

Looking back on my career in the Army 1952-1977

By
Ricky Braybrooke



A Bronze sculpture Presented to WO1 Ricky Braybrooke by WO & Sgts Mess, School of Military Survey on his retirement from the Army, April 1977

When Rod ask me if I would write a bit about my sporting achievements in the Army, he really meant my rugby career which is where I achieved my highest honours. When I got out my scrap book which is almost 30 pages of A2. I realised that I had achieved a lot of success and won many trophies in other sports as well as rugby. to be honest when I look over the 25 years I was in the army I wonder when I had time to work. To keep it brief I will try and cover the times by grouping it in years.

1952 - 54

I joined the Army October 1952, I was 17^{1/2} years old. 2 days after arriving at 1 Training Regt, Malvern I was playing rugby for them in a cup game, unfortunately I fractured my arm, so not a good start, I was put on light duties, but luckily I was not back squaded and managed to get through the initial training and was then sent to 3 training Regt, Farnborough.

I wasn't ready for rugby so took up cross country running and ran for the Regt during my time there, I quickly found out that playing sports, made life a lot easier, less fatigues and guard duties and you were given a little more respect. For the next few years my time was spent with a spell of being a training NCO, on trade courses and cadre courses so my sports was rather put on ice. Whenever I could during the rugby seasons I used to get home and play for my club Lydney.



3 Training Regt RE Cross Country Team 1953



1954 I was posted to 42 Regt in the canal zone, Hockey was the main sport so I played in a very successful team there. Rugby was played and I played for the Corps and Army but the hard grounds caused a lot of damage so preferred Hockey.

42 Survey Engineer Regt - Canal Zone 1955



?????????? Renton Ted Rylatt Pat Sleep ??????????
 Ricky Braybrooke xxxxxx Maj. Hewitt xxxxx xxxxxx xxxxxxxx xxxxxx

1955 We moved to Cyprus, the only sport played at the time was football, as an advance party we arranged matches with the local villages, EOKA was beginning to be a problem so even our games were restricted. That Xmas I did manage a few weeks leave to fly home to play for an Old boys team against Lydney

1956 I came back to SMS for another trade course. Expecting to return to Cyprus after, but to my surprise I got promoted to Sgt and posted to Singapore.

1957-60 Singapore was where my sporting life took off again. I played Rugby for the Corps, Army, Joint Services, All Malaya Services, A lot of these matches were played mid-week so at weekend I was invited to play for a civilian team called the 'Tankards' they were part of Singapore Cricket Club and through them I was able to enjoy a very good social life, and I could tell many a story of our trips up country playing local teams and staying the nights hosted by the opposition who were mainly rubber planters. Had some great matches in Thailand, Ceylon, Hong Kong, Borneo, Malaya. Playing in teams comprising of Australians and New Zealanders was a great experience. And playing against Commonwealth and Visiting teams from Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Japan widen my experience further. These 3 years were the base of my success when I came back to the UK

Royal Engineers Rugby Team-Singapore 1958?



R. Birch

M. Bowra

J Rennilson

R Braybrooke

You would think that would take up all my time, but somehow I was still able to play Hockey for RE Singapore and win a few medals. Also while traveling out to Singapore on the troopship 'Dunerra', I met up with a PT Corps S/sgt who was an Army Fencer, the Suez Canal was closed at the time so we had a long sail around the Cape. He started Fencing lessons which I joined as its a good way of improving your reactions, luckily he was posted to Engr Base Group which 570 Map Repro was part of, so when he arrived he started Fencing club which I joined and to further improve I joined the civilian Fencing Club, the following year we won the Singapore Championships and went to Hongkong to fence against their winners and Malaya for the Far East Cup. We had to travel by troopship as little flying was available so a few days on the troopship "Nevassa" was great fun where we could train all day, and we were much the envy of the rest of the passengers. After 3 hard days of fencing we won the cup, so came back on the Nevassa in Triumph.

For relaxation I joined the Sapper Sailing Club, and had some success in their races, most enjoyable were matches against other clubs, you couldn't transport your own boats so you sailed theirs which often were an entirely different class to yours so great fun.



