



## 26 Regiment Royal Artillery Association Newsletter September 2009

Dear Sirs, Honourable Members, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First and foremost, I hope this letter finds you all in good health and surviving the recession. Yes, it's that time again and it's fast approaching for us to get together to reunite our acquaintance. I have put together a programme of events for the weekend and a Hotel Booking Form for you to complete and send back to me. But before we get into filling forms out and writing cheques, I would like to bring you up to date on what has been going on since we all got together in March 2008:

**Chairman: Steve Wallis** Is it really 18 months since our last Reunion? Time passes fast when you are enjoying yourself. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all committee members especially Shuggie and Brian for all their hard work and endeavours since we last met. Theirs is sometimes a thankless task however without their dedication and commitment we would not survive as an Association. I would also encourage you all to attend the next reunion in March 2010 and full details are provided in this newsletter. Please get your returns to Shuggie as quickly as possible in order for him to crack on with all the administrative arrangements that are required to make the event a success.

Since our last reunion I have had the privilege of attending the 26 Officers Mess Reunion in Larkhill and also attended the Freedom of the City Parade in Birmingham with other committee members and have been brought fully up to speed with all the Regiment's activities. As you can imagine they have been fully committed to Operations both in Iraq and Afghanistan and as ever their performance has been outstanding and we can be extremely proud of them. Unfortunately they have suffered casualties and our thoughts and best wishes go out to all of them and their families.

**Secretary: Shuggie McTaggart** Now that I've been in the seat so to speak for 14 months or so, I would like to take this opportunity once again to pass on our gratitude to Brian Henderson and his good lady Sandra for all their support they gave to the association over the years, whilst Brian was the Secretary. I now know why Brian was ready to step down from the post, but rest assured I will endeavour to continue in the footsteps of Brian to give the association my full support and dedication. After the Handover/Takeover of the Secretary post, pictures can be found in the August Issue of the Gunner Magazine 2008 (Joking), my first assignment on the list was the committee meeting, which was held on the 16<sup>th</sup> May 2008, at the Royal Court Hotel, Britannia, Coventry. The minutes of this meeting can be found on the association website. If possible, please take time to acquaint yourself with these minutes.

I believe the most difficult task ahead of me is going to be keeping an Accurate Record of all the associate members. I am sure informing me of any "Change of Details" is the last thing on your mind, therefore I can only guarantee information being sent to those members who keep me up dated, so please could I ask you to keep passing on your changes as and when they occur. Unfortunately I was unable to attend the Regiments "Freedom of the City Parade" which took place on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2009, due to work commitments. However the association was represented by some members and an article can be found below, which was sent to me by Jack Pye who attended. I and Annette are looking forward to seeing you all at the next reunion and I hope you can find the time to attend and support the event, which I'm sure, will be a great time and success.

**New Members:** David Anderson, Simon Beckwith, David Clark, Brian Clee, Gary Day, Michael Kennedy and Allan McCartney and David Frost.

**Welfare: Brian Henderson** This is my first report since taking on the role, it's a post that should have been created earlier in the association's life, but it's up and running now and working quite well. It is up to you the members to make it work, we can only be there for our members if we know about their problems whatever they are. If anyone needs our support, we shall be there for them. I am going to let you know that the Royal Artillery Charitable Fund disbursed the sum of £79,496 in March of this year, add to this the amount that they got from the other funds (RBL, ABF, SSAFA) of which £186,208 was disbursed between 212 individual cases, giving an average of £1,253 per case. Therefore, there is money in the pot if you are in need of the help. Just recently we have been able to get help for one of our families who were in need of support. On hearing this, I approached the family, as I know that we are all too proud to ask for help. But since the approach, we have been able to get them the help they needed. This is still ongoing and only recently a stair lift has been fitted into their house, also the delivery of a riser/recliner armchair allowing the lady of the house to get in/out of a chair un-aided. These items have given her back some little life comforts and she is not relying too much on her family for help. There is more help to come, as they have had a visit from a case worker who spoke to them about an electric scooter/ wheelchair. Whilst they wait for the decision, we have supplied one that can be used in the meantime, also advice has been given about grants and claims they can make. Another situation we are involved with is the short term loan of an electric wheelchair for another member that needs it for a short time and not permanently.

