

The Royal Engineers Association

(Registered under the Charities Act 1992 and a charity registered in Scotland)

Patron: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN



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All Council Members
All Management Committee Members
All Group Secretaries
All Branch Secretaries
Controller REA
Corps Treasurer

27th September 2017

THE MINUTES OF 71st MEETING OF ROYAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION COUNCIL HELD IN HELD IN 062MR09, MOD MAIN BUILDING, LONDON ON TUESDAY 19th SEPTEMBER 2017.

PRESENT

Lt Gen Sir Mark Mans KCB CBE DL	President REA
Maj Gen A S Dickinson CBE	Chairman REA
Col M Quare MBE ADC	Corps Colonel
Brig (Retd) A S Craig OBE	Deputy Chairman REA
Col (Retd) C M Davies MBE	REA Hon Treasurer
WO1 (CSM) S Webster	Corps SM
Lt Col (Retd) L Inge	Retired Officer
Maj (Retd) P Gill MBE JP	South West Group
Mr G Owens	South East Group
WO2 (QMSI) S Tolley	South Midlands Group
Mr E Hargreaves	North West Group
Maj (Retd) P Luscombe	North Midlands Group
Mr W A L Thomas	South Wales Group
Mr E C Prosser BEM	North East Group

IN ATTENDANCE

Lt Col (Retd) N Jordan	Controller REA and Secretary
Maj (Retd) I Sidebottom	Corps Treasurer
Mr Geoff Jones	Asst Controller

APOLOGIES

Brig M Bazeley	Comdt HQ RSME
Lt Col M Heffer RE TD	Reserve Army Officer
Lt Col (Retd) A J Bunting	Central Southern Group
Mr B Simm	East Anglia Group
Mr J R Bell	Scotland & NI Group

1. The President opened the meeting and welcomed those present especially those who had come from afar.
2. He noted that apologies had been received from those listed above. He welcomed the following new members to the Committee for whom it was their first meeting:

Col Matt Quare MBE ADC
WO1 (CSM) S Webster
Mr Geoff Jones

Corps Colonel
Corps Sergeant Major
Assistant Controller

ITEM 1 – DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

3. The President explained that Charity Commission expects all charities to have a standard agenda item at the start of all trustee meetings asking each trustee to declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest. This procedure should, at least, ensure that conflicts of interest are identified at the earliest opportunity. He asked the trustees to declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest.

4. The President declared three possible conflicts of interest. He advised that he was a patron of The Royal British Legion charity in Hampshire, a patron of the Veterans in Action charity and a champion for the Defence Medical Welfare Services charity; these interests would be entered in the Conflicts of Interest Register held by the Corps Treasurer. Council members were advised that the President would not participate in any decisions where his supported charities would stand to gain.

5. There were no further conflicts of interest, actual or potential, declared by any of the remaining trustees.

ITEM 2 - TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE 70th MEETING

6. The President emphasised that they were only dealing with the accuracy of the Minutes for the record. No comments or proposed amendments have been received and he asked the meeting for their approval as to their accuracy. Council accepted that the Minutes of the 70th Meeting were a true record of the proceedings. The President signed the Minutes.

ITEM 3 – TO CONSIDER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 70th MEETING

7. Paragraph 8 - Benevolence Report. The President said that the Benevolence Report should show the assistance provided to reservists as well as to regulars. Actioned.

8. Paragraph 9 – REVETT Retrospective Qualifications to Veterans. The Corps Colonel advised that the REVETT website provided CPD policy for those seeking Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Defence Awarding Organisation (DAO) predecessor qualifications. Full details are available on the CPD website at <https://re-cpd.org.uk/rpl/>. The Corps Colonel advised that links to the CPD website are provided on the Sappers Network Ltd (SNL) and Corps websites.

9. Paragraph 12 – REA Strategic Objectives. The President said that it was important that REA goals were linked to the Corps' Governance document. The Controller advised that a draft amendment to Council's TOR was currently with the Corps Sec who will engage with Gen Alastair and HQ REA as necessary.

10. Paragraph 31 – Risk Register. The President reminded attendees that risk was more appropriately handled by the Management Committee. He said that Gen Dickinson, the Controller and the Corps Treasurer had recently reviewed the Risk Register and made a number of amendments. These will be reviewed by the Management Committee at its next meeting.

11. Paragraph 40 – Assistant Controller Job Description. The President acknowledged that job descriptions for both the Controller and Assistant Controller posts had been actioned.

12. Paragraph 41 – Controller Appointment Offer. The President was advised that the current 'offer' was in line with HQ policy and deemed sufficient to attract the right person. The

Chairman would provide an update on Controller recruiting at Item 11.