Sailing off Singapore 1959



Engr Base Group,
Singapore
Fencing Team, 1959



Ricky Braybrooke (right) in final of the Foil competition



Singapore & Malaya Army Fencers On board Troopship 'Nevassa'
bound for Hong Kong

SERVICES XV SHOW POWER AND SPEED

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun.—Full marks to Wing Commander (Rev.) P. J. Bowen and his co-selectors for picking a team truly representative of the top talent of Services players in Malaya and Singapore.

The Malayan Services XV confirmed this when they played brilliant rugby to beat Malayan Civilians 27-8 in their annual match at Merdeka Stadium here yesterday.

No one who watched yesterday's match could have had any doubts about the superiority of Services. They were deserving winners as they were fitter, faster and stronger in both forward and back divisions.

The game produced many thrills; it was played at a cracking pace throughout; there was much delightful open play by both backs and forwards. Indeed, this match was a treat to watch and it was a pity that only a few hundred witnessed this spectacle.

High standard

The high standard of rugby shown yesterday, as in previous matches in this series, augurs well for the forthcoming three-match tour of Hong Kong by the Singapore Combined Services R.U. team, which includes 10 players who turned out yesterday.

A feature of yesterday's big match was the splendid performance of the three Maori All-Black players from the 2nd Battalion, the New Zealand Regiment. Much was expected of them in their debut in top-class Malayan rugby—and they did not disappoint.

The performance of centre-three Blake and McAndrew typified the brand of rugby that is played in their native land: They moved with clock-work precision; their passes were swift and sure; their handling perfect; their defence sound; and there was a lot of power behind their bursts of speed.

Special mention for wing-threequarter Fadzil, the first Asian to play for Malayan Services. As usual, he did not go in for spectacular play but instead impressed with several fine runs and good, close marking of his opposite number.

Good form

Services had a lion's share of the ball in the set scrums and for this they had to thank hooker Tomlinson, who was in good form despite being hurt in a match on Thursday.

The strong half-back partnership of Ashton and Braybrooke contributed in no small measure to Services' victory. They provided efficient service and diminutive Braybrooke capped a splendid display by scoring a try which was the result of a brilliant piece of individual skill.

Ashton accounted for 10 points with immaculate place kicking. He converted two penalties and made two conversions.

Although Civilians lost by a big margin, they were by no means disgraced. They were determined fighters but the gruelling pace set by Services had a telling effect on them in the second half.

FOR THE RECORD: Services are now only two matches behind in this annual series. Civilians have won seven times.



Malayan Services V Civilians. Kuala Lumpur 1959 (Ricky Braybrooke 3rd from right front)



Army Singapore v Singapore Asians 1959 Scrum half Braybrooke gets the ball away



SCRUM-HALF Braybrooke gets the ball away to the Army backs from a lineout in the Navy half — Free Press picture.

Army v Navy Singapore 1959

1960 Back home in the uk with no Idea what awaited me, Initially posted to SMS but soon to moved to Chepstow, Surrey were moving from Harrogate and Captain Henshaw who I was with in Singapore wanted me there so I was soon on the move. This suited me well as that was where my home was and being single at the time I stayed with my mother instead of moving into the Sgt's mess.

While at SMS it was the Rugby season and unbeknown to me someone in Malaya had seen me play in the Malaya cup final In Kuala lumpar and had written to Rosslyn Park (a top London Cub at that time) recommending me, they wrote to me asking if I was interested in playing for them so I accepted and played for nearly 2 seasons, traveling to London was a long drive in those days from Chepstow, so for the remainder of the season I was a guest player with Pontypool, at that time their Scrum Half was Clive Rowlands Captain of Wales, but he was recovering from injury so I was asked to play, by the time he was fit and the Internationals were over the season had nearly finished so it suited me well. The next season I went back to my old club at Lydney where I was appointed captain.

Playing for Lydney I had no thoughts of playing in any service rugby. At the Apprentice College we did have a staff team which was more of a fun game played on Wednesday afternoons, after one match somewhere in S. Wales I was asked to play in a Western Command trial. This I did but thought little of it. Then out of the blue I was picked for the Army to play against The Civil Service, I wasn't an original pick, the Army scrum half at the time was a Scottish international, but he had got injured so I was drafted in, all went well and I was picked for the next match against Surrey, after that I played in all matches for the rest of the season, and got my first Army cap against the Navy. I don't really know what happened to Shillinglaw the Scottish scrum half.

