#### The Royal Engineers Association

(Registered under the Charities Act 1992 and a charity registered in Scotland)

Patron: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN



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All Council Members
All Management Committee Members
All Group Secretaries
All Branch Secretaries
Controller REA
Corps Treasurer

16th October 2015

THE MINUTES OF 47<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ROYAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION HELD IN THE VICTORY SERVICE CLUB, LONDON, ON 10<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2015

#### **OPENING REMARKS**

- 1. The Annual General Meeting was opened at 1600hrs by the President of the Association, Lt General Sir Mark Mans KCB CBE DL, who welcomed all those present and thanked them for attending; he made special mention of those who had travelled long distances. He noted that there were 59 attendees at the AGM including: 11 REA Trustees, 21 REA Branch Delegates and 27 other REA members.
- 2. The Chairman observed that there were a number of Branches represented at the Dinner in the evening that were not represented as delegates at this AGM. He suggested that if members were coming to London anyway, they should consider coming slightly earlier and attend the AGM as Branch delegates.
- Apologies for absence had been received from:
  - Brig D W Southall OBE
  - Col D L D Bigger ADC
  - Lt Col (Retd) R W Murfin TD DL
  - Col (Retd) D M Gill MBE
  - Mr B Owens
  - Mr W P Halloran
  - Mr T Mitchley
  - Mr K Green
  - CO and RSM 71 Engr Regt
  - CO and RSM 21 Engr Regt

- 4. The President reminded Branch Delegates to take meeting papers home and give them to their Branch Chairman or Secretary to promulgate to all Branch members. He asked also that once the Minutes had been published, Branches would ensure the widest distribution to all their members.
- 5. In order to ensure correctness of the records, the President asked that whenever someone rose to speak, they would clearly announce their name and Branch or official position.

#### ITEM 1 - To confirm the Minutes of the 46<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2014

6. The President emphasised that this Item was dealing only with the accuracy of the Minutes. The document had been widely circulated and HQ REA had not received any comments or proposed amendments. There were no comments from the floor.

Proposal: That the Minutes of the 46<sup>th</sup> AGM be accepted

Proposer: Maj (Retd) P Gill MBE JP - Trustee South West Group

Seconder: Mr R Price - Trustee North Midlands Group

#### ITEM 2 - Matters Arising from the Minutes of the 46<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting.

7. There were no Matters Arising.

#### ITEM 3 – To Receive the Council's 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Report to the AGM

- 8. The President asked the REA Chairman, Maj Gen Alastair Dickinson CBE, to present Council's report. The report was produced to supplement the Annual Report and Financial Statement required by the Charity Commissioners and to meet the Association's own internal requirements.
- 9. During his report Maj Gen Dickinson invited the Chairman of the Benevolence Committee, Brig Andy Craig OBE, to give some examples of where REA benevolence had made a difference in 2015.
- 10. The Chairman REA thanked the Chairman REA Benevolence for his and his Committee's outstanding work throughout the year. He also paid tribute to the support given by the serving Corps at Chilwell, Minley and Chatham for laying on the highly successful Veterans Weekends at those locations.
- 11. The full text of Council's report is at **Annex A** to these Minutes.

Proposal: That the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Report be accepted.

Proposer: WO2 S M Tolley – Branch Delegate Walsall Branch Seconder: Mr E Lowbridge – Branch Delegate Chesterfield Branch

#### ITEM 4 – To receive the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the REA for the period 01 January to 31 December 2014

- 12. The President reminded attendees that the full accounts were distributed to all Trustees and all REA Branches in May 2015. He invited the Honorary Treasurer, Col Chris Davies MBE, to present his report. The full text of the report is at **Annex B**.
- 13. The President thanked the Honorary Treasurer for his report and said that in addition to the comments made by the Treasurer he had asked HQ RE to update the policy on our Wounded, Injured and Sick (WIS), both while they are serving and as importantly when they have left the service. As part of that policy review he has asked that the REA is properly linked in. He continued by saying that the Corps had had a fair number of badly injured soldiers from recent conflicts and as the years go by their needs will become greater and some of the expense that they might quite rightly seek to make good those needs will increase.

The President said it was really important for Branches to be aware of who is in the local area who might be an injured sapper, whether physically or mentally, who may need to call on us for assistance. It is this networking which connects the serving Corps with its veterans that needs to be developed further.