13. Paragraph 43 – Corps Memorial. The President asked the Controller to brief the trustees on the impact of the NMA development on the Corps Memorial. The Controller said he had met the NMA Head of Operations on site. It was clear that in developing the RBL Events Pavilion there would be some visual impact to the area outside of the Corps Memorial boundary hedge on the north east side but there would be no material impact on the Corps Memorial site itself. Some memorial benches alongside and outside the north east side of the site would be moved to the grassed area to the rear of the Memorial. The President advised members that the Chairman of the Corps Affairs Committee (Maj Gen Chris Tickell) had been tasked with reviewing enhancements to the Memorial to improve the visitor experience and to consider the long term maintenance. He asked that Gen Tickell be advised of the impact that the RBL Events Pavilion development would have on the Corps Memorial site.

Action: Controller

14. The President took the opportunity to update trustees on another memorial matter. He said that whilst the memorials within Brompton Barracks catered for those who lost their lives in conflicts up to the end of WW2, the Corps does not have a memorial that commemorates those that died in conflicts since WW2. He continued by saying that he had directed that the Cenotaph Memorial within Brompton Barracks be inscribed with the names of the campaigns and wars in which Sappers have been killed since WW2. The plan is to unveil those additions during the 2018 Corps Memorial and Veterans Weekend.

15. Paragraph 44 – Membership Scoping Study. The findings and recommendations of the Membership Scoping Study have been reviewed by the Chairman and the Controller. The Study was considered at Item 10.

16. Paragraph 46 – Corps Presence on the Internet. The President said the Corps had reviewed its presence on the web and in light of the REA intention to update its site, he had asked the Corps Colonel to bring HQ REA up to date with the work completed so far. Actioned.

17. Paragraph 48 – Group Boundaries and Unit Affiliations. The President had asked the REA Chairman to review the aligning of REA Group boundaries with regular and reserve Engineer units. This work is currently being undertaken by HQ REA in partnership with 8 Engr Brigade and is ongoing.

ITEM 4 – TO NOTE THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE 127th MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

18. The Chairman noted that Paragraph 24 of the Management Committee Minutes recommended the draft 2017 AGM Agenda to Council.

ITEM 5 – TO NOTE THE REPORT ON BENEVOLENCE

19. The Chairman asked Brig Craig to present the Benevolence Report for the 8 month period to end August 2016. The report is at **Annex A**.

20. The President thanked Brig Craig for his update and for the work of the Benevolence Committee.

21. The President said Line Serial 14 of the budget provides £3K for grants to other charities. Last year the Committee approved a £3K grant to BLESMA from the budget. Prior to the meeting, trustees were requested to identify at this meeting any charity that were deserving of recognition by them. Members identified six charities that might benefit from an REA grant. They were:

- a. Soldiers off the Streets
- b. Care after Combat
- c. Armed Forces Community Support Hub
- d. Veterans Aid
- e. Sapper Support
- f. Defence Medical Welfare Services

22. The President asked that the Controller and Assistant Controller carry out due diligence of the charities listed to ensure that they complied with three important criteria:

- a. That the charity supported a large Sapper element.
- b. That the charity met with REA charitable objects
- c. That the charity was not already supported by an ABF block grant.

23. When that was done he asked that the results be distributed out-of-committee for a trustee's decision on the grant amount and distribution.

24. Given that there would likely be a large number of deserving charities, there was some discussion as to whether the £3K allocation was sufficient as a useful donation. The President asked that the REA Finance Committee under Col Davies to consider an increase to the 'Other Charities' grant that would be available annually to award to a deserving charity. He said that it was not necessary that the whole grant be used, but that a larger sum should be available.

25. The President suggested that the process of selecting a suitable charity/charities be embedded into the annual cycle of meeting and that the May meeting should identify suitable charities that might benefit from an REA Grant and that a decision be made at the September meeting as to which of the identified charities would be supported and with how much.

Proposal: That the process of selecting a suitable charity/charities be embedded into the annual cycle of Council meetings. The May meeting will identify suitable charities that might benefit from an REA Grant and the September meeting will agree which of the identified charities would be supported and with how much.

Proposer: WO2 S Tolley

Seconder: Col M Quare

Carried

26. The Benevolence Report was accepted.

ITEM 6 - TO NOTE THE REPORT ON CORPS AFFAIRS

27. The Corps Colonel presented highlights from his report. The report is at **Annex B**.

28. The President thanked the Corps Colonel for presenting a comprehensive and clearly expressed report. He suggested that a more concise and perhaps graphical version of Corps Affairs would be beneficial and recommended that use was made of the monthly 8 Engr Bde PowerPoint slide, a map of the world, that identified all the operations the Corps is involved with and the numbers involved. He also asked that the Army 2020 Refine changes be better communicated as they would impact upon the Groups and Branches of the REA. Finally, where security classification allowed, the Corps Affairs information should be published on the Corps website.

