



RAMC REUNITED NEWSLETTER JUNE 2015



NATIONAL SERVICE DAY SUNDAY 28th JUNE 2015



Gerald J. Rose
Chairman
The National Service Foundation

Dear Comrades,

You are invited to the 13th Annual National Service Day at the National Memorial Arboretum I am delighted to commend to you the latest edition of the AWARD catalogue which offers wonderful ways in which you can commemorate your service.

Please join us and our comrades for the thirteenth annual National Service Memorial & Reunion at the National

Memorial Arboretum, Sunday 28th June at 14:00 hours.

The National Service Memorial and Reunion is organised by The National Service Foundation, set up to represent all ex-National Service personnel and to carry the legacy of this historic period of national history forward to future generations.

National Service Day Sunday 28th June 2015

The idea of a National Service Day was the brainchild of Gerald Rose, Chairman of the National Service Foundation, who campaigned tirelessly and was finally rewarded for his endeavours in 2003. The then Prime Minister, Tony Blair, confirmed that the last Sunday in June of each year was to be an official day of remembrance and reminiscence for all conscripts of National Service; National Service Day!

Award Productions Limited was honoured to be invited to commission and sponsor the National Service Memorial, which has a prime location at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. The memorial was unveiled at the inaugural National Service Day held on Sunday 29 June 2003, since when, the event has grown in popularity, with visitor numbers increasing year on year.

Ex-servicemen and women from all branches of the Armed Forces begin arriving at the Arboretum from as early as 10am hoping to catch up with their old comrades, many bringing their families with them. At 1400hrs precisely, the one and a half hour long service of remembrance opens with a parade of standards; the standard bearers then standing proudly throughout the service alongside the

guard of honour provided by HMS Forward. Included in the proceedings are readings, an exhortation recital, an address and the singing of traditional hymns all overseen by invited dignitaries and guests of honour.

The service culminates in a march past by veterans, which is probably the most poignant part of the ceremony, as the pride in having served Crown and Country is tangible.

The National Service Day memorial and reunion is by no means a closed event, the Arboretum is open to all visitors on the day. If you have never heard of National Service Day and would like to join in with, what is essentially a joyous occasion, please feel free to come along and bring family and friends.

If you served Crown and Country, mark this special occasion by wearing, with pride, your National Service Medal.

National Service Day 2015
At the National Memorial Arboretum
Sunday 28th June 2015 14:00hrs

Who can attend?

National Service Day is open to anyone to attend and is not restricted to National Service veterans. There are no restrictions on numbers so, family and friends are also welcome.
MORE THE MERRIER.

I extracted the above from the <http://www.awardmedals.com/> website which I have used in the past and, the products supplied are of a very high quality. The site is worth a visit.

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

Just to remind members of the dates for the above Ceremony.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>UNIT</u>
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 1100 hrs 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.

Are there any members who have performed this Ceremony and would like to share them with us?

ANOTHER FAILED BUSINESS PLOT

The following is the final article of Terry Hardy's memoirs of his time whilst serving National Service.

I have recorded instances where it becomes all too obvious that I am not the World's most successful entrepreneur and business adventures were rife with failure. One such was again linked to my sojourn in Hong Kong in 1955.

The Frog Bin

Another failed business venture

Business has never been my strong point and there were many early failures: one such took place in Hong Kong late in 1955.

I was one of two working in the pathology laboratory at the British Military Hospital ("BMH"). Well, that is to say, there was usually myself aided and abetted by an "HKOR" (locally enlisted Chinese but nevertheless in the British Army – Royal Army Medical Corps): his name was Chan Lam Sang and he was a lovable rogue. We reported to a young Captain – a 'medic' who was a relatively inexperienced, but very good if more than slightly eccentric, pathologist. He would actually come on duty (when he was there that is) wearing carpet slippers, an American army jacket and a Canadian army hat. We were a happy band and the rules were simple – work hard, play hard and try to keep clear of trouble. Not always easy in Hong Kong as young National Servicemen.

