



ROYAL ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION LEWES BRANCH

Minutes of the Lewes Branch of the Royal Artillery Association Annual General Meeting – 29th January 2021 – Via Zoom Meeting Opened at 20:00

The Commemoration of The Gunners: Read by our Chairman Michael Hobden followed by a moments silence in Memory for the loss of Russell Simpson.

Members Present: Michael Hobden, Budge Harding, Mark Harding, Colin Kemp, Darryl Twinch, Lee Harding, Paul Hughes, David Collett, Peter Crowhurst, Jerry Docherty, Sean Kelly, Ray Metcalfe, Peter Marcantonio, Robbie Parker, Fred Rossington, John Shill, John Talmey and Peter Wyatt.

Apologies for Absence: Steve Winter, Mick Bird, Mark Eve, Des Foord, Peter Godding, Alan Mayers, Mick Norris, Simon Odey, Jim Talmey, Michael Taylor, Brian Walter and Steve White.

Chairman's Report: Michael Hobden welcomed Members to a very 'unusual' AGM and thanked Mark for setting this up. Michael also sent his best wishes to Des Foord, Budge Harding, Lee Harding, Jerry Docherty and Robbie Parker who are all recovering from various illnesses.

Michael also thanked Michael Taylor who has stepped down from our Committee for his help, assistance and insight during his time on our Committee.

Treasurer's Report: Colin Kemp confirmed that Mark had emailed/posted a copy of the Branch 2020 Accounts to all Members. Colin then read out our 2020 Accounts and explained throughout. The cash available in the bank as at today is £783.90. Colin also confirmed that these accounts have been provided to RAA HQ. There is £82.50 to be sent to RAA HQ with regards to our Annual SMO.

Colin thanks Lee for the set up and upkeep of our website and also thanked all Members for their support throughout 2020.

Welfare: Lee Harding updated all Members with regards to Members that have recently been ill over the last few months and sent his Best Wishes to Des Foord, Jerry Docherty, Robbie Parker, Budge Harding & Lee Harding. Lee also advised Members of the Loss of Russell Simpson on 28th December 2020. Lee confirmed that Peter Crowhurst had sent condolences to Russell's family on our behalf.

Secretaries Report:

1. Mark asked for any comments from the Members with regards to the Minutes for our Meeting held on 30th October 2020. With no comments advised, the Minutes were voted on and passed as correct with no comments. Proposed by Colin Kemp and seconded by Robbie Parker. Carried.
2. The Committee and Members were emailed prior to the AGM asking if any changes were to be made to the current Committee. All current Committee Members confirmed that they were happy to continue in their current role with no other Members advised of any volunteers.

The Committee therefore reads for 2021 as follows:

Chairman:	Michael Hobden	Vice Chairman:	David Harding
Treasurer:	Colin Kemp	Secretary:	Mark Harding
Welfare Officer:	Lee Harding	Standard Bearer:	Darryl Twinch
Committee of Four:	Darryl Twinch, Steve Winter, Paul Hughes and Alan South		

The Committee Members were voted in unanimously enblock - Carried.

3. Mark advise Members that the 2020 Branch Annual Returns had been sent to RAA HQ as they are now due.
4. Mark advised that if any Member would like to see a copy of current GAI's, RAA 2020 Accounts or Forecast of Events, please email Mark who will provide them.
5. **43 Bty Update:** *43 Bty are currently planning to re deploy in April this year to Cyprus, to conduct Watchkeeper flying, we will return in Sept 21, this is COVID dependant. As a Bty we are currently dispersed and only have those in work who are critically required.*

We are currently conducting virtual training and MATTS and also conducting our Physical training over Zoom Lessons.

The Bty Commander is currently deployed assisting a team in Wales with the pandemic.

6. **CWGC Update:** Email received from Sarah Nathaniel, Public Engagement Coordinator from The Commonwealth War Graves Commission:

Dear Mark, Happy New Year to you! Megan Maltby has forwarded your email correspondence regarding talks on to me. I am the new Public Engagement Coordinator for the South East and as such could certainly offer your group a talk if you were still interested.

I don't know what your situation is with lockdown, but we are able to offer talks virtually via Zoom.

If this is something you might be interested in, or have any other questions, please do not hesitate to contact me and I can send you further information.

Would Members please provide Mark with their feedback as to if we would like to receive a Zoom presentation from Sarah at the CWGC and he will arrange this.

7. Mark asked Members if we want to provisionally book a date for our 2021 Annual Dinner at The White Hart. It was agreed that Mark will contact The White Hart to see what the position is and revert back to Members.
8. Mark reminded Members of our Branch Scrapbook where we would like to build up with photos, cuttings etc.
9. Mark asked Member to please keep up to date with their emails as this is the main medium that we will use for updating Members. We also post various things on our Website and Facebook page.

AOB:

1. Mark advised Members that he had volunteered for the position of Regional Representative – Southern Region for the RAA. Mark advised that this in no way would jeopardise his position as Secretary of our Branch. This has not yet been confirmed by RAA HQ. Mark will update Members accordingly.
2. Colin asked Members if we could have an up-to-date Branch Photo. It was agreed that once we are able to meet, we will arrange this.
3. As per the updates sent to Mark from John Shill regarding Des Foord, John suggested that it would lift Des' spirits somewhat if some Members send individual cards to him. Des is currently in The Horizon Unit at Horsham Hospital. Address: Horizon Unit, Horsham, Hospital, Hurst Road, Horsham, West Sussex. RH12 2DR.
4. Mark received an email from Jack Neil regarding the Winter Fuel Allowance which reads:

It would seem that the DWP's new computer system has had a glitch where it has failed to pay Winter Fuel payments to those who are entitled to it.

This is more so with ex-service personnel who are in receipt of a War Pension as I am. Mine was manually inputted today.

I am advised by the DWP this has now been rectified but for those who find this has not been paid please ring 0800 731 0160 be advised there is a 30 wait on the phone.

5. Fred Rossington asked if there was any update with regards to nominations for awards for our Branch Members. Michael Hobden confirmed that he had submitted all to RAA HQ. nominations were due in no later than 15th January 2020 which was in plenty of time for Michaels submission. RAA HQ will contact Michael directly regarding this.
6. Fred also asked if we have photos of our Branch and Mark advised that we have a Gallery on our website at <https://www.theraalewe.co.uk/gallery> and also some Members post pictures on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1057140174357865>
7. Darryl Twinch advised that we currently only hold 1 x RAA Wreath in stock. Mark confirmed he would contact Dave Scott to see if he has one. If not, we will order one more for stock.

With no other business, our 2021 Annual General Meeting of the Lewes Branch of the RAA closed at 21:15.

The next RAA Lewes Branch Meeting will be held on Friday 26th February 2021 via Zoom.

Timings: 20:00 start.

Patron: Her Majesty The Queen

Chairman: Michael Hobden

Treasurer: Colin Kemp

Secretary: Mark Harding

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