The next progression in those days was County Rugby, Gloucestershire was my County, but there was already a wealth of talent vying for that position, this included the Oxford and Cambridge scrum halves, Glouceter and RAF, and Briitish police and Newport. This is where the Commandant at the College was a great help, he had been following my career with interest, so asked me if I had any other County connections, I said I was born in the military hospital at Colchester, Essex Which was part of Eastern Counties, luck would have it he had connections there so he contacted them. I didn't think I had much hope, Their scrum-half was Dickie Jeeps of England and Lions, but I was asked to go for a trial, as it happens Jeeps was thinking of retiring from county rugby, and having one last season for England. He didn't play in the trial but was there to watch, I thought I had a reasonable game which must have impressed the selectors because Jeeps never played county rugby again and I played in every game for the next 2 seasons. Also that got me into the London Team to play Paris in the annual match in Paris. Following that I was picked for the London Counties final trial in the probables team to Play South Africa, unfortunately a week before the trial I broke my nose playing for Lydney so missed the trial and the match.



Army Team V Navy 1964 (Ricky Braybrooke 1st left seated)

ARMY POWER IS IN PACK : NAVY RELY ON BACKS

Big Responsibility for Braybrooke With Shillinglaw Absent

By E. W. SWANTON

NAVY and Army battle it out to-day in what is probably the key fixture of the Triangular Tournament, and there are all the signs of their having the old traditional Twickenham weather for the occasion. That would be specially appropriate, seeing that the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester are due to be there—the only Royal visit to the Rugby Union ground this season.

The Navy beat the RAF fair and square three weeks ago, but lost unequivocally enough to the Army in the corresponding game last year. The Army went on then to defeat the RAF, and to-day both they and the Navy have picked half the sides that represented them in 1959-60.

Generally speaking the Army look formidable up in front, while

More Sport-P6

the Navy may have the more distinguished backs.

Unfortunately for the Army Pte. Shillinglaw has not recovered from his ankle-break, and he was just the foil that was needed for Rodd. Apart from all else it would have been intriguing to compare the two Scottish international scrum-halves.

Shillinglaw's successor, Braybrooke, has been compared to Jeeps in a minor key: from which it will be taken that he is a tough customer



J. A. T. Rodd (left), of the Royal Navy, and N. S. Bruce, of the Army, rival captains to-day

used to the rigours of West-country football. Stationed at Chepstow, he captains Lydney.

FAST BACK ROW Edgecombe Superseded

There is no disputing the power of the Army forwards, with Bruce leading and hooking, Campbell-Lamerton and Payne as locks, and a fast back row wherein Edgecombe has lost his place at No. 8 to Marriott.

The latter in fact is moved from the flank to let in Renilson of the Duke's, who has been scintillating in the Army Cup. Renilson and Parker are both Rugby Leagueites: the

The Teams

ROYAL NAVY.—Sgn.-Lt. H. S. Cormack; D./A. J. D. Casey, Lt. M. A. Pearey, Lt. P. T. Tyrell, Lt. R. D. Sinclair; Lt. P. Francis, Lt. J. A. T. Rodd (capt.); Lt. J. E. Highton, Inst./Lt. G. P. Thomas, Cdt. F. S. Owen, Lt. T. C. Jones, Lt. C. S. Stafford, Midshipman A. R. Godfrey, Sub-Lt. S. G. Palmer, A./B. B. W. Goodwin.

THE ARMY.—Capt. P. V. Crooks; Capt. M. H. S. Heath, Sgt. E. W. A. Rosser, Lt. M. R. Handfield-Jones, Capt. R. J. Moyle; Sigmn. G. G. Sharp, Sgt. R. Braybrooke; 2nd Lt. J. G. Vaux, Capt. N. S. Bruce (capt.), Pte. E. W. Davies, Capt. M. J. Campbell-Lamerton, 2nd Lt. G. W. Payne, Sgt. G. D. Parker, Sgt. V. R. Marriott, Pte. C. Renilson.

REFEREE.—M. H. R. King.

latter, on the strength of his performance against the Wasps recently, is a dangerous player without over-much respect for the off-side law.

Rodd by all account is both captain and inspiration of the Navy, and he seems to be playing at least as well as before he went East and so relinquished his place in the Scottish side.

