MINUTES OF THE 43rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF THE ROYAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION
HELD IN LONDON ON SATURDAY 8th OCTOBER 2011

OPENING REMARKS

1. The Annual General Meeting was opened at 1600hrs by the President of the Association, General Sir Peter Wall KCB CBE ADC Gen, who welcomed all those present and thanked them for attending, especially those who had travelled long distances. He wanted to take stock of where the Corps is since the last meeting. It has been another busy year for both the Corps and the Association; they seem to go by faster and faster. The future heralds some significant change for the Army as a whole and this will have an impact on the future of the Corps. Although the Regular part of the Corps will be slightly smaller it will continue to play a significant part in the Army’s Order of Battle. Operations in Afghanistan and Libya have kept all elements of the Corps very busy throughout the year and the Corps is much appreciated by the Army as a whole. These campaigns have compounded the understanding of the importance of the REA especially in its benevolence role and the demand for this help goes back to the more senior veterans and also for those serving and recently injured. Tough times, but across the whole front of the Corp’s interests, serving and retired, fit and wounded and dependants, the REA can report that we are in good shape for whatever the future may present to us.

2. There were 53 members present including: 15 REA Trustees, 22 REA Branch Delegates and 16 walk-ins.

3. The President said that the papers had been circulated prior to the meeting and after the meeting he encouraged all delegates to disseminate the information throughout their branches.

4. Apologies. We received apologies of absence from the following REA Trustees: Colonel RMR Hunt, Lt Col R Murfin TD DL, Mr B Owens, Mr MJ Barry MM, and Mr G Littleford.

ITEM 1  TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE 42ND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

5. The Minutes of the 42nd Meeting had been circulated to all Branches.

6. Proposal: That the Minutes of the 42nd AGM be accepted.

   Proposed by: Lt Col (Retd) F Ford
   Seconded by: Lt Col (Retd) N Parmley
   Carried

   REA Trustee
   REA Trustee

7. The President signed the Minutes in confirmation.

ITEM 2  MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF 42ND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

8. There were no Matters Arising.

ITEM 3  TO RECEIVE THE COUNCIL’S 43rd REPORT TO THE AGM.
9. The President invited the Chairman REA Major General John Moore-Bick CBE DL to read out the Council’s 43rd Annual Report. The Chairman reported the REA Council and REA Management meetings throughout the year had been well prepared by Controller and Deputy and well attended by the Members. The report was produced to supplement the Annual Report and Financial Statement required by the Charity Commissioners and to meet the Association’s own internal requirements. The REA’s primary function is benevolence. We have dispersed over half a million pounds to those who have fallen on hard times and, sadly there is a trend showing an increase in marital breakups probably due to the level of separation incurred through the pace of operational tours. Those who have been seriously injured on operations may expect care and support from the State and where there is a need to enhance that support the Association is there to help when needed.

10. The REA gives donations to other major service charities to help them to assist Sappers and former Sappers in their differing charity roles. SSAFA Forces Help, Combat Stress, and ABF – The Soldiers Charity and others all contribute a great deal and we thank them and their caseworkers for their support.

11. The full text of the report is at Annex A to these Minutes.

12. Proposal: That Council’s 43rd Annual Report to the AGM should be accepted.
   Proposer: Mr J Briggs Peckham Branch
   Seconder: Maj (Retd) P Gill MBE JP Andover & Winchester Branch
   Carried

13. The Chairman REA thanked the Chairman REA Benevolence for his and his Committees work throughout the year.

ITEM 4 To receive the Trustees Annual Reports and Financial Statements for the REA for the period 1st January - 31st December 2010.

14. The Trustees Annual & Financial Reports 2010 had been circulated prior to the Meeting.

15. Controller REA, Lt Col (Retd) J McLennan was asked to read out the Honorary Treasurers report in his absence and explained the implications of the present financial situation to the REA. His full report is attached at Annex B.

   Proposer: Mr R Prosser REA Trustee
   Seconder: Brigadier I James OBE ADC REA Trustee
   Carried

ITEM 5 TO NOTE THE APPOINTMENT OF REEVES & CO LLP, CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS, AS REA AUDITORS FOR 2012

17. Proposal: To Note the Appointment of Reeves & Co LLP, REA Auditors 2012
   Proposer: Col M Gill MBE REA Trustee
   Seconder: Mr G Elliot Swindon Branch REA
   Carried

ITEM 6 APPOINTMENT OF REA HONORARY TREASURER FOR 2012

18. Colonel Roger Hunt to be re-appointed as REA Honorary Treasurer 2012.
Proposal: That Colonel R Hunt is appointed as Honorary Treasurer for 2012.

