



## **RAMC REUNITED**

## **NEWSLETTER**

## **FEBRUARY 2015**

### **THE FRIENDS OF MILLBANK (FOM)**

Colonel (Retired) Frank Davis is Chairman of Friends of Millbank (FOM) and is forever looking for new members to join the Group, which is "Keeping Alive the Memory of Millbank". They meet from time to time at the Chelsea College of Art and Design which was formerly the Royal Army Medical College.

### **Membership Fees:**

Annual membership subscriptions are:

Individual £15.00

And

Couples £20.00.

FOM Website can be accessed by going to:

<http://www.friendsofmillbank.org/>

Members can contact FOM at:

[info@friendsofmillbank.org](mailto:info@friendsofmillbank.org)

### **WEDNESDAY 13 MAY 2015** **RAMC ANNUAL SERVICE AND** **ASSOCIATION AGM**

The RAMC will be holding its Annual Service at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas on Wednesday 13 May 2015. The Service will start at 1100hrs at the RAMC Memorial Grove.

All RAMC members; Regular, Reserves, Families and Friends may attend this service.

The Association AGM will commence at 1200 hrs at the NMA and will be followed by a buffet lunch.

Those wishing to attend the Service and AGM are to apply to RHQ RAMC by the closing date.

Cost of the Buffet Lunch is £6.00 and cheques are to be made payable to 'The RAMC Charity'.

Closing date: Friday 24 April 2015.

### **130 St JOHN FIELD AMBULANCE**

The historians amongst us might find this entry very interesting. Fred Pope forwarded me an article which was published in the 13th January 2015 edition of the walesonline.co.uk publication.

When war was declared in August 1914 there were 800 St John Ambulance men in training in Aberystwyth and the Army asked St John Ambulance to put together Field Ambulances. On 12th December 1914 the Field Ambulance Unit was mobilised and handed over to the Welsh Army Corps at St David's Centre Cardiff.

The unit was raised predominantly from experienced St John Ambulance trained men from across the South Wales coalfields including the Rhondda, Gwent, Ogmore Vale, Amman and Garw Valleys.

The 130th was one of three mobile Field Ambulance units raised to support the new 38th Welsh Division (the other two were 129th and 131st) – and was the only one entitled to use the title St John in its name and to wear the St John insignia.

Training took place at Criccieth and then Prestatyn in North Wales during the first half of 1915 before a move to Winchester, Hampshire in August 1915 for final training.

On 3rd December the men sailed for France, remaining in the war zone until the end of the war. The men of the 130th served with distinction at some of the most important battles of the Great War. They were in support of the infamous Battle of Mametz Wood on the Somme in July 1916 and at Pilkem Ridge during the third battle of Ypres in 1917.

The men of the 130th won 25 Military Medals for gallantry, two Distinguished Conduct Medals two Croix de Guerres and Military Crosses.

For further information on 130th Field Ambulance please visit the following site:

<http://www.130thstjohnfieldambulance.co.uk/>

## **TURNING OF THE PAGE CEREMONY – WESTMINSTER ABBEY**

<b><u>DATE</u></b>	<b><u>UNIT</u></b>
4 April 2015	3 Med Regt 251 Med Sqn Sunderland
2 May 2015	5 Med Regt (Soldiers KIA during this month on Op TELIC were from the Sqn that is now part of 5 Med Regt)
4 July 2015	MDHU(N)
3 October 2015	34 Fd Hosp
5 December 2015	335 Medical Evac Regiment

The Books are now located under the RAMC windows at the front of the Abbey.

The Ceremony always starts at 1100hrs sharp.

Those wishing to attend should be in at the designated location before 1045hrs so that they can be in position and, if they need a seat then earlier as there are only approximately 20 seats.

Those attending should state that they are attending the RAMC Service and will be allowed in.