Action: Corps Colonel

29. On a separate matter the President commended the use of Twitter as a source of up-to-date information. The Corps Colonel advised members that a flyer would shortly be issued that provided details of the most useful and informative hashtags.

30. The Corps Col's report was accepted.

ITEM 7 – TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE 118th REA FINANCE COMMITTEE

31. The President invited the REA Honorary Treasurer, Col Davies, to brief members on the Minutes and present his report.

32. Col Davies said, in respect of the REA Welfare Grant, overall the relatively-low level of response from units had been disappointing and the fund is unlikely to be entirely used. He recognised that the poor take-up of the offer could be partially attributed to the uncertainty of units regarding their future locations. The Grant provision was deliberately defined as being for one year only (2017). He said that early indications are that this has been a successful initiative which has given the REA some very positive 'PR'. Notwithstanding this, the Finance Committee would like to take the time to analyse how this fund has been advertised, managed and responded to this year before making any proposals for continuous *Esprit de Corps* support to units and Branches in the future. He said that for the moment, the Committee does not seek either a carry-forward of 2017 underspend or to offer a proposal that a similar sum should be set aside from Capital Reserves in 2018. The President and members supported this stance.

33. The Treasurer reminded members that Council had agreed to support the Royal Engineers Vocational and Educational Training Trust (REVETT) for three years with an annual grant of £30K for each year. He advised that REVETT had spent £15K this year and had confirmed that it is able to spend the carry-forward next year as well as the 2018 £30K grant. The Treasurer asked Council to approve a carry-forward of this year's underspend in addition to the 2018 £30K grant. Council approved the request.

34. The matter of staff remuneration was raised by the Honorary Treasurer. He explained that the pay of staff within the HQ had eroded considerably since the introduction of the 1% cap on rises for all public sector workers. Owing to the HQ pay policy, this cap extended to privately employed staff as well as civil servants. He said the erosion threatened staff morale, retention and recruiting and suggested that a salary increase should be considered. He was conscious that there needed to be an equitable payment scheme across the HQ and that it would not be fair to consider REA staff pay in isolation. In remedying this he suggested that a review of staff remuneration be carried out. The President echoed Col Davies' concerns and advised that the Corps Finance Committee would address the matter of RHQ RE remuneration.

35. In reviewing the Projected Budget for 2019-2022, the President said the REA Finance Committee recommended the Projected Budget for 2019 – 2022 to Council. Council accepted the recommendation.

36. The President said the budget for 2018 needed formal approval; the REA Finance Committee had recommended the budget to Council.

Proposal: To approve the proposed budget for 2018

Proposed: Lt Col L Inge (Retired Officer)

Seconded: Maj P Gill (South West Group)

Vote: Carried

37. The President thanked the Hon Treasurer for his report and for all the work that goes on behind the scenes with the REA Finance Committee.

ITEM 8 – TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE THE REA 5 YEAR STRATEGIC REVIEW 2017-2022 AND THE TRUSTEES 12 MAIN ROLES

38. The President introduced the Item and asked the Chairman, Gen Dickinson, to comment. The Chairman said that it was a rolling review but in the coming year, see if would be possible to insert a strategic plan as well. It would then show our objectives and show how we intended to meet them. The President and members endorsed the Chairman's approach as it would guide the work of the Controller and his staff as well as the current and future work of Council and the Management Committee.

Proposal: To approve the REA 5 Year Strategic Review 2017-2022 and the Trustees 12 Main Roles.

Proposer: WO1 (CSM) S Webster

Secunder: Maj P Luscombe

Vote: Carried

ITEM 9 – TO RECOMMEND THE DRAFT AGENDA AND COUNCILS DRAFT REPORT FOR THE 2017 AGM

39. The President introduced both documents and asked if there were any comments on either. He said that in light of the strategic objectives discussion held under Item 8, an item that dealt with the development of a strategic plan should be included in the AGM Agenda. The Chairman said he would include some information on the development of a strategic plan within Councils Report.

