



**ROYAL MILITARY POLICE
OLD COMRADES LINK UP
NEWSLETTER #126 DECEMBER 2017**



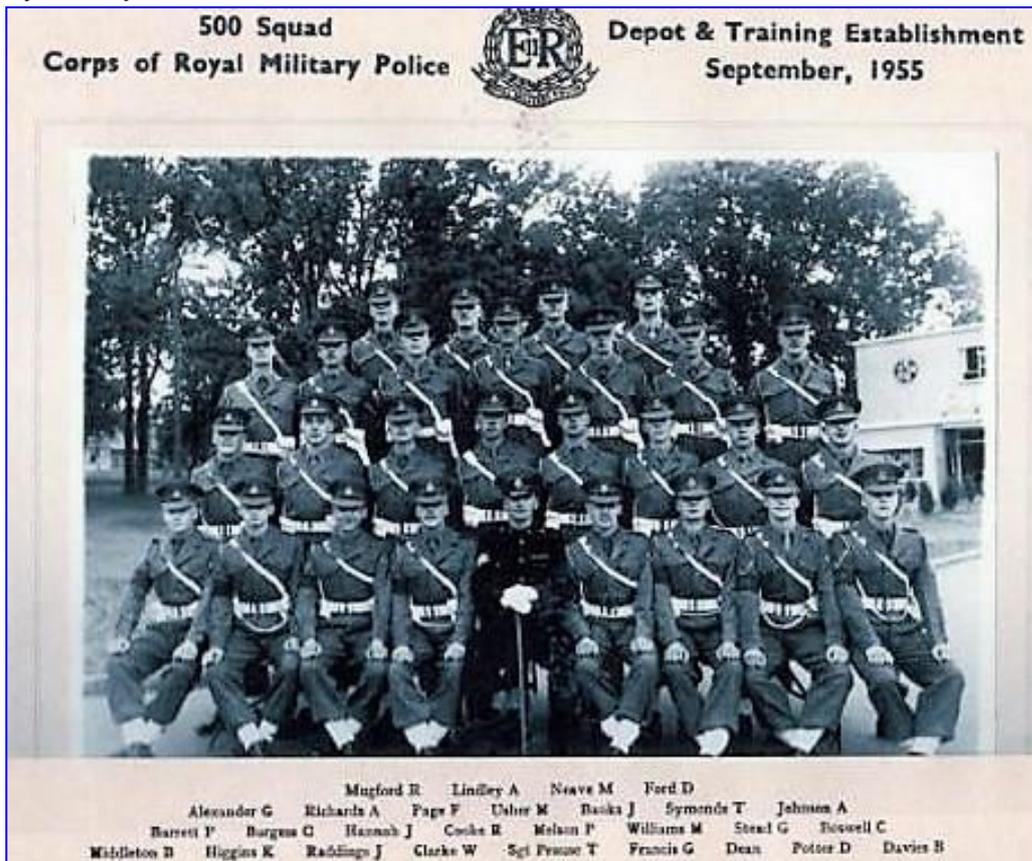
NEW CONTACTS



FORD

I shall let him introduce himself. 'I am 23136286 Lance-Corporal David Ford, Squad 500, I served 1955 – 1957. Yes, National Service. I was called up and destined to languish in the infantry with The Beds & Herts. However, when asked what I wished to 'do' in the Army, I requested an immediate transfer to The Royal Military Police. This to the amazement of the enquiring officer, the Company Officer and my, then, colleagues, and the rest they say is history. (I had to continue with them for approximately two weeks and subjects to much ridicule) Enjoyed myself with the then Sgt Prouse, later RSM and unfortunately he died just prior to me joining RMPA Colchester and East Anglia. I wonder if there is anyone still alive (I am 81) from our Squad and in particular Paul Barrett. Having both volunteered to go to Hong Kong ended up in Germany with the 2 Inf Div Provost Company. Happy days in Hilden and the outlying Sections. Paul was demobbed earlier than me and I was advised that he intended to join the Civil Police around Blandford Forum.

I really enjoy joining with 156 Provost Company on our monthly meetings and comparing my service time with the younger Company members. I really enjoy reading the news sheet but, to my knowledge I have never seen a mention of Squad 500.' *Ed: Dave supplied the photograph below and I think you can just make out the names.*



GIBBS

Former 22830326 Lance-Corporal John Gibbs, Squad 332B. John served with 101 Provost Company in Bad Oeynhausien and Rhinedahlen between October 1952 and October 1955. He would like any information on the following: Keith Purkis, Bob Sanderson, Ron Addison, Pete Hanrahan, Don Jennings, Pete Kent, Yorky Morris (Cpl), Skin Davies, Tiff Erridge. (REME). John Varley, Jim Frisby,

Dykes, Ben Benbow, Ernie Hampton, Ryman, Mick Tatton, Robertson, Perry Mason, Joe Bater. Cabby Bowers and Henry Savvidge.