**WESTERN OMMAND LABORATORY**  
**CHESTER MILITARY HOSPITAL**  
**JUNE - DECEMBER 1954**

This article is a follow on to Terry Hardy's contribution to the January edition of the Newsletter and his time at the Military Hospital Chester.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank Terry and his Family for his contributions to the RAMC Reunited Newsletter.

Crookham and those ten weeks of 'very auspices of the Army and enforced labour. The next six months was to prove another turning point in my life and, although I had no idea of how important it was at the time, that half year, turned out to be absolutely crucial in later years and long after National Service years were over. At times my young wife Greta and I managed to be together too and that was a fantastic 'bonus'.

**Another training period – a useful one!**

Leaving Crookham and 'Basic Training' was a blessed relief which could not come swiftly enough. The drawback was that I was leaving Greta even further away and to us Chester was in the far North and the back of nowhere. But there was a carrot to the stick and I was going back to a career that had already begun, at Beecham Research Laboratories in 1950; now there was the hope of further training and interest, to keep me sane, for the remainder of my two years.

After a brief and blissful leave in our little love nest in the woods at Capel, I arrived at Chester Military Hospital one Thursday, mid-June, on a glorious sunny day. It was a long journey by train with the inevitable change at

Crewe; one of the most dismal railway stations in Europe which I came to know quite well.

Having reported to the guardroom with full kit and a few personal belongings I was directed to "Malta Barracks" – "over there, behind the cook house mate." I was not sure if Malta Barracks sounded good or bad but I soon found out. After some searching, I found a somewhat rusty Nissan hut with a small lopsided wooden plaque hanging on the open door. I entered and there were two others sitting on their bunks. It appeared that these were the only bunks in the hut and after a brief greeting and swapping of names one of the incumbents nodded to a door "you are through there mate". Fine, it looked as if I was going to have a room to myself: I did. I went through and there was the remainder of the small Nissan with one bunk (presumably mine) and nothing else – not even a back to the hut and it was open to the elements, backing on to a field! After dumping my kit I explored a little and found that I had duties for the "special weekend events." I had arrived on "Corps Day" and the sports shenanigans. I was to report to the Cook house at 6.30 am on Friday and Saturday and cut sandwiches all flaming day.

This was not good and I confess to feeling somewhat 'down'. I wandered around and eventually found the Laboratory and my new colleagues to be for the next few months. They welcomed me, listened to my plight and quickly introduced me to the Laboratory 'IC', a Sergeant Gregory, and the Pathologist in charge, Captain Nobel who was affectionately known as "Higgy." They quickly sorted matters out for the Monday and I soon had a bed in a pleasant hut, with about a dozen others, and settled in to the Lab. and my new home, Western

Command Laboratory, starting on the Monday morning: First I had the weekend of sandwich cutting which could not, it seemed, be avoided.

From that day onwards I suffered very little in the way of military activities and I only remember two parades when I had to exercise my boots – church parades for Armistice Sunday, one of which was at Chester Cathedral and one in Hong Kong. Life at Chester was very much orientated to useful matters.

The laboratory at Chester, although a wooden hut was spacious and, for its day, well equipped. There was a very long Laboratory. with a massive central table, maybe twenty or more feet long, and benches running the full length at the sides. There were small service rooms at the ends for autoclave, wash-up, centrifuge, toilets and so on. The 'Boss', Col. T.G.A. Warrington, a Maltese, had his own office. The laboratory corridor linked to the main hospital.

From the word 'go' it was very clear that this was a working laboratory. It served the hospital but was also a service Laboratory for the area and helped out with the adjacent civilian hospital, the Deva, too. All of the traditional disciplines were covered so we had to cope with haematology, bacteriology, histopathology and blood chemistry: where possible we collected our own biological samples and one of my first educational duties was in the art of collecting blood. We soon became much more expert than the 'medics' who were, it seemed, only occasional visitors to the wards in this regard.

