

THE BLYTHE SAPPERS
62ND MANAGEMENT MEETING
1030hrs Wednesday 1st June 2011
THE ARMY & NAVY CLUB, LONDON

Those Present:

Sapper Idris Pearce	Chairman
Sapper Bill Woodburn	Chairman Designate 2012
Sapper Roy Wilsher	Honorary Treasurer
Sapper John Wilks	Honorary Auditor
Sapper Stuart Sinclair	Link Member
Sapper John McLennan	Honorary Secretary

1. **Item 1 Introduction.** The Chairman welcomed all those in attendance.
2. **Item 2 Apologies for Absence.** Apologies had been received from Colonel Sean Harris Regt Col, Sappers Charles Holman, John Moore-Bick, Brian Pearce.
3. **Item 3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting.** The Minutes of the 61st Meeting of the Blythe Sappers Management Committee had been published on the BS website for a month. The Minutes of the previous meeting were signed.
4. **Item 4. Matters Arising.** The Chairman raised the following points:
 - **Letter on AT&CP letter** -- to be discussed later.
 - **Derby Day Draw** -- the procedures were discussed.
5. **Item 5. Finance.** Sapper Roy Wilsher referred to the revised Blythe Sappers Budget sheet and is attached at **Annex A**. Points to note are:
 1. **AT&CP.** The draft letter had been circulated prior to the meeting and was approved by the Committee. The final document was approved by the Committee and is attached at **Annex B**. It was agreed that BS Council be informed that the letter had been approved by Management Committee.
 2. The Chairman agreed that the monies due to him as a re-imbusement for payment of two lunches where his guest could not attend should be credited to the BS accounts.
 3. The Committee discussed a donation to a charity of choice.
 - It was decided that the sum of £1,000 would be granted to one of the charity's chosen by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge for the royal wedding -- **The Army Widows Association** -- Charity number 1127921.
 - **Forces Children Trust** -- it was agreed to give £1,000.
 - **Not Forgotten Association** -- it was agreed to give £1,000.

Carried

6. **Item 6. Corps & TA Report.** The Regt Col's report on the Corps is attached to these Minutes at **Annex C**.

- 7 **Item 7. Casualties Since Last Meeting**
 Deceased. Sappers Maurice Parrott, Antony Shave
 Resigned: Nil

- 8 **Item 8. Nominations for New Members**

Nomination	Sponsor	Seconder
Captain (Retd) Hamish Bryce	Sapper Peter Heier	Sapper Richard Peck
Major Hazel Whiteman RE	Sapper Larry Inge	Sapper Colin Walker

Both Approved

9. **Item 9 Attendance & Arrangements for Today's Luncheon**

Principle Guest: **Mr Keith Simpson MP**
 Total number Attending **85**
 Number of Guests **17**
 Those to Rise **3** (Sappers Iain James, Joe Fossey, Mungo Melvin)
 Derby Draw To take place after the parish notices

10. **Any Other Business**

Sat 6th Aug 11 **BS Guest Night** **RE HQ Mess Chatham**
 Wed 5th Oct 11 **Lunch & AGM** **The Lord Dannatt**
 Wed 7th Dec 11 **Christmas Lunch** **Baroness Boothroyd**

11. **Date of Next Meeting.** 1100hrs on **Wednesday 5th October 2011** under the Chairmanship of Sapper Idris Pearce. This meeting will be followed by the Blythe Sappers Annual General Meeting after the lunch.



Sapper Idris Pearce
 Chairman
 The Blythe Sappers

Oct 11

Sapper John R McLennan
 Honorary Secretary
 The Blythe Sappers

June 2011

Annex A
The Blythe Sappers Proposed Budget 2011



-
-
-
-
-
-
-

-
Annex B
AT&CP Letter
BS Management Minutes Jun 11

BLYTHE SAPPERS FUND FOR ADVENTUROUS AND CHALLENGING PURSUITS

ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATION FOR GRANTS

1. **Introduction.** The Fund has been in existence for over eighteen years and more than ninety seven grants have been made. Some applications have been turned down as not appearing sufficiently adventurous or challenging in their aims. It is now thought necessary to prepare simple guidelines on the levels of adventure and challenge required for an application to be successful. These should enable

those assessing applications to be consistent in their awards; they should also help applicants to know what to demonstrate to convince those responsible that their proposed expedition is worthy of the Blythe Sappers support.

