



RAMC REUNITED **NEWSLETTER APRIL** **2015**

RAMC ANNUAL SERVICE AND **UNVEILING OF THE RAMC** **MEMORIAL - NATIONAL** **MEMORIAL ARBORETUM - 13** **MAY 2015**

The RAMC Annual Service will take place at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA), Staffordshire, DE13 7AR on Wednesday 13 May 2015 at 1100 hours.

The RAMC Memorial which was a 2 year project undertaken by the outgoing Corps RSM Andy Game and, was completed in time for the RAMC Annual Service. The unveiling of the RAMC Memorial will take place during the RAMC Annual Service. The Memorial will be a fitting tribute to those who have, are and will serve within the Corps.

There will be a short service held at 1100 hours in the RAMC Grove with the formal changing of the Corps Flag followed by the Memorial unveiling and tree dedications.

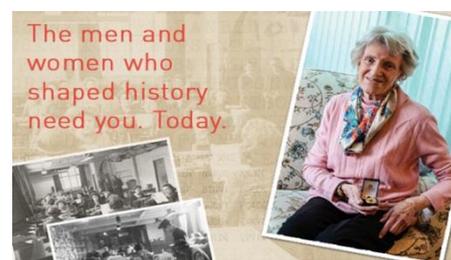
The NMA will provide a shuttle service for the RAMC Association members who require it. This will run from 1010-

1040 hours from outside the Coffee Shop to the RAMC Grove. The shuttle can carry 4 persons at a time. It is requested that the shuttle is only used by those who require it otherwise people will not be in place before the start of the ceremony which will start at 1100 hours.

All those personnel attending the Service are able to attend the buffet lunch in the NMA Marque on completion of the Service. All those wishing to attend must have sent in payment for £6.00 per head to the Events & Functions Co-ordinator, RHQ RAMC, Slim Road, Camberley, Surrey GU15 4NP by COP 24th April 2015.

The RAMC Association AGM will take place in the NMA Marquee following the buffet lunch. The start of the AGM will remain flexible and will not start until after the departure of the principle guests. The AGM is open to all RAMC members, regular, reserve and their families.

THE SOLDIERS' CHARITY – **TOGETHER, LET US SUPPORT** **THOSE WHO SHAPED** **HISTORY**



Do your bit for the men and women who shaped history. There are thousands of veterans of all ages who need your support. Please send a gift today.

In my work as Director of Fundraising at ABF The Soldiers' Charity, I am always proud when the Charity supports veterans of the Second World War and their families. These men and women served our country and helped shape history. Our debt to them is immense.

To me, one of the most fascinating aspects of the Second World War is the story of Bletchley Park: the Buckinghamshire stately home where teams of codebreakers and other staff worked to crack the fiendishly complex German codes.

Read the story of Greta Casperson; a former Bletchley Park Veteran whom The Soldiers' Charity helped support.

No veteran or their family should be left wanting - please give what you can today.

[DONATE NOW](#)

Yours sincerely,

Sean Bonnington
Director of Fundraising

JOURNEY ON THE TROOPSHIP MV GEORGIC TO THE FAR EAST

The following article is a continuation of Terry Hardy's memoirs of his time whilst serving National Service. This article covers his time on board the Troop Ship MV Georgic.

Hong Kong was a long way off and I had to get there. The voyage was to take 35 days and I intended to make the most of it, even though it was on a trooping ship at Her Majesty's pleasure. I had little idea of where

Hong Kong was, let alone 'what it was all about' and I had little knowledge of the history of the colony or the local geography: the library book I tried was not much help and I gave up - I would just wait and see.

Greta and I said our goodbyes once again and this was becoming a habit; this time we knew it was to be for over a year, so neither of us was in a state of absolute bliss.

From embarkation leave I was posted first from Chester back to Crookham and a few days at H&D Company for fresh kitting out and a minimum of 'briefing': this was largely centred on the subject of how to avoid catching VD with lurid films resembling an enhanced version of the 'World of Suzie Wong'. H&D (Holding and Drafting) was a miserable place right out in the sticks and at the edge of the camp, behind the top drill square. The only entertainment was a small and inadequate Salvation Army hut selling the only meal they could cook – bacon, egg and chips and peas or beans. "Beg pardon, peas or beans" the elderly, deaf 'Sally' Army chap asked. There were huge mugs of hot tea, of course. We did escape to "The Windmill" pub sometimes to drown our sorrows. There was a mixed mood of excitement, apprehension, anticipation and depression at the thought of leaving our loved ones behind; me for a year and a bit and some for almost two years.