ITEM 10 – REA MEMBERSHIP SCOPING STUDY

40. The President asked the REA Chairman to lead on the Item. The Chairman reminded members that the REA had engaged a consultancy to carry out a health check of our membership, both serving and retired. He said it was a very good report, well worth the £5.7k paid, and that there are a number of observations and recommendation within the report that needed to be investigated through the wider REA committee structure, these included:

- Update/upgrade the REA website – funding for this has already been approved by Council.
- National Branches are thriving. There is a need to widen the scope for an increase in National Branches. This might include the development of community interest groups – for example Caravan Branch, Motor Cycle Branch, Emergency Services Branch.
- Geographically located Branches have in the past been the lifeblood of the REA. Feedback from the younger veteran element has described some of the Branches as too formal, bureaucratic and in many cases unsympathetic to younger member's needs.
- Association Rules are complex. Whilst they need to be so to support our Deeds, they are complex and a review is needed. Additionally, there needs to be a simplified Members Rule Book.
- Develop useful and attractive membership offerings. Roadsmart, RERFC offer of Army v Royal Navy Rugby tickets to REA Branch members.
- Develop firm, effective affiliations with the serving Corps.

41. In response to a question from Maj Gill as to how this work would be initiated, the Chairman advised that the first action was to develop the Strategic Plan with an eye on the recommendations within the Scoping Study report. Once that had been achieved, and it had been decided which work to take forward, these would then be farmed out to the various committees.

42. The President said that the development of firm, effective affiliations with the serving Corps, and the linking of both regular and reserve units to REA Groups was a key recommendation. He spoke about the advantages of the recently launched Sappers Network Ltd, which was more than just about jobs. He said REA involvement with SNL should be considered an important element of the overall vision of developing firm, effective affiliations with the serving Corps. He asked that the SNL flyer be distributed as widely as possible.

ITEM 11 – CONTROLLER RECRUITING

43. The President asked the Chairman to bring members up to date with the process of recruiting the replacement Controller. The Chairman advised that the closing date for applications was 8th September and that four applications for the post had been received; these were currently being assessed for suitability.

ITEM 12 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

44. Corps Policy – The Bereaved and the Wounded, Sick and Injured (WIS). The President spoke on the Corps policies relating to Support to Bereaved Families and to Support to the WIS which was issue in December 2016. He said that during his visits to Corps units and REA Branches he detected that there was not as much knowledge about these endorsed policy's as there should be. He said that in the past we have not been as good as we should have been in looking after our bereaved families and WIS personnel. The policy documents provide the detail of how the Corps and the REA should 'look after its own' and said it was incumbent upon us all to get the policy out to the serving Corps and to REA Branches. The President asked the Controller to ensure that the documents were distributed to all REA Groups and Branches.

Action: Controller

45. The Queens Gurkha Engineers (QGE) and the REA. The Chairman said the QGE were part of the wider family of the Corps and spoke of the opportunity to embrace them within the REA. He said he had had a recent meeting with Col Mike Carter, Chairman of the Queens Gurkha Engineers Association (QGEA), to discuss the benefit of more closely and more formally aligning the QGEA with the REA. The Chairman said the process of taking this forward would not be without its difficulties and he was keen that everyone understood that any alignment would not impose any financial burden on the REA. The development of the QGEA and REA alliance would form part of the Strategic Plan. He hoped that some positive action could be achieved in 2018 to coincide with the 70 Anniversary of the formation of the Gurkha Engineers.

ITEM 13 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

46. The President said his preferred dates for the next meeting of Council were 1st, 4th, 9th and 10th of May 2018. He asked that members advise the Controller of any of those dates that were not suitable by the end of September. The Controller would then advise members of the most suitable date. The exact location of the meeting room will be advised when known.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

The President said he had one final matter to deal with and that was for the trustees to say a formal farewell to Lt Col Neil Jordan for whom it was his last Council meeting as Controller of the RE Association. He said that since joining the staff in 2001, he had done an outstanding job within the REA. The President reminded members that for almost four years Lt Col Neil had simultaneously carried out the roles of Deputy Controller and Controller, a period during which there have been many changes within the REA; they have all been accomplished professionally in the best way possible. He offered grateful thanks, not only from this Council, not only from the Corps but from him personally as Chief Royal Engineer.

27th September 2017

Controller

Minutes Approved

Dated

Chairman
Lt Gen Sir Mark Mans KCB CBE DL

Benevolence Report to the REA Council September 2017

1. **Trends 2017.** For the period 1 Jan – 31 Aug 2017 the number of benevolence cases submitted to the Association by SSAFA, The Royal British Legion and other organisations was 344, this is 11 cases more than the same period in 2016. Of these 344 cases, 243 were submitted by SSAFA and 81 by TRBL; these figures are comparable to the same period in 2016.

