



## ROYAL MILITARY POLICE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



**#7 NOVEMBER 2018**

**Chair: Bob Eggelton**

**Vice Chair: Bob Potts**

**Secretary: Stewart Leach MBE**

**Treasurer: Ron Campbell-Smith**

Dear colleagues,

Once again Northern Ireland Branch leads off the newsletter, nothing new there. It demonstrates the commitment of the branch. Tanky Walker said, "Attached is a photo which I think is unique. It was taken at the Festival of Remembrance, Waterfront Hall, Belfast on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> November. Left to right are Sean Archer, Ray Spence and Nigel Parnaby. Sean is RBL Standard bearer for towns in Fermanagh. Nigel is RBL Standard bearer for Ballycastle. Both are ex RMP and members of the RMPA NI Branch."



I had only just returned from London and Tanky was buzzing down the optic fibres with yet another photograph. He said, "Each year, RMPA NI visits a different part of the province to parade the standard on Remembrance Sunday. This year it was in our home city of Lisburn. We were very pleased to be accompanied by members of 2 (NI) PI, 174 Pro Coy, 3 RMP and Moira Det RMP ACF."



Tanky's parting remark was that they were taking a rest, somehow I do not think so but well done for all your efforts, the Branch is a credit to the Association.

It is not only Northern Ireland Branch that has been busy and I know that the Scarlet Beret has been most prominent worldwide celebrating Remembrance Weekend. With regard to the Corps and the Association then it began on Thursday the 8<sup>th</sup> November with the opening of the Field of Remembrance 2018, at Westminster Abbey, where thirteen members were present for the official opening by HRH

Duke of Sussex, more informally known to us as Prince Harry who certainly attracted crowds of onlookers. The Field of Remembrance is created and organised by The Poppy Factory. It was started in 1928 by Major Howson MC (founder of The Poppy Factory) and a few disabled veterans from the First World War. They grouped together around a single battlefield cross and, with trays of poppies, invited passers-by to plant a poppy nearby. This year, on the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of the First World War, a total of 380 Plots were laid out in the names of military associations and other organisations.



Above we have the rear of Mike Allen, ProSM WO1 Marc Thomson, Stuart Leach, myself and WO1 Dan Stephens 3 RMP. In the photograph on the left is Len Honey, London Branch, who served from 1959 to 1961 in London and Cyprus.

Two days later, 10<sup>th</sup> November and it was time for the annual RMP/MPSC Service at Westminster Abbey. Prior to the event a number of people had been invited by the Deputy-Colonel Commandant (Major-General Ben Bathurst) to his wonderful office at Horse Guards. Amongst those gathered were Helen and David Perry - mother and step-father of Corporal Michael Pritchard (KiA in

Afghanistan 2009; John Hyde - father of Lance-Corporal Ben Hyde (KiA in Iraq 2003); Jacky and Jim Mortimer mother of Corporal Nick Webster-Smith (KiA in Afghanistan 2009) and Sue and Will Hunt - mother and step father of Corporal Chris Read (KiA Iraq 2007).

The service, orchestrated by the Regimental Secretary, Colonel JT Green OBE seemed to attract considerable more than in previous years with a good blend of serving and retired in attendance. I am sure that more formal photographs will appear in the RMP Journal so I have just included a couple to get the flavour of the day.



There were certainly more former members of the WRAC Provost on parade this year and seen on the left are Sylvia Adams, Terri Foster, Chris Melisi and Sue Johnson.

The newly appointed Association Chaplain, Mark Christian conducted the service and proved that a public address system was not necessary. Mark is seen on the right.





I could not resist a photograph of a brace of Brigadiers. The service brought serving and retired members of the Corps together with relatives of the fallen. Jacky Mortimer can be seen below wearing her Elizabeth Cross



Many at the service were on parade bright and early the following day for the Royal British Legion's Cenotaph parade. This year only 50 tickets were made available to the Association, a reduction of 50%. So a small but smart group of members proudly marched down Whitehall. I must say that they were a credit to the Corps and by all accounts they all want to do it again next year. For many, including myself, it was the first time they had undertaken the march. HRH Princess Anne took the salute on Horse Guards Parade. The scarlet beret was evident in many other marching groups which only shows the diversity of the Corps. The only regret is that a group photograph was not taken but that is just one lesson learnt for next year.



