



The Times TUNNELING

November 2022

016

President Maj Josh Wardman RE
Chairman WO1 Nic Edmeades RE
Secretary Capt (Retd) Jack Noble RE
Treasurer Capt (Retd) Richard Tomlinson RE

Diary of Events ■

Branch

Fri 11 Nov: Armistice Day [wreath laying]

Sat 12 Nov: Cross Laying North Front Cemetery

Sun 13 Nov: Remembrance Sunday [Sapper service; Command service; refreshment]

02 Dec: Branch Christmas function (Moniques Queensway Quay)

REA Gib Monthly Meeting

Tue 08 Nov 22

tbc Dec 22

Gibraltar Notable Dates 2022

11-13 Nov: Remembrance Weekend

Mon 26 Dec: Public Holiday Christmas Day (in lieu)

Tue 27 Dec: Public Holiday Boxing Day (in lieu)

Other

Nil

Sad Loss of a True Sapper

This has been a very difficult newsletter to write. With the very heaviest of hearts and the very deepest sadness, we have to inform you of the untimely passing of our brother and our friend – **Mr Buck Sheppard**.

Buck was one of the last remaining Tunnelers on the Rock, something for which he was very proud, and he was unquestionably, one of life's true characters. Bubbling and spontaneous with wit; cheeky yet polite; and unwaveringly committed to the Corps, he had a drive like no other, and was able to enthuse those around him. Often seen in the corridors of the Central Office Block of the Naval Base, he would engage, chat, and interact with everyone – generally to blag a cup of tea! But people stopped. And took the time to have a chat with this infectious individual.



The Corps has lost a shining light, although the Squadron Bar up above is just that bit brighter tonight, for all that frequent. All we can hope is that there's a kettle and brew kit up there, and it's still in guarantee – because it will get used ... heavily!

**Stand down Sapper, your work here is now done.
Until we meet again RESpect**

President's Thoughts

When I started this month's editorial, I mistakenly thought that following the period of National mourning, we could return to something a little more light-hearted and enjoyable. How wrong recent sad events have proven me. As I sit writing this, I am processing the news that one of the nicest people I have come to know in Gibraltar has just passed. So firstly to his wife **Lou** and all his family, please accept mine and the REAs deepest condolences.

Bucky, in his poppy badge festooned Gillet, was known to us all in the REA and due to his almost daily pottering in our offices and the REA room, he had become a well-loved part of the furniture and a firm favourite of all of those of us still in green.



What is a Veteran ...? Part 4



...continued from September...

On board with Churchill. We were given sleepers and when we woke up in the morning we were in the Firth of Clyde. There was the Queen Mary, out in the mouth of the firth, so we went out into a little hull somewhere in the water line and then, when we got on board, there were notices in Dutch all along the corridors, which we thought were extraordinary.

I went straight on watch, and I was as sick as a dog, but that didn't make any difference – you went on watch, and you were given a ship's biscuit, which was like a dog's biscuit. By the time you'd chewed this and tried to do your work, you had forgotten you were sick in the first place. It turned out that we were on board with Prime Minister Churchill and his Chief of Staff going over to a conference in Quebec ...



President's Thoughts

But that's not just the RE personnel, **Bucky** had gotten to know a number of the serving personnel across the Naval base, many of whom were greeted by his smile and his standard dismissive "I've been in NAAFI queues longer than you've been in". They like us will miss his presence. Although he was small in stature, he was a colossal of the REA, his work particularly in the Club and around Remembrance time has been vital. Work for which he was, only this summer, recognised by the wider Corps, and for which he was rightly awarded a Group Directors Commendation at the RE 250 dinner.

Bucky thank you, I and everyone else will remember you.

Staying with Remembrance for a moment longer, it is my intention as per the last two years, to hold a Sapper Remembrance at the Sapper Statute prior to the Remembrance Sunday parade. Details will be discussed and promulgated at the next REA meeting.

Now in an attempt to give members something to look forward to, it has been brought to my attention by WO1 Taylor (SO3 Infra) that we are about to be overrun by more visiting RE units. He reliably informs me that both 38 & 69 are due into Gibraltar to conduct construction tasks before Christmas. Now for those who can remember the last time we had a Squadron in, we had a modest social gathering, where we had a little drink or two and a couple of quiet hands of EuchRE. So at the next meeting, it is my intent to tie down the dates with WO1 Taylor, and then select an appropriate date to welcome the squadrons in and teach them the Corps card game. So in preparation for that night, can I request that personnel who want a game or two of EuchRE stay behind after the November meeting to polish up their table talk card skills.

