ROYAL MILITARY POLICE
OLD COMRADES LINK UP
NEWSLETTER #228 JUNE 2026

If I have done my sums correctly 228 divided by 12 equals 19; that is the number of years I have been publishing this monthly newsletter. In addition, for about four years I published the RMPA newsletter during my tenure as National Chairman.

I have decided that it is time to call it a day and make this my final newsletter. I have not taken this step lightly and I have spent many sleepless nights turning the matter over in my mind. The reason for this decision is that I am not getting any younger and I have several other projects to complete and the newsletter is now taking up too much time, detracting from other important tasks. I also have an expanding team of great grandchildren (six at the last count and three more on the way) with whom I want to have more time with. In addition, the circulation has dropped as members pass on and because members have not informed me of changes to their emails and telephone numbers; to chase them up would almost be an endless task. New contacts are far and few between.

Over the years I have made many friends and acquaintances, and you have been outstanding in supplying material for the newsletters. I have often said that I only had to write the first newsletter, the rest relied on your contribution and the contribution of those that have now passed on.

Sadly, most of my readers are from my era and content focuses on the same period in the Corps history and contacts with, and from the younger generation are very rare and the stories and photographs are not forthcoming but they do appear on social media which is the way it is as it is faster and a wider audience can be reached in seconds.

I took over the OCLU from the late Derrick Palmer some time about 2004 and full credit to him and all the work he did in his ten years as co-ordinator. I must thank the late Tony Bowdler for suggesting that I compiled a newsletter and the rest, as they say, is history.

It is almost impossible to thank everyone by name who have supplied material over the last nineteen years, you know who you are and your contribution was really appreciated. The stories and photographs have, or will end up at the RMP Museum adding to the story of our great Corps.

I now intend to clear my desktop of photographs, and they will come in no particular order, and some will be without explanation.

The second photograph is a familiar location for many, seen from a very different angle. You have to look hard to see Inkerman Barracks in the distance.

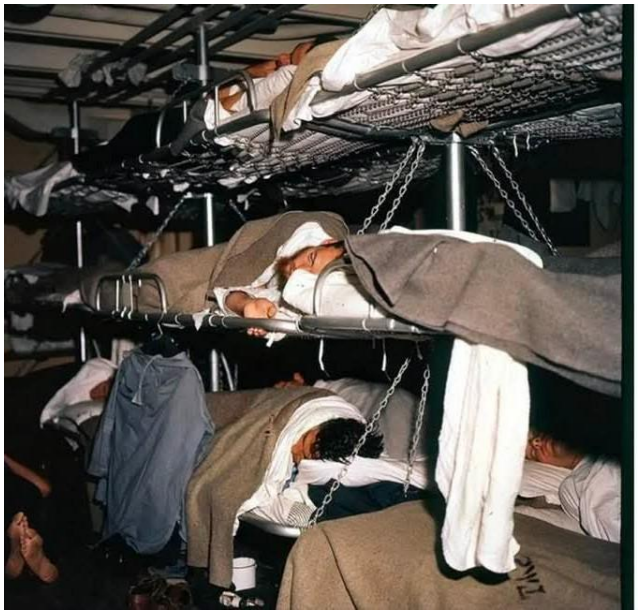




On the left there are two members of the WRAC Provost, and I believe the pic was take in Aden.

The photograph below is that of a young Viv Buck and we all know she went on to greater things.





The photograph on the left will bring back memories (good or bad). No deluxe cabins on a troopship. On my very first "cruise" in 1961 I occupied a top bunk from Southampton to Gibraltar and yes, we did bounce around in the Bay of Biscay. No stabilisers in those days.

It is the 17th June and I have to make an amendment to my opening paragraphs as two more great grandchildren, twin boys, arrived today, a little earlier than expected but both safe and sound. Just one to go.

John Wilkinson sent in the photograph below which was taken during a officers' course. He has named the following: (1) Paul Watton, (2) Jim Gallagher, (3) John Wilkinson, (4) Colin Finley, (5) Alan Barley and (6) Brian Courtney. If you can identify any other person featured, please let me know.





Perhaps a final contribution from Philip Wade on RMP Mediterranean night-time attempts to keep warm?
Michael Davies's comments last month about the wide variety of 1950's RMP dress was matched by many of us in the 1960's when guarding 301 Ordnance Depot, Cyprus – similarly wearing every item of clothing authorised by the Army – plus several unauthorised layers This did indeed contrast with the full "Christmas tree order" as worn by me shortly thereafter for a visit of the Princess Royal – see below.
When on more visible dog patrol duties such as patrolling the perimeter of Flagstaff House , the CinC's residence, we were restricted to a Greatcoat– seen here at dawn. – but, when not inspected, a Greatcoat can also cover a multitude of sins!
This night-time patrol could have included in its circuit, the Other ranks wash house – where newly spun dry clothing will have been removed from the Drier into its basket, the newly washed clothing moved from the Washing machine into the Dryer, and the next pile of dirty washing inserted into the washing machine with its dose of detergent, with finally both machines being switched on, to await the next circuit. Unlike most of the British Army, the General's assorted support staff knew that the RMP did serve a useful purpose!