The West Yorkshire Branch mustered 25 Redcaps for the Remembrance Service held at Pudsey, West Yorks and then a total of 60 family and friends enjoyed a marvellous lunch at a local Golf Club. The weather was awful however that did not deter this hardy gathering.



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I think Tanky Walker is taking over this newsletter. His last offering for this month, "One of RMPA NI founder members, Jim Patterson, travelled to Kyrenia in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, and was privileged to lay the RMP wreath at the Old British War Cemetery during the annual Armistices Day Service. Here Jim met up with another Branch member Sue Steel who laid the wreath on behalf of the WRAC Provost. Sue was accompanied by her sister Mary (nee Johnson) also formerly WRAC Provost.

Sue's husband Colonel Tom Steel OBE late of the Royal Army Physical Training Corps laid the wreath on behalf of the Army. Kyrenia's main street was blocked off by civilian police and was crowded to capacity with an estimated crowd of 4,000.



On Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> Jim, Sue and Mary attended the service at Wayne's Keep Military Cemetery in the buffer zone of Nicosia, hosted by the Commanding Officer of the UN British Contingent, Lt. Col. Leask MBE 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Scots Guards. During the service Jim narrated his own article "A tribute to the fallen" to the assembled veterans and families."

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The 248 GSU - Guard Report can be downloaded from the following link:

[http://248gsu.de/index.php/der-guard-report/gp\\_download/send/3-guard-report/298-guard-report-september-oktober-2018](http://248gsu.de/index.php/der-guard-report/gp_download/send/3-guard-report/298-guard-report-september-oktober-2018)

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### **A Message from Stuart leach, Secretary Royal Military Police Association**

Good afternoon one and all, I am sitting here in Devon in what can only be described as “dull” conditions, the low cloud base and threat of imminent rain is all consuming I feel.

I thought this may be an opportunity to chat about various things that are and perhaps are not happening across our Association.

Along with Bob our Chair I feel very passionately about the RMPA and I am afraid guilty of dedicating too much time and effort to it perhaps at the detriment of other things, but hey ho.

Firstly please try and adopt the following as a tag line, it hopefully reminds one and all of the very basis of our Association.

*“The RMPA is **our** Association serving or retired”*

With that in mind the trustees all strive to include both elements of the Association into all that we do, we are grateful to the current Provost Marshal and his team of serving officers within 1MP Brigade for their efforts in getting the serving cohort to align with the retired cohort. Colonel Jeremy Green the Regimental Secretary and I speak most days about those things that we feel affect both parts equally, so it really is “our Association retired or serving” notice how I turned it around there, it makes no difference the message is the same – embrace it please.

This last weekend (I write on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> November) was of course Remembrance weekend, I was fortunate enough to be able to combine my time in London between my official other duties and my role as your secretary, it got slightly confusing remembering which hat (literally) I should be wearing but I think it worked! Next year I shall, I promise to be 100% RMPA for you all. What this weekend showed me was just how good we are as group of people young and old, male and female, serving and retired, alone or with partners at coming together where ever it may have been and reflecting and honouring those that have gone before. I had the pleasure of meeting over 100 of you at the Westminster Abbey FoR on Saturday, some active branch members of course, some who say that they don't care to belong to a branch, some who were still serving all though gave an absolutely shining example to those who were observing through the railings or from around the Abbey of how good we are and how professional we can be. I had many members of the public ask me as I sprinted away, who we were and tell me how good it all looked. A couple of former members of other Corps and Regiments said “we would expect nothing less from your lot!” Proud I was and proud I am of all of you.