We were always on the lookout for a spot of spare cash – there were a lot of

temptations for young lads in Hong Kong! Stan, the pathologist – and therefore the 'boss' - ran a small but lucrative sideline which was very much undercover though everyone (including the Colonel) knew about it. This extramural business pursuit was de facto a 'Private Medicine' laboratory service. Would-be clients paid for special services which would otherwise take a very long time to obtain through the normal channels, or not be available at all, or which might be rather embarrassing. For example, MNO blood grouping in cases of paternal dispute, culturing swabs for gonorrhoea for those who were 'not quite sure', and importantly, pregnancy testing – there were several young nurses around and other 'sparkling' young girls among the 40,000 or so British troops based in Hong Kong and Kowloon.

The system was simple: the three of us in the laboratory ran a private and confidential service and the proceeds were split unequally between Stan the Pathologist, me and Chan on something like a 70:25:5 basis. We also shared the business between 'our lab' at BMH on Hong Kong Island and the lads in the lab at 33rd. General Hospital in Kowloon.

Pregnancy tests were simple to conduct and involved injecting a urine sample under the skin of a toad and then waiting to see if it ovulated - or not (if the girl was lucky). Other female hormone level tests used the same principal and so there was room for confusion.

These were no ordinary toads – they were the xenopus toad, apparently specially suited and dedicated to the all important task of determining some poor woman's status! There were two problems. First find the toads and then

keep them in a reasonable environment. I delegated both tasks to Chan Lam Sang. On the surface he was a willing chap but inclined to take the easy way out and take short cuts; the level of his 'IQ' was somewhat questionable. When we needed toads it was simply a matter of giving Chan twenty dollars and sending him down to Wanchai to get them: he had his secret sources and I asked no questions. "Chan, we need five toads – you know, the special ones: here are twenty dollars – well what are you waiting for?" Chan would disappear to some market place and, after several hours (no doubt Chan was in some house of ill repute spending half of my twenty bucks) he would arrive with a plastic bag of writhing toads – the special toads, of course. The second problem, keeping the toads confined, was solved by using a dustbin with a few bricks in the bottom and a covering of water. My orders to Chan, and his to carry out, included an all important cleansing ritual. The water was supposed to be kept fresh – it was not – and the bin was supposed to be emptied and upturned every few days to counter the possibility of developing a breeding colony of mosquitoes – again unknown to me, this task was left unattended. I had delegated both tasks (of course) to the willing Chan Lam Sang, and slipped him a few extra dollars for his trouble.

So, two major problems were born, both out of my idleness and one of them compounded by my misplaced trust in Chan.

Unknown to me, Chan, being Chan, had pocketed half of the twenty dollars and purchased ordinary frogs. These frogs looked like the toads, they walked like the toads and they jumped like the toads – the special toads. Unfortunately, very unfortunately, the

frogs were not in the least dedicated or orientated to the special task of deciding pregnancy and adding certainty to some poor woman's life. These particular frogs were not only useless – they gave false readings! If these frogs had a Latin name it would have been *Rana calamitous*. The result was catastrophic. Suddenly we were presented with results of illegal 'liaisons' - wife of Brigadier 'x' was suddenly pregnant - that pretty girl in the NAAFI was not pregnant though her abdomen was suspiciously swelling at an alarming rate. All over the colony there were weeping, and angry females. We, in the lab. were not popular and there was some fast talking needed to get over this little 'glitch'.

I then compounded my own mistake by not only blaming Chan but in reducing his financial reward and ensuring he had extra duties: not popular with Chan who was inordinately lazy. This led to the second disaster in the Frog Bin saga. Chan successfully 'put one over' on me: he sought a kind of primitive revenge.

It was very rare to have a visitation to the laboratory at BMH from the Colonel. The Lab. was a small wooden structure, an outpost a little way above the main hospital with steep steps to climb, so he tended to keep clear and leave us alone. Disaster struck when an unscheduled Inspection was thrust upon us. We cleaned and tidied (a little). Unfortunately I did not check the frog bin assuming that the 'faithful Chan' had cleaned it. Wrong!