PRICE

Former 24116747 Warrant Officer Class 2 Paul Price, Squad 112. Paul enlisted in 1968 and served until 1991 with the following Provost companies: 4 Division, 115, 175, Minden Detachment, 150, 19 (Sp) Platoon, 101, Munster Detachment, 176, UNIFICYP and 160.

YOUR CORRESPONDENCE

It is gratifying when the Link Up actually does put people back in touch. As I previously reported I met Ken Steven at the Corps Museum and in passing he mentioned that another former member of the Corps lived in the same apartment block and that was David Ulyett. The latter was instantly recognised by a couple of readers and since then David's phone has not stopped ringing. Trevor Margetson said, 'Dave Ulyett. He joined with us, 'The DE Six' as we were known at that time. As Direct Enlistments. He, Dave Knight, John Davison, Brian Taylor, Ron Tyman and myself kicked off in Squad 527 at Inkerman in Sept. '55. Dave kept us amused with cartoons sent by his uncle who was a cartoonist with a daily at Fleet Street – I think it was the Daily Express.'

Barrie Woodward, who also remembered David from SHAPE has also been on the phone and from what I can gather David is over the moon. Rumour Control has it that there is a third former Corps member in the same apartment block and at the time of writing I am waiting to hear just who that is.

The mention of a cartoonist prompted further research and David's uncle was Roy Ulyett, a famous sports cartoonist who died aged 87 years in 2001.

-ooOoo-

You may remember that Dave Riordan was recently advertising for a video which was made in Berlin. As a follow up he said, 'Thanks once again for your help. I have now got a Digital copy of Provost Berlin, late 1960s from the IWM for family friends use. Edited to small amount of what we actually filmed, gone down well with family. Apart from me there is plenty of others who assume haven't seen it. I recognise, George Nelson, Dave Wilson, Geoff Hughes, and quite a few others names. Would love to hear from anyone who feels they may have featured.' *Ed: If you want to contact Dave please do so through me.*

-ooOoo-



You may remember the photograph on the left from the last edition which was of 1 (Br) Corps Provost Company's football team c1963. Baden Wilson has been able to add a couple of the unknown names. 'If it helps I can identify two of the unknown in the football photo; Pete Jones is stood between Mick Shuster and unknown. Alec Gibson kneeling between myself and John Herbert. Alec was one of the last National Servicemen who signed on to complete the 3 year run down.'

-ooOoo-

From football to driving. Harry Davies, former member of 203 Provost Company said, 'Bob your recent article on the advanced driving course at Hendon for the RMP jogged my very old brain cells into action. I passed the army driving test in 1950 when I was in Suez at the infamous Kilo 99 check point. I took my test only in the desert (I passed it quite easy) in the World War 2 Jeeps we had at the time. I seem to remember there was a road somewhere but don't recall using it, I believe in the ensuing years it's got a tad harder to pass. Thanks again for keeping a lot of us in touch.'

Dave Peet also had something to say about driving. 'I've been reading the bits and pieces from Roy Oswick, Tex Pemberton and Jim McKinley regarding their Advanced Driving Courses with Metpol at Hendon. After my RMP Service, I became a member of the Surrey Constabulary which was within No 6 Region of the Police Service and our Advanced Driving Schools were at Kent and Essex Police Headquarters in Maidstone and Chelmsford respectively.'

Being a member of the then Surrey Constabulary Traffic Department from 1967 to 1985, I attended the 4 weeks Initial Advanced Course in 1969 and in addition to the 3 yearly Advanced Refresher Courses which were of 2 weeks duration, I attended and passed the 6 weeks Advanced Driving Instructors Course in 1974.

As was stated by the above gentlemen, these were wonderful and most enjoyable courses but every day after a morning stint at the wheel followed by an afternoon stint of the same intense concentration, we emerged from the drivers seat feeling mentally exhausted but nicely satisfied. Coupled with this of course was the various written examinations in Roadcraft, Highway Code etc. in addition to the various Practical Driving Examinations we had to undergo including The Main Test Drive, The Skid Pan and Reversing Test. We were obviously required to attain the required pass mark in each and every exam otherwise, we could not pass the course.'

