

The Listening Post



The Newsletter of the Langeleben Reunion Branch, Royal Signals Association

Issue No: 4

Spring 2010



Still time to book!



Welcome to the fourth issue of our newsletter, not bad since the “Listening Post” was only established a year ago. At that time we were worried that we would be hard pressed to find enough interesting content to publish more than two editions a year but members have come up trumps with their stories and recollections of times past at Langeleben, In saying this we do rely on your continued support and welcome any contributions for publication from you our members.

My, doesn't time fly! I cannot believe that nine months have passed since our enjoyable (if rather emotional) memorial reunion in Königslutter, now we have less than three months to go until our next gathering in Loughborough.

At the time of going to press some 70 Members and guests are booked for our 17th AGM and reunion at Burleigh court in June and with plenty of time still to go

I would expect that around 100 of us will be enjoying a weekend of camaraderie and fond memories with old and new friends. Those of you yet to book have until the last week in May to ensure accommodation.

Sales of the DVD of the memorial celebrations “**Three days in June**” are very disappointing and of the 250 ordered we still have some 170 left, we need to sell at least another 60 copies to cover the initial costs of production, which of course came out of branch funds, surely a fiver would be money well spent for a lifetime memory of a great occasion, especially for those of you that could not make it to Germany last year, keep those orders coming in. I will of course be bringing a supply to sell at the Loughborough reunion.

Ernie Callaghan 1957-1959

To book for the Loughborough reunion 18th -20th June or to order the DVD Please contact: Ernie Callaghan on 0208 300 7577.

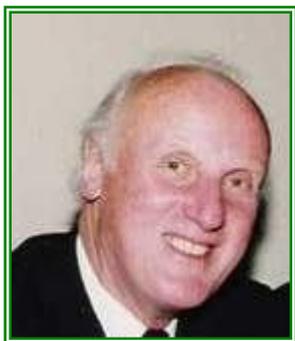
E-mail callaghanernie@hotmail.com

Or write to: 12 Carisbrooke Avenue, Bexley, Kent. DA5 3HS.



Dear Friends

In my Christmas message I said that Gail and I were looking forward to seeing you all at the Reunion. That was my hope until recently when I discovered that the dates conflict with those of the Corps Weekend at Blandford. Normally I would have to choose but, this year; it is the 60th Anniversary of the Korean War. I have asked the people at Blandford to lay on something appropriate and I feel I must be there to participate.

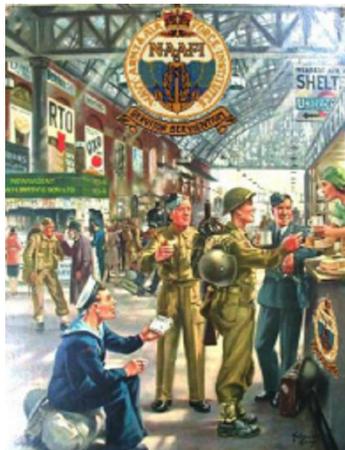


I realise I was not much use at the BVA Reunion in Torquay and would not like you to think that I had reported sick again and been given 'Excused Reunions' Best wishes

Peter Baldwin 1951

GOOD NAAFI NEWS!

The German authorities have agreed that British Veterans will be able to shop in the Naafi for non-rationed items. This HQ is in consultation with the Naafi regarding the process. More information will follow when available. In the mean time, you will still be able to buy items for immediate personal consumption on the premises in NAAFI facilities such as cafes, shops and Pay As You Dine restaurants. (Jan 2010.)



Presumably a Veterans' Installation Access Pass will be required to get into the base. These can be applied for by contacting the relevant Pass Office:

HERFORD Hammersmith Bks PASS OFFICE
(0)5221 995 3145

GUTERSLOH PRB BASE ADMIN OFFICE
(0)5241 84 3068

PADERBORN Normandy Bks PASS OFFICE
(0)5254 982 2053

ELMPT Javelin Bks PASS & PERMITS
(0)2163 97 4285

JHQ RSU PASSES & PERMITS (0)2161 472 2866

BERGEN-HOHNE Haig Bks HCSO (0)5051 96 2022

FALLINGBOSTEL Lumsden Bks HCSO
(0)5162 971 2332

MUNSTER York Bks PASS OFFICE
(0)251 927 2355

John Richardson 1982-85 90-92

Thinking back

Does anyone remember Fred and Edith Edrich? You can see them in this photo.