Proposed: Maj (Retd) B Wilks, REA Trustee
Seconded: Lt Col (Retd) F Ford, REA Trustee
Carried

The President thanked Colonel R Hunt for all that he has done as REA Honorary Treasurer over the year.

ITEM 7 VOTE OF THANKS TO MR HAROLD EVANS

Mr Harold Evans has been involved with the Families Event Committee for many years. His contribution to the organisation of each event from conception to fulfilment has been outstanding. Each event requires detailed planning, co-ordination of many coaches and outside visits and detailed liaison with the Holiday Camp proprietors. The REA has had its last Family Events and the Trustees wish to express their gratitude to Mr Evans for his support and endeavours over the years.

Proposal: To thank Mr Evans for his outstanding contribution to the REA Families Events

Proposer: Major General J Moore-Bick CBE DL, Chairman REA
Seconder: Mr G Scarborough, REA Medway Branch
Carried

ITEM 8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Next year’s AGM will take place at the Victory Services Club at 1600hrs Saturday 13th October 2012. The Annual Dinner will follow that evening and the following day will be “Sapper Sunday” at the Royal Hospital Chelsea.

ITEM 9 A PRESENTATION BY THE CORPS RSM - A Soldiers Perspective of the Corps and REA.

The Corps RSM, WO1 (CRSM) J Blaylock gave a short presentation, the substance of which is outlined here:

- A great privilege to speak to the REA AGM
- Corps – The Corps continues to deliver effect on operations. Our people continue to provide security in the provision of forts and roads (in that order) in the Helmand River Valley. High priorities in Population-centric Counter Insurgency Operations on Operation HERRICK. We contribute largely in a multinational effort in Afghanistan.
- In addition, Counter ID Task Force continues searching for the indiscriminate killer, that is, the Improvised Explosive Device. It is a sad fact that we have had four seriously injured personnel in the last three weeks, one officer and three sappers.
- A key for the future is ‘Agility’, and the Corps has proven to be extremely versatile despite the challenges of the re-structuring of the Future Force. It is important for the Corps to remain positive. This requires good Leadership, a Chain of Command function.
- Equipment – Continues to improve. Trojan delivers and is a dependable asset on Ops. Protected Mobility continues to develop and the ‘on the man’ equipment is excellent and
• Equipment – Continues to improve. Trojan delivers and is a dependable asset on Ops. Protected Mobility continues to develop and the ‘on the man’ equipment is excellent and continues to improve. Although there is much talk about the cost of equipment and the need for saving, rarely do we quantify the monetary value of a Sapper or a Soldier.

• People - He noted how modest, professional and positive all of the Officers and soldiers were that he had met whilst on visits and on operational. In the face of adversity, they remained, motivated, professional and more than capable. They are nothing short of extraordinary and we should be extremely proud. We ask an awful lot of our people and they continue to deliver. Our people are our most precious resource.

• Injured personnel - Headley Court is a great leveler, and our Sappers despite their injuries remain remarkably positive, achieving their personal goals along their road to recovery. They ask about the Corps and maintain a great interest in all aspects of the Cap Badge. Fostering the Corps’ links with Headley Court and Esprit-de-Corps is paramount.

• Benevolence. Attending the REA Benevolence Meeting, he was impressed with the scope and reach of the REA in their efforts regarding Benevolence and Hardship. He went to Headley Court with the Regt Col, hosting nine of our injured Sappers for dinner, it was a most successful evening and he thanked the Controller for arranging for the payment through the REA.

• Wider Community – The Corps RSM is interested in developing support to families, wives, partners and siblings of our injured. Some forward thinking is needed in regards to the needs of our service families. Understanding that the REA is very receptive to helping where there is a need.