2. **Flexibility.** No two expeditions or their grant applications are the same. These guidelines should be interpreted as giving “general indications” of what is required, rather than hard and fast rules.
3. **Eligibility.** Grants are made towards the costs of members of the Royal Engineers, whether commissioned or not and whether serving in the Regular or Territorial Army or Queens Gurkha Engineers. Expeditions need not consist exclusively of RE personnel. Sappers participating in an Army, Joint Service, University or Society expedition are particularly deserving of financial assistance, where this will benefit the standing of the Corps. Whilst the Fund is aimed primarily towards younger and more junior soldiers, assistance to other members of the Corps is not excluded.
4. **Location.** Adventure and challenge are most clearly present in remote areas, particularly where there are also extremes of climate and temperature. Applications in respect of expeditions to such locations must therefore have stronger merits than those to more developed and temperate areas. This applies whether the locations are on land, on sea or even in the air.
5. **Accommodation.** Expeditions will normally be expected to be living rough.
6. **Guides.** It is sometimes obligatory to employ guides in national parks and mountain areas; these will not invalidate an application, but preference will be given to expeditions going on their own into un-trodden or un-charted territory.
7. **Training.** Although there are always opportunities for gaining experience and knowledge from any expedition, training or the acquisition of qualifications should not be the primary purpose. In addition, it is unlikely that applications involving attendance at formal courses, e.g. shallow water diving, would be successful.
8. **Charitable events.** Sponsorship will not be approved for participation in a fund-raising event for a charity.
9. **Value of grants.** The total amount donated from the Fund since 1993 is £31,950. The balance of the Fund granted to the RECCT as at 31 Dec 10 stood at £4,226.40. Normally grants whether to individuals or groups are made at the prerogative of the Regimental Colonel. This is in accordance with the decision made by the Management Committee at a meeting in 2006; Grants made are normally up to a maximum of £400/head/expedition according to the individual’s contributions towards the total cost of the expedition/exercise.
10. **Grants.** Grants from the Fund to the RECCT are made annually according to applications and the amount allocated in the budget.
11. **Reports.** The BS Management Committee is to be kept informed of all AT&CP Fund made by the Regimental Colonel and Post Exercise Reports (P&R) should be copied to The Blythe Sappers for info.

As approved by the Management Committee

1st June 2011

Annex C
Corps Report
BS Management Minutes Mar 11

Regimental Colonel's Report on the Corps

HEADLINE ISSUES

- **Casualties Jul 10 – Mar 11**
 - Spr Smith KIA

- Spr Foster KIA
- o Sgt Jones KIA
- o Cpl Barnsdale KIA
- o Spr Blanchard KIA
- o 11 – WIA

- **Strategic Defence and Security Review** – Work continues apace. The Corps, again, stands at a defining moment. Army is set to reduce by 7,500 personnel over the next 3 years with the Corps reducing by 600 more or less. The Corps is set to lose a RHQ(+) but remains well placed to meet future operational requirements. The EinC is adamant that we will retain Sappers as soldier, combat engineers and artisans.
- **Transformational Army Structures** – This will be the future structure of the Corps. The Corps will be configured to match the new operational roles apportioned to it. Despite losing some personnel over 3 to 4 tranches, we will gain in terms of Search, MWDs (Dogs) and FPE.
- **Manning** (next DM(A) update Apr 11) – The Corps is now fully manned – over liability in officers, SNCOs and Sprs but under liability across the JNCO population. Input through recruiting will undoubtedly be reduced as the Corps shrinks to the TAS structure.

	Held Strength	RAL	Difference	% of RAL	Remarks
Officers	1,280	1,197	+83	107.0	Lt to Lt Col (incl LE)
Soldiers	8,210	8,332	-122	98.0	
TOTAL	9,490	9,529	-39	0.4	
Females	155			1.6	All ranks
Foreign & Commonwealth	445			4.7	All ranks

OPERATIONS AND

DEPLOYMENTS

- The Corps remains as busy as ever with every squadron committed to the Operational Commitment Plot.
- With the reduction in Task Force Helmand's Area of Operations and the concentration of force in Central Helmand, sappers are in increasing demand. The Engineer Group has consolidated in Camp BASTION:

Capability	HERRICK 12 Apr 10 – Oct 10	HERRICK 13 Oct 10 – Apr 11
RHQ Engr Regt	21 Engr Regt	23 Engr Regt (Air Asslt)
Infra	64 Wks Gp (62 Wks Gp from Jul)	62 Wks Gp (66 Wks Gp from Dec)
C-IED TF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RHQ 33 Engr Regt (-) • 21 Fd Sqn (EOD) • Search backfill from 36 Engr Regt, 12 (Air Sp) Engr Gp with res of 23 Pnr Regt RLC • Elms 521 EOD Sqn RLC • (WIS and ECM Elms) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HQ 29 Gp IA HQ • 61 Fd Sqn (EOD) • 621 EOD Sqn RLC • Search backfill from 23 Engr Regt (Air Asslt), 6 HQ Sqn (22 Engr Regt), 12 (Air Sp) Engr Gp with 23 Pnr Regt RLC • WIS and ECM Elms

RE CAPABILITY

- Enhancements to operational equipment continue to be developed. The successful **TALISMAN** route proving and clearance system is being upgraded by the addition of a DETECT and FLAIL system on a remotely operated chassis.
- **C-Vehicle Private Finance Initiative**. A number of replacement fleets including Medium and Self Loading Dump Trucks as well as well drilling and LWT/MWT will be fielded in 2011.
- **Boats**. The ageing Rigid Raider craft Mk III is increasingly difficult to support and will be withdrawn from service in 2011; the capability will be gapped for several years until a replacement can be delivered.
- **TROJAN and TITAN** (Engineer Tanks). These vehicles have proven to be a step change in mobility, protection and obstacle breaching. TROJAN has been used successfully on operations in Afghanistan and has breached IED belts and forced entry into compounds.
- **TERRIER** (son of CET). The replacement for CET is an urgently required one. TERRIER offers a well-protected, rapidly mobile successor and is currently undergoing demanding trials in the SE England.
- **Tactical Bases**. In future, all tactical infrastructure bases will be delivered as *integrated capability platforms*. This will include combat power, surveillance, generators, protective structures and living accommodation.
- **Electrical Power**. The safe use of electrical power on operations is challenging but no less necessary. A mechanism for stronger governance has been established in theatre and all arms courses are being developed.
- **Explosive Ordnance Disposal**. The Land Forces EOD and Search Branch was established in HQ EinC(A) in 2010 with the aim of providing a single focus for all policy, direction and inspectorate responsibilities. The team of 8 was fully operational by Jul 10. The original intent has been exceeded and the Corps now fields the one-star *Defeat the Device* lead for C-IED search.
- **Geographic Support**. Engineer geographic capability continues to provide Joint Force Engineer Group (in Afghanistan) full support. Work is on-going in the UK to rebase 42 Engineer Regiment (Geo) to RAF Wyton. The Royal School of Military Survey is likely to move to Chicksands in 2013 thus ending the long-standing military relationship with Hermitage.
- **RSME Update**. The RSME has changed significantly over the past year with the HOLDFAST contract securely bedded in. Courses have been redesigned and are now quicker and more efficient. Whilst RSME has focused largely on the Afghanistan campaign, it remains committed to longer term training and being appropriately placed to meet the challenges of the next campaign wherever that might be.

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS ROYAL ENGINEERS (CHATHAM)

- **Corps Activities.** The Corps Memorial Weekend was a great success and consolidated Chatham as Home of the Corps – the Colonels Commandant at Home event and REA events across the weekend added the gloss to an impressive gathering.
- **Honours and Awards.** Senior awards to the Corps include a Knighthood to Lt Gen Sir David Bill and the award of CBE to Brig Chris Tickell.
 - **RE Museum, Library & Archive Staff.** Essential recruiting to support the funded projects and a credible return to the Heritage Lottery Fund for £2M has recommenced following successful recruitment of an MA qualified E-Band.
 - **The Fortifications Gallery.** The Museum was successful in its bid for minor lottery funding (46K) and this coupled with money raised from the 'Hold the Fort' raffle will allow work to begin, in earnest, in the coming months. In addition, the Museum courtyard's glazed vault is high enough to fit the Corps' V2 if reassembled and we await advice from the Science Museum and the RAF Museum on structural, cosmetic and transport issues.
 - **Grounds.** The installation of another 30m of high quality iron fencing funded by the Local Authority for the public perimeter is imminent. This leaves about 25% of the public perimeter to be addressed by MOD in future. The Museum will continue to lobby the Local Authority to improve the facilities and access directly in front of the Museum.
 - **Governance.** The Historic Dockyard lease has completed and the first rent has been paid. Work on the CSA awaits final estimates of estate management costs by REMLA.

CORPS SPORT – No change to the last Corps Update

S P F HARRIS
Col
Regt Col
Mil: 94661 2034

-