2. **Individual Benevolence Cases Considered during 2017 – 2014 (Excludes Weekly Allowances and Christmas Grants)**

Category	First 8 months 2017	2016	2015	2014
Disabled & Illness	102	174	175	202
Aged	22	53	71	63
Widows	27	55	86	78
Unemployed	79	107	118	137
Miscellaneous	84	136	149	171
Grants not made	30	40	51	68
Totals	344	565	650	719

Regular – Reserve Case Comparisons	First 8 months 2017	2016	2015	2014
Regular Cases	321	540	605	666
Reservist Cases	23	27	45	53
Regular Grants	£166,216	£260,925	£282,412	£287,855
Reservist Grants	£7,662	£10,145	£20,318	£18,217

3. **Cost of Benevolence Jan to Aug 2017.** The gross amount spent on benevolence for the period 1 Jan – 31 August 2017 was £174,428. This is £11.6k more than was spent in the same period in 2016.

4. **Benevolence Committee meetings.** In 2016 the Controller's delegated powers increased from £500 to £1,000. Since that increase the REA Benevolence Committee sits quarterly rather than monthly. Meetings are now held in March, June, September and December. Cases requiring financial assistance greater than £1,000 (Controller's financial threshold) are referred to the REA Benevolence Committee. Cases of an urgent nature that exceed the Controller's delegated powers are considered out-of-committee in consultation with the Chairman of the Benevolence Committee and the Hon Treasurer REA. There is no financial limit on grants that the Committee can authorise for benevolence. The Committee also deals with applications for weekly allowances. Cases, having been in front of the Committee, are dealt with within a week of the Committee decision.

5. **Grants to Charities.** At the last meeting of Council, the trustees agreed that with effect from 2018, the grant to ABF would be increased from £40k to £50k, the grant to SSAFA would be increased from £15k to £20k. Council also agreed to remove the standing £5k grants to Combat Stress and BLESMA and retain the £3k per annum for other charities to be nominated annually by Council.

6. REA Welfare Grant Update.

- The following bids have been considered and funded:
 - REAWF-001 39 Engr Regt Campervan – REA grant was £38.5k
 - REAWF-002 Corps Cricket Practice Nets – REA grant was £40k
 - REAWF-003 Carver Bks Sports Village – REA grant was £195.5k
 - REAWF-007 1 RSME Cpls Club Furniture – REA grant was £4.4k
 - REAWF-010 299 Para Sqn RE Drill Hall improvements – REA grant was £3.8k
 - REAWF-011 3 RSME Regt Cpls Club Furniture – REA grant was £4.15k
- The following bids are approved but unfunded:
 - REAWF-009 39 Engr Regt 2nd Campervan – REA grant requested £40.67k
 - REAWF-012 3 RSME Regt Minibus – REA grant requested £29k
- The following bid has yet to be considered by the REA Finance Cttee:
 - REAWF-015 23 Engr Regt RVS Lounge – REA Grant requested £ 5853.67
- The following bid is approved by REA Fin Cttee, but yet to be considered by Council:
 - REAWF-014 Gibraltar Display Cabinet – REA Grant requested £1440.00
Awaiting drawing/illustration of cabinet to support request.

Expended: £286,350.00

Committed: £ 69,670.00

Total: £356,020.00

Remaining: £643,980.00

CORPS UPDATE JULY 2017**8 Engineer Brigade****12 (Force Support) Engineer Group**

