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 prowl!! [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 "SLIGHLY 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 BOARDER, 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 ÏN 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 – Trausffiniod [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)