Proposal: That the 2014 REA Annual Report and Financial Statements be accepted

Proposal: Mr L Zacharow – Medway Branch

Seconder: Col (Retd) L McLeman - Newcastle Branch

#### ITEM 5 – To note the appointment of Kreston Reeves LLP (Formerly Reeves LLP) as the Auditors of the Association

14. The President advised those assembled that the responsibility for appointing auditors to the Corps charities rests with the Chief Royal's Committee. At the last Chief Royal's Committee meeting, Reeves & Co LLP were approved as auditors of the Corps' charities. REA Council has approved the appointment.

#### ITEM - 6 - Appointment of Honorary Treasurer 2015

15. The President said that Colonel Chris Davies had kindly agreed to continue as the REA Hon Treasurer.

Proposal: That Col Chris Davies is appointed as REA Honorary Treasurer for 2016.

Proposer: Lt Col (Retd) N Parmley – Weymouth Branch Delegate

Seconder: Mr G Elliott – Swindon Branch Delegate

#### ITEM 7 - Date of next meeting

16. The date of the next AGM will be 08<sup>th</sup> October 2016 at the Victory Services Club, London.

#### ITEM 8 - A presentation by the Corps RSM WO1 (CRSM) C McLennan

- 17. The President introduced the CRSM who gave a short presentation. A précis of the CRSM's presentation is at **Annex C.**
- 18. The President thanked the CRSM for his presentation.

#### **Presidents Closing Remarks**

- 19. The President reminded all attending that 2016 would see the Corps commemorating the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the Corps of Engineers through **Sapper 300**. There would be many events and celebrations occurring next year and some of these would involve the REA at the lower level. He asked those assembled to make sure they knew what was going on and spread the word amongst their Branch members so that people could engage as they saw fit. A flyer giving more details of Sapper 300 is at **Annex D**.
- 20. He said the Association relies on the dedication and work of everyone in it, at the very top he paid tribute to Council and the Management Committee for their valuable contribution to the development of the Association. He thanked the Benevolence Committee under Brig Andy for its outstanding work which is in effect the main effort of the Association.
- 21. The President asked that his thanks be extended to all Branch and Group officials and the highly valued grassroots membership for the work that goes on in terms of promoting the REA and maintaining esprit de corps. He was keen that the serving Corps became more engaged with the REA and noted that whilst there were some Group Directors and Group Secretaries present at the meeting, he expected even more to attend the 2016 AGM.

- 22. The President was keen to thank all members of the REA staff for their sterling work over the last year. In particular he thanked Ann Richardson and Julia Ferguson, both REA membership staff, for their work in ensuring the smooth running of both the AGM and the Dinner. Those assembled showed their appreciation in the usual enthusiastic way.
- 23. The President reminded those assembled that as usual Sapper Sunday will take place at The Royal Hospital Chelsea the next day and provided outline timings. There being no more business the meeting was closed at 1640 hrs.

16th October 2015

Deputy Controller

Minutes Approved

Date

President
Lt General Sir Mark Mans KCB CBE DL

#### REA Council Report to the 47th Annual General Meeting - Saturday 10th October 2015

#### Forward by Chairman REA - Maj Gen A S Dickinson CBE

- 1. This is my first report to the Council since assuming the role of Chairman in July this year. Firstly, I am extremely grateful to Colin Boag for his hard work and the achievements made possible during his tenure I have no doubt however that we will continue to see Colin at the heart of Sapper events in the future. I should also pay tribute to our former Controller Lt Col Keith Lowerson, who has moved on to become RCMO of 1 RSME. Notwithstanding, I am particularly grateful to the Deputy Controller Neil Jordan for covering both roles whilst we select a replacement for Keith and specifically for putting together the bulk of this report.
- 2. The report makes clear the true purpose of the REA is to support those of the Sapper family, be they serving, veteran or a relative who are in need for whatever reason. The Branch structure has, and continues to, serve us well. But beyond this, there is more that can be done to adjust REA activity to improve serving member's involvement thereby smoothing the flow from serving to retired status whilst firmly remaining within the Sapper (and REA) family. The successes of our national branches supported by the internet are real positives that the REA over the coming years will wish to develop. But, for now, here is my report on 2014...

