

**THE BLYTHE SAPPERS**  
**71<sup>ST</sup> MANAGEMENT MEETING**  
**1100hrs Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2013**  
**THE ARMY & NAVY CLUB, LONDON**

**Those Present:**

<b>Sapper Hooky Walker</b>	<b>Chairman</b>
<b>Sapper Bill Woodburn</b>	<b>Vice Chairman</b>
<b>Sapper Scott Robinson</b>	<b>Chairman Elect 2014</b>
<b>Sapper Charles Holman</b>	<b>Honorary Membership Secretary</b>
<b>Sapper David Hamilton</b>	<b>Honorary Auditor</b>
<b>Sapper Stuart Sinclair</b>	<b>Link Member to BS Council</b>
<b>Sapper John McLennan</b>	<b>Honorary Secretary</b>

1. **Item 1. Introduction.** Sapper Hooky Walker welcomed all those attending the meeting.
2. **Item 2. Apologies for Absence.** Apologies had been received from Sapper Stuart Sinclair.
3. **Item 3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting.** The Minutes of the 70<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Blythe Sappers Management Committee had been published on the BS website recently. The Minutes for 70<sup>th</sup> Meeting were signed.
4. **Item 4. Matters Arising.** There were no matters arising.
5. **Item 5. Handover of BS Honorary Secretary.** Sapper McLennan informed the meeting that the Handover of the Honorary Secretaries would be complete after this meeting and the following AGM. Sapper McLennan would complete the Minutes of each meeting and Sapper Bouwens would start the preparation for the Christmas Lunch on 4<sup>th</sup> Dec 13.
6. **Item 6 Finance**
  - a. The Hon Treasurer, Sapper Peter Clayton, gave his report which is attached at **Annex B**.
  - b. The Chairman asked Committee Members to give consideration for the Dec Meeting as to the Charities to which our annual donations could be made. Suggestions included those charities we assisted last year: Forces Children's Trust (£500), Army Widows Association (£1K), The Not Forgotten Association (1K). Sapper Hamilton suggested an additional charity The Kitchener Trust, an educational charity -- this was discussed and would be further discussed and to be finalised at the next meeting.
  - c. Sapper Holman said that 2016 will be the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the untimely death of Lord Kitchener and that it may be appropriate to make a donation in that year.

- d. Sapper McLennan expressed concern about the grant of £667 granted to TA soldiers for Ex Mount Manaslu. He thought this was in excess of the normal contribution made through the Days Pay Scheme.

6. **Item 6. Corps Report.** The Corps Secretary, Sapper Charles Holman provided a Corps Report.

**The Corps Report is attached at Annex A.**

7. **Item 7. Casualties Since Last Meeting**

**Deceased Sapper Mike Stancombe & Oliver Keef.**  
**Resigned Sapper Martin Coulson**

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

<b>Nomination</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Seconder</b>
Brigadier Jon Mullin	Sapper Gordon Lane	Sapper John McLennan
Colonel Damian McKeown	Sapper Jonathan Welch	Sapper Aiden Smyth
Major Richard Rees	Sapper Jonathan Welch	Sapper Aiden Smyth
Lt Col Mark Lancaster TD MP	Sapper Jonathan Welch	Sapper Stephen Hodder
Major (Retd) Nigel Snelling-Colyer	Sapper Fred Sheppard	Sapper Mark Hughes
Lt Col (Retd) Nick Elliot	Sapper Mark Ruddy	Sapper Mark Manns
Major General Carew Wilks	Sapper Idris Pearce	Sapper David Hamilton

**All Approved**

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

**Principal Guest Mr Anthony Stansfield**  
**Thames Valley Police & Crime Commissioner.**

**Total Number attending 100**  
**Number of Guests 29**  
**Those to Rise Sapper Ken Clunie**

10. **Any Other Business.**

- a. The outline of the AGM was discussed.  
b. Sapper David Hamilton raised the matter of Associate/Honorary Membership. This was discussed and reference was made to the Sinclair Report in which it is discouraged. Sapper Woodburn was sympathetic to the idea but asked for further consideration. Sapper Hamilton agreed to write a paper for consideration at the next meeting.

11. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING.** The next BS Management meeting will be on 4<sup>th</sup> Dec13 at 1100hrs which will be followed by the Christmas Lunch.

**Sapper Hooky Walker**  
*Chairman, The Blythe Sappers*



**Sapper John R McLennan**  
*Honorary Secretary*  
*The Blythe Sappers*

*Annex A*  
*BS Minutes*  
*Sept 13*

20 May 13

## **8 Force Engineer Brigade Report to the Corps June 2013 (Abridged)**

### **G3 OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY**

#### **OP HERRICK**

1. **Overview.** Afghanistan remains Defence's Main Effort and significant progress continues to be made by the ANSF (Afghan National Security Forces). As a result the UK has been able to cease mentoring at the Tolay (company) level. In 2013 mentoring at the Kandak (battalion) and District levels for the Afghan National Army and Police respectively will also cease. This will leave mentors solely at the Brigade and Province level by the end of 2013. The success of the ANSF in assuming the lead role in delivering security in Helmand province will allow, on current planning, British troop levels to reduce to around 5,200 by the end of 2013 as announced by the Prime Minister last December.

2. **Redeployment.** In parallel to Transition, Redeployment has now formally begun, with Reverse Supply Chain facilities in Camp Bastion complete and initial trial 'proof of principle' movements undertaken. It is planned to redeploy materiel by a combination of air, road, land and sea, and rail movement. By the end of 2014 the UK will have completed its combat role in Afghanistan, although there will still be a small residual presence to assist our Afghan partners. It is anticipated that Afghan, US and NATO plans for enduring operations will continue to mature this year, which will allow the UK to confirm its longer term commitment in detail, centred in Kabul at the Afghan National Army Officers' Academy and other key locations.

3. **Engr Wks Gp.** The Engr Wks Gp has begun to reduce as the Helmand Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) has also decreased in size. Afghan Assistant Supervisory Officers (ASOs) have started to replace the RE NCOs undertaking this role in overseeing contractor construction work, and UK ASO numbers will be reduced through 2013. The Infrastructure surges (Ops TETHYS (Irrigation), IODINE (Water), VESICA (Fuels), FARADAY (Power), CASTRA (FP) and EUNOMIA (ISP Oversight)) are now approaching their last iterations and are increasingly focussed on rationalising the UK infrastructure estate. As the UK looks towards longer term tasks in Kabul, so the Engr Wks Gp effort has also begun to switch with an increasing number of tasks outside of the Helmand Area of Operations.

4. **TFH Engr Gp and EOD&S TF.** The major C2 change in mid 2013 will be the merger of the Task Force Helmand (TFH) Engr Gp and the EOD&S TF during Op HERRICK 18. The remaining number of EOD&S teams and ANSF CIED mentors will form a single EOD&S Sqdn

within the Engr Gp. ANSF CIED capability development continues to progress and the ANSF now hold a significant number of Explosive Hazard Reduction Teams (EHRT) and IEDD teams across the various ANSF branches. This is a significant step forward in ANSF capability allowing for a reduction in the number of UK BRIMSTONE teams deployed. The reduction in overall troop numbers and bases will also result in there being a requirement for only one CS Engr Sqn in theatre by the end of 2013. Base Realignment and Closure/Transition (BRAC/T) has dominated the workload of the TFH Engr Gp during recent months, with UK bases in Helmand now reduced significantly. Those remaining are mainly the larger level 3 bases, which will be closed through the remainder of 2013 and into 2014. However, the recent emphasis on Force Protection has seen an additional Op CASTRA surge deploy and as the BRAC/T workload has reduced, the Force Protection workload has increased significantly implementing their recommendations. By the end of the year HQ TFH will relocate from Lashkar Gar to Bastion, including the HQ elements of TFH Engr Gp.

5. **RE Geo Sp Gp.** RE Geo elements within HQ TFH and JF Sp(A) will reduce and merge to form a single team at Camp Bastion during Op HERRICK 18. UK Geo elements within HQ RC(SW) will also reduce, with greater synergy across all elements within Camps Leatherneck and Bastion and investment in the Afghan Regional Corps Battle School (RCBS) for the continued training and development of the ANSF.

