

## **Ian Loftus**

### **Vice Chairman – The Armourers' Association**

I was born in 1955 into a military family, my father was a serving Artificer Armaments REME and my uncle at the time was a Gun Fitter REME, who also went onto become an Artificer. They both served in the Corps; my father served from 1942 – 1977 and my uncle from 1952 – 1978. Both being commissioned.

I joined the Army in 1971 serving until 1987 finishing as an Armourer Sergeant, I did not follow my father or uncle down the Artificer route. My nephew also served in the Corps also as an Armourer and then onto Artificer Weapons. He did serve at two units I had previously served with during my time, finding FORWARD cards with my name on them.

I served in many different locations and types of units in my time. My most memorable was being posted to 22 SAS Regiment as attached personnel in May 1979 and being with them when Operation Nimrod occurred in 1980. Without doubt in my opinion one of the best postings an Armourer could ever have.

During my career I served with Royal Signals, Household Cavalry (Windsor) also a number of other RAC Regiments, including the RAC Training Regiment, Special Forces, Royal Artillery, Infantry and RCT units. I was very lucky that at no time did I serve at a large REME Workshop, kept well clear of those. I spent time at Verden, Pergamos and Episkopi (Cyprus) Armd Car Sqn for 2 years this being 4 months after the Turkish invasion. Windsor, Catterick, Hereford, Dortmund, Saffron Walden, Osnabruck, Munster.

Whilst serving with the 1st Queens Dragoon Guards I deployed with C Squadron as the first British contingent of the Multi National Peacekeeping Force in Beirut, Lebanon on Op Hyperion for 6 months. Interesting to say the least with an Armoured and Infantry unit of the Israeli Defence Force camped directly opposite us.

On leaving the Army in 1987 I joined HM Prison Service and served through to 2003 at Category A establishments.

From there to Kent Police and subsequently Stagecoach UK Bus from driver through to Operations Manager retiring at 66 in August 2021.

I fill my retirement time going to watch Harlequins Rugby club as a season ticket holder, Oval Invincibles Cricket, walking with Ramblers and cinema and the theatre.

I am also a Coastguard Rescue Officer with HM Coastguard and the Deputy Station Officer for Langdon Battery Coastguard Rescue Team based at the Maritime Rescue Co-Ordination Centre above Dover Eastern Docks.

I now live in the closest village in the UK to France between Dover and Deal.