#### Council's Report

- 3. The REA is governed by the Deeds of Trust 1968 supplemented by the REA Rules 2009. Trustees of the REA are recommended to the Council after a thorough search for suitable candidates in the eleven REA Group areas and by ex-officio appointments for REA representation by the Chief Royal Engineer. On appointment each Trustee is given a standard Trustee briefing pack and is strongly encouraged to attend Trustee briefing days where they are given updates on various matters on the running of their Association.
- 4. Trustees make and approve Association policy and delegate the day to day running to the Controller REA and his staff through different committees for management, benevolence, recruiting and finance. At each Council meeting the Minutes of each of the delegated committees are reviewed recommending adjustments as necessary. Council also carries out an annual review of the Risk Register. Council is content that all measures are in hand to minimise risk.
- 5. The delivery of benevolence is at the heart of what the REA does and the Association is structured in a way to ensure that this is done in a caring and efficient manner. Government initiatives over the past few years have increased the awareness of the general public and local authorities as to the availability of benevolence assistance for those who have served in the Corps and their dependents. The total number of benevolence cases considered in 2014 was 2.5% less than the previous year. This is significantly better than the 24% drop in 2013 and may indicate a steadying of figures. The majority of cases continue to be processed by The Royal British Legion (TRBL) and SSAFA on behalf of the REA Benevolence Committee.
- 6. With the help of other charities like The Army Benevolent Fund The Soldiers Charity, Help for Heroes and The Royal British Legion our seriously injured Sappers are now given extensive treatment and advice in the Personnel Recovery Units as they prepare for the return to civilian life. As part of a wider range of initiatives, the REA, through the Corps RSM, provides a pack of "useful items" when a Sapper is admitted to hospital as the result of an Operational injury to help maintain his links with the Corps.
- 7. The audited net cost of REA benevolence in 2014 made up of Grants, Christmas grants, weekly allowances and grants to other charities was in the region of £406,000; this figure does not include donated services support costs which amounted to a further £70,380 (£476,291 in total). This is marginally lower than 2013 where the audited net cost of benevolence was £419,752; this figure does not include donated services support costs of £62,369 (£482,121 in total).

**Table 1** provides the net cost of REA Benevolence, including service support costs, for the last five years.

	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Total Grants Considered	719	737	966	969	953
Total Grants Made	651	686	943	959	941
Net Cost of Grants incl service support costs	£476,291	£482,121	£682,77	£676,675	£699,971

Table 1

- 8. Effective benevolence requires many organisations working together to bring the help needed to the applicant. The REA relies on the volunteer caseworkers of SSAFA and The Royal British Legion to act as its "eyes and ears". They inform us of the requirements of the applicant and help him or her complete the application form comprehensively and succinctly so the right type of financial assistance is accurately and speedily delivered. Additionally, Veterans UK through their Veterans Welfare Service (VWS) signpost the REA to those RE service personnel and veterans who may need assistance. Our link with the Army Benevolent Fund The Soldiers Charity is also important as it contributes to the homes and other military charities, such as BLESMA and St Dunstan's and Combat Stress. The ABF also continues to control the "ring fenced funds" set up following the comparatively recent operations in the South Atlantic, Northern Ireland, the Gulf and Afghanistan. To assist them in their work, the REA Council continues to support the ABF with an annual grant of £35K, SSAFA with an annual grant of £7.5K, and Combat Stress with an annual grant of £2.5K. Council also authorised a one-off grant of £3K to BLESMA to support their valuable work.
- 9. The REA Council wish to record their gratitude and appreciation to all these organisations and to the volunteers who act as caseworkers and fund raisers in a combined "partnership" for the benefit of all those in need in our Corps family. Caseworkers for all these charities are always required and volunteers are warmly welcomed.
- 10. **Branch Changes**. In July this year the Management Committee approved the formation of the Solent & District Branch. The Portsmouth & District Branch that had been in existence for over 100 years closed in March this year.
- 11. **Badges of Merit 2015**. The Chairman REA and the REA Management Committee announced the award of Badges of Merit to the following:

Name	Branch	Group
Mr Barrie Owens	Medway Branch	South East Gp
Mr Frederick Andrews	Brighton Branch	South East Gp
Mr Peter Markham	Bomb Disposal Branch	London Gp
Mr William Steele	Bath & West Wilts Branch	South West Gp
Mr G Kirk	Blackpool Branch	North West Gp

12. **Recruiting**. Branch membership continues to occupy the thoughts of the REA Recruiting Committee but it is worth noting that the number of new members in 2014 is 31% higher than the 2013 period. National Branch membership is at a steady state. **Table 2** shows the number of new Life Members enrolled for each of the last five years and, of those members, how many were enrolled into the three National Branches with the highest take-up.