The Colonel appeared with the RSM, the Orderly Sergeant, the Matron and the usual entourage of 'hangers on'. The Colonel tended to stutter: "i . . i . . .ss. is the ffff frog bbin clean?" "Yes

Sir, of course Sir”, I answered. He marched up to the frog bin and gave it a healthy ‘whack’ with his stick. To my horror, there was a loud humming sound and then the air was thick with an absolute mushroom cloud of mosquitoes and we had to run for it: Chan had lied – again. These two episodes very nearly spelled the end for our little business venture and my ‘wages of sin’ were severely docked that quarter, and I was duly chastised.

Sometime later, I managed to ‘put one over’ on the Colonel. We had been experiencing trouble with the incubator. It was an unbelievably ancient piece of equipment fabricated from wood and with wonderful brass fittings which included an ornate metal handle. The thermostat had an unnerving habit of developing a ‘buzzing’ and ‘hissing’ noise and sparks could be drawn from the door handle, especially if it was well polished. I got Chan on that task and worked him well. Opening this ancient device was like opening a beehive and one handled that old incubator with great respect and a little fear. I had to lever the handle with a stick to avoid electrocution. We had asked for attention from the Royal Engineers several times but nothing ever came of our requests.

The stuttering Colonel came on his visit to check that we had not fallen back into our lackadaisical ways. He asked “is everything OK here?” “No problems to report?” “Absolutely OK Sir” I replied. “Well, actually there is one small problem with the incubator Sir and I would be most grateful for your support to have it fixed” He approached the incubator with gay abandon. “Looks alright to me” he said. “It’s the door Sir. There is some difficulty with it” The stuttering Colonel, resplendent and serene in

best kit and wearing his regalia thrust out his hand at the same time still stuttering “looks alright to me” – and grasped the highly polished brass handle. He then moved with some speed – probably with more speed than he had ever before achieved. There was a howl of pain and a lot of foul oaths: the normally placid Colonel was no longer inscrutable, Matron, with a smirk on her granite face disappeared in search of a resuscitator and Chan locked himself in the toilet. I maintained a masterful look of innocence and inscrutability.

“This bloody thing is lethal” the Colonel shouted. “that’s what I have been saying for a long time – Sir”, I said, “would you mind signing this?” It was fixed next day.

Gaiters cost me!

A part of every soldiers kit was the webbing gear awful to clean and hard on the fingers – and very prone to fungal growth in certain conditions. The conditions were perfect in Hong Kong – dampness and heat.

As I was ‘The’ Laboratory Technician I had access and need for an autoclave. With the assistance of my so called ‘Assistant’ , dear Chan Lam Sang, I had the idea that I could offer a service to those lads who had need and wanted to keep their kit nice and clean and free from fungus. For a few dollars, I could sterilize their webbing and return it neatly wrapped in plastic and it would be ready for the next parade or inspection (a very rare event at BMH, Hong Kong any way). I had to use the old autoclave for the bacteriology of course; the contraption was old and somewhat battered and noisy but it worked and would get up to

steam quite nicely. All went well – for a while. My ‘Clients were very satisfied.

Then disaster struck. A new intake of chaps arrived in the Colony and some came to us at BMH. I plied my trade and they understood – I could render their kit sterile for a few bucks, shared unequally with Chan.

However, no one had informed me that the webbing straps on the gaiters were now not webbing – they were a black plastic material. The straps melted into the webbing beautifully and the gaiters were absolutely ruined. First I had to reimburse the cash to my Clients and hide a little from the foul and colourful language. Then I had to approach the Quarter Master and explain how somehow I had to purchase about ten or more pairs of gaiters: fortunately he did not enquire too deeply. But the replacements cost me my wages of sin and that was the end of that little business.