Then, at long last we were off after a call at 4.00 am and parading at 5.00am for the trucks to Aldershot and the train bound for Liverpool. There were not many of us on the train as it began its journey but we seemed to collect troops from all over the country as the hours wore on. It was Friday January 28th. 1955. The train journey

from Aldershot seemed to be endless, with stops at some curious places, and the route was very tortuous. From Aldershot we actually tracked East and through, of all places, Betchworth, within a couple of miles of Greta who, by now, was back living with 'mum', her birthplace in Brockham. After an interminable stop at Crew, that most miserable of stations, we arrived on the quayside at Liverpool and descended with our 'carry on' kit. There it was, towering and almost menacing, black as night and in the night, the MV Georgic, sister ship to the majestic SS Britannic: at 27,000 tons, she seemed a near giant of a ship to those of us who had only been on a rowing boat. This 'Old Lady' of a majestic ship was to be my home for the next five weeks and it was my transport to carry me across the oceans, to exotic parts, and deposit me at the gateway to China. For sure, the Georgic had seen better days as a luxury liner crossing the Atlantic in pre WW II days and she had been bombed and set afire in the Suez Canal in that War. Some of the great steel 'plates' were still showing signs of those bad times and showing 'buckling'. But this was still a rather grand ship and one sensed history as soon as one embarked. In a curious kind of way, it was 'homely' at once and I still remain attached to it as the years roll by.

I was lucky to be going out on the Georgic as many of the luxury aspects were in place and, importantly as it was to turn out, the crew were White Star Line employees. The White Star line leased the old Georgic to the Ministry of Defence once a year in lieu of tax (or so I have been told); as a consequence there were cabins - not luxury status, but cabins none the less.

We gathered in small groups on the dockside waiting expectantly for the

word to board. We were new 'mates' and we were to be cooped up together for quite a long time, so we had better do our best to get along. One chap seemed petrified and was convinced he was going to be seasick for all projected 35 days. "rubbish" I said. "This ship is so massive you won't even know we are at sea; not a sign of movement". He seemed reassured, but I have to confess this was not one of my better judgements and I was soon to be proved horribly wrong! We filed up the gangway, assembled in some kind of 'foyer' and listened while our names and numbers ("the last three - Hardy 325") were called and we eventually found our little kennels. Our cabin was shared by six of us. We were right at the very front (the sharp end) and down so many decks I lost count. We were somewhere near to the anchor locker as we soon found out when the thing was hauled in: that noise was ghastly, a long low growling noise like some kind of death gasp. We had a porthole and it was about three inches from my right ear which was great, I thought, as 'I can get some fresh air when it's hot'. I didn't realise at that time that I was almost below the waterline when the ship was 'parked' let alone when it would be ploughing through the turbulent oceans. Within a few minutes someone came in and screwed the thing down, put a massive steel cover over it and turned what looked like huge brass wing nuts to effect a good seal. In a way I was comforted as no way was the sea, or marauding marine life, going to get at me by that route!

Soon, there was a sharp awakening to the fact that we were still in the army and not part of some school adventure trip. Over the loudspeakers came the first order - "all troops will remove boots and lay to attention on their bunks for inspection". I thought that it

was not going to be a ball of fun if this kept up for 35 days!

Soon we were “at ease” and allowed on deck to watch the departure. Lights sparkling all over the ship, we gently eased away. No waving crowds, no brass bands, no hooting and tooting. We headed down the Mersey, leaving the unmistakable towers of the Liver Building behind, and on to the Irish Channel. I was on my way to Hong Kong, to the great adventure of my life, and would not see England again for more than a year. I went below to the warmth and relative solitude of my little cabin and to chat with my new mates.

The first reality of being at sea

I slept well for a few hours and awoke to find the cabin empty. At first I wondered if I had missed some kind of reveille call but surely my cabin mates would have given me a shove. I slung my legs over the edge of the narrow bunk, sat up and felt good. A yawn and a stretch and feet to the floor. Oh dear, the ship was moving a little bit but nothing of any magnitude - yet. This was going to be a ‘piece of cake’ if it kept up like this.

I dressed and as I did so I realised that the ship was actually swaying around quite a lot and, maybe I was a little dizzy, probably a result of being a little short of sleep and also the stress of the previous day, I thought. Thinking about ablutions and breakfast and a little exploration, I opened the little cabin door: the most dreadful sight assaulted my eyes and senses. I had found my new shipmates and a whole lot of others. They were strung out along an endless narrow corridor, in groups of three or four, with arms linked around shoulders, supporting and comforting each other whilst they vomited into a whole series of

galvanized iron dustbins. The heat, the stench the groaning and moaning and the swearing, was awful. At this precise moment, my brain informed my stomach that it was not to be left out of this little pageant of life and that it should join the others immediately; I just about made it to the nearest group in time.

