

## **RAOC/REME JUNIOR LEADERS!**

**By  
CAPTAIN JOHN K. HEAD  
1956 to 1963**

Having just joined and been so privileged, THIS VERY, VERY SPECIAL “BAND OF OLDE-BOY’S”. May I be permitted to throw in the odd “REMINDER OF YEARS PAST” ??

BE WARNED: Have a BRONZE MEDAL for being BORING!! But as years go by, it brings back so many happy {??} memories, BUT ABOVE ALL. To read how each one of YOU have progressed both in the Services and the “After-Life”. It was not all BAD [or was it?].

I would like to think, that, due to those experiences, training, and above all, the commitment and dedication of all P/Staff [don’t forget the Educators!] each has made you what you are now [GOD HELP US!! If we failed...but did our best].

With the Caveat, as years go by, the Memory tends to become a trifle clouded! Names, some, have been lodged in ... somewhere... but due to the above [I blame my many years service] some will be still/might recall some or other of the following:

### **RECRUIT HOUSE ?? 1956-58 [ish]**

1. Initial COLLECTION: BROOKWOOD, ASH VALE... ALDERSHOT [even!] STATIONS, unless delivered by NOK! [Social Services, .... Or Others!]
2. Deposited at THE SCHOOL [or whatever it was called at the time]. No matter how “TOUGH”, feeling Bl\*\*\*dy frightened!
3. Having been “delivered/abandoned”... Or whatever”, taken into this odd wooden hut, “INVITED” to “SIT and Stay Quiet”
4. Enter this strange person in uniform, with a BL\*\*DY Great BOXER DOG!
  - a. depending on the hour of arrival both the above could have been seated when the next “PERSON” arrived. By which time “PRU” [the Boxer Bitch] would have been fast asleep below the table! No doubt breaking wind... as of time she did!!
  - b. However, once a NEW BOY arrived, seated, “PRU” became all “soppy”, had an instinct for anyone feeling in need of a bit of “TLC”, and proceeded to snuggle up... and in almost every case, received a pat or two.
5. Contrary to Rumors, of which I have only recently been made aware, “PRU” was NOT trained to locate the illicit TOBACCO!!
  - a. I used her as an “Early Warning Device”. Enter dog... beware HEAD in on
  - b. the prow!! [Having had a pause reroute for an Ice Cream!!]. It then became
  - c. safe {??} for me to enter... ALL QUIET!
6. **FIRE!! [??]** Could have been either Recruit or Joslyn [both were my responsibility at the time].
7. Remember the layout of the old blocks?
  - a. Ground floor, Rooms to left and right, Quiet Room in the Centre.

- b. Buckets; Fire [Two Sand, one Water] in the entrance??
  - c. Up three steps to the Ablutions/Toilets!
  - d. Then ascending to the upper floor, Quiet Room [occupied by a J/NCO] , Rooms left & right.
  - e. Well, to get back to this “event”. For whatever reason, perchance being very keen in those days... I entered the House... **OBSERVED, WITH HORROR... TWO PAIRS OF FEET in the same Toilet!!**
  - f. For those of gentle preposition, deflect eyes... In these days of PC... might be accepted... but then NO WAY!!
  - g. Thank goodness, I observed, SMOKE arising there from!! [Thinks hopefully, perchance, an illicit fag?]
  - h. Grabbed the Buckets; Fire, Water... and heaved into the “suspected conflagration... Results: Two Damp J/Ldrs.... [Be safe, I have no recall who you were... secrets safe]. But Oh, the language.. almost made me blush!! Then SHOCK HORROR... on the faces...!
  - i. Me, I recall saying words to the effect “Thought it was a Fire” and moved on!
8. Other reminders [very much for the more “Mature Old Boys”]
- a. The Assault Course” Built in 1957/8]  
Being “Invited” to climb up a tree [teams of three/four] and produce a Mess-tin of Tea... back on the ground?? Must have been produced at least 10 feet above ground, with limited/no help!
  - b. Being “Invited” to undertake almost impossible tasks, {Bodies, Live/Inert/, Supplies, Ammunition... almost everything which came to mind at the time... [All part of getting YOU J/Ldrs to work together, and for the P/Staff to start to identify FUTURE POTENTIAL].  
[All this became part of the future development... [TRADE SECRET].
9. **HAWLEY LAKE !!**  
[Wet, cold, most of the “EXERCIES” carried out at night!]
- a. Cutter Rowing- Night Battles/Races [some quite rough!]
  - b. Early morning SWIM... “ If you do not swim, now is a time to learn! JUMP... or be shafted with a Boat Hook!!” {NOTE: For the benefit of Health & Safety Experts... To the best of my knowledge NO ONE DROWNED... not too sure about any long-term effects... [BUT DO NOT SUE ME PLEASE!!] We did try to “COUNT THEM OUT AND BACK... BUT!!
10. **HOLIDAY/LEAVE/ JAUNTS & others!**  
With those “BOYS” [and P/Staff] who, for whatever reason, could not go home.
- a. Jomping, or otherwise, via YHA, in Scotland [must have been about 1956/7].
    - i. John DIFFIN,[ First J/RSM]. Bob Crickard and I going “FISHING” in the Loch. One [no names] having a weak Bladder, even in those days, required to... correct! But the OTHER caught a fish!! [me thinks might have been somewhat overcome by the sudden influx of Y NO WHAT!! And expired!!
  - b. Snowdon/ish] The “BOYS and P/Staff attended CHAPEL [unfortunately the Service was in WELSH!! ].

c. Recruiting Barge Trip – Round the Midlands!!