Behind him one notes the robust Pearey, who has several times got so close to the England side. At forward the Navy have picked one Dartmouth cadet, Owen, and a midshipman, Godfrey.

"Names" Daunt No One

They lack "names" in this department—not that this is an occasion when anyone is daunted by reputations. Time was when Navy v Army was as fast as the University Match and often made better watching. We could well be in for something pretty good this afternoon.

Braybrooke gets call-up from Army

By RUPERT CHERRY

THE Army find that they cannot do without their tough little scrum-half, R. Braybrooke, after all. This great-hearted player lost his place in the Tournament side this season after bobbing about in Services Rugby for five years.

He had become almost an institution. From 1961 he played in all the Army's tournament matches, mostly with I. H. P. Reid, the London Scot, as his partner.

Together they helped the Army to win the championship in the last two years. This season, they could not strike form.

Braybrooke was dropped and Reid played in the centre against the RAF last Saturday, but both were clearly missed at half-back. So, for to-morrow's game against the British Police at Hartley Wintney, they are together again. Team:

Gnr. F. A. Williams (RA); Lieut. P. K. Colgate (RAVC); Lieut. G. Lougher (RAEC), Lieut. G. C. Edwards (DWR), 2nd Lieut. C. P. Simpson (R. Anglian Regt.); Lieut. I. P. Reid (DWR), S/Sgt. R. Braybrooke (RE); Lieut. R. D. H. Bryce (RE), Capt. J. A. Cuthill (R. Sigs.), Gnr. M. Kirke (RA), Sgt. P. Eastwood (RAPC), Capt. M. J. Campbell-Lamerton (DWR, capt.), Capt. P. R. Fisher (RADC), Lieut. R. M. Stancombe (RE), Lieut. M. B. Millar (RA).

Reid is more suited to fly-half than centre, and the Army need Braybrooke's experience. He must be one of the most durable scrum-halves in the game.

MEMORY TRICK

Knock on head

Last season in a tournament match he took a heavy knock on the head, but played throughout, giving a good performance without being able to remember it afterwards.

The first Services encounter this season was not without casualties. E. Barker, the Army's hooker, had a deep gash in his hand and is replaced by J. A. Cuthill. Their lively wing forward, M. S. Friend, had a couple of teeth knocked out and M. B. Miller takes his place.

The RAF lock forward, M. J. C.



Army V Navy 1963

Putting in a tackle

About to meet the Duke of Gloucester



Army v RAF
Making a break

Army V Harlequins

The dive pass, hardly used these days



Combined Services Tour to East Africa & Rhodesia 1962



Ricky Braybrooke

Combined Services V French Armed Forces 1962



Ricky Braybrooke

Combined Services 7's Team
Winners of Ontario Tournament
1965, Montreal.



Ricky Braybrooke 1st left



RE v RA 1963

Ricky Braybrooke

School of Military Survey
Rugby Team
?



42 Survey Engineer Regiment
Winners
Aldershot District and Southern Command
Minor Units Hockey Championships 1965-1966



Sgt R Percival Cpl B Foote Cpl c Howorth SSgt D Heriot SSgt A Thompson WO1 P Armitage
L/Cpl R Henry L/Cpl R Champion LT.Col R.S.J Ireland S>Sgt R Braybrooke Sgt D Walker (Capt) Cpl P Kimber

DOMINANT ARMY MAKE RAF A MERE EXERCISE

By RUPERT CHERRY

Army 19 pts Royal Air Force 6

AFTER this victory by two goals, a penalty goal and two tries against two penalty goals, which was no trouble for the Army to achieve at Twickenham, the Services Championship is a clearcut issue between them and the Royal Navy on April 4.

On the face of things the Army should be able to take that in their stride, too, but performances by all three services have varied so much that there is little knowing what is likely to happen.

The Army cannot expect their path to the goal-line to be so easy as the RAF left it for them. In fact, the airmen can hardly have played so badly this season.

DEFENCE HAMMERED

Brilliant Braybrooke

Passes were dropped everywhere; no one except Dymond, the scrum-half, seemed able to give one; there was no rhythm in any attack, and the defence was not a shadow of what is needed for a match of this kind.

By contrast the Army surpassed themselves. I did not see their victory over Gloucester, which was achieved with a makeshift team, but on other occasions they have been lambs compared with the lions that tore through the gaping RAF defences.