As soon as was practical and my gastric contractions had subsided for a few seconds, I made my way back to the tiny cabin, grabbed some warm clothing and my greatcoat. My overriding need was to find fresh air and leave the bowels of the ship while mine were still safely still glued inside of me. I set off on a journey along endless corridors and up countless gangways and steps until I was leaving the engine noises and the groaning of my shipmates and could detect that golden commodity I was seeking - the fresh air. I met a crew member coming down and he paused, took one look at me and said something like “what you want lad is a good breakfast to settle you down”. This provoked another convulsion deep down in my entrails and I burst forth at the critical moment through doors and onto the deck. I stayed on that deck not just for an hour or so but for the remainder of the day and most of the night and the next day too.

The sight which met me was simply indescribable. We were in a storm of unimaginable proportions and intensity as we sailed into, and across, the notorious Bay of Biscay. From the mighty ship there was an unending vista of grey green foam and mountains of water which, unbelievably, were breaking right over the bows. At intervals the ship ducked and weaved to such an extent that the stern rose clean out of the water, there was a gasping roar as the ‘screws’

came right out of the sea. I lay on my back in some shelter and looked up at the angry sky and the boiling clouds. This was not a clever thing to do as I then saw the extent of the swaying of the huge masts against the skyline - I was terrified and once again my vomiting senses were galvanised into action.

After a while, and next day, the nausea began to subside and gave way to a strange exhilaration. I was literally bruised and battered but I was 'coming round' and began to feel I was going to survive. The seascape took on a fascination and I could not leave it. The peaks and troughs of the waves must have been of almost unbelievable proportions and what must have been very sizable ships, way out beyond us, simply disappeared from view from time to time. Despite this I was staggered to see tiny fishing boats, from the coast of Portugal, out fishing for sardines – mad, but I think of those idiots when I have my sardines on toast.

In time, the storm started to calm, the sun came out and bathed Lisbon in a gold carpet off on our left hand side (that's the Port side I learned). Then we were through the Straits of Gibraltar, in the evening glow and a few twinkling lights and into the Mediterranean: I was beginning to enjoy this little cruise.

Not all plain sailing

Soon we were mustered on deck and asked what our skills were. There was no problem with the Artillery lads and they were organised into groups for rifle practice off the stern and boxing and sundry other unsociable pastimes. When it came to my turn I muttered something about "Laboratory Technician" and "Research" and

fortunately no one had the faintest idea what I was all about. I was left alone for a crucial few hours while 'they' tried to dream up something to keep me occupied for the next 30 or so days.

During the night I was rudely awakened and with hoarse whispering in my ear I was summoned to the ship's 'MI' room and to see the ship's surgeon and the RAMC senior 'medic' somewhere up near to the bridge - the holiest of command centres. I was hustled in to a small very dark room and shown a microscope "ever used one of these before?" Well yes, I had actually! Then "would you know a malarial parasite if you saw one?" I wondered if this was some sick joke or perhaps I was in some kind of nightmare – why I should be being grilled about malarial parasites on a ship in the middle of the night in the Mediterranean.

It transpired that there as one very sick and unconscious senior crewmember and no one had the faintest idea what the problem was. As a guess 'they' thought he might just have malaria and I was asked to have a look at his blood. I did, and Chester Pathology Laboratory training came in useful and rather earlier than I had anticipated. I searched and searched well into the early hours and found nothing unusual in the poor chap's blood. After a while the problem was solved as another crewmember came in to the tiny room with an empty pill bottle: the patient had consumed a large amount of hyoscine (seasickness antidote) in a suicide attempt. A nursing sister appeared and we duly pumped the poor chap's stomach and I was dismissed to return to my quarters and to sleep. So, this was an early baptism under fire, so to speak, and I felt 'useful'.

Next morning I was summoned again and thanked quite profusely by the ship's surgeon and our RAMC chap. "Perhaps you would like to carry on and be the ship's Laboratory Technician" they suggested "but we have never had one on board before, so we don't really know what you will do". I couldn't believe my luck and fell over myself to agree this strange appointment. I took advantage of the situation and struck while the iron was hot. I explained that there may be other times when I might be called upon in some emergency - perhaps at night even, and it would be unfair to my cabin mates to wake them; also, I really ought to have a telephone! There was much consideration and astonishingly, it was suggested that I should move to the ship's isolation hospital where there was a telephone and three tiny wards, one of which I could take over – "and, oh yes, there is a bath and a refrigerator and they might come in useful."

