



ArmsNews

Issue 15a The Newsletter of the ARMOURERS' ASSOCIATION 2008

President: Mr. E. D. Stratford

Chairman: Mr. A Briscoe

Vice Chairman Mr. N. Brown

Secretary: Mr. C. Dennis

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The main purpose of this supplementary ArmsNews is to afford the new Chairman, 'Eric' Briscoe (SEME 1985) the opportunity to introduce himself and his ideas for our future.

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A LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Armourers' Association,

Please allow me to introduce myself, Andrew (Eric) Briscoe, your new Chairman. Following a successful coup at the reunion dinner on 6th September, I have been voted in as your chairman until further notice.

My background is that I went through Bordon in 1985/6 on 102 Basic Armourer; some years later in 1989 I returned to Bordon for 111 Armourer Upgrader. I then managed to steer clear of Bordon until being sentenced to 104 Artificer Weapons from 1996-8. I served in Northern Ireland, the Falklands, Cyprus,

Bosnia, Germany and had the dubious honour of invading Iraq in 2003. I retired after 22 years service in January 2007 and now I work for a Hereford-based company providing project support to the MOD.

For those of you not at the dinner, I now wish to outline my hopes for the Association over the coming year.

Firstly I believe it is time that the Association moved into the 21st and gained a presence on the World Wide Web. Karl Hamilton-Cox has agreed to build a website for us at no cost other than the unavoidable hosting charge, which would be in the region of £60 per annum. The website can be found at www.ukarmourers.org.uk; further details are in the newsletter.

Secondly it is my aim that ArmsNews be delivered electronically as an email attachment to all serving Armourers by distributing it on DM, the MoD's internal email system. To do this we need an accurate email address list and a couple of members; Gary Holden and Phil Harley have agreed to help with this.

My third objective to hold an additional function to run in parallel with the reunion dinner. My ideas for this spring fling are to have a day out at a venue of interest to Armourers serving and retired. The day out would then be followed by a meal at a local hostelry. Initial suggestions include:

- A visit to the SASC Weapon Collection at Warminster. This *may* include an opportunity to fire some of the weapons.
- A trip to the Defence Academy at Shrivenham. The weapons here of a technologically significant design.
- The Pattern Room in the Royal Armouries at Leeds. Formerly in Enfield, the Pattern Room should need no introduction.
- The BBC/Pinewood Studios props department. Armourers are credited in many productions, there's 4 listed in "Lethal Weapon" and I met one from "Blackhawk Down" at the reunion in 2000. A potentially interesting day looking at the none-lethal side of the trade.
- A visit to one of the Police Firearms schools; such as the ones run by our Vice-chairman and Secretary.

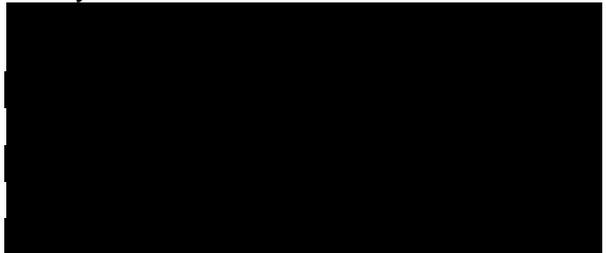
I am thankful to **Peter Laidler (Carlisle 63A)** for offering the opportunity to go to the SASC Museum. This event will be on 4th April 2009; full details and a booking form are in the newsletter.

I hope that you will support the events laid on. If more members attend then we will run more events. If anyone has any

ideas or wishes to contact me about anything to do with the Association then please get in touch. My contact details are below.

The reunion dinner will remain for the foreseeable future as the first Saturday of September at the Victory Services Club. Next year's dinner has already been booked for 5th September 2009, bar opens at 5.30pm (that's 1730hrs for those still serving!).

See you there!



Email: chairman@ukarmourers.org.uk

The following are a list of the ideas, some of which are already well into the planning stage

After-Dinner Speaker

It has been suggested that we have an after-dinner speaker at the annual reunion dinner. If anyone has any suggestions for whom might fill this role please forward them to the Chairman or Secretary.

Spring Fling 09 - Saturday 4th April 2009 - SASC Weapon Collection, Warminster.

The first function of the year will be a trip to the SASC Weapon Collection at School of Infantry in Warminster. Peter Laidler has kindly offered to make this

collection available to us to view for the afternoon. Those wishing to attend please submit the attached return or send an email to the Secretary.

Full details are yet to be confirmed but the only way you'll know is to send a return.

Address Database

The membership details of the Association have until now been held on a card index by the Secretary. This database will shortly be transferred to an electronic searchable format - a Microsoft Access© file for those that know.

As soon as the members details are stored electronically they become subject to the strictures of the Data Protection Act. Members who do not wish to be stored on a computer please contact the Chairman.

Members can be reassured that Chairman considers the privacy of Members with utmost respect and will take far greater care of it than the Government or any of its contractors. The database will NOT be made available to third parties.

Should any member wish to arrange their own local reunion, the Chairman will be happy to supply details of member in that area.

Best Craftsman & Best Upgrader

It has been suggested that the association sponsor the Best Craftsman from the all Armourer Initial courses and the best Class 1 student from the

Upgrader courses run within DCEME to the Reunion Dinner.

The Craftsman would have his dinner & accommodation at the VSC paid for by the Association (approx £80) while the Upgrader would have his dinner (£30) paid for by association.