November 2011

Lieutenant Colonel John McLennan
REA Controller & Secretary

October 2012

Chief Royal Engineer
President REA
REA COUNCIL REPORT
TO THE 43RD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING -- SATURDAY 8TH OCTOBER 2011

1. The REA is governed by the Deeds of Trust 1968 supplemented by the REA Rules 2009. Trustees of the REA are recommended to the Council after a thorough search for suitable candidates in the eleven REA Group areas and by ex-officio appointments for REA representation by the Chief Royal Engineer. On appointment each Trustee is given a standard Trustee briefing pack, undergoes an induction briefing and has the opportunity to attend Trustee briefing days where they are given updates on various matters on the running of their Association.

2. Trustees make and approve Association policy and delegate the day to day running to the Controller REA and his Staff through different committees for management, benevolence, recruiting and finance. At each Council meeting the Minutes of each of the delegated committees are reviewed recommending adjustments as necessary including detailed examination of the Risk Register. Council is content that all measures are in hand to minimise risk.

3. The delivery of benevolence is at the heart of what the REA does and the Association is structured in a way to ensure that this is done in a caring and efficient manner. Government initiatives over the past few years have increased the awareness of the general public and departments of state as to the availability of benevolence assistance for those who have served in the Corps and their dependents. There has been an increase in the number of applications of benevolence grants but not an increase in costs to the same degree. A trend that is not so welcome is that of the younger families separating as the strain of un-accompanied tours takes its toll and the REA is asked to help with the setting up of a new home for the mother and small children. This has resulted in less of a decline in applications than expected five or six years ago. Indeed, case numbers have slightly increased over the past five years. Full details are contained in the REA Annual Report and Financial Statements issued to all branches earlier this year and available on the Charity Commission website.

With the help of other charities like The Army Benevolent Fund – The Soldiers Charity and Help for Heroes, our seriously injured Sappers are now given extensive treatment and advice in the Personnel Recovery Centers as they negotiate their return to civilian life. It is important that the REA is there to help them in years to come. The REA, through the Corps RSM provides a pack of “useful items” when a Sapper is admitted to hospital as the result of an operational injury. Throughout is treatment and recovery period we have a number of offers for Rest & Recuperation include visits to London, tall ship sailing and go-karting. In addition, the REA Trustees recognised the need for Independent Financial Advice when the injured Sapper receives his compensation and a process for this advice is now in place.

4. The total cost of our benevolence charitable activities in 2010 was £578,047, and our Esprit de Corps activities were £42,008 which was about the same as 2009. There is no obvious trend at this stage but we can expect a decrease in our income over the coming years as the numbers in serving Corps decreases as the result of the Strategic Defence Review.
5. Effective “benevolence” requires many organisations in “partnership” to bring the help needed to the applicant. The REA relies on the volunteer caseworkers of SSAFA Forces Help and The Royal British Legion to act as our “eyes and ears”. They inform us of the requirements of the applicant and help him or her complete the application form comprehensively and succinctly so the right type of financial assistance is accurately and speedily delivered. Our link with the Army Benevolent Fund – The Soldiers Charity is also important as it contributes to the homes and other military charities that our family of Sappers is connected to including such organisations as BLESMA and St Dunstan’s and Combat Stress. The ABF also continues to control the “ring fenced funds” set up following the comparatively recent operations in the South Atlantic, Northern Ireland, the Gulf and Afghanistan. The REA Council continue to support the ABF with an annual grant of £35K and SSAFA Forces Help, £7.5K with grants to help them in their work. We are also now making a grant on an annual basis of £2,500 pa to Combat Stress.

6. We would now like to give three examples of how we have helped those who have fallen on hard times and how the REA helped them:

**Case A: Miss Lauren McLiesh.** Lauren was six months old when her father LCpl Christopher McLeish died in 1996 in Bosnia. Shortly after this tragic event her mother also died and the Corps has taken on the responsibility of her education whilst she is looked after by her grandmother. Lauren is at present in a private school in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne Church High School and her reports show that she is bright, hardworking and diligent in her studies. She is developing well and has written to the REA to thank the Trustees and Members for their financial support over the years. She received her Elizabeth’s Cross from the Chief Royal at the 2010 Corps Memorial Weekend. Her school fees come from the Kitchener Scholarship Fund that is administered by the REA Benevolence Committee with additional help from the ABF and TRBL (Ladies Section).