Now a mini Hilton

I wasted not one millisecond, transferred my kit, and was soon ensconced in my new world before there was a change of heart. The isolation hospital was right at the 'top' of the ship and somewhere behind the funnel. There was a small veranda and a waste high metal gate. I found a notice which read "No Entry – Infectious Disease" and hung it up for all to see and it worked like magic; no one came near. The 'Hospital' consisted of three wards - a double (which I took over) a single, and one which could accommodate around six patients. There was a large bathroom with giant sized bath, and an enormous, empty, refrigerator. I was in clover! It was me now who was in splendid isolation and it seemed, I was

completely forgotten. I kept out of sight except to bask in the sun when possible and when I ventured below decks to collect food and slowly stock up the fridge with a few cans of beer. How long could this existence in paradise last?

I could sit in a chair on my little veranda and watch the other poor sods boxing, wrestling, practicing firing weapons over the stern and engage in other military tasks and unsociable activities.

We docked at Port Said at night and before entering the Suez Canal the following morning. I had a grandstand view of the myriad of tiny 'bum' boats busying themselves around the ship and the graceful dhows sailing gently. We had sustained quite a lot of damage in the storm and this included a rupture of one of the fresh water tanks which in turn caused us to have to cut back on that staple of the British soldier's diet - endless cups of tea. We were duly repaired and took on fresh water, which was a mistake as the troops suffered with diarrhoea from drinking the water which was near saturated with magnesium sulphate (Epsom salts) which had come from deep wells; boiling it made no difference of course. I had my personal and private WC in my little enclave and if anyone came near I simply pointed to the notice on the gate and shouted to them to 'bugger off' and they did, fearing catching a dose of plague.

I saw my first camel, my first palm trees growing 'native' and my first Arabs as we slid gently and majestically though the canal: sights I can never forget. The Georgic was so large it seemed to almost be touching the banks of the canal at times. Arabs were all over the place like 'Desert Rats' and clambered aboard by all

seemingly impossible means as fast as we hosed them off. There was much shouting and bartering and the never ending strains of “go home McGregor” from the natives. Several of us had been swindled and robbed trying to bargain for souvenirs, but we got our revenge by enticing the natives to the side, in their tiny and unstable boats, and then, at a signal, we emptied the garbage bins from a great height, nearly capsizing them. The language, even in Arabic, was quite recognizable!

One subsequent episode resulted in more bad language (and a lot of giggles) but this time it was from ‘our side’. We were transporting a number of ‘Officers and Gentlemen’ on the trip and many had their young wives on board. Sometime after we had nearly drowned the itinerant natives in rotting garbage, a whole bevy of locals with camels and God knows what gear, lined the sides of the canal and started to perform interesting ‘tricks’, including juggling, handstands and so on. They created maximum noise as they massed along the embankments, were colourful and “Oh, how interesting, and don’t they look sweet”, was the soft, genteel, very British girlish cry from the young women lining the ship’s side. When they had determined that the maximum crowd of females had come out to enjoy the fun, with one hidden signal, every single Arab turned about, lifted their white djebellas, bent over and pointed their bare brown backsides to the ship! The young women were aghast but seemed extraordinarily slow in averting their gaze! The RSM was apoplectic but it all helped pass the time.

A business venture for two **(a case of mumps)**

I had teamed up with a chap in the Hygiene Corps - or whatever it was called - early into the voyage: we had met while losing our dignity somewhere crossing the Bay of Biscay and he sought me out as we entered the Red Sea and quickly realised we could make a fast buck or three. “Ginge, we will need some cash when we get to Hong Kong, can you iron or wash and starch clothes”. Well, neither with any degree of experience was my cautious reply; what was he up to?

The suggested ploy was that I use the bath in the mini hospital to soak, wash, and starch the white jackets and trousers of the crew; he would iron them ‘somewhere’ all for a few ‘bob’ a time. I was a little circumspect about this but it seemed ‘safe enough’ and, after all, all was quiet in the isolation hospital and no one came near. So, foolishly, I agreed and we went into business; our little joint venture on the high seas. All went well for quite some time and business flourished, the only problem being that we had to smuggle the stuff in and out under cover of darkness. Then, trouble struck.

I was called to see the RAMC Officer in Charge and informed that the Padre had contracted mumps. As I was already installed in the isolation hospital and was RAMC, I could look after the patient and nurse him! Suddenly I actually had a real, living - infectious - patient on my hands. I allocated the small single bedded room and the poor guy was duly installed. Fortunately (for me) the chap really was quite unwell and needed little looking after. He was married and had a wife and child on board but, as we had no need to have a raging epidemic of

mumps at sea, they were banned from visiting. I still had the 'business premises' to myself and the Padre couldn't care less so it was 'business as usual'. Every cloud has its silver lining and the Padre's sickness actually helped since it tended to reinforce the fact that my little empire was out of bounds (except to my business partner of course, under cover of darkness). Also, I was able to visit the

Officer's Mess kitchen area and, following polite enquiry, inform the chef that "the Padre feels a little better today and he would like some chicken, some fruit and a bottle of beer". He couldn't eat anything but I dined well and sat with my mate in the dark enjoying a cool beer.