Philip Wade writes. Your fond memories of the Royal Yacht sent me back to my Album and produced this 1962 picture of it anchored off Limassol, having brought the Princess Royal* for a four-day tour of Cyprus. We were amused that at Episkopi there had apparently been a full-dress rehearsal of the formal dinner for her, including all the food and the wine. She visited several Units in Episkopi, and we cleared the road for the escort and her car – rather appropriately, I think that it looks like the CinC's Austin Princess.
National Service was coming to an end, the continuous stream of fresh RMP L/Cpls was drying up, and Redcaps were becoming fewer - so that it was down to a driver and two of us to play Royal leapfrog between each Unit that she visited – see her in, leave one of us to see her out, and then speed ahead to clear the road and leave the other to see her in for the next visit, and then back to the previous Unit to pick up the MP who had seen her out – not quite the keystone cops but it felt like it - I saluted her car umpteen times. If she was looking, then she must have thought that Cyprus Redcaps all looked remarkably similar.



One of the most scary moments of my two years was at a road junction later in the day when, just after I had stopped all the other traffic and her car and the escort were in sight, an apparently derelict old Cypriot bus parked apparently unattended just off the road, suddenly spluttered noisily into life and went to pull out in front of the Royal personage, in what appeared to me to be the first move in a well-planned ambush – but in reality was just the driver of an old Cypriot bus not looking where he was going, and then pulling back off the road in response to my, probably not very military i.e., panic stricken, arm flapping – followed by to my final salute for that day (Old Cypriot buses could vie with those of Malta for antiquity!)



On that day we also did the usual traffic control duties, still in full Christmas tree order and, away from the main area, an RAF motorist asked a passing MP why his colleague on lunch time point duty at the nearby NE HQ was carrying a

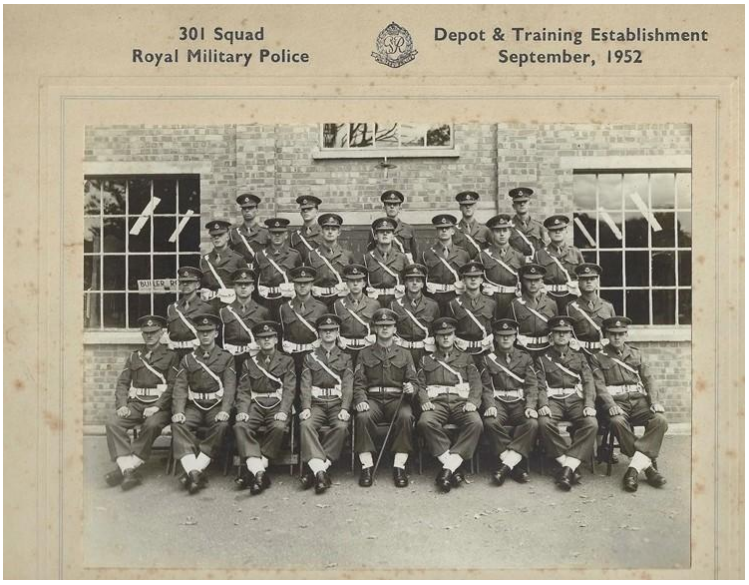
revolver. He was notified, with a perfectly straight face, that the Provost Marshal was at long last taking seriously the increase in traffic violations.
We of course had no ammunition in our very visible revolvers whilst the two close protection MPs, in their “butter wouldn’t melt in their mouths” blues uniforms, had wicked little loaded automatics hidden out of sight under their arms. Not for the first time, the Army brought to mind “Alice in Wonderland”.
*At that time, the Princess Royal was the sixth to hold the title, had been Princess Mary and was now the Countess of Harewood. She had done much charity work during the Second World War, was Honorary Colonel to a number of regiments and held the Army rank of Honorary General. She was the sister of King George VI, and of the Duke of Windsor. She did not please the Establishment by endeavouring to maintain close family links with both the King and the Duke. The next Princess Royal was Princess Anne.

‘-ooOoo-

I received an unexpected email from a Chris Hanks, who said, ‘Subject: 1 RMP 1972 photo Hello Bob. Just discovered the photo of 1 RMP from your newsletter 205. My father was Bob Hanks in the back row. Bob retired in 1976 and joined the prison service at Dartmoor. He then got posted to HMP Chelmsford in 1977 and sadly passed away in 1978 from lung cancer so had a very short life. Good photo I hadn’t discovered so thanks for sharing.’ Chris did send me a photograph but at the time of writing I was not able to download it. If any of you wish to get in touch with Chris them please do so through me.

-ooOoo-

Now a few photographs sent in by Harry Ryder.







David Hendry contacted me from way up above the border and he said, ‘Please find attached photos of memorable times I spent at Kensington Palace Barracks, 1960 - 1962. I was known as Jock the Noo (Lance Corporal) also attached a photo of my friend and colleague John Hinchcliffe with his wife





I think I will end it there, always best to leave on a high. Once again I must thank all of you, past and present who have made this journey of nineteen years with me, your contribution has always been the essential part.

I will still be around so if you want a chat, require some information then do not hestitate to contact me.

At this juncture I do not know if the newsletters will continue under a different set of fingers, if that happens I will contact you with details.

Joy and I send our best wishes to you all.

As they say, “*That’s All Folks*”

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