-ooOoo-

Some months ago I featured an article by Pete Shotton that dealt with his early days in training prior to his posting to Middle East Land Forces. He also sent in Part 2 which I have had on the back burner for a while but was prompted to use it following a meeting with Pete at the Corps Museum on the 12th December. Pete, who is a young 86 year old, was accompanied by his Granddaughter Jemima, who for some strange reason prefers the English weather to that of Brisbane, Australia, where she was born and raised and where Pete still resides. The following is the continuation of



Pete's tale. 'To continue on with my illustrious career as an MP. After completing my training I was shipped to Egypt and joined 203 Provost Company, Port Said Detachment.

Talk about culture shock. In my whole life I had barely ventured outside Yorkshire. I was born in York and then grew up in Leeds. Neither place culturally or ethnically diverse in those days! On my first day in Egypt I was instructed to take a motor cycle to Garrison HQ for some minor work to be done and wait and return to police HQ. Police HQ was in the CBD and the Garrison was situated on the outskirts of town. Verbal directions were given on how to get there and return.

On my trip to the Garrison, (remembering this was my first time on an Egyptian street) I discovered the hard way that a horse drawn gharry had the absolute right of way over everybody. As I drew up alongside the rear wheel of one, without any signal or indication he immediately turned right and cleaned me up good and proper. He took not the slightest bit of notice of me and proceeded on his way. I had no option but dust myself off and do the same.

I managed to find my way to the Garrison OK but on the return I became unstuck. I came to a T junction and instead of turning right which would have returned me to the CBD, I accidentally turned left which headed into Arab town (any Egypt vet will know this strictly and absolutely out of bounds as people had been known to

simply disappear).

This Yorkshire lad very quickly became disorientated in the maze of streets, it was impossible to retrace my steps, I was totally lost. I pulled up alongside an Egyptian policeman and asked (in my best broad Yorkshire accent) if he could direct me back to the CBD. He looked at me with an open mouthed blank stare - his English as good as my Arabic. By this time I was surrounded by a huge curious crowd (this always happened in Egypt) when, to compound my troubles my trusty M/C sputtered into silence.

At least I didn't need a common language for it to be evident that I was out of petrol. An elderly man came out of an old garage with a litre of petrol and poured it into my tank. I offered him all the money I had, which he took and the bike thankfully restarted. Not that it helped much as I still didn't know where I was or where to go. Amazingly a smartly dressed young man in crisp white shirt and black pants appeared on a push bike. He approached me and spoke perfect English. He asked where I

wanted to go. I said the Union Jack Club as it was the only place I thought we both knew. He told me to follow him and off we went.

Again, after a maze of streets and alleys, we arrived at junction and I finally recognised where I was, to my right, the Union Jack Club to my left our HQ. He continued riding towards the Union Jack Club and with huge relief I rode to HQ.

I never saw that young man again, and to my shame I never offered him payment or thanked him. This has stayed with me for the rest of my life and I have been forever grateful to him because it is quite possible he saved my life. I learnt that that a British soldier rarely came out of Arab town let alone with M/C and pistol. My only excuse is I was a very frightened young man who had never been out of my home town before. Thus ended my first day in Egypt.' *Ed: Thanks Pete. Hope you are back home in the sunshine reading this – a pleasure to have met you.*

-ooOoo-



I mentioned John Sherwin earlier and he sent in a photograph which I found of interest – well it was in black and white to start with. He said, 'Hello Bob, I have been searching for this photo since you wrote about Captain Mott, the Adjutant at 247. It was taken on May Day 1951 and in preparation for any skirmishes on the British side of the Brandenburg Gate between communists and anti, we had reveille at 2.45 am and were in position in bombed buildings early. Everything went off peacefully.'

-ooOoo-

Eric Hanson wrote in and said, 'Just read latest newsletter and was pleased to see the item about Helmstedt and John Sherwin. I was in 247 Pro Coy, 1950 to 1952, and spent time at the Helmstedt Detachment. The officer in charge was a captain from the RASC he was a football fanatic. As I played centre half I was in the team made up from the RMP and the lads from other attached units who ran the shooting lodge billet. We went to various places for matches and had some wonderful times when my six week stay was up returned to Berlin. After a couple of days was called to RSM Dimond who said that b****y man has been on the phone saying he wants his centre half back again so I got another six weeks cushy living. If you are in touch with John Sherwin please give him my regards I remember his name and tell him that I am still in touch with Jim Stracey'. *Ed: I hope by now that Eric and John have engaged in some form of communication. Sadly I have to say that Jim Stracey passed away – see the Deaths at the end of the newsletter.*



Now for a bit of true nostalgia thanks to Geoff Marston who sent in the photograph of Roussillon Barracks taken in 1968. I am sure there are many of us who wish that it was still the Training Centre – that's life I guess. At least if you arrive at the same location now you can still see The Keep and the old Victorian Wall but do not look any further. I understand that some of the MSQs are still there. OK, wipe away the tears and move on.