Again there was a slight hitch to this strife torn life when a young child, a girl of about six or seven, decided to get measles and so she had to come up to the hospital as well. She was accompanied by a 'QARANC' nurse, the daughter of some high ranking officer (a Brigadier or some such) and the young nurse and child both took up residence in 'my' remaining little ward. The nurse was a 'cracker' to look at, there were only the two of us and the sick Padre, and a fractious child who could be drugged: there were six empty beds and the nights were tropical. What more could we want! Well this young thing was more frigid than your average Eskimo and, I have to say, I remained a virgin on that trip: the thought of an irate Brigadier descending on me was also a powerful deterrent. **(To be continued....)**

EXTRACTS FROM PETER REDMOND'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY (CONTINUED)

June 1948 - I applied for a transfer to the Royal Army Medical Corps and was pleasantly surprised to find that they were happy to let me go. I could have become the longest serving private in the Green Howards. Everyone in my new unit made me feel so welcome!

I was posted to the British Military Hospital (BMH) Khartoum. "You'll have to start at the bottom" they said, "so we'll put you on Dysentery Ward" Ho! Ho! Ho! And they did. Then a couple of weeks on Surgical; I would do the rounds. I had only been there six weeks when I overheard a conversation between the CO and the QM. "The pharmacist is being posted to Asmara and we have no replacement coming. What are we going to do?" "Excuse me, Sir, I couldn't help overhearing..." The pharmacist asked me a few questions and established that I knew something about dispensing. I worked with him to learn the routine, providing drugs, medicines and dressings for the wards, outpatients and the military units in Khartoum. After a couple of weeks, he went to Eritrea and they put me in charge of the dispensary! I had a Sudanese assistant called Ali Eman who helped me with my work and taught me my first words of Arabic.

The CO came in one afternoon and we chatted as he watched me work. "We can't have a private soldier running a dispensary. Come and see me in the morning". So they gave me two stripes. A corporal after only two months in the Corps! I must assure the reader that I am not a vindictive man.

But when that corporal from the Green Howards came for his supplies..... I did enjoy meeting him again!

December 1948 - Posted to BMH Fayid, Egypt, a 1200 bed hospital. I flew by RAF, acting as escort to a patient. Arriving on Christmas Eve, I wasn't expected so as a temporary measure, I was given a bed in a small room that had apparently not been used for a long time. I awoke in the night to find myself covered in bed bugs! Happy Christmas!

Again, I worked in various departments and studied for my Nursing Orderly Class Three examination, a requirement for everyone in the RAMC. It was when I was on night duty in Reception that I encountered my first dead body. There had been a Road Traffic Accident. Several Basuto soldiers had been injured; there was a Crash Team to look after them. (Always wondered why they were called that!). One man was dead, on a stretcher in the back of a lorry. I was told to take him to the mortuary. I directed the driver and on arrival, we carefully lifted the stretcher off the truck. Holding one stretcher pole on my left hip, with my right hand I opened the door of the mortuary. There were three bodies on slabs. The driver saw them, let out a scream and dropped his end of the stretcher, leaving me with a mangled body that had now slid to the bottom..... He climbed into his truck and drove off. I gradually eased the body back onto the stretcher and slowly, manoeuvred it into the morgue, putting it alongside the others. Thinking back, Blood, Sweat and Tears would have been an appropriate description.... I returned to Reception and told my story to the Ward Master, a very old soldier.

"Dinna let it get to yee. Just write your report, Sonny". "Report? What do I put?"

"The body was conveyed to the mortuary with all due respect and decorum."

Shortly after that I was promoted to sergeant and put in charge of the Pack Store, looking after patients' kit.

May 1949 - Sent to the Middle East School of Dispensing, Tel el Kebir, where I studied pharmacy, played the drums in the Bilharzia Club Trio and qualified as a Dispenser.

May 1949 - Posted to BMH Aqaba, in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. a very small hospital. I shared a tent with a staff sergeant called George Ockmore. He looked after stores and personnel; I had the ward and the dispensary. There was a doctor in charge. A dentist and other doctors would fly in from Egypt. King Abdullah used to visit Aqaba and stay, with his entourage, in a compound next to the hospital. One Sunday morning, I was swimming in the sea when I found myself alongside a Jordanian. "Salaam Aleikum!" I greeted him. He replied "Aleikum Salaam!" Then I realised that it was the King. Not having met many kings and not being sure of the etiquette when in deep water, as a good soldier, I "stood" to attention and promptly sank. When I surfaced again, he'd gone!