	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Total new Life Members enrolled (All Branches)	581	442	469	458	349
Airborne Engr Branch (new members)	8	10	9	52	27
Bomb Disposal Branch (new members)	50	57	15	18	17
Cdo Engr Branch (new members)	31	24	47	42	37

Table 2

- 13. The REA Recruiting Committee continues to review ways of publicising the work of the REA to serving Members and marketing the REA with the aim of attracting more members to each of the branches. A renewed effort is being made with RCMOs in order to capture those leaving the Corps. The REA is hopeful of complete support for this initiative from the serving Corps as part of the Chief Royal Engineer's 'Corps Through Life Concept'
- 14. In addition to the Welcome Packs, the following recruiting initiatives are in place:
  - **a.** Information Cards for Branch members to carry and issue to potential members.
  - b. A revised REA Information flyer
  - c. Banners issued to Groups for display on barrack perimeter fences
  - d. REA Website
  - e. REA Facebook
- 15. **Re-unions**. The Association reunions have again been a great success and we wish to give you brief details on them:
  - a. Chilwell. The Chilwell Weekend held over the 5<sup>th</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> June was a great success. Twenty six REA branches were represented and 137 REA members and partners attended. The Weekend incorporated a Games Night in the Cpl's Club on the Friday, Freedom of Entry Parade to Eastleigh, Borough of Broxtowe, with REA members marching on Saturday morning, equipment displays and various military stands provided by the MTMC (I) during the afternoon and a very well organised and attended Regimental Dinner in the WOs' & Sgts' Mess during the evening. We also said thank you and farewell to Colonel David Brambell the Director of South Midlands Group as this was his last REA Veterans weekend as the Director. The formal dinner was attended by 143 REA members and their partners along with some 107 Officers, WOs' and SNCOs' in mess kit. Music was provided by the Nottinghamshire Band of the Royal Engineers; it made for a very grand evening. The Group Standard Bearers competition was held on the Sunday morning.
  - b. **Minley**. The 2015 REA Minley veterans weekend held over the period 31 July 2 August was a huge success, the only disappointing aspect to the whole weekend was number of veterans who attended, numbering only 81, nearly half of the number attending last year. The 2015 Minley weekend was a combination of not only REA veterans but also the Station Families day, allowing all to intermingle. As per last year the weekend started in the WOs' & Sgts' Mess on Friday evening, with all of 3 RSME's WOs' & Sgts' Mess members hosting the veterans. Saturday morning started with a brief and to build on last year's success by fielding a selection of personal from across the Regiment to speak; this ranged from a Corps update to duties of a training SNCO and JNCO. The latest methods of coaching and mentoring were also explained, this was particularly well received. The CO took the opportunity to present Minley Branch member Peter Bain with the Group Directors Commendation for his work within the Central Southern Group. The afternoon was spent on the regimental playing fields as part of

the family's day. This included many static displays as well as lots of entertainment for children and families to enjoy. Each branch was invited to enter a team into a shooting competition with the overall winners being the Swansea branch. That evening there was a function in the WOs' & Sgts' Mess with live music and a buffet. On Sunday a Service of Remembrance was held in the Gymnasium, after which attendees paraded outside and were marched to the Officers Mess for lunch before dispersal. The weekend was very warmly received by all those who attended and the chance for veterans to mix with serving soldiers and their families was highly valued.

Corps Memorial & Veterans Weekend. The 2015 Corps Memorial and Veterans Weekend was a huge success. The event was supported by branches nationwide, in total the REA attendance was around 220 with many being accommodated in Wildfire (formerly HMS Collingwood). The Weekend kicked off with an informal meet and greet in the WOs' & Sgts' Mess. The event was well attended and everybody enjoyed the music performed by the REA Band. Saturday morning saw some of the veterans and their partners receiving a brief from the new Corps RSM on recent changes within the Corps before being split down into groups ready for the day's activities. During the day, veterans and their guests moved around various stands including the live 25 m range, Museum and the highlight of the day was getting out on the River Medway on Raider and Combat Support Boats. Both the regular and reserve bands performed together in the afternoon providing a spectacular display of traditional and contemporary music on the regimental square. The National Standard Bearers Competition and the Dove Cup (darts) ran concurrent to the day's activities. The prizes for the competitions were formally presented in the evening at the official function in the WOs' & Sgts' Mess by Major General Alastair Dickinson. As always the function was well attended with some veterans staying until the early hours. On a fine Sunday morning, albeit later than usual, some 65 veterans and 12 Standard Bearers sipped a glass of port before marching on parade - the numbers were impressive and they certainly added value to the parade. In the afternoon Rochester Cathedral was filled almost to capacity for the Memorial Service and after the service the veterans once again 'fell in' with the serving Corps to march through Rochester to exercise the Freedom of the Medway Towns. The 2016 Corps Weekend at Chatham promises to be a grand affair as we celebrate Sapper 300.

