



# ROYAL MILITARY POLICE OLD COMRADES LINK UP NEWSLETTER #123 SEPTEMBER 2017



## NEW CONTACTS



### **ROSS**

Former 24762485 Sergeant Michael Ross, Squad 8810. Mike is a comparative youngster having entered service in 1988. He served with the following Provost companies, 114 (two tours), 160, 174, 111, 39 Brigade and also in Sonthofen and CIT 2 RMP and completed his service in 2012.

### **WATSON**

Former 23864959 Sergeant Ernie Watson, Squad R9. Ernie, who I recall from Bielefeld days, served with SHAPE Provost Company, 156 Provost Company, 39 Brigade Provost Unit (Aden), 1 (Br) Corps Provost Company, Londist Provost Company, 160 Provost Company (RMP Display Team) and 2 RMP and completed his service in 1976. By pure chance I did find a photograph of Ernie taken in December 1961.



## YOUR CORRESPONDENCE

In the last edition you saw an NCO being eaten by a Volkswagen, well the unfortunate person was a certain Bob Hart who was lucky to survive, it appears that British military police are a little on the tough side.



The photograph, which Bob had never seen, was sent in with some other photographs by David Hartley. On the left is David, Bob Hart, Joop Wagenaar who owned the bar, Mike Bolstridge, Miss Holland 1959 and Les Fryer. David said, "Joop gave the lady a few guilders and told her he would see her the following day, then took us round just about all the clubs in Amsterdam, till breakfast time. I think in all honesty we would rather have given him a few guilders, and taken the young lady round ourselves. The following day he took us to see the

Dutch Grand Prix, had his own reserved area. We never saw the young lady again." David, in a later message added to the story of the day at the Grand Prix. He said, "Joop's bar was the *Passage*, Nieuwe Brugsteeg 30 and he had noted directions on a business card showing where to meet him at the circuit at Zandvoort, the following day. We got a bit lost and ended up on a bend right next to the track. Someone told us we were being shouted at, and we saw Joop waiving from the top of the hill where we joined him. Some twenty minutes later Dan Gurney, the American driver, lost control and ploughed into the crowd where we had been standing killing three or four people. He got pushed off the bodies, and went on to win the race. We were told later he had no feeling for the spectators, as the year before too many people had crowded on to a foot bridge, the bridge collapsed killing his best friend driving underneath at the time. Apparently, after that, he could not care less about the spectators."



The second photograph shows David in his car. He said, "I am sending you this photo, not because of myself in my Borgward, but for what is in the background. That pile of signs. For weeks, we did no duties, we were just navvies. Each Division was tasked with removing the WW2 transport signs, Venus, Mars, Saturn etc. Some were on walls behind electrical cables, they were dodgy but most were planted in concrete. We were given pick-axes, sledge-hammers, shovels etc, and told to bring them down. All we had were the Champs and trailers to carry them in. After we removed them, German long-distance lorry drivers were getting lost all over West Germany as they had been following them since 1950."



In the last edition I reported the death of Peter Drury. Since then his son, Steve has added some information. He said, 'In 1963 we were all in Malaya, Dad was in the 28<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth I think, stationed at Terendak Camp until 1964 then on to Borneo until 1966. Prior to that he was stationed in Tripoli. He had many stories that he retold, one of my favourite was when he was in the security detail for a visit by HRH Prince Phillip and was told to shove his umbrella where the sun doesn't shine when Dad tried to shelter him from the rain. Later in the visit Dad tried to offer the Prince a flak jacket and was told to put that with the umbrella. Right to the end Dad was a Red Cap and would never hear a bad word said against them, you could easily tell how much he missed those days. Although it was only 13 years out of his 82 years they seemed to be the most important and memorable for him.'

My next entry comes courtesy of Mike Potter who said, 'Having read the account of Pete Spooner regarding the motorcycle display team, I found the following photo which I am sure shows Pete Spooner kneeling down and myself on the back of the motor bike trying to spear the ring. I believe

we had done many shows and I'm sure that when the members were in a bad mood the pegs were put in extra hard!!'

Just to confirm Mike's theory I contacted Peter and he said, 'I think you are correct. I think that the rider of the bike is Ted Rimmer, I have a copy of the Display Team photo and he is the only Lance-Corporal rider. If I remember correctly, the copy of the photo I have came from Ted. I have attached a copy, luckily all parties are named. I suspect that the photo was taken in Rushmoor Arena.' The photograph is shown below.