Speaking of Royalty, there was always a Royal Navy frigate at the top of the Gulf of Aqaba; they would change over every two or three weeks. The crew would come ashore for exercise, to collect stores and sometimes take part in sporting activities. On one occasion, HMS Magpie was on patrol. The captain of the ship was Prince Phillip

and the crew were about to play cricket against the Garrison team. Then it was discovered that Prince Phillip couldn't play. He had an upset stomach. (He couldn't get the runs because he had the runs. Ho Ho Ho!) So he came to the hospital where the MO prescribed the medicine and I dispensed it. So, technically, I cured Prince Phillip's diarrhoea. And I'm still waiting for the document that says "By Appointment"!

1952 Malaya - Another troopship, where an old friend, Tony Wilson, was in charge of the sick bay. I became the assistant dispenser!

We were in the Indian Ocean when the ship's doctor discovered a patient with crabs, a parasite infection medically known as pediculosis pubis. It would be necessary to examine everyone to prevent an outbreak. Nurses looked after the families; the MO, Tony and I examined the men. Lined up on deck, in groups of thirty, the soldiers were required to lift their arms so that we could look for signs of infection, then they dropped their shorts while we examined their pubic areas. Wearing gloves and holding the forceps carefully, we had one thousand six hundred willies between us! There were some funny shapes and sizes! Actually, I'd forgotten about it until recently, we had a family gathering at home. Not wearing gloves but using forceps, I was carefully turning some sausages on the barbecue.....

BMH Kluang, Johore - I was the dispenser and part time mortician, a job I shared with two colleagues. Most of the deaths were from gunshot or shrapnel wounds, incurred in the jungle, where half a century before President Bush invented terrorism, British, Commonwealth and Gurkha troops were fighting Communist

Terrorists in a twelve year war, euphemistically called The Emergency. While it was not the most pleasant of tasks, especially when the body was that of a friend, as happened once, it had its lighter side. On one occasion, two Chinese men were brought in dead, having been drowned in a vehicle when it ran off the road into a river. I prepared the bodies for burial and having only one slab, placed one body on it, the other on a stretcher, on the floor. A major came to identify the men. "Ah! We have Corporal Tan on the table...and Private Lee on the floor. Even in death, there is class distinction!"

Annual inspection is important; we had a National Service sign writer had been told to smarten the place up. I arrived at work on the day to find over the dispensary a sign that read WE DISPENSE WITH ACCURACY; WE BURY OUR MISTAKES.

I became reasonably fluent in Malay and was given another task. There was a high incidence among soldiers of sexually transmitted diseases. For political reasons, the situation had to be handled carefully, so I, and a colleague who spoke Hokkien, had the task of inviting local prostitutes to come to the hospital for treatment. My approach was that some soldiers were spreading diseases and to ensure that they, the ladies, were clean, they could come for examination. If they were infected, treatment would be given, free of charge. I would collect them in my car in the morning and take them home at lunch time.

Despite the terrorist activities in the jungle, life in town went on and one of the pleasures in Malaya was to go to the night market for a meal. Sitting with friends, some of whom may not have been aware of my extracurricular activities, I would often get friendly

greetings from one or more of the girls. Many an eyebrow was raised; I would just smile. After all, my private life was my affair. On one occasion, towards the end of my tour of duty, I went to the house of a Chinese family where I saw a boy of about ten years, crawling on his hands and knees; he couldn't stand. Known as "Mouse" he had been disabled from birth. After a second visit to the family, I received a message from the Head Man of the village that I (the White Devil) was not welcome. I explained to my contact, a Burmese colleague, what was happening and I got approval to go back.

I told the CO and some of the doctors about Mouse and eventually, we got him into hospital. After surgery, physiotherapy started and he learnt to walk. My last memory of Mouse in BMH Kluang was of him, wearing callipers, and supported by his father and a physiotherapist, walking down the corridor with a big grin on his face and tears in his eyes. I think I might have been reflecting those emotions. I like to think that they were my contributions towards the hearts and minds campaign.

1963 Malaya - BMH Kamunting. As a Warrant Officer Class 2, I had been back in Malaya for nearly two years when I was given the opportunity to qualify as a Malay speaker. At the School of Languages in Singapore, I enjoyed the course, passed the examination and returned to the hospital. "I can speak Malay proper now! I've got a certificate!" I exclaimed. "We know!" they said. "And you've been promoted. We've got a posting order. For you!" they said. Thinking it must be a diplomatic mission, or something as exciting, I said: "Come on, then. Don't keep me in suspense! Where am I going?" "Hull!"