The benefit of this measure is that it would introduce new blood to the Association and help spread the word of the existence of the Association and its benefits. Also there is the possibility that those attending for free would bring some of their colleagues. This would further introduce the Association to new members and *vice versa*.

Suitable advertising materials would be placed in the relevant Trade Wing at DCEME. We would also have to obtain the details of the best student; the Chairman will do this.

'Armourers at work' pictures appeal

At the dinner, Karl Hamilton-Cox gave a briefing on a proposal he has for Association members for a series of exclusive limited edition prints. The print run would be limited to 99 signed and numbered prints. The aim is to depict Armourers at their trade from any conflict or situation that would reflect the dedication and conditions we have had to or continue to work under. We need source material (digital or hard copy) from association members who own the original photograph and are willing to allow it to be used as artists reference material in return for an Artists Proof print if selected for use. Cost to the Association would be nil. Prints will be very affordable but will be made to the latest Fine Arts Guild standards.

Karl's current work can be seen at www.bespokemodels.com

Armourers' Association Website

It was agreed by the members at the dinner that a website is needed and a number of members offered to help in its creation and update.

The Domain Name:

www.ukarmourers.org.uk

has been secured and Karl Hamilton-Cox is pricing the hosting of the website by 1&1. The content would be very much up to members but we will have 12 pages to populate so suggestions are welcome, the following have been suggested thus far:

- Homepage
- Presidents page
- Secretary's page of Rules, events, news etc.
- BLOG: for one of our serving members to give us a web-sanitised diary.
- Picture gallery
- Roll of Honour
- Links: to sites of interest
- Shop
- Pull up a sandbag - stories from the past

We aim to enable members, for a modest fee to help self-finance the website, an email address such as ericbriscoe@ukarmourers.org.uk. By paying a modest once-only fee (£1) has been suggested the website would be self-financing and impose no burden on Association funds.

Costs:

1&1 costs £5.89 per month (£70 per year) to host the website. See <http://order.1and1.co.uk>

Please keep checking back to the site; we hope to have information up on it shortly.

OBITUARIES

It is with great sadness that we have learnt of the passing of the following Armourers since the publishing of the last newsletter.

Reg Dargan	Hilsea 1928	230808
Ron 'Ginger' Ely	Hilsea 1936	April 08
Ken Reed	Arborfield 43	2008
Jason 'Jay' Barnes	SEME 2001	220708
Fred Westphal	Hon. Member	2008

Reg Dargan: Reg was our senior member, aged 94 when he passed away. He joined as a Boy Armourer aged 14 in 1928 at Hilsea. In a long and varied career, including responsibility for all troops had adequate weapons prior to D-Day, he was commissioned and went on to serve in Singapore. He retired in the early 60's. **Mike Homard** was able to represent us at his cremation and lay a wreath on our behalf.

Jason Stuart Barnes: 'Jay' was serving with 2 Para in Kajaki, Helmand province, Afghanistan when he was Killed in Action on 22 July 2008. Jay was driving a Vector Ambulance having just assisted in the successful evacuation of a casualty when on its return to base it was hit by an Improvised Explosive Device. Despite the very best medical efforts at the scene Jay died a few minutes later.

For further details and tributes to Jay go to:
[www.mod.uk/defenceinternet/defencenews/militaryoperations/corporalia\\$onstuartbameskilledinaction](http://www.mod.uk/defenceinternet/defencenews/militaryoperations/corporalia$onstuartbameskilledinaction)

SECRETARIES NOTES

Balance Sheet: My thanks to those of you who noted the error on the last Balance Sheet (Blessings on those of you who noticed and chose not to point it out). This is based on incompetence on my part rather than any nefarious dealings. I will put the figures right and endeavour to do better in the future.

Contact: To any of you who are awaiting some sort of response from me please do not hesitate to give me a sharp reminder of what you requested of me. (*See previous paragraph for summary of secretary's skills*)

Association Rules: An up dated set of Association Rules have been drafted, once ratified by the committee these will be published on the website and available in hard copy to anyone who requests them.

REUNION 2009

As already mentioned the 2009 Reunion will once again be held at the Victory Services Club on 5th **SEPTEMBER 2009**

I have written to the VSC to seek clarification over the issue of accommodation for those attending functions and hope to have it sorted out by the time the next ArmsNews is published

Spring Fling 09 - SATURDAY 4th APRIL 2009 - SASC Weapon Collection Warminster.

This return is to get a feel for how much interest is there for this visit. The weekend in question is the one before Easter; you'll be waking up on Palm Sunday! It is likely to be the first weekend of the school holidays in many LEA areas and for those Units going on 2 weeks block leave it will be the first weekend of that leave.

The venue for the social gathering is yet to be confirmed but will probably be within the confines of the School of Infantry; full details will be promulgated by the end of February 2009. Details will be displayed for all to see on the website; they will also be posted to those who submit a positive return

It is not likely that accommodation will be available within the camp however the Warminster Travelodge, about a mile away, currently has rooms available for £29 per room on 4th April 09.

Yes I'm interested in visiting the home of the SASC and looking at their weapons.

Name _____

Address

Telephone: ,

Email:

/ work at _____ and I'd like to host a gathering of the Armourers' Association at: _____

Please submit all returns to the Secretary:



Or

Willow18@tiscali.co.uk