11. Self-contained/catering/cooking!! BARGE!!

- a. Complete with BUGULAR [HUCK- BODY!!], [played/blew or whatever: REVALEY/ LIGHTS OUT. and anything else which came to mind!] who, whilst not blowing his thing... acted as MY BATPERSON!! [Managed to “SLIGHTLY SINGE” my SD Jacket!!] Like ruddy great hole in the back!

12. “PLEASE SIR, IT WAS ON THE CHAIR AND I ONLY HAD ONE CUP OF TEA”.

- a. HADRIANS WALL –LEFT TO RIGHT

13. [CHRISTMAS/ NEW YEAR ?? 1959/60 ISH]

- a. “PRU” accompanied, got ever so slightly OTT on Newcastle Brown. Ale!! . [There is nothing quite like a BOXER with
- b. [HANGOVER]

14. ii. [WIND!! from all ends, even the ears!]

- i. Having crossed over the BORDER, come New Years Eve, entered a Local Hostelry... as one did in those days. “BOYS” bought raffle tickets.. and won.. BRACE OF PHEASANTS [or could have been Peasants.. we left before collecting the prize!].
- b. Upon reflection, could have been ??? ‘were you there??
- c. STONEHENGE –ROMAN ROADS TO CAMBERLEY-
  - i. Camped up [if you will forgive the expression] some 1.5 miles from Stonehenge. Once more, self contained, food, fodder, etc.
  - ii. Come about 23.15. the party departed to STONEHENGE!! [Ruddy dark!!... SPOOKY!}
  - iii. My mother, for whatever reason, had provided a CAKE, to be cut & consumed at MIDNIGHT!!
  - iv. As the PARTY approached [as one could in those days] the INNER CIRCLE... Single file ... Well disciplined!
  - v. A Strange Sound was heard.. [I jest not, was VERY ODD]
    1. Sort of “Whispering/ Wailing” sort of noise! No one else visible!! MAN THIS WAS SPOOKY!!
    2. The Party [if it could have recorded in those days] executed a VERY SMART EXIT!!

**HOUSE INSPECTIONS!!** Oh what joys they were!

- Bumpering the floor, Dusting [almost everywhere], kit layout [use of long piece of string to ensure everything was IN LINE throughout.
- Great competition between each House to get THE BEST AWARD, not quite sure what the prize was?

**JOSLIN** became the **FIRST HOUSE** to have a TV in the Quiet Room [+ points!], also, does anyone remember the Bedside Lockers, covered with colorful plastic, painted beds [multi colored?]. Again **JOSLIN** [more + points!!].

During my first stint was also appointed [if that is the correct term] **ADVENTURE TRAINING OFFICER!** [This was pre- Duke of Edinbro' Scheme]. According to "MAD JACK JJ" and others, Playing Boy Scouts!! BUT IT WORKED!!].... Or did it??

Introduced: **INITIATIVE EXERCISES**, whereby Boys could volunteer [yes... they did], to be given a task which involved them, usually solo, making their way at least 200 miles [from home, no way was this intended to be a Freeby] to bring back confirmation of their task.

This was worked in conjunction with the Schoolies, based on the worst subject. From memory, these included going to Jodderal Bank, [sound of the first Sputnik was picked up there]. The furthest was to PITLOCHRY to get details of the Salmon Leap.

Dress was Denims, Small Pack, ONE TIN OF CORNED BEEF [or could have been Cheese], Water Bottle, Biscuits, [hard tack].

NO Tin Opener!! NO MONEY!!

Chit stating words to the effect, that the bearer [Number, Rank Name] was taking part in an Official Exercise.

Was FORBIDDEN to 'thumb lifts', however may accept lifts when offered! Also included the School Telephone number!! Upon return a written report had to be submitted! We even sent letters of thanks to anyone who had been particularly helpful enroute!

Army Outward Bound School – Trausffiniad [or some such place in the wilderness of Wales!]. More jumping. CO was Jack Churchill, played the Bagpipes!! OH WHAT JOY?? To hear those RUDDY PIPES way [thank goodness, way out]... on the hills!!

BE WARNED!

IF ANY OF THAT VERY SPECIAL 'TEAM OF EX-BOYS' WISH TO KNOW [OR PERCHANCE NO LONGER WISHING TO BE REMIDED OF YEARS GONE BY]... HARD LUCK!!

MORE TO FOLLOW... BEEN THERE DID IT!! [And look where YOU are today!!].

Next VOLUME: Life in "A" Company... [From the OTHER SIDE OF THE FENCE!].

The following come to mind!! Might forget the year... but the memory [somewhere] recalls YOU!!

[1] VENABLES

[2] WIGHT [WIGET!!]

[3] BOND

[4] McHALE

[5] WEBSTER & BASSON

[6] FELLOWS

[7] HUSSEY

[8] MORE WILL FOLLOW... BE WARNED!!

[9] HEATH [with the Teeth!] [December 1963/ish] More of this later.

[10] CLAMP [REME] Acting Up-Paid J/CQMS!! [but ruddy good at his job!].

To ALL of YOU, please keep in touch with each other.

It would be wonderful if, some form of reunion could be arranged.

But alas, AGE [infirmity, loss of memory, [in my case] from driving, WIFE even] could inhibit such a gathering... BUT PLEASE keep in touch.

Should anyone wish to contact me!!

Delighted to hear from you... in spite of all that happened in yesteryear!

I forgive YOU!!

**Regards, best wishes... and Bloody Well Done ALL OF YOU!**

**MAJOR JOHN K. HEAD**  
**(JAKE)**