The only winner was Chan Lam Sang of course- and as usual.

A black snake causes screams.

In Hong Kong I slept in an off shoot of the old wooden Victorian Pathology Laboratory, as I was on duty virtually 365 days a year. There were of course some pleasant and decorative nurses around though as far as I remember there was no fraternising even though one rather attractive girl was called ‘Nurse Love’. Little nurse Bissett was to be found in the operating theatre and had a pleasant chuckle. And well she might have as she had seen my naked rear end as I knelt on the operating table while the surgeon – a Colonel Grant – removed a polyp from where the sun wasn’t shining with a huge pair of tongs.

The nurses quarters were just a little way down a short hill side from the Laboratory – and hence my own little oasis. I found out that the girls were going out on a booze up to celebrate one of their kinds birthday. I challenged dear Chan Lam Sang and parted with \$5” Chan, go down to Wan Chai and get me a big snake”. “You want to eat it?” enquired Chan. “No I do notjust get me a big snake”. “You want it live?” “No Chan I just want the biggest snake you can get in the market somewhere and make sure it is very dead for \$5now get a move on”

In due course Chan came back with a large bulging bag and inside was just what I wanted.

I broke into the nurse’s wooden hut and hung this huge reptile over the rafters and then retired to sit in the dark and warmth of the sub-tropical night on the wooden veranda outside ‘my’ Lab.

In due course I heard girlish laughter of the ever so slightly inebriated gaggle of nurses – nurses Love, Bissett and Killin were there but I don’t remember the other names. They entered their little hut like fortress, a light went on and then.....the screams must surely have been heard across the harbour to Kowloon and mainland China beyond! They got back at me some time later. All good fun and that is how it was between the serious parts of life at dear old BMH.



23018325 Hardy T.L, RAMC

I would like to thank Terry and his family for allowing me to publish extracts of his memoirs of his time serving as a National Serviceman in the RAMC.

HIS MAJESTY'S HOSPITAL SHIP GLENART CASTLE

Pete Starling the former Head of the AMS Museum, emailed me in relation to the article published on the HMHS Glenart Castle in last month's edition of the Newsletter. I have appended Pete's email below:

"Mick,

Thanks a lot for the Newsletter.

Some years ago I appeared in a documentary Deep Wreck Mysteries - Red Cross Outrage which was about the sinking of the Glenart Castle in the Bristol Channel. We reconstructed the sinking using the Royal Navy's simulator that they use to teach ship's crew what to do when a ship is holed

and filmed actors dressed as patients and QAIMNS in the water. The film crew had also dived on the wreck.

I was also involved in a second program with the same people about a horse and mule transport torpedoed in the Bristol Channel Deep Wreck Mysteries - Search for the Bone Wreck.

Best wishes,

Pete"

MEDICAL VICTORIA CROSSES OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Pete Starling the former Head of the AMS Museum has for some years been working on revising the VC Book. He has kindly offered to share with us extracts from the works that he has done. This article relates to the first medical VC awarded of the First World War to Captain Harry Sherwood Ranken VC.

HARRY SHERWOOD RANKEN



Harry Sherwood Ranken was born in Glasgow on 3rd September 1883, the elder son of Reverend Henry Ranken and Helen, nee' Morton. After early education at Irvine Royal Academy, medical training was undertaken at Glasgow University where he graduated MB, ChB in 1905 and was awarded eight prizes. Ranken was 'highly esteemed' by his tutors at the university.(1) Shortly after graduating he was appointed House Physician and House Surgeon to the Western Infirmary, Glasgow. A move to the Brook Fever Hospital on Shooter's Hill at Woolwich followed. The Brook had been opened in 1896 as an infectious diseases hospital but on the outbreak of war became a war hospital. (2) Ranken then decided to pursue a career in the army and joined the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) as a Lieutenant on 30th January 1909.(3) During his introductory course at Millbank he was awarded the Tulloch prize in military medicine, the de Chaumont Prize, the Tropical Medicine Prize and the prize for first in order of merit. He was obviously a very bright doctor with a promising career.(4) In 1910 he became a member of the Royal College of Physicians and in 1911 undertook and passed his Captains examination. Also in 1910 he became a Freemason, a member of the Mother Killwining Lodge No 0. Ranken's interest was obviously in tropical medicine and he commenced research under Sir William Leishman on Trypanosomiasis. On secondment to the Egyptian Army as part of the Sudan Sleeping Sickness Commission this research took him to Western Mongolia where he gained the trust of the local tribes and worked under considerable difficulties. As a keen researcher he wrote and published profusely on his research subjects.(5). Promoted to Captain on 30th July 1912 Ranken came home on leave to