We have spent some of our money on the following causes since our last reunion:

- a. Donations for members that have passed away: £50.00
- b. Flower for members who were in need of a lift: £180.00. I can only send these if I know of those in Hospital or such.

**We need you to let us know of anyone that might need our help, you can let me know and I shall make the approach, by mailing me through the website or phoning me on the following numbers. Home: 01933381955 Mob: 07714895767**

**Last Post** It is with sadness that we have to announce the following members have passed on to another place since the last reunion:

**Jack Latham (16)**  
**Pat Newell (76)**  
**Chris (Snowy) Penfold (17)**  
**May Walton (M)**  
**Alice Walker (17)**  
**Wendy Kendell (159, HQ)**  
**Trevor Little (HQ)**  
**Dennis Neagle (HQ)**  
**Robert (Bobby) Hunter (159)**  
**Dave Shaw (All Bty's)**  
**Rita Dooley (17)**

### **Other Business:**

**Website** Once again we must thank Steff Jordan for all of his hard work in maintaining our website. He continues to put a lot of work into it, keeping it up to-date with current issues and events.

If you have an email address, can you ensure that we have it, but, please include your name? It would also be great if you would give us permission to put it on our website.

**Association Tie Regimental** Ties will be available at the reunion for those members who wish to purchase one at a cost of £12.00. It would be gratefully appreciated if members would wear their Regimental Tie for the Gala Dinner.

## **THE REGIMENTS FREEDOM OF THE CITY PARADE BIRMINGHAM**

On Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2009, the Association were represented at the Regiments (The West Midland Gunners) Freedom of the City Parade, Birmingham by the attendance of Steve Wallis and Sue, Brian and Sandra Henderson and Jack and Mandy Pye.

The Lord Mayor, Michael Wilkes officiated the parade, as 150 soldiers from the Regiment, commanded by the CO, Lt Col Ford paraded in front of the Council House in Birmingham to receive the honour. After the parade the Freedom Roll was carried ahead of the troops in a silver casket on a circular route through the streets of Birmingham led by the Band of the Parachute Regiment.



On completion of the Freedom march the Lord Mayor hosted a buffet for the Regiment, their families and guests, where our members were able to meet the officers, soldiers and old friends, two ex Cos, Col David Gay and Col Charles Nesbitt.

## **159 BTY DETACHMENTS FRONT**

On Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2009, 21 ex members with wives and partners of 159 (Colenso) Field Battery met at the Royal Court Hotel in Coventry, the time together was taken up with much reminiscing over a pint or 2 and a full meal in the evening, typical of a battery dinner. It is planned that this event will be repeated during the alternating year of the Regimental reunions.



**The reunion will be held on the weekend of 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> March 2010 at:**

**The Britannia Hotel  
Fairfax Street  
Coventry  
CV1 5RP  
Tel: 08717029713**

We have negotiated prices as follows:

- 3 night package: £130.00 per person inclusive of bed, breakfast and evening meal (Fri, Sat & Sun night). Gala Dinner is included in this price.
- 2 night package: £110.00 per person inclusive of bed, breakfast and evening meal, (Either Fri & Sat or Sat & Sun nights). Gala Dinner is included in this price.
- 1 night package: £85.00 per person inclusive of bed, breakfast and gala dinner (Sat night)
- Attending the Gala Dinner only: £21.95 per person (This is to be paid in full, in advance)

For any rooms that will be required for Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March or Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March, we have a preferential rate at £45.00, Bed and Breakfast, per room (Double/Twin) or £40.00, Bed and Breakfast, per room (Single)

A deposit of £10.00 per person is required and this is non-refundable and will be required with receipt of the booking form. Cheques are to be made payable to '**26 Regiment Association**'.