6. The Op HERRICK GeoViewer continues to provide access to 'live' data from the OVERTASK RE Intelligence Application (ORIENT) database, widely exploited by BGEs, Int Offrs and MSSTs.

7. **Slowed Tour Rotations.** As the Afghan Campaign draws to a close, there will be slowed tour rotations for some Force Elements, resulting in longer deployments of up to nine months. This is likely to include the TFH Engr Gp and some EOD&S elements. Further details such as the level of individual roulement within units are still being refined.

## **OTHER COMMITMENTS**

8. **Op VOCATE (Libya).** The UK remains committed to the development of the Libyan armed forces. 29 EOD&Search Gp will deploy a Short Term Training Team (STTT) and project manager in support the development of Libyan CIED and EOD&Search capabilities.

9. **Op VERDITER (Pakistan).** The Corps continues to support the delivery of CIED and EOD&Search development in Pakistan through the deployment of STTTs.

10. **Op NEWCOMBE (Mali).** The UK has assisted French, Ghanaian and Nigerian Forces to deploy into Mali using C17 aircraft, and provided ISTAR support. The Army has also deployed an Infantry Training Team as part of the longer term EU Training Mission to assist the Malian Armed Forces. 29 EOD&Search Gp supported these operations with Ammunition Technicians to inspect and consign ammunition for the follow on forces.

11. **Op BACKWELL (Somalia).** The Army continues to provide assistance to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) through a small team of military stabilisation, intelligence, communications and infrastructure specialists.

12. **Op TOSCA (Cyprus).** 28 Engr Regt will undertake Op TOSCA as the main deploying unit from Oct 13-Mar 14. The E1 RE commitment of five personnel continues to rotate between 1 (UK) Div and 3 (UK) Div Engr Gps (DEG).

13. **Op KIPION (Middle East).** Support provided to AIR assets across the Middle East region by 12 (Air Sp) Engr Gp. This area is likely to grow over the coming months with increasing emphasis on the Broader Middle East for both redeployment of materiel from Op HERRICK under Op CATALINA, and in support of the UK government strengthening of partnerships in the Middle East.

14. **Falkland Islands.** No change. The RE commitment is for a Maintenance Team of eleven personnel managed centrally by APC Glasgow.

15. **Kenya.** The Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP) in Kenya continues to be the focus for the Joint Force Enabling exercises (JFEES). More on the specifics can be found in the G7 element of this report.

16. **Upstream Capacity Building (UCB).** Multiple in-roads are being made into UCB through: the work of the DfID Liaison Officer providing subject matter advice and deployments to East Africa in support of DfID; ongoing MSSG deployments (including the planned deployment to Chile for Ex CIVIL BRIDGE 13B); 170 (Infra Sp) deployment to Sierra Leone on a well drilling task in support of IMATT; the support of charity organisations such as the Prince's Foundation where 12 (Air Sp) Gp recently deployed artisan tradesmen into the local community to assist in a charity project; and participation in overseas exercises such as Ex AJEYA WARRIOR, an Anglo/Indian exchange exercise supported by Infrastructure and EOD specialists.

17. **International Engagement.** The renewed emphasis on Defence Engagement and partnering has reinvigorated the relationship with our closest military partners. The established Bonds of Friendship between UK Sapper Regiments and their French equivalents is part of this and the relationships have been adjusted in line with A2020 roles. This area is expected to grow along with opportunities to strengthen bonds with France as well as the US and other countries such as Denmark, where we have built valuable relationships during operational deployments over the last 10 years.

## **G5**

18. **Knowledge Management.** A Corps Knowledge Management working group has been established to provide a forum for sharing best practice and 8 Bde guidance to RE unit info managers. This and the preservation of the Corps Back Brief beyond Op HERRICK are steps currently being taken towards ensuring that the Corps is a learning organisation.

19. **A2020.** The decision to delete sub-Units this year was a necessary evil that has put the Corps in a better place to weather the effects of Tranche 3 Redundancy. The Corps has already taken some significant steps to integrate the Reserve through Hybrid Regiments and wholly transferring the Wide Wet Gap crossing capability to the Reserves.