Sunday found me elsewhere again observing the RBL parade down the Cenotaph and again I heard nothing but praise for the turnout and bearing of the Association group as it marched past, well done one and all who managed to get tickets. If you want to be there next year keep an eye out for the applications – we are governed in numbers by the RBL, I shall be lobbying for more places for 2019.

I am aware of course that London was not the only place where red Berets were very much in the view on such parades, I have seen today Facebook pages of photos from far flung places of the empire and beyond, Canada, Australia, North Africa, Weston Super- Mare, Sussex, Salisbury, Bristol, Chelmsford, Colchester, Edinburgh, Northern Ireland, Belgium, and of course Pudsey in West Yorkshire (is that the edge or centre of the Empire?????) I can hear the clamour of response even now!

Well done one and all – fantastic effort. Special mention must I feel be made to Caroline Beazley who whilst proudly wearing her Scarlet Beret got to be interviewed on the BBC – well done Caroline.

Of course, with every positive must come a negative and we have had sight of one person wearing a scarlet beret and medals whom we know is not entitled to do so, but he breaketh no law!

Against this background of wonderful esprit de corps I must again ask that if you wish the Association to prosper and move forward then we need you to support and join the branches – there is no minimal engagement – just join and let others know where you are and what you do, often through the branch network we are able to assist others who from time to time may need a hand up but are not in dire enough straits to require getting onto the Veterans Gateway, but sometimes with encouragement from branch officials and members even the reluctant take a step forward to recovery and assistance, thus leading to a change of circumstances. The Association is a charity, but it is not a benevolent giving charity – but we do need financial support to continue to assist across the membership as we do.

If you live in Buckinghamshire – Bristol – Gloucester – Strathclyde and have not made contact with the local branch – then you may have missed the boat, those branches are struggling or indeed have given up the chase.

Can we have a branch elsewhere YES, are Bob or I going to run it NO I will assist and advise but if you feel that you can rustle up enough for a viable branch then do so come to me and speak and tell me what you want to do. Branches do not have to meet every month in the same place, branch meetings do not have to be in the day time or in the evening they need to fit the needs of the membership. So again, well done one and all, let's move it, the Association on again from here.

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

Dorset Branch Christmas Lunch - 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018 at the Remedy Oak Golf Club, Horton Road, Woodlands, near Wimborne, Dorset BH21 8ND. For further details either contact Brian Samways [brian\\_samways@btinternet.com](mailto:brian_samways@btinternet.com) or me.

West Yorkshire Branch is holding a Christmas Party at the Robin Lane Club, Pudsey, LS28 7BR on Thursday the 6<sup>th</sup> December 2018 at 1930 hrs. All local RMP Family welcome, just RSVP to [westyorkbranchrmpa@outlook.com](mailto:westyorkbranchrmpa@outlook.com)

Taunton Branch Christmas Luncheon - 14<sup>th</sup> December 2018. Oake Manor Golf Course, Nr Taunton 12 for 12:30 start £18:50 per head. Details from Stewart Leach. [rmpataunton@btinternet.com](mailto:rmpataunton@btinternet.com)

13<sup>th</sup> January 2019. Depot Branch post-Christmas Lunch at Southsea. Details from me.

26<sup>th</sup> January 2019, Aldershot Branch Annual Dinner at the Army Golf Club, Laffans Road, Aldershot. Hants. GU11 2HF. Please contact me for full details.

10<sup>th</sup> February 2019, RMP Parade and Service, HM Tower of London. Instructions to be issued.

10<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> May 2019 Annual Reunion at Stretton, near Warrington hosted by Cheshire and North Wales Branch. If you would like further details please contact me.

11<sup>th</sup> May 2019, RMPA Trustees' Meeting, Royal Park Hotel, Stretton

11<sup>th</sup> May 2019 Annual General meeting, 1400 hrs, Royal Park Hotel, Stretton

If your branch has a forthcoming activity which you would like publicised then let me know, but let me know in good time.

If you require further details about any event then please contact me via e-mail or telephone.

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