England in July 1914 but events in August 1914 would curtail his research and change his life forever when on the outbreak of war he insisted on volunteering for active service and on 12th August went to France as the Regimental Medical Officer to the 1st Battalion of the Kings Royal Rifle Corps (1 KRRC). The KRRC was part of 6 Brigade of the Second Division. The 1st Battalion were quartered in Salamanca Barracks Aldershot and at dawn on 12th August the battalion marched out of barracks to Farnborough Station. By 9 am the train had arrived at Southampton and here they boarded the SS Honorius which sailed at mid-day but did not arrive at Le Harve until midnight. Having missed the tides it would be 5.30pm before the battalion finally disembarked at Rouen.(6) During the next few days the battalion travelled across France arriving at Hannappes at 5pm on 15th August. Here they stayed until 21st August, spending their days on route marches and training.(7) A week later the battalion experienced their first enemy artillery fire at Trieux but left there the next day and over the next few days moved to and fro getting ever closer to the enemy and the War Diary for 1st September records the first battalion casualties of one officer wounded, twelve other ranks wounded and one man missing.(8) The London gazette of 3rd November 1914 notified that for his gallantry during battalion operations between 21st August and 30th August Ranken was awarded a Croix d'Officer of the French Legion d'Honor. Between the 2nd and the 10th of September the battalion was constantly on the move remaining in one place for very short periods and on the 10th September arrived at the south end of the village of Hautesvesnes. 50 Battery Royal Field

Artillery were in support of the brigade and were brought up to bring fire down on the enemy located south west of the village. The brigade war diary states that this fire was instrumental in routing the enemy resulting in 450 prisoners.(9) As the enemy fled the battalion deployed its companies around the north side of the village with the artillery providing fire support but this resulted in the enemy artillery fire increasing seeking out the battery positions. 50 Battery adjusted its fire but without knowing the exact location of the battalion brought fire down onto the KRRC battalion headquarters wounding the adjutant and three soldiers. With persistent rifle and artillery fire now falling on the enemy after about ninety minutes they surrendered with many killed and wounded. The battalion itself suffered ten soldiers killed, four officers and sixty other ranks wounded and five missing.(10)

On the 11th September the battalion moved into billets for a day or two and here Ranken had to treat an officer who accidentally shot himself in the foot with his revolver.

On the 14th September the battalion were in the vicinity of La Bouvette Wood close to Soupir where they encountered the enemy once again and advanced through the wood with the Irish Guards on their left. Sadly, here again they came under fire from their own guns, Captain Makins being wounded. Perhaps the Divisional History gives some clue as to how this happened, 'On the morning of the 14th there was very thick mist so artillery observation was out of the question'.(11) The battalion war diary for the 14th September states 'Here as later with A & D Captain Ranken did splendid work'. (12) There is an interesting comment written in the ADMS war diary for the 16th September, 'Lt Ranken & Shield who

were captured by the Germans returned yesterday'. (13)

The battalion remained in the edge of the wood over the next few days, two companies in the line and two companies held in reserve and at 2pm on the 19th September the enemy commenced a vigorous artillery fire with their infantry attacking the whole brigade front with the support of machine guns. Lieutenant Alston was wounded early on in the attack and Ranken rushed to his side but whilst treating him friendly artillery fire again fell short on to the battalion location and Ranken sustained a wound to his thigh and a fractured femur. He refused to be evacuated until all other casualties had been treated and bound up his leg to try to stem the blood flow whilst he worked.