If Dymond was one of the few who glowed in the RAF team his opposite number, Braybrooke, shone as brightly as the sun. Many times



Braybrooke, the Army scrum-half, is collared by Harries (RAF).

he scooted low under the arms of wing forwards and linked up with his own ever-ready back row or gave Reid the chance to play one of his best games.

No more than five minutes had gone when Stancombe, a splendid No. 8, got the first try from Braybrooke's break. Five minutes later Campbell-Lamerton touched down between the posts after Edwards had cut neatly inside from a clever little kick by Reid.

The teams

ARMY.—Offr. Cdr. R. T. Brown (RMA, Sandhurst); Cpl. H. Blinkhorn (RAOC), Lieut. M. R. Handfield-Jones (RE), Pte. T. Waguabaca (DWR), Lieut. C. J. Edwards (DWR); Lieut. I. P. Reid (DWR), Staff Sgt. T. Braybrooke (RE); Lieut. R. D. H. Bryce (RE); Capt. N. S. Bruce (RAOC), Lieut. J. D. MacDonald (RASC), Capt. M. J. Campbell-Lamerton (capt., DWR), Sgt. P. Eastwood (RASC), Lieut. C. Guthrie (Welsh Guards), Lieut. R. M. Stancombe (RE), Lieut. M. S. Friend (Devon & Dorset).

ROYAL AIR FORCE.—Flying Offr. F. W. Burns (Halton); Cpl. D. O. Harries (Wyton), Flying Offr. H. J. C. Brown (Abingdon), Flying Offr. J. Keepe (Alderbury), Flying Offr. P. A. Kelly (Cottesmore), Flying Offr. R. H. Palin (Acklington), Cpl. M. J. Dymond (Wyton), Flt. Lt. M. J. D. Stear (Sandherby), Junr. Tech. M. L. Berry (Benson), Flying Offr. R. Elwig (Cottesmore), Junr. Tech. R. S. Glazher (Colerne), Flying Offr. S. K. Mulligan (Abingdon), Flt. Lt. K. J. Mallett (Halton), Flt. Lt. L. H. Jenkins (capt., Upavon), Flt. Lt. B. E. Morgan (Abingdon).

Referee.—R. P. Burrell (Scotland).

RICKY BRAYBROOKE, Royal Engineers staff-sergeant, yesterday took over retired England captain Dickie Jeeps's place at scrum half in the Eastern Counties trial, "made" two tries in Eastern Counties 18-0 win over the Rest, and earned rave reports from the selectors—including Jeeps!



Golf at St Pierre, Chepstow

Army were eight points up in 10 minutes, and already one had grave suspicions that the RAF's back row were not nearly quick enough on their men.

BAD TACTICS

Hesitant defence

Later we saw how blatantly they and the midfield players waited for the pass instead of tackling, thus allowing the Army to score more points.

Before half-time MacDonald kicked a good penalty goal for the Army and Jenkins got one for the RAF. Stancombe scored another try from one of Braybrooke's stealaways, while the RAF's defence hesitated, and then Reid seized on a badly flung pass from Keepe in the RAF centre and got another. Brown, the cadet full-back, who had kicked well in the field, converted this try.

It was small consolation for the RAF's indefatigable captain, Jenkins, when he kicked another penalty goal just before no-side.

BRAVE RICKY

One felt though that the Army forwards, with Peter Eastwood in the lineouts, hooker Norman Bruce, who won the tight heads 4-3 from English trialist Terry Scott, and Campbell-Lamerton himself, maintained sufficient control, backed as they were by competent halves in London Scot Ian Reid, who kicked shrewdly, and Ricky Braybrooke.

If there was such an award, the sturdy Braybrooke would win, hands down, a medal for Rugby gallantry.

His service in the first half was good, his darting, nippy breaks always dangerous in denting the Navy defence and his line kicking was first class.

Early in the second half he received a heavy bang behind his ear, was concussed and so dazed that he only remembered the last 10 minutes, but carried on by instinct and the instructions of his anxious colleagues!

As courageous a performance as I have seen for a long time.

Rugger tourists romp to win

By Doug Milton
Citizen sports writer

Off the field Ricky Braybrooke and Mike Davis would resemble Mutt and Jeff, and on a rugger field they're standouts as well.