A 'fete' was held in the field over the road from the camp. I seem to remember that the profits were



going to be used towards the cost of chartering a flight home. Now the hard part is naming the people. Left holding teddy, RQMS ? - I do remember the fact that he was used as model for the smallest size of No. 2 dress. Next to him looking very young is me, Bill Fry. Next to me is a young German lady who is the wife of Jim Hylton, she was I believe from Helmstedt. Then there is Fred and his wife Edith. Both of whom were excellent people. Edith I remember spoke English with a Scots accent. I must say they showed me many kindnesses.

Many, many, many years later (two years ago in fact) I was out with a group of cyclists and we stopped at a pub one very warm evening for a pint. Staying at the pub, which is along the coast to coast walk, was a German couple. Conversation was helped by the fact that they spoke good English and my German was 36 years rusty.



I bought them a couple of pints and they did ask why? To which I was able to reply "in thanks for the very many wonderful times and years I had in Germany."

Happy days brought back by a couple of German tourists. The second photo is of me and fellow cyclists taken by one of the German tourists using my camera.

Bill Fry 1968-1970

THE INCINERATOR

Now my Langeleben days were a long time ago. I find it hard to believe, but I have only one photo of myself there during this time. I took plenty of other photos... the camp, fellow watch lads, trips to Brunswick, etc., several of which are in the Langeleben Gallery, but there is only one of me in the C watch football team. Such is the penalty of being the man with the camera, (or perhaps it should have been 'boy').

In looking over the photos all these years later, the one that constantly catches my eye, and reminds me of my time is the one below below. It is headed 'Incinerator' in my album. What is it about a group of lads fooling about in front of what 'Health & Safety' these days might call a 'hazard'? Was it the 'boys with toys' syndrome? At Langeleben in these early days of the establishment of the camp much work was required, and the Regimental Morning was taken seriously by our superiors, and several photos in the Gallery give that impression that this attitude had been accepted. I do believe that when it came to the incinerator, a different attitude was adopted. When duties were being allocated after the initial morning parade, there was a definite sigh of relief when 'your' party was told 'incinerator'. The actual work, and prospect of stinking of smoke for the rest of the day, was delegated to one poor sole who for some reason, merited the work, (late on watch/still owed 20 cigarettes to the corporal) whilst the rest of the squad could fool about. Not that this only worker didn't enter into the spirit of the occasion, as it was a sign of failure if he didn't manage to get flames, smoke and part burnt pieces of paper belching out of the chimney of the incinerator. Only when the smoke started to interfere with the 'fooling about' was the request made to hold back a bit meantime. Needless to say the length of this duty was made as long or as short as to meet the time felt appropriate. It couldn't be rushed as further duties might be allocated. It couldn't last too long, as a NAAFI break had to be allowed for, and sufficient time to tidy up and change out of our fatigues for the afternoon shift. Extra resources would be allocated or withdrawn by the corporal to the actual work, as felt necessary in order to complete the work at the appropriate time. The task was finished right on time, and we congratulated ourselves

on a job well done.



But that was a long time ago and many of us who were there at the time on our National Service returned to 'civvy street' with some great memories of our

two years away from home. Did we carry on in the same way when we returned to our civilian job? I don't think so. Marriage, a mortgage, children and the prospects of getting on in life, the training courses, the exams we took and the famous 'Carrying a Message to Garcia' tale by Elbert Hubbard soon made the incinerator fun disappear in our new world. Still, it was fun whilst it lasted...and never to be forgotten.

Bill Lloyd, Langeleben 1958

LANGELEBEN AS I KNEW IT

With my travel warrant and a fluency in 4 words of German I set off for 'God knows where'. I recognized

some of the names of stations that we passed through from bombing raids and saw how successful they had been.

No one at Königsutter station and then in drove a 3 tonner with the toothless grinning Scouse the Cook (that's an exaggeration) in the front. I and my stomach had met him before. After what I was to find later was typical, a tour of the bars of Langeleben picking up, we climbed steadily up through what appeared from the back of the Bedford to be thick forest. The Camp was in total darkness and then to my horror I saw the tents. No one had warned me! We went to what I found later was the Cookhouse and social club where everyone would meet up. It was warm, lit and there was endless tea brewed, by the stainless steel bucket load.