### **Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March 10**

Reception will be in the courtyard and moving to the Three Spires Bar. This is our own bar and it will be open as long as there are a minimum of 10 members drinking.

Evening meal will be in the Restaurant with the last sitting at 9.45pm. You will be required to book a table and time whilst you are booking in on your first day.

### **Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> March 10**

Breakfast in the Restaurant between 7.30am-10.30am

**Meetings** The Council and General Meetings will take place in the Connaught Suite.

Council – 10.00am-10.45am

General Meeting – 11.00am-12.00pm

**Coach Trip** There will only be one coach trip put on this year, which is included in the price of the weekend. The coach has been booked to take members to the Bull Ring Shopping Centre, Birmingham, which will depart from the hotel at 11.30am, and return at 5.00pm. Places for this trip will need to be booked on your application form.

**Inter-Bty Competition** For those member that have not planned anything other than “Propping up the bar” I will be arranging an Inter-Bty Competition with a “twist”. Not going to give too much away, we will have a great laugh! It will be held in one of the bars within the Hotel and it's scheduled to start around 2.00pm.

**Gala Dinner** The Gala Dinner will take place in the Connaught Suite. Timings: 7.30pm for 8.00pm  
The Menu will be:

**Starter** – Crown of Seasonal Melon (Filled with soft Berries and Port)

**Main Course** – Sirloin of Beef “Bordelaise” (Red Wine, Tomatoes, Mushrooms & Bacon with Gravy)

**Vegetarian** – Mediterranean Wellington

**Dessert** – Strawberry & Vanilla Mousse

**Afters** - Tea, Coffee and Mints

## **Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> March 10**

Breakfast in the Restaurant between 7.30am-10.30am

Those departing will need to be checked out between 11.00am-12.30pm

Dinner will be in the Restaurant and a table and time must be booked to avoid disappointment

## **Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March 10**

Check out will be at the normal hotel check out times, please ask when you arrive for details.

## **General Points**

**Car Parking** There is a car park opposite the hotel, unfortunately this year it's NOT free. Due to circumstances imposed by the Local Council, the hotel is not allowed to offer free parking. However it's not all gloom and doom, you can park your car up for the weekend for less than £10.00. Currently the prices are:

Friday: 80p per hour until 1800hrs, then 50p only from 1800hrs to 0600hrs.

Saturday: £5.00 All day parking

Sunday: 50p All day parking

Example: Workout how many hours Friday you will use, plus Sat & Sun rate, then take off 30% Hotel discount, this will give you an approximate price on what you will pay for the weekends parking.

**Transport Links** The Bus station is also opposite the hotel.

Railway station is approx £6.00 in a taxi.

Birmingham Airport can be reached by train, coach or taxi.

**Raffle** The committee decided that we would not ask anyone to bring raffle prizes, but to pay a £5.00 administration and charitable contribution cost when booking their places.

**Drinks Prices** Drink prices, a subject close to all our hearts. Our bar will have the following price list for the complete weekend. They are the same prices, as it was for our last reunion ☺

Fosters per pint	£1.50
John Smiths per pint	£1.50
House Spirit and a mixer:	£3.00
Bottle of House Wine	£9.95
Glass of Wine	£1.50
Fruit Juice	£1.00
Coke's and lemonade	£1.50

**Complaints** Please could I ask members to direct all complaints to me, if and when they occur over the weekend? I am fully aware of those issues from the last reunion and I am working with the hotel management to prevent them from happening again. I hope those members that had an unsatisfactory experience the last time, will not be put off attending the reunion in March 2010.

**Conclusion** If you would like to put forward any suggestions to the committee about improvements, new ideas etc, then please put them down on paper or e-mail them to me. This association will only be successful if your support and input is there.