#### 16. Media Matters.

- a. **REA Facebook**. This has proved a most useful interactive REA promotional tool. It is an excellent and modern means of delivering REA information and many REA branches are making themselves known by this medium.
- b. **REA Website**. The website continues to be the main REA information pool for those able to access the internet. The provision of the most recent Minutes of meetings, regularly used REA Forms and the Annual Trustees' report and financial statement has proved very popular and beneficial.
- c. **Corps Memorial Book**. Since its commencement, this has proven to be a most popular development. The facility provided through 'Friends & Relations' that allows friends and families to add comments and reflections to those who have passed away is also popular.

### Honorary Treasurer's Report to The 2015 AGM Of the Royal Engineers Association 10 October 2015

- 1. The 2014 Budget was authorised by Council with an income of £769,500 and an overall deficit of £52,006. The year closed on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014 with a surplus of £194,246. The main reason for this surplus was the healthy excess of income over expenditure due to the investment income exceeding forecast by £80k (As a result of new units purchased in July 2014) and expenditure on Benevolence being some £210k under budget.
- 2. The budget for the current accounting year, which started on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015, had an authorised income of £829,750 and an overall surplus of £16,320. The monthly FOO and historical evidence indicate that the year should again finish with a surplus against the budget.
- 3. Next year's budget (2016) has been approved by Council with an income of £835,290 and an overall surplus of £54,333. The reasons for this forecasted surplus, despite the £51.5k allocated to support *Sapper 300* events, are the strong returns on our increased investment holdings (dividends projected as £365.5k for the year) and the forecasted reduction (based on historical evidence) of Benevolence grants (down from £548k to £428k).
- 4. REA capital is invested in the Armed Forces Common Investment Fund. At 1<sup>st</sup> August this year the capital value (including the Kitchener Scholarship Fund) was £10.1M Compared to £9.5M in 2014 and £9.1M In 2013. The REA invested an additional £250k into ACIF in June 2013 and a further £250k in July 2014. The final transfer of investments from the 'A' and 'B' Funds has taken place which has reduced these to zero with all assets transferred to the REA General Account.
- 5. Benevolence is a key part of REA business and its biggest expenditure. In 2014 £404,412 was spent in support of Benevolence against a budget of £614k. At 1<sup>st</sup> August 2015 a total of £204,412 had been disbursed against a budget of £520k. The estimated final figure for all Benevolence in 2015 is expected to be circa £400k and this follows the downward trend that has been observed in recent years. The Finance Committee takes the view that demands for assistance tend to lag some distance behind the operational activity curve so this is a trend which deserves to be monitored but it is not felt that the budget estimate is in need of adjustment at present.
- 6. Members will be aware that, in global finance terms the Chinese year of the Goat has proved to be disappointing thus far! Having taken advice from our investment portfolio manager (BlackRock) we have been reassured that our investments are safe and that there is no need for concern. There is no need, here, to dwell on the complexities of the international markets and associated investment risks. Suffice to say that, for the moment, the received advice is not to act in haste. Our investment portfolio is widespread and in low-to-medium-risk areas. Annual performance will be measured over the whole year, not just the recent 'blip'. To date our investments have performed well and there is no reason to doubt that they will continue to do so. Your Finance Committee will monitor events and report if any concerns arise.

Colonel (Retd) Chris Davies MBE REA Honorary Treasurer

#### CRSM's Briefing to the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting – 10 October 2015

#### **Prelims**

- The previous Corps RSM moved on in June this year to take up appt in 21 Engr Regt. His
  dedication to the Corps, and the REA in particular, was outstanding and worthy of note.
- The previous Corps Colonel has also recently move on, this time to retirement. The new Corps Colonel is Col Don Bigger. Due to military commitments he is unable to attend this evening but he wishes you all well and hopes to meet you all in due course.