1. HQ 12 (FS) Engr Gp continues to force generate personnel for upcoming deployments across Africa, the broader Middle East and assistance to Air Operations on behalf of the RAF.
2. 21 Engr Regt has been focused on the recovery from Ex ASKARI STORM in Kenya and preparing for a testing exercise on Salisbury Plain - Ex WESSEX STORM. 1 Fd Sqn has completed CAST and low level training events, personnel have returned from Project ANEMOI in the Falkland Islands and are preparing for a return to the Island come late Sep 17 in order to complete further construction works. 4 Fd Sqn are transitioning to a construction focus in preparation for Op TRENTON 4 in South Sudan and have a Tp+ deployed on a construction task in the Lake District. 12 members of the Regt are currently deployed on Op CATAN 2 in Somalia, with a further 11 members also deployed with the UK Task Force on Op TRENTON 2 in South Sudan.
3. 32 Engr Regt is currently focused on the pre-deployment preparations for personnel deploying to South Sudan on Op TRENTON 3. A comprehensive training and integration package involving 2 MERCIAN and 32 Engr Regt is now complete. Pre deployment training is now under way, including a substantial range package. 31 Fd Sqn have returned from Project ANEMOI and preparation has started for their re-deployment in late Aug 17.
4. 36 Engr Regt is balancing several Group tasks post Easter leave. RHQ hosted GOC FTC Comd Maj Gen Urch, providing him with a Regt overview and update. 69 Gurkha Fd Sqn completed low level training in Weymouth and Salisbury Plain leading to AV(W) conversion commencing in May 17. 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn continue to make good progress on Ex CRABAPPLE in Kenya, currently half way through completion point of their deployment.
5. 39 Engr Regt now have 34 Fd Sqn deployed in South Sudan and 53 Fd Sqn deployed on Project ANEMOI in the Falkland Islands. The Regiment continues to be extremely busy supporting the RAF on exercises and operations in the UK and overseas, where members of the Regiment have recently deployed to Cyprus and Romania.
6. 71 Engr Regt has 27 personnel mobilised for Op TRENTON in South Sudan. Focus is now on mobilisation for Op CATAN 4 in Somalia. Ex ATLANTIC STAR 17 in the Ascension Islands has been cancelled.
7. 75 Engr Regt has been undertaking annual training. The first Regt'l weekend focused on trade training resulting in a significant upturn in attendance across the unit. Amphibious Tp has completed low level trg ahead of Ex SABRE STRIKE, the unit has now received the additional M3 Rigs required for future deployments to Germany and beyond.
8. R MON RE (M) delivered two significant training events recently, at both Sqn and Regt'l level. Regt'l training event was the units first Professional Development Weekend (PD). PD events focus on the development of individuals at trade competencies and enable the unit to deliver the first module of the intermediate Cbt Engr modules, bespoke MT, C3S and Officer training. Current Regt'l focus is G1 administration for deployment on ACT17 to Romania. Installation of the sundial presented to HM The Queen by the Corps during S300 at Frogmore House is complete.

25 (Close Support) Engineer Group

9. 25 (CS) Engr Gp support to 3 (UK) Div HQ study days in preparation for Ex WARFIGHTER 17/5 have concluded culminating in a US Army Comd Leadership MCCP. Close support engineering across the various Battle Groups continues at Regt'l level. Work continues to better understand future 3 (UK) Div requirements in order to forewarn 8 Engr Bde where required.

10. 22 Engr Regt are currently supporting operations in Iraq and various UK and overseas exercises; support to British Army Training Unit Canada is enduring. 3 AES currently have 91 personnel deployed on Op SHADER Iraq, split between the Taji and Besmaya. 5 AES have recently completed ACROW Bridge pre deployment training in Norway.

11. 26 Engr Regt training year continues to develop at pace. Activity for 33 AES and 8 AES is broadly focused around low level training, such as annual training events, small arms and demolitions ranges; basic specialist skills; building BG integration. 30 AES deploy imminently on Ex PRAIRIE STORM in Canada. 38 HQ&SP Sqn are in the process of returning from Canada having concluded Ex WARPAINT.

12. 35 Engr Regt has been preparing for Ex HECTOR'S RESPONSE, a very high readiness exercise which also coincided with the visit of GOC FTC Maj Gen Urch. 29 Armd Engr Sqn has deployed on Op CABRIT in Estonia. The remainder of the Regt has continued to maintain its high level of readiness, which has been tested during EX NOBLE JUMP 1; a full recall exercise initiated by NATO. Deploying ahead of the Regt, the Spearhead Troop from 77 AES conducted low level training including mine clearance drills before 37 AES deployed and trained with Panzer Bn 203 which included crossing No10 CSB for the first time since the new waiver came into operation. 44 HQ & Sp Sqn conducted logistic movement and GSB builds. Throughout Spring the Regt has managed to deploy 40 personnel away skiing and Army snowboarding as well as winning the Army Rugby Championship Tankard.

29 (EOD & Search) Group

13. HQ 29 EOD and Search Gp currently have vast numbers deployed supporting various operations and exercises being conducted in the UK and overseas.

14. 1 MWD Regt continues to support various task across the broader Middle East, including assistance to the Ministry of Interior of Bahrain. Pre deployment training continues at pace for the next iteration of troops to deploy to the region. The Regt also continues to hold several elements of the unit at readiness for various UK tasks and operations.

15. 33 Engr Regt in support of the various EOD task matrixes have troops deployed at the CIED school of excellence in Tunisia, supporting the overall Africa training mission. Amongst the several UK tasks, the Regt is significantly supporting Op ESCALIN: potential fuel tanker strikes. 58 Sqn have supported Ex JOINT WARRIOR and Ex WESSEX STORM in support to 40 Cdo CT4 validation, conducting role specific training prior to further validation in May. 217 Fd Sqn and 350 Fd Sqn have participated in the Gp MATTs weekend, the both Sqn's continues to support a number of community engagement events looking to retain high levels of recruiting.