The pair, Braybrooke at 5'5½" and Davis at 6'4", were the chief instructors as the touring British Combined Services gave a selected Ottawa fifteen a lesson in the niceties of English rugby union.

Playing before about 800 including Lord Louis Mountbatten, on hand for opening ceremonies, the Services side ran up a 59-3 triumph, their second straight one-sided win on their North American tour.

The tourists matched the score with their display of rugger ability. They were sharp, they had that knack of changing the flow of play full flight, they were opportunists and they were going as fast at the end of the 80 minutes as at the start.

They got a total of 14 tries (touchdowns) in collecting their scoring total, and significantly six were credited to forwards. Seven of them were converted and the extra three points came from a successful drop kick. The only scoring method missed was a penalty kick, but they didn't have the opportunity (though they scored off a movement from a quick penalty).

Braybrooke and Davis were the keys to the production, Braybrooke directing the backfield many times including the fullback from his scrum half spot, and Davis, a 224-pound forward and 10 times an international, controlling the lineouts.

Braybrooke was also the top scorer with four tries, one more than forward Ray Cossi. Davis also proved an adept placement artist, booting two of three convert tries.

Jim Casey collected two tries and the five single scores were credited to Mike Stancombe, Gerry Lougher, Brian Goodwin, Harry Sever and Chris Edwards. Edwards got two converts and John Brown three. Lougher hit on the drop kick, a shot from about 20 yards out.

Ottawa points

Jack Donaghy got the only Ottawa points, a 25-yard penalty placement to make the score 5-3 in the early minutes as the home team, represent-

ing the Beavers, Irish, Indians and Deep River, managed to stay with the tourists. That lasted about 15 minutes as condition told and the visitors went on to make it 19-3 at the break.

There was some measure of consolation for the rugger enthusiasts in the curtain raiser, an Ottawa-Montreal high school seven-a-sides. That win, a comfortable 18-0 conquest, stayed here.

Brian Palleck, recently named Laurentian's outstanding athlete, set the scoring pace with a pair of tries and two converts. Paul Weiss and John Stafford each picked up single major scores and Bruce Arden the extra convert.

Combined Services Tour Ottawa 1965

ARMY

Colours: RED

Capt. M. J. ROSE	(15)	Full back
O/Cdt. J. S. A. JEFFRAY	(14)	Right Wing
Lt. C. G. EDWARDS	(13)	Right Centre
2/Lt. D. S. BOYLE	(12)	Left Centre
Capt. B. McS. HATHORN	(11)	Left Wing
Capt. I. P. REID	(10)	Outside Half
S/Sgt. R. BRAYBROOKE	(9)	Inside Half
		Forwards
Lt. R. D. H. BRYCE	(1)	
Capt. N. S. BRUCE	(2)	
Lt. T. A. MORONEY	(3)	
S/Sgt. P. A. EASTWOOD	(4)	
L/Cpl. L. MARTIN	(5)	
2/Lt. C. G. BALE	(6)	
2/Lt. A. J. HOON	(8)	
2/Lt. C. J. W. GILBERT	(7)	

NEWPORT

Colours: BLACK and AMBER

Full Back	J. ANTHONY	(15)
Right Wing	D. PERROTT	(14)
Right Centre	G. BRITTON	(13)
Left Centre	K. JARRETT	(12)
Left Wing	D. CORNWALL	(11)
Outside Half	D. WATKINS (Capt.)	(10)
Inside Half	J. PALMER	(9)
	Forwards	
	M. WEBBER	(1)
	V. PERRINS	(2)
	R. HAWKESLEY	(3)
	W. MORRIS	(4)
	B. PRICE	(5)
	D. HAINES	(6)
	P. WATTS	(8)
	R. WOODMAN	(7)

Referee: O. P. BEVAN (Merthyr Tydfil)

Next Home Game v. Northampton, Saturday, 25th March, 1967, kick-off 3.30 p.m.