1964 Hull - I wrote to the CO of the Territorial unit where I was to be the Regimental Sergeant Major, to introduce myself. He was a doctor, Lt Col Peter Dench. (He had a sister called Judi, an actress. I've often wondered what happened to her...)

He wrote back saying that he had arranged for me to lodge with the widow of an RAMC captain. I was between marriages at the time and I must admit to wondering what she would be like. My dreams were soon to be shattered. What he failed to tell me was that the good lady had been widowed during the First World War.

The Territorial Army prepares for war, with classroom training one night a week, outdoor work at weekends and a fortnight at camp once a year. Invariably, the weekend training is away from the headquarters, and we would travel to various parts of East Yorkshire. The work finished, we would sometimes find ourselves in a village pub. Waiting for our transport one evening, we were having a drink when an elderly lady, sitting at the bar, stared at me. I smiled at her. She looked me up and down, looked at the badge on my wrist, then asked; "Who are you, then?" "I'm the sergeant major. The RSM." "Oh! The RSM. I see. And how long have you been in t' army?" "About seventeen years." "Oh! Seventeen years." There was a long pause. She took a sip of her beer, and then she asked: "And are you going to make it your career?"

My skills as a make-up artist in casualty simulation came to the fore when I was in Hull. Shortly after my arrival, I was told that we had the use of the recruiting office shop window and we had to devise a set piece to draw attention to the Territorial Army,

in particular, the Field Ambulance to which I had been posted. We acquired a tailor's dummy and agreed that this should be our patient. Our sign-writer drew up some slogans, the main one being a question; could you save this man's life? I dressed the dummy and gave him a wound to the face. A bit tame, I thought. I know: a severe shrapnel wound with lots of blood and guts! Simulated blood is easy; guts – that's another question. Without telling anyone my plan, I nipped down to the slaughter house and acquired some animal intestines. We took all the publicity and window dressing kit to the shop and I told the helpers that I would finish it off so they could go. Placing "George" in the centre, I applied the real make-up, then, having prepared for the abdominal wound, I inserted the intestines. It was realistic! Fantastic! This was on a Sunday morning. On the Monday, I had been in the office for a couple of hours, when the phone rang. "Is that the Territorial Army; the medical unit?" "Yes, the Sergeant Major speaking" "Well, this is the Chief Constable speaking. Could I talk to the man who did the window display in the City Centre?" Thinking I was about to be praised for my ingenuity, originality and sheer brilliance, I replied "Yes. It was me, actually" "Well, it's attracted a crowd that's blocking the street, it's upset quite a few folk and the Lady Mayoress has just been sick on the pavement so will you come and take the bloody thing away!" My moment of fame

WOWCHER VOUCHER

You all must have seen the **WOWcher** advert on television or read about it in the papers. I have used this facility using the discounted hotel deals. For those of you who haven't yet tried **WOWcher** you are really missing out

on some great deals. I thought I would share the link with you. Go to [WOWcher](#) and register – it is free – place your location on the homepage (at the top) before registering. You will receive emails from **WOWcher** with deals within your area.

RAMC REUNITED 2016

Members of the RAMC Reunited Committee have been for some time mulling over the idea of inviting one of our decorated serving members to be a Guest Of Honour at a future Reunion and, was going to bring it up at the next General Meeting at Liverpool. This has been pre-empted by a message received by myself from Nick Natlock on FB which is appended below. I have consulted the Chairperson Mac McHale and he has requested that I contact members and ask for their views on the matter. In relation to where the money for feeding and accommodating the GOH I will look at getting sponsorship. Are there any volunteers?

"Nick Tatlock 2:40pm Apr 3
Hi Mick - I hope you well. I have been doing some thinking (dangerous I know) and wonder what you think to this suggestion. We now have a few well decorated young servicemen men and women in the Corp who have showed many acts of valour and bravery. How about inviting a couple of them to be our guests of honour at the next RAMC re-united? I know the function is about former members and current serving personnel cannot attend, but do you think it would be an honour to have them in our company and also for them to see us, speak with us and also hear some of our tales. Anyway, just a suggestion. I would also volunteer to act as a host. Regards Nick PS see you next year"