RMP Mounted & Motor Cycle Display Team-1969  
 Rear:L to R:Sgt.Gordon;LCpl.Paddern;Lt.Julian Henwood;WO2  
 Griffiths;Cpl.MacAlister;LCpl.Oliver  
 Centre(Pillion):Cpl.Doug Atkinson;Cpl.Doug Adams;  
 Cpl.Michael Potter;LCpl.Mal Scott  
 Centre(Rider):Cpl.Marshal Hodgkinson;Cpl.Idris Davies;  
 LCpl.Ted Rimmer;Cpl.Peter Attridge  
 Front:Cpl.Spooner;Cpl.Wright;LCpl.P.Smith;LCpl.Price;Cpl.R.Smith;Cpl.Ruddick

Mike also sent in a photograph of 200 Singapore Provost Coy football team who were runners up in the minor units cup, the following team was: Mike Potter, Cpl Locke, Campbell, SSgt Mackrell, Cpl Lines, Hayes, Barton, Lang, Atkins, L Cpl Iliffe ACC, SSgt Brown, Maj Stannard, Sgt Shaw and LCpl Gore



Earlier in the month I had a surprise phone call from Roy Tyler, better known to most of us as *RAJ Tyler*. He was seeking any surviving members of the 1<sup>st</sup> Airborne Provost Company so please spread the word. Roy asked me to convey his best wishes to everyone and would welcome a call on 01748 826221 from anyone who remembers him. Roy is now 96 years of age and sounded in fine form.

John Redman contacted me having read the report of Bill Baker's death. He said, 'Many thanks for the latest newsletter and thanks for all the work you do in putting it together. I certainly look forward to it each month.

In the recent edition you mention the death of Bill Baker and I wanted to say that Bill was in the same squad as me at the D&TE RMP, Inkerman Barracks, 670 squad, under the 'gentle' hands of the late Fred Fletcher, then a Sergeant. We commenced training in February 1958 and the squad was roughly



90 percent National Servicemen. I was a VT from the Infantry and Bill was a Direct Enlistment aged, I think, just seventeen and a half. After pass out, I was posted to Berlin with two other squad members and Bill went to Krefeld, which I seem to remember was, at that time 101[Army] Pro Coy RMP. This could well account for Bill's posting to Rheindahlen, at that time an outpost of 101. I next met Bill back at Inkerman Barracks in late 1962 when I was a squad instructor, he was posted in as a member of the Depot Permanent Staff and arrived with a splendid BMW motorcycle and sidecar. As far as I am aware, he only took one squad through training and I enclose a photograph of that squad. I left Inkerman in October 1963 after my 30 months as an instructor on posting to Malta and I suppose Bill was still there. I never saw him again but have tried to find him on many occasions. Someone told me some years ago that Bill had left Hong Kong as a Sgt and had gone to join a company supplying security on oil rigs. Bill was a great lad, a Londoner with a super sense of humour and I shall not forget him.'

Alec Hayton contacted me and said, 'The various articles regarding the motorcycle choices in the 1960 have been interesting, but I may be able to throw a little extra light on the subject of the choice of the BSA B40. I was in 28 (COMWEL) Brigade in 1966 and we were presented with the Triumph and a B40 for 'trials' and asked to report on performance of both bikes for the Army to evaluate. Without doubt, the Triumph was by far the better machine, it ran beautifully. The BSA was a problem, it didn't like the Malayan climate and had to be recovered on several occasions because the petrol was evaporating before it got into the motor.

Later that same year, I returned to BAOR and found that the B40 was already being issued. A year or two later I was posted to JLR at Rhyl to be a motor cycle instructor where I took over from a very old friend, the late Keith Bridgeman. I was sent to Bordon for the M/C Instructors Course where we were taught by members of the Army Trials Team who were riding some very quick B40s which we were told had been specially tuned by the BSA factory especially for them, some of the bikes had different carburettors. The final choice between Triumph and BSA hinged on the opinion of the Trials Team who found the 350cc easier to manage in competition and the offer from BSA to keep their bikes in tune. Politics also came into play, because it meant, for a short while the BSA factory stayed in production. Sadly the Triumph never stood a chance. There were various stories around that Japanese bikes had been trialled with their names obliterated, but the idea that the UK couldn't produce a decent motorcycle for the Armed Forces meant that [at that time] we were stuck with cannibalising B40s due to a complete lack of spares.'

Jim Jackson-Bowers must have been having a lonely day as he wrote, 'Hi Bob. Just to let you know that I am still active and now well. Could you please continue to send me the newsletter and if you have space in your next newsletter please say hello to any one i served with Malta Pro Coy RMP also 165 Pro Coy RMP Chester during the early and late 60s.' *Ed: Jim, your wish is my command.*

### **123 L of C PROVOST COMPANY CMP**

In is with regret that I can find little about this particular company at this stage. I believe 123 Provost Company CMP was formed on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 1944 and following Embarkation leave embarked at Liverpool in January 1945. The only other reference I can find is that the Company was in the Poona area of India in 1945.

There was a section of the Special Investigation Branch that had the same number, the section was in Indian in 1946. There is a very brief mention of the section in Corps Journal No 3 of 1968 in a letter to the Editor. It was from a former CSM A Morgan who was in the said section. Sadly little more has been determined.

### **NOTICES AND INFORMATION**

#### **2017 RMP Poppy Pins.**



It's that time of year again when we raise money for the Royal British Legion and the RMP Central Benevolent Fund, and this year I am helping Sav who has again commissioned an RMP Poppy Pin.

The cost of the pins are £3.75 each including UK P&P with all profits being split equally between the above charities (no consolidation of postage I'm afraid, and happy to post abroad for an additional cost).