And looking a little further afield, as we approach the winter months, I want to remind you all that last year the Corps fielded a 100% turn out for the RG's RSMs challenge.

Presidents Thoughts (cont'd)



Again this year (*fablonned bif chits permitting*) I want to put in an RE contingent, so if anyone would like to join in, or just cheer us along, keep your eyes peeled for details of this year's new and improved RSMs challenge.

Maj Josh Wardman

"Royal" NAAFI in Gibraltar

The NAAFI has been granted permission to use the title 'Royal', in recognition of its close links to Royalty and the military. The organisation was established in 1920 when the then Secretary of State for War, Winston Churchill, set up a committee to oversee organisation of the armed forces' canteens following World War I.



King George VI was the NAAFI's original patron until his death in 1952 at which point Her Majesty took over the role. The organisation also provided service onboard the Royal Yacht Britannia throughout its commission. CEO of NAAFI **Steve Marshall** said: *We are truly thankful to receive the Royal title and we aim to repay this honour by continuing our excellent support to our Armed Forces as we begin our 2nd century of operation.*



Royal Engineers Association

The Aims of The Association are to promote and support the Corps of Royal Engineers among members of the Association by fostering esprit de corps and a spirit of comradeship and service, and by maintaining an awareness of Corps traditions.

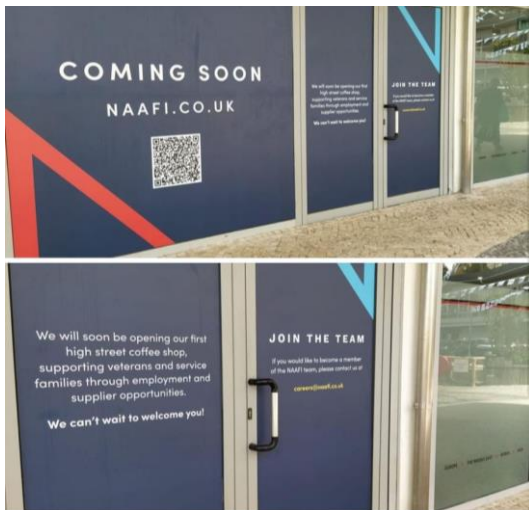
The Association also acts as a link between serving and retired members of the Corps, and it provides financial and other assistance to serving and former members of the Corps, their spouses, widows, and dependents who are in need. Grants, within Association Guidelines, are made to the Army Benevolent Fund and to other charities that further the objectives of the Association.

Those that know ... know!



“Royal” NAAFI in Gibraltar

NAAFI operates several facilities in Gibraltar; both **Helm Point** and **Devil’s Tower Camp** are overlooked by the Rock, and very shortly, NAAFI will also open a coffee shop in the luxury marina area of Ocean village.



Gib International Airport, IATA: GIB

Gibraltar International Airport (formerly North Front Airport) serves as the air transport link to the Rock. The airport was established in 1939 during World War II as an emergency landing base for the British Navy.

The airport is located at the northern end of Gibraltar near the border with Spain and serves over 300,000 passengers per year. Owned by the Ministry of Defence, it is operated by the Government of Gibraltar and is used for both civilian and military operations. It also serves as Gibraltar’s RAF base.



It had very limited facilities with just ten check-in counters, one baggage carousel, a security gate and two departure gates. Proposals for construction of a new terminal building were therefore discussed.