I was thrown in to the deep end. My records had followed me and there was some notion that, because I had come from industry and a research laboratory, I must already know a lot

about pathology laboratory technology but this was not the case. True there were some in the Laboratory who had come from a hospital environment and who knew at least some of the ropes; I did not, and had to learn fast and the hard way. There were, as far as I can remember, 6 or 8 of us in the lab excluding "Higgy". The working day seemed to start early and go on forever and often into the next day. We were working and serving and at the same time training and learning so this was the epitome of so called "on the job training" and there was not much room for error. My early experience dating back to Sir John Cass Technical college days served me well in histology but I had no background in bacteriological techniques let alone diagnosis. I soon picked up the basics of haematology and blood biochemistry was not too mind bending. The problem was the decadence of the apparatus and I now marvel as to how we avoided killing some poor soul. I cannot emphasise the training too much. "Higgy" was certainly rather weird but he knew how to 'put us through it'. In the army, in those days, one was very much individually responsible for one's errors. Mistakes could land one in very serious personal trouble including, effectively, being flung into jail!

"Higgy" very much believed in us experiencing, within limits, the discomforts of the patients. A good example was the issue of gastric intubation. We quickly learnt that making a mistake in the chemistry, or knocking the sample tubes over, would result in the patient having to suffer the discomfort of having another Ryles tube passed down his gullet. "Higgy" considered it right and proper that we should all suffer the discomfort and indignity of swallowing a tube and sampling our own gastric juice. So, we

all lined up round the table, swallowed our own gastric tube with much coughing, spluttering, retching and watering of the eyes. Eileen Jeffries, a little half pint of a girl, did it first - well she would, wouldn't she! Although turning a nasty shade of purple, she stood proudly in the middle of that damned bench, heaving away, and was first to get the wriggling and snaking rubber tube down her scrawny little neck.

Another of "Higgy's" little games was to ensure that we tried the Volhard's water dilution test of kidney function. In this little delight the patient was first required to empty his or her bladder and then drink a beaker of urea water solution, following it with a litre of water. It was then necessary to "hold one's bladder" for some absurd length of time before having an almighty pee, the output volume of which was carefully measured along with the blood urea. Well, "Higgy" saw to it that we went through this procedure, and suffered, just in case we should make a balls up of the test in the lab. We all took advantage of the loo and then drank the potion and the litre of water. Then "Higgy" locked the WC doors and simply cleared off to his small office and left us alone. All was well for a while and then, one by one, we started to squirm and cross our legs! There were cries of anguish but all to no avail. No matter how loud we shouted "come on Sir, for Christ's sake open the bloody door", "Higgy" would not relent and bladders were at bursting point as he strutted round the Lab with an obsequious grin – well, all except Eileen's bladder of course. Yes, we learnt that we should not make a cock up of the Volhard's water dilution test and I, for one, will never forget it. Little Eileen Jeffries was a complete misfit but she was a good Laboratory

Technician and a great sport. **To be continued.....**

### **ALDERSHOT BARRACKS READY TO RECEIVE 3 ARMY MEDICAL UNITS**

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) has started work to make an Aldershot Barracks ready to receive 3 Army Medical Units.

The work, which is in partnership with the Army, is part of a £50 million project to transform Keogh Barracks into the new home of 4 Armoured Medical Regiment (4AMR), 22 Field Hospital and Ministry of Defence Hospital Unit (Frimley Park).

The £7.5 million first phase of the 3 year redevelopment involves converting the Sandhurst single living accommodation block to single occupancy rooms. It will also create a large laundrette and common rooms located on the ground floor and the officers' mess will be upgraded.

DIO project manager Scott Ross said:

"There is quite a lot to do to make these buildings fit for their new purpose, but I'm pleased to say that by working together with our Army customers we will have Keogh Barracks ready for these 3 Medical Regiments when they need to move in.

This project is an excellent example of DIO's work to enhance the service we provide to defence and build a better estate for our Armed Forces."

Major Eddie Rae, second-in-command 4 AMR, said:

"This is a fantastic opportunity for the Army Medical Services and their soldiers' future. Co-locating these 3

units, with their differing and complex needs and specialisms, will provide greater synergy in their operations. This will build on military medical capability in preparation to provide and support Army 2020.