16. 101 Engr Regt continue to supports UK security operation in reaction to the recent terror attacks across the UK. 22 HQ & Sp Sqn (EOD) conducted ADW trg at DEMS Trg Regt as well as other low level exercises. 17 Fd Sqn (EOD) have limited personnel deployed in Iraq, the Sqn also recently honed Cbt Engr skills in Weymouth during a 2 wk exercise. 21 Fd Sqn (EOD) are heavily engaged with personnel deployed in Iraq and conducting further pre deployment training for future

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deployments across the broader Middle East; a team is also set to complete the Nijmegen March in July. 221 Fd Sqn (EOD) are supporting Regt activities via various personnel mobilised, the Sqn also took part in Ex BLACK CAT FIRE 2 at Surrey Fire and Rescue HQ and Ex BLACK CAT STRIKE on STANTA, both of which included Search and casualty training in support of other government agencies.

17. 11 EOD Regt RLC has deployed on various missions including Op CABRIT in Estonia and Poland. Pre deployment training has started for further iterations to Estonia; the unit is also conducting high-risk search tasks for a plethora of VIP personnel.

170 (Infrastructure Support) Engineer Group

18. 170 (Infra Sp) Engr Gp are providing various technical support across 8 Engr Brigade, FTC and in support of PJHQ; these tasks vary from basic design support, facilities management and in country project management/support to several military construction forces.

19. 20 Wks Gp continues to support various RAF stations in the UK as well as having personnel deployed in the Middle East.

20. 62 Wks Gp has delivered infra support across Africa, in particular South Sudan and Somalia.

21. 63 Wks Gp is delivering project management for Project ANEMOI, which is the rebuilding of the three radar head site on the Falkland Islands. Teams have recently trained and deployed to the Middle East as well as producing design reports for a construction tasks in Cyprus.

22. 64 Wks Gp are at very high readiness. In addition, visits to Ex PINESTICK in Cyprus in order to provide assurance has occurred, also seeing teams deploy on technical recce's to Kenya.

23. 65 Wks Gp & Reserve Support Team 65 Wks Gp & Reserve Support Team continue to support with technical expertise widely across Defence both nationally and internationally. The unit continues to have individuals committed to Op TRENTON in South Sudan and the broader Middle East. Support to Defence Strategic Fuels Authority continues, deployments for support to DIO in Nepal have occurred and further individuals are being prepared. The shooting team have prepared for the forthcoming FTC shooting competition, along with a small team deploying on Ex MARTELLO DIVE adventurous training in Cyprus. Recruiting and retention remain strong; unit numbers have increased for the seventh consecutive month and currently sit at (91%).

24. 66 Wks Gp continue to have soldiers deployed in the Middle East and South Sudan and further afield across Africa. Flood Defence training was conducted to Standby Infantry Battalions. Sgt Purja was awarded a Chief Royal's Commendation for taking on responsibilities above and beyond that expected of his rank through achieving the Authorised Person (Pet) qualification, usually a preserve of a Clerk of Works.

Specialist Units

25. 24 Cdo Engr Regt continues to support 3 Cdo Bde RM by holding a large number of officers and soldiers at readiness. The Regiment has been operationally committed almost continually since Jun 15. 59 Cdo Sqn are currently deployed in Norway.

26. 23 Para Engr Regt continues to support 16 AA Brigade and has many officers and soldiers held at readiness. 51 Para Sqn are currently deployed on a construction tour in Cyprus. 299 Para Sqn continue to recruit large numbers of reserve soldiers to its ranks, 9 Para Sqn had personnel

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attending the 35th anniversary events in the Falkland Islands, followed by a 2 day event in camp which seen the unit host many veterans that deployed in 1982.

27 42 Engr Regt (Geo) continues to support a vast array of tasks around the world. Currently there are officers and soldiers deployed to Estonia, the Middle East, the Falkland Islands, Cyprus and a variety of UK locations. Though extremely busy as a unit, sport is still being played with the Regimental Squash team unfortunately losing in the semi-finals of the Army Championships. A number of officers and soldiers will take part in the Rome marathon at the end of April 17.

Future Activities & Events

28. The following notable activities are planned for the future:

- a. 15 – 17 Sep 17 – Corps Memorial and Veterans Weekend – Chatham.
- b. 14 Oct 17 – REA AGM, VSC, London
- c. 15 Oct 17 – Sapper Sunday, Chelsea Hospital.

General Points

29. **Royal Engineers Website.** To find out more about what the Corps is up to and view electronic copies of Sapper Magazine visit the RE pages inside the Army website at the links provided at serial 33. The Corps RSM has now been replaced by WO1 Steve Webster, who holds the new title of Royal Engineer Corps Sergeant Major.