Ranken was eventually taken to 5 casualty Clearing Hospital located at Braine and his leg amputated above the knee as detailed in an anonymous letter,

Only last night I amputated poor Ranken's leg above the knee joint, a terrible shell wound it was, but he will probably get a VC for his behaviour. Although the leg was only hanging on by a very little, he continued to dress his wounded in the firing line.

Further reference to Ranken was made by a fellow RAMC officer, Lieutenant Robinson, It was on one of these days at Braine that I came across that very gallant fellow, Captain Ranken RAMC. When I saw him he was lying on a stretcher on Braine Station platform; he was smoking a cigarette and talking with animation. He had recently had his leg amputated somewhere above the knee, but he was in no pain and was quite comfortable and well. We were horribly shocked to hear a day or two later that he had died suddenly of

embolism; but he had already received the award of the VC for his work at the time when he received his injuries.(14)

Harry Sherwood Ranken died at Braine on 25th September 1914 and was buried in the communal cemetery, grave A43.

The battalion casualties for the 14th – 21st September were five officers wounded, twenty seven other ranks killed, one hundred and thirty six wounded and eighteen missing.(14) His recommendation for the Victoria Cross must have moved with great rapidity because the award appeared in the London Gazette on 16th November 1914:

For tending wounded in the trenches under rifle and shrapnel fire at Hautvesnes (sic) on the 19th and 20th September continuing to attend to the wounded after his own thigh and leg had been shattered.

Ranken's Victoria Cross was included in the list of the first awards for the First World War. It was presented to his father by the King at Buckingham Palace and is now in the possession of the Royal Army Medical Corps and on display in the Army Medical Services Museum.

REFERENCES.

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2. Ranken House, Re-Opening and Dedication Ceremony, Brook General Hospital. 23 April 1985. Program.
3. Drew, R. Commissioned Officers in the Medical Services of the British Army 1660-1960. Vol. II. (London: The Wellcome Historical Medical Library, 1968) Entry 673.
4. The Medical Victoria Crosses, (Mytchett: The RAMC Historical Museum, 1988), p.65
5. Creagh, O'M, The VC & DSO, p.145

6. The National Archives. WO95/1358, War Diary, 1st Battalion KRRC. p.1

7. TNA, WO95/1358, p.2.

8. TNA, WO95/1358, p.7.

9. TNA, WO95/1324/4 War Diary, 34 Brigade Royal Field Artillery

10. TNA, WO95/1358. p.11

11. Wyrall. E, The History of the Second Division 1914-1918 (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1921). p. 81

12. TNA, WO95/1358. p.17

13. TNA WO95/1320 War Diary, ADMS Second Division

14. TNA, WO95/1407, Narrative, Lieutenant Robinson.

15. TNA, WO/95/ 1358

STATUTORY RESIDENCE TEST (SRT)

I would like to bring to the attention of all those members who are resident abroad of the Guidance Notes on Statutory Residence Test (SRT) which can be accessed by going to:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/427484/150506_RDR3_govuk_hyperlink_updated_078500.pdf

I hope this information is beneficial to all our overseas members.

RAMC REUNITED REUNION 5th – 8th FEBRUARY 2016

Those members who are contemplating on attending the above function can go to the following link for information on the Reunion. I have included the current attendance list as an annexure to the letter.

<https://www.dropbox.com/home/RAMC%20REUNITED%202016?preview=RAMC+Reunited+2016+Letter+%26+Attachments+%28Word+Document+Format%29.docx>

ABSENT BROTHERN

The following former member of the Corps has passed away.

Sergeant Edward (Ted) Thomas Noyce passed away on Wednesday 27th May 2015. Transferred in from the RA on 2nd July 1956 and served to 11th August 1978.

RIP Ted