Working with DIO gave us the opportunity to help shape these facilities to provide exactly what the soldiers and the army need, in a timely and efficient manner.”

Further refurbishment and new buildings will provide fit-for-purpose accommodation for the 3 units, allowing them to train and work in a co-ordinated way. The medics are due to move into their new home over the summer.

The redevelopment of Keogh Barracks is part of the Army Basing Programme, which will provide the facilities the army needs to live, work and train in the UK as it returns from Germany, rebases across the UK and restructures under Army 2020. More than 30 army units have already moved and or changed roles within the UK as part of the programme, freeing up infrastructure and sites and allowing units to better align to their Army 2020 structures. In turn this creates the conditions to enable later moves from Germany and within the UK that will take place over the next 5 years.

In total £1.8 billion will be invested in infrastructure across the UK under the programme, boosting the economy, creating jobs and providing around 1,700 new homes for service families, thousands of new bed spaces for single soldiers and working, technical and training infrastructure.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dio-provides-for-army-medics-new-home>

## **CORPS RSM RIDES FOR CHARITY**

Hi everyone, for those who don't know me, I am the current AMS Corps RSM.



And 2015 is the year I get out and complete some events to raise money for a great charity - Bike Tours for the Wounded.

This amazing charity supports Wounded, Injured and Sick Servicemen and Women by financing their places on amazing motorcycle trips in America and Europe, each one supported by a volunteer rider to carry them.

So this year I am going to get fit and complete various events throughout the year and in doing so raise enough money to fund some WIS places on these amazing trips.

You can check out the charity at the following website: <http://www.biketoursforthewounded.co.uk/> and see the great things they achieve.

## Ok, so what will I be doing?

**April 2015:** Leading a group of 30 people, including some wounded veterans, attempt on the UK 3 Peaks Challenge. Climbing Ben Nevis, Scarfell Pike and Snowdon in 24hrs!



**July 2015:** Rat Race The Crossing <http://www.ratracecrossing.com> - A two person team completing a 3 day, 200 mile mountain bike race from the west coast to the east coast of the UK. Crossing the Lake District, the Yorkshire Dales and the North York Moors!!



More events to follow!!!

In Sept 15 some of our AMS Wounded Sick and Injured are attending the trip to America and by raising this money their places will be free to them. They have given a lot; please help me to give something back.

Please support me, every little helps and it doesn't matter what you give, your money and thoughts will carry me on! THANK YOU!

'IN ARDUIS FIDELIS'

Please follow this link to donate:

[www.gofundme.com/kzeqgg](http://www.gofundme.com/kzeqgg)

## STORING OF 9 VOLT BATTERIES

I consider the information contained in the youtube video link shown below should be shared with members.

9 volt batteries can cause considerable damage if stored inappropriately.

[https://www.youtube.com/embed/CnVDayl-gwI?feature=player\\_detailpage](https://www.youtube.com/embed/CnVDayl-gwI?feature=player_detailpage)

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

**Billy Driver** - Steve Fenton, a former member of the 3rd Battalion, Royal Anglian Regiment knew Billy whilst he was attached to the Regiment. They were neighbours in Bad Lipspringe. Steve would like to get in touch with him. Anyone know of Billy's whereabouts, would you please pass Steve's email address onto him:

[stevfelton54@hotmail.com](mailto:stevfelton54@hotmail.com)

## **British Station Hospital, Suez, MELF**

**15** - Peter Armstrong has been trying unsuccessfully to contact anyone who served with him at British Station Hospital, Suez, MELF 15. He was a Lance Corporal in charge of reception. His nickname was "Louis" and at that time hailed from Wembley Middlesex.

Some of the names he can remember are, Baldock, Juniper, Cooper (Cpl?), Lewington, Davies (RASC)

Anyone who knows Peter can contact him on [louis-arm-100@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:louis-arm-100@hotmail.co.uk)