Sports & AT

30. **Corps Sporting Fixtures.** A short list of Corps sporting fixtures, should personnel wish to drop into events to provide support, is below:

- a. **Cricket:** RA versus RE 3 day fixture, Larkhill – 20-22 Jul 17.
- b. **Rugby League:** RE Rugby League is fast approaching the summer season, the following fixtures:
 - (i). **12 Jul 17.** Lawson Cup Semi final v Inf at 3 RSME Regt.
 - (ii). **26 Jul 17.** Lawson Cup final v REME or RS.
 - (iii). **7 Oct 17.** Providing trophy party and on pitch support (Flags/escorts/banners) to the Super league Grand Final at Old Trafford (Live on Sky Sports).
 - (iv). **8 – 15 Oct 17.** End of season tour to Greece.

31. **Corps Sports Results:** A short list of Corps sporting results are as follows:

- a. **Athletics.** The RE Inter-Regt'l Athletics Championships took place in June in Tidworth, which were an outstanding success. 13 teams (176 athletes – 24 females, 152 males) took part. 22 Engr Regt are the RE Inter-Regt'l athletics Champions 2017 with 23 Para Engr Regt second and 1 RSME Regt third. The Corps men's team finished second in the Inter Corps Athletics Championship 2017 with the women finishing 5th.

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- b. **Football.** The Corps football team (men) won the Woolwich Cup 2017. The Corps were runners up in the Inter Corps Quadrangle Tournament 2017 having won one, lost one and drew one. The game they won was against the gunners 6-1. 3 RSME Regt are the Sapper Cup winners beating 22 Engr Regt 7-1 in the final.
- c. **Rugby.** A combined RE and REME ladies rugby union side beat the AGC ladies rugby team in the Army Cup final. The RE RFC (mens) won the VT Inter Corps Tournament. 35 Engr Regt are the Army Rugby Union winners.
- d. **Cross Country.** 23 Para Engr Regt are the RE Cross Country Champions for 2017 with 3 RSME Regt second and 1 RSME Regt third.
- e. **Road Running.** 22 Engr Regt are the Corps Half Marathon Champions with WO2 Sutton overall winner. 1 RSME Regt are the Corps 10k Inter-Unit champions, with 36 Engr Regt second and 1 RSME Regt third.
- f. **Road Biking.** The Corps road biking team is the Inter Corps Champions 2016/7.
- g. **Cricket.** 39 Engr Regt are the current Corps Cricket Champions.
- h. **Boxing – Army Individual Finals.** The Corps had the following 4 finalist competing at the Army Individual Boxing Finals:
 - i. Spr Roberts – 1 RSME Regt, Grade A, Super Heavyweight Champion.
 - ii. Spr Keywood – 26 Engr Regt, Grade A, Middleweight Champion.
 - iii. Spr Blackwell – 23 Para Engr Regt, Grade A, Lightweight Champion.
 - iv. Spr McKane – 23 Para Engr Regt, Grade A, Light Heavyweight Runner up
- i. **Tennis.** The Corps are Inter Corps Summer tennis champions 2017, for the first time in 20 years. This built on earlier season success when the Corps Tennis team also won the Inter Corps tennis winter league.
- J. **Corps Games.** The RE games was coordinated by 22 Engr Regt and delivered at Tidworth with some events being coordinated at other locations due to activity requirements. The event was an outstanding success with over 2000 personnel in attendance. 3 RSME Regt were overall champions narrowly beating last year's winners 1 RSME Regt; 71 Engr Regt were the overall Reserve unit winners.

32. Individual Success:

- a. **Army Sportsmen of the Year** – Sgt Crossley - Wakeboarding, 22 Engr Regt.
- b. **Army Adaptive Sportsmen of the Year** – Capt Dave Henson MBE.
- c. **Selection to Team GB Female Boxer.** Spr Ebony Jones.

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d. **Invictus Games:** Spr Jack Cummings, Ashley Hall, LCpl Clive Smith, SSgt Steve Arnold (Team Vice Capt), Cpl Ross Austen and Cpl Luke Sinnott have been selected to represent Team GB at this year's event in Toronto.

33. **Useful Links:**

- a. Army Website (Royal Engineers): <http://www.army.mod.uk/royalengineers/26293.aspx#>
- b. REA Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Royal-Engineers-Association>
- c. RE Museum: <http://www.re-museum.co.uk/>
- d. Institution of Royal Engineers: <http://www.instre.org/>
- e. Sapper Shop: www.sappershop.com
- f. Army Sappers (New Corps website): <https://www.armyengineer.co.uk/>