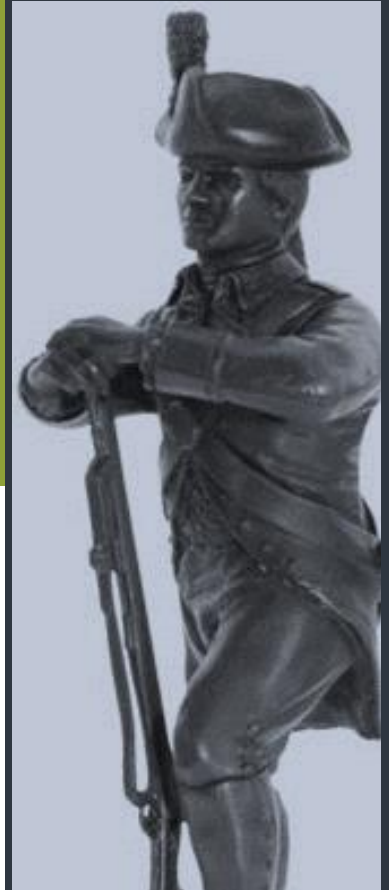
€85m (\$113m) passenger terminal commenced in 2007 and construction was started in 2009. The first phase of the terminal building, that handles all the airport arrival operations, was completed by 2011. The new terminal building was fully opened to traffic in September 2012 and the old terminal was closed. The new terminal has the capacity to handle one million passengers each year.

US Nuclear Sub arrives in Gibraltar

Foreign Ministry watches out arrival of another US nuclear submarine to Gibraltar.



The US nuclear submarine USS Florida (SSGN-728) arrived at the Naval Base in Gibraltar for a “routine stopover”, but the expected duration of its stay, between 4 and 8 days, suggests that it is not so much a routine stopover for crew rest, as a possible stop for maintenance or repairs.



Royal Engineers Association - Gibraltar Branch

Located in the birthplace of The Corps, the Gibraltar Branch was officially formed on 01 October 1914. Now in its 107th year, the branch continues to strengthen its position within the Association and the wider Sapper family.

The Branch is honoured to be able to support the military community, raise awareness and Esprit de Corps from The Rock of Gibraltar.

Monthly branch meetings are held on the first Tuesday of every month at 1930hrs in:

**The 1772 Club
First Floor
Central Office Block
Her Majesty’s Naval Base
Gibraltar
GX11 1AA**

Please come and join us ...

*“there are no strangers here;
only friends we have yet
to meet”*

Meet a Member

This month we say hello (again) to **Buck Sheppard**, our first "Meet a Member" he always has the last word!



Enlistment Date? 06 June 1956

Trade/discipline? Field Engineer and Plant Operator and Fitter

Any nicknames? Buck (and some others that are not printable!)

Person who has inspired you the most? My Dad – I always remember his words just before I joined the Army ... "a man is only as good as his word" ...!

Favourite meal? You can't beat a Sunday Roast (lamb), and mid-week, a wee bit of ham-egg-chips or a Cornish Pasty and chips – NO spicey!

Beer or wine? Tea, always!

Military career highlight? Meeting and marrying my beloved Lou, 56 years ago!

Military career lowlight? Stopping National Service – the military dropped off a little...

If your house was on fire, what one thing would you save? My wallet!

Best advice you have ever been given? Never ask anyone to do something you can't do yourself...

Worst piece of advice you have ever been given? I've not really had any bad advice, thank God!

Favourite country visited? Gibraltar, without a shadow of a doubt!

What's the best thing about Gibraltar? Me ... and the young ladies!

Person you would most like to meet? The lads of the Troop when I first joined – be great to get together again!

What couldn't you live without? My pacemaker!!!!

Favourite music? Country and Western, and the old-type Rock n Roll (Bill Haley etc)

What your biggest regret? Not winning the lottery – would like to give her indoors a chunk of money to do up the house, as she wants it

If you had a Super-power, what would it be and why? Invisibility – to have fun (I'll leave that to your imagination....)

What would like on your headstone? Here lies a bloke that tried to enjoy his life ... p.s. if there were more men my size, there would be more room in the world!

Navy's Second New Patrol Boat

HMS Dagger has arrived in Gibraltar, while two boats she is helping to replace are decommissioned after almost 30 years of service.



HMS Dagger arrives in Gibraltar

The Royal Navy Gibraltar Squadron has taken delivery of its second new £5m patrol boat. **HMS Dagger** joins **HMS Cutlass** (reported in April newsletter) in the role of 'guardians of the Rock', replacing **HMS Sabre** and **Scimitar** which operated in Gibraltar's waters for nearly two decades. The two vessels, which have spent almost 30 years in service, were decommissioned during a ceremony at Portsmouth Naval Base on Wednesday.

