This memory was donated by Bruce Spenser MSc MCIOB
Gordon House
September 1968 to March 1971

Looking back to how it all started...

I am in a position at the moment at looking back at my 60 years on this earth - I was raised in a children's home until I was 11 and then removed by a sadly schizophrenic Mother, thus the next 4 years of my life were a complete waste and I must say I was quite a disturbed dysfunctional boy when I enlisted. Post 15 I have had an extremely challenging and enjoyable life and on reflection this is due to the opportunity which was available to youngsters of all backgrounds then - the Junior Leaders! They took that dysfunctional, angry, disturbed young man and turned him into a soldier but more importantly gave me the life skills necessary to succeed.

I was a very lucky lad - Germany, Hong Kong, Aussie, New Zealand and Windsor - never a shot fired in anger (except the bars) and then a spell in America as I delved into civvy street. 8 or so years digging the tracks on London Transport and then I started my own construction business. I have always continued to educate myself and went to college to study brickwork and surveying, Spanish, professional exams and ended up with a Master's degree in Building Surveying which is my current profession.

Have a couple of houses; one in stoke Newington and one in Orkney - the Orkney one I renovated over a 10 year period by driving backwards and forwards from London - what fun!! 700 miles and I can do it in 10.5 hours - and I have only just got my first speeding summons!!

The only reason I left the army was because I was gay and I soon realised the limitations which my sexual orientation placed on my progression and myself in the army (first time I read the vetting manual or whatever it was called I thought, "Oh Fuck") - However this was probably a blessing in disguise as I was so, "army barmy" I probably would have suffered an early demise doing my job.

I now have been with my partner of over 30 years - he is the Principal Oboe of the Royal Opera House and a bit of a star - If you turn on the TV on Xmas day you will probably see him opening Don Quixote.

I think the most important lessons I have learnt over the last 60 years is to rise above the common fray (study group dynamics), ignore the bigots and don't fight them, shit happens - get over it, stay constantly motivated, never retire, music conquers demons and reinvigorates, love who you are and as many people as you can, friends are very precious

By Bruce Spenser MSc MCIOB
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