**Case B:** Cpl “J” served from 1986-2011 in both the Gulf and Bosnia. He left the Army this year to pursue a two year course in Bio-Degradable Technology at a college in Dundee. Mr & Mrs “J” live in a their home with their 17 year-old daughter Leah who has been severely handicapped from birth. She is continually fitting and was unable to do anything for herself and had to be fed by a nasogastric tube. There was a need for financial assistance towards the costs of night care to enable the parents to have a modest break. The costs of the night care was £230 per night. The REA (£4,600) and ABF (£5,000) contributed to the costs of night care for a period of six months. Very sadly Leah died in May 2011.

**Case C:** Mrs Evelyn Belletti, 86. Her husband’s service North Bengal Mounted Rifles, India Army & Royal Engineers rising to the rank of Major. He served in India, East Pakistan and Burma and later worked in Kenya. They moved to France in 1991 to convert a barn into a home and he passed away in February 2011 aged 96 after having been bed-ridden for 18 months. Mrs Belletti is struggling to pay her bills since the death of her husband and still has outstanding bills but she wishes to stay in her house for as long as possible. The REA benevolence committee authorised a weekly allowance of £15pw and a grant of £400 towards general expenses through the Officer’s Association. The Burma Star Association and Elizabeth Finn Care also contributed.
7. The REA Council wish to record their gratitude and appreciation to all these organisations and to the volunteers who act as caseworkers and fund raisers in a combined “partnership” for the benefit of all those in need in our Corps family. Caseworkers for all these charities are always required and volunteers warmly welcomed.

8. **Branch Changes.**

a. **Branches:** Approval was given for the transfer of the Malvern Branch from South Midlands Gp to the South Wales Group.

9. **Badges of Merit 2011.** We are pleased to announce the award of Badges of Merit to the following:

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<th>Name</th>
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<td>Mr R Prosser</td>
<td>Airborne Engineers</td>
<td>North East</td>
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<td>Mr M Payne</td>
<td>Reading &amp; West Berkshire</td>
<td>Central Southern</td>
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<td>Mr R Atkins</td>
<td>Andover &amp; Winchester</td>
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<td>Mr N Hardisty</td>
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<td>Mr K Evans</td>
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<td>Mr F Saunders</td>
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10. **Recruiting** The Committee continues to review ways of exposing the work of the REA to serving Members and marketing the activities of the REA with the aim of attracting more members to each of the branches. New Membership applications average about thirty per month but this is offset by the overall number of those who die leaving a modest increase. The poster campaign highlighting esprit de corps has continued.

**Reunions & Family Events**

11. **Re-unions.** The Association reunions have again been a great success and I wish to give you brief details on them:

a. **Chilwell.** 170 Group hosted the first and a most successful Chilwell weekend for which the REA was most grateful. Almost 200 attended with families that included visits and a formal Dinner in the WOs & Sgts Mess.

b. **Minley.** The REA Minley weekend is always very popular and, even with a very busy in-barrack building programme in progress, this year was no exception. 3 RSME Regt were excellent hosts and we are most grateful for the support and hospitality the REA received. The Veterans Weekend was the first function to be held in the new WO’s and Sgt’s Mess and was superbly organised. The Weekend was packed with activities and the military demonstrations at Hawley Hard provided by 55 and 57 Trg Sqns and 63 HQ & Trg Sp Sqn were
most impressive. The Weekend finished on the Sunday with the traditional Drumhead service which was supported by 21 REA Branch Standards. This was followed by lunch in the mess; a most enjoyable way to end a great weekend.

c. **Chatham 2011 -- Corps Memorial Weekend**. (to be confirmed after the event).

d. **Family Events.** Mr Harold Evans and his team organised an excellent spring reunion week at Southdowns Holiday Village near Chichester. Almost 200 members, families and friends attended and it was regarded as being a great success. These events were always well organised with outings and entertainment as part of the package. Attendance at the reunions was falling whilst costs increased. The REA were most grateful to the Families Events Organisation for all their hard work but is with great regret that this was the last of the Family Events.

12. **Corps Memorial Book Website.** This is in conjunction with “Friends & Relations” and allows friends and families to add comments and reflections to those who have passed away. Since its conception it has proven to be a most popular development and currently we are dealing with some 20 new entries per month. In addition to the new entries, each month we are also dealing with some 30 to 40 tributes to those already listed in the Corps Memorial Book. There are currently some 2100 entries in the Book.