## **G7 Training Activity**

20. **Reserves.** Precursor activity to ensure the Reserves are integrated appropriately with their future Regular counterparts has occurred to pre-empt Reserve growth and maintain seed corn capabilities. Opportunities for Regular / Reserve collective training integration include

deployments of Sect to Tps on FTXs, JFEs and plant concentrations to BATUK, BATUS and Cyprus.

21. **Force Sp Construction Tasks.** The first RE Construction Working Group sat at the end of May 13 to deal specifically with the growth and maintenance of sufficient HFT Force Support Engineering training opportunity. It collated customer aspirations for military design and military construction that are of mutual training benefit and economic value to a range of customers (DTE, PJOBS, Sp Comd, BATUK, Charities and non-profit organisations). Forward programming design work for 2014 – 2016 and construction work for 2015 – 2017 will seek to generate up to 10 CT2 Joint Force Enabling Exercises (JFEs) per year.

22. **Ex LION STAR.** 71 Engr Regt and R Mon RE (M) deployed individuals to Cyprus to deliver the construction tasks funded for British Forces Cyprus.

## G1

23. **Army Redundancy Tranche 3 (T3).** The Army announced the Tranche 3 redundancy selections on 18 Jun 13. T3 has been designed to ensure it underpins the future structural integrity of the Army.

24. **Deaths.** The following members of the Corps have died since the last report:

Ser (a)	Ran k (b)	Name (c)	Unit (e)	Date of Death (f)	Remarks (g)
1	Spr	Richard Walker	28 Engr Regt	7 Jan 13	KIA – Insider attack shot by a member of the ANA
2	Cpl	Colin Clark	42 Engr Regt	31 Jan 13	Non Operational Death
3	SSgt	Gary Hill	101 Engr Regt	27 Mar 13	Non Operational Death
4	LCpl	G Coleman	22 Engr Regt	10 Apr 13	Non Operational Death
5	WO 2	John Marley	BATUK Nairobi	26 Apr 13	Non Operational Death
6	Spr	Josh Thomas	1 RSME	29 Apr 13	Non Operational Death

## G4 Engineer Logistics.

25. **Overview.** There has been significant progress into how the Corps conducts future engineer logistic business ranging from current operations to Joint Force Enabling Exercises (JFEE) and looking ahead to A2020 and the restructuring of Engineer Logistic Nodes within HQ & Sp Sqns. The main work strands are:

**a. Doctrine.** Starting with the development of the Engineer Logistic Concept of Operations and Concept of Employment, a review of doctrine is underway. Engineer Logistic Guidance Notes (ELGNs) have been produced and published. ELGNs have replaced Engineer Logistic Policy Statements (ELPS)

**b. Personnel.** There is a manning shortfall at Engineer Logistic JNCO level. To date there are insufficient Logistic Specialists qualified for promotion to Lance corporal. This is being addressed through the provision of more PNCO Cadre places.

**c. Equipment.** With the return to 'Contingency', it has been identified that current operational stocks may not be fit for future requirements. Engineer units, currently held at readiness, are in the process of identifying tasks that they will be required to or are likely to achieve on various types of deployment. Once all tasks have been ratified by this HQ, Special Purpose Operational Stocks (SPOS) will be generated and endorsed at the agreed level of readiness for future deployments.

## **Financial report as at 25 September 2013**

**Computer purchase:** As directed, a laptop an ASUS V550CA-CJ was purchased for the Honorary Secretary designate at a total cost of £558.99. This price includes £59 for the latest Microsoft Office 365 package.

**Derby Day Sweepstake:** The sweepstake was well supported with £830 of tickets being sold. The prize money paid was £300 which leaves a contribution to the main fund of £530.

**Guest Night 27 July:** The evening showed a slight profit of £47.75.

**Adv & CP Fund.** Three TA soldiers were granted a total of £2001 (£667 each) to enable them to participate in a REMEC expedition to climb Mount Manaslu (8,161m). The expedition dates are 16 Sep – 19 Oct 2013. The remaining balance held within Corps funds is £1825.40.

### **Financial summary:**

Cash at bank	£12,138.73
Lunch 25 Sept approx costs	£5,800
Available cash	£6,338.73

**Charities:** The charitable donations for 2013 are due.



P Clayton  
Hon Treasurer  
Blythe Sappers