Staggering down the duckboards to my new home in the almost pitch black there was the occasional glow from a tent and mystifyingly the sound of female voices. Certainly not from the radio! And this was a top security establishment!

I shared a tent with Cpl. Mick Bailey who introduced me to Langeleben life. Suddenly I was on watch. Not the watches that they had at the Regt. Oh no! Langeleben had to have their own system which was longer, more tiring but gave more time off.

I was to spend 15 months there. Eventually we moved from the tents in to barrack accommodation. Finally, we had a Cookhouse/canteen. The trouble was they kept the same cooking equipment and the cockroaches revelled in the improved living conditions. To go in late at night in the dark was a very odd feeling. One of the cooks was suddenly rushed to Hospital. He had TB. Fortunately he did not pass it on.

A night out in Königsutter meant the statutory visit to the PAC where one, travelling more in hope than expectation, would help himself to a contraceptive or two and sign the book. That was for me, and many more of us I reckon, the nearest we ever had to a sexual encounter.

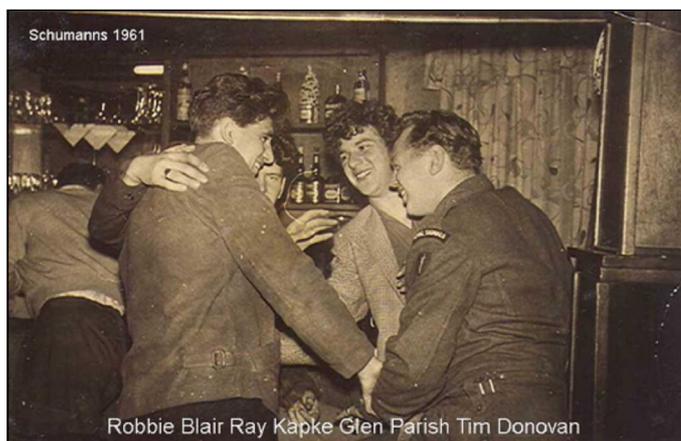
One job I had to do immediately upon arriving at Langeleben was to remove my shoulder flashes and cap badge and become a Signaller (Oh, the shame of it). After all the trouble that I had undergone to get in the I Corps I resented this. On my return to Birgelen I took off the flashes and removed the cap badge only to find that over the past 15 months I had lost the real things. I was a prize loser. With just three days to go they put me on guard duty or fire piquet and, thanks to Keith Richardson (I wonder what happened to him?), I was able to turn out in something resembling a uniform.

With all the moves that I had made at very short notice the UK and BAOR were littered with my laundry. I had become quite well known for my yellow socks. To be honest, they were all that I had and how could one possibly wear black boots with yellow socks? That's the story behind the brown shoes. Anyway we old soldiers had the Canadian lumberjack boots which will remember with affection and were they not brown? Fifteen wonderful months, at the time a record, that I would have hated to miss and some wonderful friendships which still last.

Paul Crosson 1955-1956

Langeleben Humour

When you came back to 'civvy street' did you find that no one in the 'real world' understood your jokes? It seems that in Langeleben we all had one thing in common and that was our almost whacky sense of humour, the fun, and the camaraderie which is till evident today on the internet on our website, and at our reunions. One joke was sent into the Listening Post recently which we would like to share with you now:



OFFICER FITNESS REPORTS.

The British Military writes performance ratings as Officer Fitness Reports. The form used for Royal Navy and the Marines reports is the S206. The following are excerpts taken from actual '206s'...

1. He has the wisdom of youth and the energy of old age...
2. This Officer should go far- and the sooner he starts the better!

3. In my opinion this pilot should not be authorized to fly below 250 feet...
4. When he joined my ship, this Officer was something of a granny; since then he has aged considerably. ...
5. This Medical Officer has used my ship to carry his genitals from port to port and my officers to carry him from bar to bar....
6. Since my last report he has reached rock bottom and has started to dig....
7. He has carried out each and every one of his duties to his entire satisfaction...
8. He would be out of his depth in a car park puddle...
9. This Officer reminds me very much of a gyroscope- always spinning around at a frantic pace, but not really going anywhere....
10. His men would follow him anywhere, but only out of curiosity...
11. I would not breed from this officer...
12. This Officer is really not so much as a 'has been,' but more of a 'definitely won't-be...'