Please forward your views to me at
michael.mccran@gmail.com

**LIST OF ATTENDEES FOR RAMC
REUNITED 2016 AS AT 14/04/2015**

NAME	5th Feb	6th Feb	7th Feb
John Askins	2	2	2
Fred Boland	1	1	1
Jim Carter	2	2	2
Jim Carroll	1	1	1
M Christopher	2	2	2
Harry Cooper	2	2	2
Joe Dolan	1	1	1
Chris Edgar	2	2	2
Dave Garbutt	2	2	2
Bryan Hair	2	2	2
Alan Harbour	1	1	1
Dai Leek	2	2	2
David Lowe	2	2	2
Mick McCran	2	2	2
Mac McHale	2	2	2
Trevor Miller	1	1	
Lance Milo	2	2	2
Alan Morton	2	2	2
G Mottley	2	2	2
David Natolie		1	
G Poole	2	2	2
S Price	2	2	2
D Proudfoot	2	2	2
Alan Rees		2	2
Tony Smith	2	2	2
Ed Sutton	2	2	2
Ken Taylor	1	1	1
C Tresh	2	2	
H Walker	1	1	1
M Wallace	2	2	
Bill Watt	1	1	1
Roger Wild	1	1	1
Brian Wilson	2	2	2

I would like to remind members of the need to book early if you intend attending the 2016 Reunion. Please do not leave it until the last moment.

**ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS
ASSOCIATION**

The RAMC Association was founded in 1925 and has nearly 30 established Branches throughout the UK and 1 newly formed Branch in Cyprus.

Its Objects are to maintain contact between past and present members of the RAMC, fostering esprit de corps, comradeship and welfare, and preserving the traditions of the Corps. To relieve either generally or individually past and present members of the Corps and their dependants who are in need by virtue of financial hardship, sickness, disability or the effects of old-age through the provision of grants, pensions or otherwise.

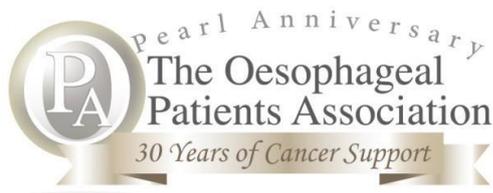
Since all the RAMC charities converged at the direction of the Charity Commission in 2008, the Association has only had one level of membership. Membership is open to all serving and retired members of the RAMC and friends and family of serving or retired members of the RAMC or retired personnel of the Army Medical Services or other Regiments and Corps who have had close links to the RAMC. Those members who formerly enjoyed Life Membership status under the RAMC Association (Registered Charity No. 1024102) shall retain the rights and privileges granted thereunder for life.

Each Branch is different; some are very active with regular meetings and social events and trips. Others, because of their geography or the general age of members meet less often, perhaps one or twice a year.

As always, the best way to influence what happens at a local level is to get involved!

For further information on becoming a member or obtaining details of your local Branch please contact:

Chris Richards
Secretary RAMC Association
9 The Close
Caldicot
NP26 4EF
Mob: 07850 424197
Email: secretary.ramcassoc@gmail.com
[RAMC Association website](#)
Facebook: [RAMC Association Central Branch](#)
or on Twitter at @Sec_RAMC_Assoc



Dear Friends,

My name is Les Viner and I am 71 years of age and a former Operating Theatre Technician having served 25 years within the Corps. It's nearly a year since my surgery for Oesophageal Cancer & I hope to celebrate by cycling in the forthcoming Louth Meridian Sportive. I want to pay something back to all those who worked to save my life so I will be attempting to ride the medium route, 55 miles, of very hard hill riding in the Lincolnshire Wolds with long pulls some reaching 14%. I will be accompanied by my Michael, son-in-law, Bronya, my cycling friend and

hopefully one other. My wife Janet and Lorna, a fellow patient, and her husband will be in support, guarding the collection tins.

I know that we are all bombarded with good causes but please if you can, donate to this cause, a cancer that is not in the public eye but is a killer and the Oesophageal Patients Association are helping to fund research into early diagnosis and raising awareness. See <http://www.opa.org.uk/>

You can donate on line by using <https://mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/lesviner1>

My donate is run by BT and they do not take a percentage so all of your money goes to the good cause.

I have attached some background information and an old fashioned sponsorship form if you prefer to use that.

The event takes place on the 10th May leaving from the Louth Tennis Club.

For event details please go to <https://www.itpevents.co.uk/event/the-louth-meridian-sportive>

I hope you will be able to support this worthy cause.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Les

FOOTBALL - BLISS CUP WINNERS 1948-49

Josephine Huckvale forwarded me a picture of 12 Company RAMC the winners of the Bliss Cup. Her father is in the Photograph and he is in the back row second in from the right – Pte Biddel. She is trying to trace

information on the Bliss Cup. When I served in Germany, I seem to recall that the Bliss Cup was played for by the winners of the Hospital Cup and winners of the Field Ambulance Cup. The winners of the cup were established the best medical unit in BAOR. If there is there anyone out there who is aware of the history of the "Bliss Cup" would you kindly email me.



RSM Ingoe, who is in the picture was my Company Commander when I was posted to RHH Woolwich in January 1966.