended to hold this year's gathering at the Copthorne Hotel over the weekend 03-04 June 2016. However, as all things do, things have changed hopefully for the better in that; individuals should they choose to attend,

will get the chance to return to some old hunting grounds in Germany to see the regiment and spend a weekend with it, before it returns to the UK. As the Chairman has stated the 2016 reunion will be held in Mansergh Barracks, Gutersloh coupled with the Regimental Celebration Weekend from 23-24 July. Please keep an eagle eye on the website and the Facebook page for further details.

Battery Reunions and articles

As a general comment all members can read the discussion within the minutes (para 9) regarding reunions at Battery and Regimental level. It is fully appreciated that members enjoy attending their respective Battery gatherings and it is not the intent or the stance of the committee to discourage this. Attendance at Battery functions does however bring into focus the question of the relevance of a regimental gathering particularly when they take place during the same year. Again it is fully appreciated that attending both in one year, or even one every year, can with accommodation and other subsidiary costs prove to be very expensive. As you have seen, the Association Chairman has made his comments regarding this issue in his opening remarks.

Quite understandably, I have hitherto received no news articles for submission into this year's newsletter from any of the Sub Units. With the change of secretary and the production of an annual letter this is unsurprising. In future, should members wish to contribute to the newsletter as they have done in the past, and then please forward any article or item for consideration to the secretary via email, by October of each year.

As Secretary, I have received the following information from the Welfare Officer:

- Celebrations of Births and Marriages - Well done and congratulations to those listed below:

Steve and Sue Wallis married 16 September 2014

- Last Post – sadly in this newsletter we have had to say a sad farewell to:

Sean Kenny 16 and HQ Bty's

Mrs Mortimer wife of Brian Mortimer (Monty) 16 Bty

I feel sure that many more occurrences have taken place since the last newsletter. It is appreciated that the loss of a friend or loved one can be a private matter and equally other joyful events may want to be shared, but unless we are informed concerning either, we cannot include that occurrence in the newsletter. We do have of course our Last Post pages on the website. May I please ask all members to forward notices of such events to the welfare officer or the secretary via the website using perhaps the committee or welfare page. It is hoped that there are no glaring omissions concerning the welfare

announcements. Should there be, it is completely unintentional and we trust no upset is caused, that is certainly not the intent.

As secretary for personal reasons, I do not have a Facebook account so I am out of the loop on this popular form of media (so what's new there some may ask?) Therefore can I ask members please, to use the secretary's contact email address which can be found on the website which again I visit as regularly as I can.

secretary@26thregtra-asc.com

Conclusion

It has been firmly agreed and established that all association business will now be conducted electronically via email and other media sites such as the website and facebook, et al. The association no longer completes its business via the "snail mail" system as it is simply too laborious, expensive and time consuming. Most if not all of us lead busy lives and we the committee feel sure, that most members will agree that the electronic age is here to stay- so let's embrace it.

Although fairly brief, it is hoped that this newsletter in conjunction with the website and committee meeting minutes (Found on the website oddly enough under the page entitled - Minutes) help to bring all members up to date with what's happening across our association. Any constructive comments and positive offers of tangible support to improve the association would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you all and all the best for 2016

I hope to see many of you at future reunions.

TW Kirkpatrick

Secretary