ROYAL MILITARY POLICE ASSOCIATION



It has been a busy year for the Association, with branches throughout the world maintaining the good work and comradeship which they are well known for. Closer ties are being forged between the serving members and the retired members and this, as they say, is work in progress.

The Western Australia Branch, as you well know, always send in photographs at this time of year normally showing bright blue, cloudless skies with short sleeve shirts in abundance. This year is no exception. The photograph taken during the annual Christmas Lunch.

Just don't mention the Ashes!

Once again the 248 GSU have sent in their Guard Report, just follow the link.

http://248gsu.de/index.php/der-guard-report/gp_download/send/3-guard-report/285-guard-report-november-2017



INFORMATION AND NOTICES

I have received a request from the daughter of a former member of the Corps. He was WO1 (RSM) Leslie Austin Crossley who died suddenly from a cerebral haemorrhage on the 15th June 1966. He served in a number of theatres and the family would like to know more about his service. I have, at this stage, been able to supply a copy of his obituary which appeared in the Corps Journal at the time. If you remember him please let me know.

DEATHS

LEDGER

Taken from a Face Book page. Former Sergeant Sheelagh 'Sledge' Ledger, WRAC Provost, passed away on the 7th December 2017 having finally lost her battle with cancer.

REID

Former 24075658 Warrant Officer Class 2 Ian Reid passed away on the night of the 27th December 2017 following a long battle with cancer. Ian enlisted in 1967 and was in squad R64. He went on to serve in 200 Provost Company, 20 Armoured Brigade Provost Unit, 177 Provost Company, 247 Provost Company and then went on to serve with the Special Investigation Branch in Dusseldorf, York, Preston, Belize, Northern Ireland and Edinburgh. He was discharged in 1988.

STRACEY

Former 22349529 Lance-Corporal Jim Stracey, seen on the right, passed away on the 12th December in Worthing Hospital. Jim was an active member of the RMPA West Sussex Branch in Worthing. Jim trained with Squad 154 and served with 247 Provost Company 1950 - 1952. On hearing of Jim's death Eric Hanson said, "Thanks Bob. I was aware of how ill Jim was and it is quite a blow to me. We were born on the same day and called up on the same day, at Inkerman Bks at the same time, served in 247 Pro Coy together and were demobbed on the same day. My wife Margaret and I met up with Jim and Dot a few years ago in Eastbourne so you can see that we were brothers-in-arms and true friends thanks to our time in the RMP."



SOULSBY

I was made aware today, the 15th December, through a Facebook of the passing of Ken Soulsby of Worthing. Ken was a long serving member of RMPTA and latterly served in 1 Port Task Force Provost Company RMP (V) and 164 Provost Company, RMP (V) at CVHQ Chichester, completing his service as RSM.

THUMWOOD

John Thumwood aged 80, passed away on the 30th November 2017. At the time of writing no other details are available.

TUSCHER

The following Facebook entry was forwarded to me. "Mick Tuscher, my husband of nearly 60 yrs passed away yesterday after a long and painful set of circumstances." I do not have any further information.

WALKER

Sadly I heard from Mrs Pauline Walker who said, 'Would you please include the death of my husband 22839532 Lance-Corporal Clifford Herbert Walker in your next newsletter. He passed away peaceful at Loros in Leicester on the 7th October 2017.' Clifford was born on the 24th September 1931 and I have him recorded as serving initially with the Royal Artillery and then with 203 Provost Company. From 1953 until 1956.

-ooOoo-



Well another year has flown by and I was reminded by this edition that it is now ten and a half years that these newsletters have been circulated around the world and that is all thanks to you the readers and contributors. I cannot guarantee another such period but for the foreseeable future keep the stories and photographs coming in.



Having just got over *The Last Post* I was somewhat enraged when news circulated about the rebranding of the Army's logo and badge. Call me old fashioned, call me an elitist, but is there something wrong with being the best? I am proud to have served alongside the Best it what was, an in my opinion remains, the best Army in the world. I am pleased that the change has been placed on hold for the moment and hope the lunatics are put back in the asylum. That is my final rant of the year.

I hope your Christmas went well and the waistline did not suffer too much. Joy and I wish you and your families a healthy and prosperous New Year.

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