

PRESIDENT
Major (Rtd) T Dady
10 Vicarage Close
Halling
Kent
ME2 1BH
01634 244340
Trevordady@talktalk.net

CHAIRMAN
Mr R J Hill
6 Smith Road
Chatham
Kent
ME5 8DR
01634 201570
royhill@talktalk.net

SECRETARY
Mr G T Smith
146 Broadway
Gillingham
Kent
ME8 6DT
01634 263099

TREASURER
Mr S Jerome
88 Cavell Way
Sittingbourne
Kent
ME10 1BN
01795 553636

Website www.rtra-medway-branch.org.uk

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1. Greetings to you all. The Summer warmth seems so far away now and I suppose that the only thing to do is to look forward to the Spring. We have had a very busy few months with lots of 'ups and downs'. We sadly lost 3 of our ranks to The Green Fields over recent months. On September 5th Trevor and Roy attended the funeral, at the Barham Crematorium, of one of the Medway branches founder members. Major 'Stan' Holloway served in the Indian Army before rejoining into the RTR. Failing health prevented 'Stan' from attending the branch for many years. The branch Standard was lowered in salute.

Neville Hargreaves had been suffering the traumas of Leukaemia and all the associated illnesses for a long time and finally lost the battle in October, just a week short of his 80th birthday. The branch turned out in force to say 'Farewell' to a dear friend at Bobbing Crematorium. 20 members formed a Guard of Honour at the doors of the chapel and tributes were paid by family and friends, to a full congregation. The branch standard was lowered in salute. Neville was a very popular branch member and will be sorely missed by us all.

On the November meeting, where we held a minutes silence for Neville, we also learnt of the passing to The Green Fields of Dave Rogers. Dave and Cheri had been living in France for several years and we seemed to have lost contact. It was only when Dave's son called a member of the branch did we learn of his passing on in the Spring. He had been suffering the effects of Altsheimers. Cheri is also suffering from the same dreadful condition and is, at present, in a French nursing home. We have no details of Dave's service except that he served in 1RTR in Korea and was something of a boxer. Obituaries for Stan Holloway and Neville Hargreaves will appear in TANK later in the year.

May all those who have gone to The Green Fields rest in peace.

A number of the branch members including our President Trevor, have been under the weather since the last newsletter. We must not forget that some of our Ladies have also been unwell. Come on Ladies, we need you! We sincerely hope that you all get back to full health soon.

2. 'Cavalier' was present at 'The War and Peace Show' in Folkestone again in July. We had a good site and business was quite brisk. Several members of the branch dropped in for a chat and a cuppa. Dick and Ray, who took over from Trevor and Roy for the second shift, experienced a heavy storm on the Friday evening. Due to good preparation and planning, everything came through without damage!

Military Odyssey, on the other hand, was not as good. Our allocated site was well off of the beaten track and therefore business was very quiet. Crew morale was lifted to great heights with the culinary expertise shown by our resident Masterchef, Dick Gash. Rumours that 'Cavalier' is to be re-

named DICK'S DINER' are false! We survived another storm which slightly dampened our spirits but we did eat well.. Well done, Dick.

Combined Op's was, as ever, a terrific show. Great weather and a steady flow of visitors made for a great weekend and look forward to a repeat performance next year.

The Regimental Amalgamation was a bitter-sweet experience for all those who served in the RTR. The parade in Bulford was very well planned and executed and as the Challengers thundered past, there was more than one 'old sweat' with a tear in his eye! A video of the days events was made available before we all departed. It was not of the standard expected and we subsequently discovered that the official video will be available in due course.

A branch detachment made the annual visit to Thetford to pay homage to The Desert Rats. As ever, it was a great opportunity for a day out and to meet some old friends. Trevor and Roy had a day out in Ashford, at the invitation of Ashford council, to commemorate the start of WW1. We were introduced to an interesting Australian chap who was building a replica IV tank back in Oz. He stayed with us throughout the day. A short Service at the WW1 tank in the town centre followed by lunch and a some liquid refreshment supplied by an old friend of Roy's made for an excellent day. A visit to the museum and more that one cup of tea rounded off the day nicely. We are in negotiations with Ashford Council to organise something to celebrate 100 years since the first tank battle in 1916.

In early September, several members were seen to be entering The Houses of Parliament for a visit organised by Trevor and 'The Old Boys' Network.' It is truly magnificent building both inside and outside. It gave us an insight into what our MPs do (or don't do) and the conditions in which they have to do it, (or not do it!).

Another day out was spent in Chatham Dockyard, on September 22nd to commemorate the loss of 3 British ships in 1914. Good organisation, good weather, and plenty of tea and grub made it a great day out.

We were invited, by the RBL, to attend the official beginning of the 2014 Poppy Appeal. As it happened, Roy was the only one available and he spent the day, with the branch Standard, in total confusion, courtesy of the RBL and the RAF who 'organised' the event.

As I write, we are in the 'silly season' with one party or occasion closely following another. As we have done for a few years, we paraded in Sittingbourne for Remembrance Day. The parade took a different format this year and is thought to be a bit down on numbers. Steve carried the Standard. Following the parade, we went to Bernard's grave to pay our respects before having some very welcome refreshments at Bill and Audrey's. The annual pilgrimage to the Cenotaph in Whitehall saw a much depleted parade. It leads one to contemplate as to how much longer the Met Police will allow us to parade.

The branch Cambrai Dinner was held in the Abbey Hotel on the Isle of Sheppey on 21st November. Andy Hyland's organising skills leave nothing to be desired and a great evening was had by all. Well done, Andy.

The Desert Rats parade at Orwell School took place again on November 18th. Steve carried the Standard and a Poppy wreath was laid. It was a much smaller event than usual but we were all made extremely welcome by the school principal, staff and pupils. The Principal is keen that the event should continue.

3. As far as forthcoming events are concerned, the branch Christmas Dinner is scheduled for 20th December at the Abbey again. As we don't have exclusive access to the room, the branch Christmas Draw will take place on the December meeting

4. For all those members who don't suffer from Techno-phobia, you will be pleased to know that Medway branch now has its own Facebook page! I understand that to gain access to this modern form of communication, one needs a 'smart phone' and a 7 year-old to explain, in words on one syllable, what to do! What ever happened to just talking to one-another or writing a letter?

5. Medway branch continues to thrive and financially we are sound. We always have a full calendar but, sadly, it is normally the same faces which appear at events. We appear to be happy at The King Charles Hotel in Brompton. It would make things even better if members who we haven't seen for some time came back. Believe me you will be made most welcome. Come on chaps maintain support for YOUR branch!

6. We recently received a letter from the Regimental C.O. Lt Col. Nick Cowey MBE RTR, explaining that he was very keen to re-connect the link between the Regiment and the Association

branches which has become strained over recent years. He has instructed his Squadron Leaders to make contact with each branch. Medway branch have been assigned to Major Chris Rimmer, OC Badger. He is investigating an event for all Association branches in 2016. I have written to Major Rimmer to introduce Medway branch and to discuss ideas.

7. If all goes according to plan, a Forecast of Events for 2015 is attached. It looks a bit 'thin on the ground' at the moment. We still have several event dates to be discussed and confirmed.

It just remains for me to wish you all a merry and relaxing Christmas closely followed by a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Fear Naught
RJH