Sabre and Scimitar's commanding officers both expressed their sadness at seeing the vessels decommission. Commanding officer of Scimitar, **Lieutenant Joshua Tyrie**, said it was "bittersweet" saying goodbye and that it "tugs on the heartstrings", as HMS Scimitar and Sabre lower the White Ensign for the last time. Team Sabre was proud to have family, friends, and former Ship's Company amongst those joining us.



Dagger and **Cutlass** will be based at HMNB



Gibraltar's territorial waters, as well as support British exercises and operations in the area.

Before being able to fly the White Ensign, Dagger must undergo a rigorous series of sea trials and safety checks; these trials were recently completed, and **Lieutenant Simon Holden**, HMS Dagger's first Commanding Officer, said it is "an incredibly proud moment for everyone involved in the project". "I am looking forward to putting HMS Dagger through her paces and getting her operational as soon as possible."

Cutlass was handed over last year for trials ahead of being declared fully operational this spring. Dagger and Cutlass are twice as fast as the Navy's Archer Class P2000 fast patrol boats, as well as being smaller and nimbler. They are also equipped with the latest optical and infra-red systems, enabling crew to identify and track potential threats at range.



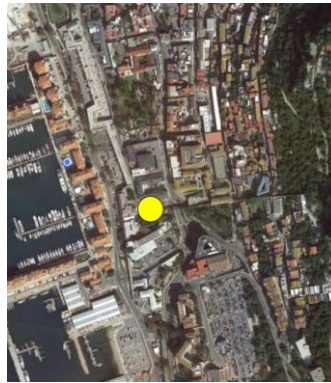


PLAQUE CHAT

Located on **Charles V Wall**, near TOC H, just down from the Southport Gate, Line Wall Road and at the side of **Ince Theatre**. The name **TOC H** is derived from WW1 when Signallers (yuk!) used a different phonetic alphabet to that of today's NATO standard version. Today's phonetic letters, T - Tango and H - Hotel, were known



Toc and *Aitch*. In 1915, an Army Chaplain, the **Rev Philip Clayton**, set up a rest house for Troops in the area to the west of Ypres Salient. The property he rented was Talbot House. The name was abbreviated by soldiers as TH, which colloquially became Toc H House...



In Memorandum



It is with heartfelt and tremendous sadness that we announce the very sad passing of our friend, brother and fellow branch member, **Mr Buck Sheppard**. One of the founder-members of the recent branch (as we know it), and 'Godfather' of the Gibraltar REA, Buck held many positions including Committee, Property Salesman and 1772 Club "Manager". A vibrant figure, he commanded respect from all those around him, for his interaction and humility with all. We will all miss him dearly. Until we meet again



"Once a Sapper, always a Sapper"

*They shall grow not old,
as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them,
nor the years condemn;
At the going down of the sun,
and in the morning,
We will remember them.*

"Once a Sapper, always a Sapper"

Branch Welcomes

No new arrivals this month.

Branch Farewells

We bid a sad farewell to **Nic Edmeades**, his wife **Lyndsey** and the kids, who leave us for a role in RAF Whittering. Nic has been a tremendous Chairman and we are truly thankful for all his efforts. We will welcome his replacement in next month's newsletter

Thought for the month



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www.facebook.com/REAGibraltar

[Rock Sappers](#)

www.reahq.org.uk

Need support or just a chat?

Sapper Support

Need Help to alleviate the suffering caused by PTSD and associated mental issues.

Call **0800 0407873** www.sapperssupport.com

Combat Stress

For over a century we've been helping former servicemen and women deal with issues like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety and depression.

Call **0800 138 1619**

You can also text on +44 **(0)7537 404719** and E-mail helpline@combatstress.org.uk

Veterans and Reserves Mental Health Programme

(VRMHP) provides assessment and treatment advice for veterans. Call **0800 032 6258** or

E-mail: dphce-dcmhcol-vmhp@mod.uk

SSAFA

Can help you find the right person to contact
Call **0800 731 4880** or
+44 (0)207 463 9292

Clubhouse Gibraltar

Call **+350 200 68423**

E-mail: info@clubhousegibraltar.com

GibSams

A confidential helpline is open every day from 1800hrs to midnight by calling:
116 123

E-mail: info@gibsams.gi <http://www.gibsams.gi>

GHA Community Mental Health Team and Facility

Community Mental Health Team 0800-1700hrs; call
+350 200 42307 / +350 200 41659 / +350 200 78807