If you want any please email [rblandcbf@gmail.com](mailto:rblandcbf@gmail.com) and you'll get an automated response with ordering and payment details. Orders will start being delivered towards the end of September early October and given the volume of requests, proof of posting will NOT be obtained for orders of less than 10 pins (unless this is requested and it will be at an additional cost). So any that do not arrive cannot be replaced free of charge this year, sorry, (so please understand this as a condition of buying them).

Colin Whatman reminded me of a forthcoming TV drama. 'The BBC are to start screening a series about the last years of the Aden Campaign entitled "The Last Post" during early October on BBC1. As far as I understand this is the view of service families during the build up to the troubles.' *Ed: At the time of writing I have not seen a date for the first episode but it is due to be screened in early October by all accounts. I cannot wait for your comments on this one.*

## RMP ASSOCIATION NEWS



Geoff Berry lives in Sydney and has said that he is happy to organise a meeting of ex RMP members who live in NSW with a view to forming a branch. If you live on the Eastern side of Oz and feel like getting together with former members of the Corps then please let me know and I will channel everything through Geoff.

Congratulations are in order to Baden Wilson who was awarded the BEM in the Queens 90th Birthday Honours List for over 30 years of voluntary service for The Chindits Old Comrades Association having held the post of Secretary General for numerous years.

Depot Branch had a successful trip to Normandy and visited all the beaches and Pegasus Bridge. This followed on from last year when the Branch completed a tour relating to the First World War. The Tour Guide was one of their own, Paul Rayner, who seemed to know every back road along that particular stretch of coast. Speaking personally, as it was my first visit, I can only say that the experience really brought home the enormity of the task on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944 and why so many paid the ultimate price. Next year has already been muted so watch this space.

### DEATHS

#### **CAMPBELL**

I received information to the effect that Captain Jim Campbell in Surrey on the 15<sup>th</sup> September after suffering a massive stroke almost exactly a week before. Jim a former AAJLR Tonfanau, Boy Soldier, graduated from RMPTC Chichester with Squad 72 in November 1965. Some will remember him when a Corporal in 1 (BR) Corps Provost Company – Bielefeld. He later obtained a commission and went on to serve as the OC 177 Provost Company in Northern Ireland. Jim was 70 years of age when he passed away and is survived by his loving wife Jane.

#### **HANNA**

At the time of going to 'press' I heard of the death of former Warrant Officer Class 1 Bob Hanna. I do not, at this juncture, have any other information.

#### **HAYWARD**

I received the following message from Michael Shuster. "It is with deep regret that I inform you of Alan's death. Alan passed away suddenly on Tuesday evening September the 12th 2017 after a bout of cancer." Alan was in R1 Squad with Michael and myself and the last time I saw him was when I left the troopship at Gibraltar, Alan was going on to the Far East. I understand that Allan did his full time and served with 200 Provost Company Singapore, 20 Armoured Brigade, Bulford, Aden and as an Instructor at the Training Centre.



#### **GROVES**

Former Corporal George Groves passed away on the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at Worthing. Following training in R4 Squad, George served from 1961 until 1970 with 247 Provost Company, AFCENT Provost Section, 24 Brigade Provost Unit (Aden and Plymouth and finally with 165 Provost Company.

-ooOoo-

I am always looking for a suitable ending to the newsletters and this time I am going to hand it over to Percy Powell. "Dear Joy and Bob, It's always a pleasure to read your newsletters especially when coming across familiar names. I just thought I would let you know I broke the age related world record for the third time on the 30th July this year, going on 82 years old. The first time was in 2014 to commemorate the 70th anniversary of my father being killed in action at Monte Cassino, Italy and the centenary of the start of WW1. The record is to tandem HALO (High Altitude & Low Opening) skydive from 30,000ft with two oxygen cylinder on my tummy, free falling at 300mph. Last year I also did it in



August as Mayor of Reigate & Banstead Borough Council being the first mayor in the world to do so. There is only one person in the world to lay this on for civilians, his name is Kevin Holbrook and he is a former Green Beret Colonel who much of his time trains east European special forces to make this HALO jump. The guy in camouflage next to me is Alex Croker, ex Special Forces, former CIA operative and former US Marshal. He is the US Bear Grylls on US TV. My family are opposing me doing this every year (which is my plan) until I am 90. Best wishes to all my old buddies." *Ed: Percy, I must say you are looking good. Old geezers are not in the habit of listening to their families so keep going!*

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#### **STOP PRESS**

I was just about to put this edition to rest when I took a few moments to read the daily paper. I turned a page and much to my dismay I saw a two page spread under the headline "Farewell to the White Helmets who rode roughshod over elf 'n' safety". The troupe has been retired on the grounds that it is old fashioned.

There cannot be anyone reading this newsletter who has not heard of the Royal Signals Motorcycle Display Team and I am sure that most of us have seen them. They have been going for 90 years and the curtain came down on 27<sup>th</sup> September. I shall remember seeing them in Catterick Camp as they often rode past my married quarter to their training ground and at several displays throughout my service career and I would not consider them to be old fashioned.