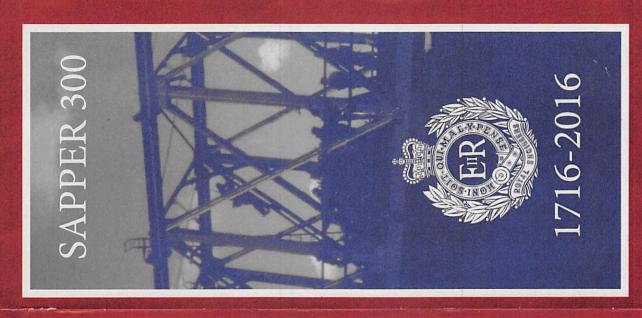
#### **Current Challenges**

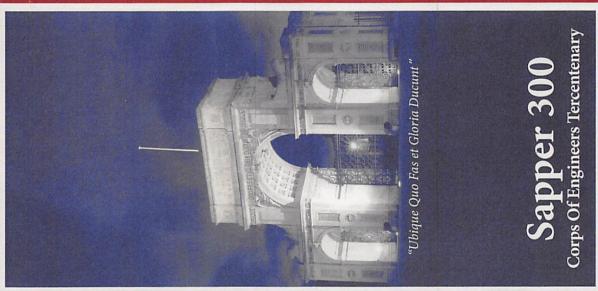
#### Recruitment and Retention.

- One of the key challenges facing the Corps is both recruitment and retention. The constantly improving UK economy presents a real threat to the retention of our highly qualified, talented officers and soldiers.
- The Army and the Corps are working hard on new initiatives to attract the right people to the Corps be that as a Reservist or a Regular. The Corps will therefore be inserting Sappers into key locations around the country to assist in the recruitment of young people. My message to the REA is to ask that you assist with our Corps recruiting effort by passing your positive messages to the young people you encounter and encourage them to consider what the Corps can offer them.
- Corps Review (RESTORe). The last formal review of the Corps, its structure, trades and
  underpinning policy was in 1995 (RESR). To that end a formal review is currently underway to
  consider our career employment groups; look at all of our trades to make sure they are up to date
  and relevant; consider how we promote our young people at JNCO level and review our Combat
  Engineer Training, specifically which of our trades should undertake higher level training.
- Return to Contingency. Many veterans have lived through this type of readiness during the majority, if not all, of our service. The modern soldier has been consumed by contingent operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and the challenge they face is to change the way they conduct themselves into this new (although old) way of thinking and training. Again I ask that when you come into contact with the youngsters of today you share your experiences and knowledge about this type or readiness, it all helps!

#### Summary.

- o The Corps is as busy as ever. Even though commitments such as Afghanistan and Iraq have ended, there are still many Sappers, both regular and reserve deployed on operations and exercises all over the world.
- o Of particular note is the work conducted by Royal Engineers who deployed at very short notice to build hospitals and medical aid posts in Ebola ridden Africa in support of the humanitarian crisis.
- We are a great Corps full of exceptional, highly motivated, highly trained people. We must retain these people with diverse opportunities at home and globally and 'collectively' attract the very best of the young people from the civil sector to sustain our Corps. The Corps review underpins that opportunity and attraction by making sure those who serve have a fulfilled career with abundant opportunity both in their chosen trade and through interesting and challenging deployments.
- The REA continues to play a pivotal role in all the challenges we face. Veterans' contact with our serving Sappers and those who show interest in joining is vital to the continued success of the Corps. Please search out the opportunities in your Branches and Groups to retain or initiate contact with the Corps and young people who show interest.



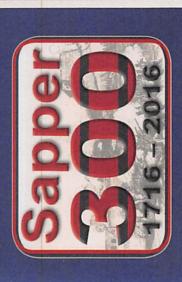




# SAPPER 300

EVENTS

George I, the Engineers and the Artillery were placed on separate establishments and so our commemorates this tercentenary anniversary celebrating a remarkable and rich history of distinguished service throughout the world. On the 26th May 1716 by Warrant of King Corps of Engineers was born. Sapper 300 through a series of country wide events,



Royal Engineers Games

8 - 9 June 2016 Perham Down Musical Extravaganza

Sunday 18th September 2016 Rochester Cathedral Memorial Service

## SAPPER 300

OPEN DAYS

2016