**REMINDER
BOOK NOW FOR THE
REUNION!**

**Our next copy of The Listening Post will be in July 2010 and *your* short stories are needed. Marlene Brooks (Editor)
Tel: 01279 862960
167 Fold Croft, Harlow Essex
CM20 1 SL (UK)**

**Email: langelebennews@yahoo.co.uk
IMPORTANT - If you have received your copy from one of our volunteer 'buddies' please do let them know you have received your copy and that you are safe and well. We don't want to cause distress in families where a member has moved on for some reason or even sadly passed, nor send you anything you would prefer not to receive.**

'Welcome to Langeleben Braham.'

As a young REME soldier in 1963 I received a posting, or was it deportation, from 13 Signal Regiment Workshop REME to 2

Squadron at Langeleben, to take over from LCpl Alan Hayes REME, who was 3 year National Serviceman, and was leaving the Army for 'civvy-street'. At 7 am on that day the duty driver picked me at Birglen and delivered me to the Haupt Bahnhof in

Mönchengladbach. then via Düsseldorf, Paderborn, Goslar, Braunschweig and finally to Königslutter, where I finally arrived about 7 pm.



The instructions given was to telephone for transport on arrival. This was duly done, and the duty NCO who was Cpl Hammond answered. The conversation then proceeded along the following lines. "Craftsman Braham at Königslutter Station would like some transport to take him to the Langeleben." "Very good Sir, this will be about half an hour." About forty minutes later a dashing young officer in service dress complete with Sam Browne arrives breathlessly at the station. Captain Dan Bailey, Royal Anglian, walks straight past me searching up and down the platform. He eventually came back to me saying: "Was there an officer on the train with you soldier?" "No Sir" was the reply. "And who are you then?" "Craftsman Braham reporting for duty in Langeleben" "Corporal Hammond said you were a Captain?"

'Welcome to Langeleben Braham.'

When the duty officer comes in person in his own personal car to deliver a REME Craftsman to camp, I just knew that this was going to be a very good posting.

Finally - The Wedding, or the Cooks Revenge...being single I was billeted in the MT Room of Block 1, the lower of the new blocks. The rest of the camp was under construction at that time. My fellow inmates at that time were Ken Vipond; Ginger Osbourne; Sig Matthews; Basher Bates and Vince Regan. Vince was shortly due to get married to a young lady from Lelm, so we all got invited along with other members of the Squadron to attend the wedding. We were told that tradition in Lelm at that time suggested that when attending a wedding you had to bring a piece of crockery, which you smashed when entering the party. Naturally the only place that such items could be obtained was the cookhouse, so we all secreted a plate out that day.

The wedding was held on a Saturday, and a lovely day was had by all, leaving a large pile of broken crockery

outside the home of the bride. All was well until the following morning when we headed off for breakfast, to be met by the cook Corporal Johnny Hudson, who greeted us with the tirade.

"You bl**dy animals, you have stolen all my plates. If you want breakfast, go and get your mess tins!"

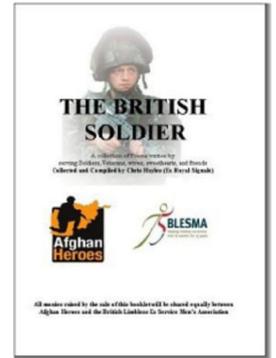
Three years later in December 1966 I returned to the Regiment, on completion of the happiest detachment of my Army Service!

Michael Braham 1963-66

And lastly a message from a friend of many of us, Chris

Hayles HF-R Sigs:

I have produced a charity book of poetry that has been written by serving and veteran soldiers, wives and families etc., about soldiers. It contains poems sent in to me from WW1 up to Afghanistan and I have got a local printer to print it free of charge for me (500 copies now and if need be another 500).



The book is A5 size and contains around 45 poems and is called THE BRITISH SOLDIER and all money raised goes to Afghan Heroes a charity run by a mother and friends who lost a son and also the British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association to which I belong and they have done a lot for me

The Book is £5 a throw and so far we have made £605 in a week so if you can do a bit of a plug among your friends or would like a copy yourself

ONLINE

Using Paypal at <http://herforder-association.org.uk>
<http://royal-signals.org.uk/main/HEROES.php>

POST

Simply send a cheque made out to THE BRITISH SOLDIER and send to me at:

The British Soldier
C/O 8, Arthur Road,
Eastleigh,
Hants,
SO50 4FU

Hope to see you at the
reunion!