A young Survey Officer Andy Hoon played in this game

During this time at Chepstow 1960-64 I played in all the Army games and was fortunate to play for the Combined Services as well. In 1962 a Tour had been planned to East Africa, North and Southern Rhodesia it meant being away just over 3 weeks. I didn't think I would be able to go as I was teaching at the college and there was no back up for me there, but I need not have worried on the Army Rugby committee was Colonel Kelsey who was in the Survey Directorate, he just posted in a replacement for the time I was away. I think it was Paul Abrams who was inconvenienced. This was a great tour, socially, cultural and some good Rugby, Rhodesia was a fine country with a lot of history, and the trips we had to Victoria falls and up the Zambesi were unforgettable, it also Corresponded with the Lions tour to South Africa, They arrived in Rhodesia to play a warm up game the day before we played Rhodesia, so they watched our match and we were invited to their welcoming function. this worked well for one of our centres who had a brilliant game and although not capped for England went back out to play for the Lions when they had some injuries. The worst part of the tour was a plane breakdown and we ended up in Aden for nearly a week waiting for a flight home, What a place to get stuck in! During my stay in Chepstow I took up golf, this filled in my summer months mainly, although I did manage a game on sundays during the winter, I played at St Pierre golf club and was pleased when I left to have got my name on the honours board by winning one of their major trophies, I have been back on occasions to play and its nice to see the trophy is still played for.

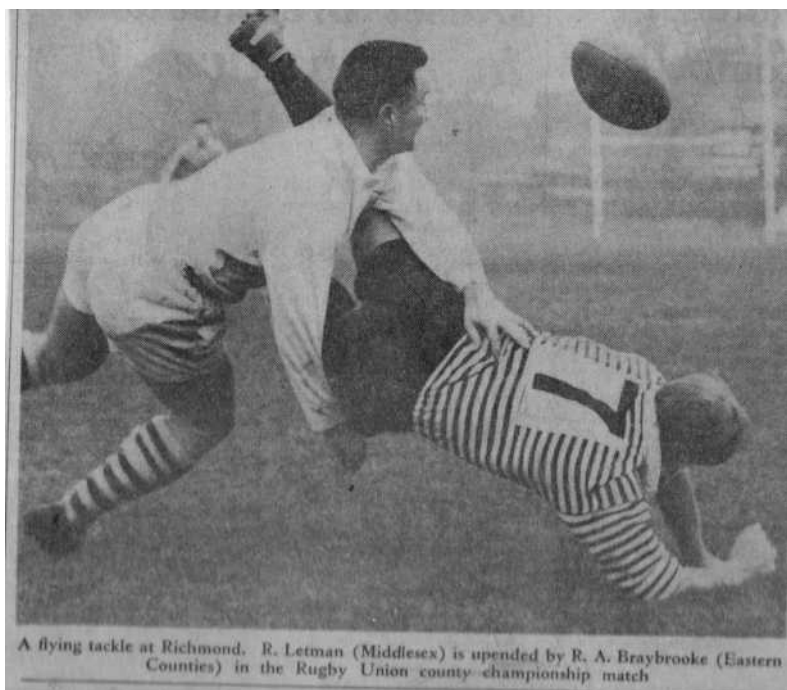
1964 I was posted to 42 Regt at Barton Stacey, I also got married to a local girl before moving so a few changes to my carefree life. I decided not to travel back to Lydney to play, it was August so the start of another season, through playing combined services I had got many Navy friends so I was persuaded to go and play with U.S Portsmouth, they had a strong fixture list against most of the top London clubs. I carried on playing for Eastern Counties for another season then retired from county rugby or so I thought until Hampshire lost their scrum half at the beginning of the season and ask me if I would play, my half back partner at U.S was playing for them so it worked out fine. Eastern Counties had already found a replacement for me so they were happy about it.

I played a few games of rugby at the regiment, but mostly it was hockey, we had a good team there and won quite a few trophies. It also enabled me to keep fit without having to play mid week rugby and get injured or have time to recover before the Saturday games.

I was also invited by the Corps to represent them in some golf matches although I never made it to the inter Corps team. The Corps championships were held at the Cinque Ports club near Deal, one of the toughest links courses in the country.

1965 saw another Combined Services rugby tour to, Nova Scotia, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto and Boston, I was lucky to be selected again as there was only 3 in the party who had played in the Rhodesian tour. The tour wasn't as hard as Rhodesia and we won all our games easily, including the Ontario 7's, it was nice to visit Niagara falls and be able to compare it with Victoria falls. Before the game in Ottawa we were presented to Lord Mountbatten, He was on a world tour before retiring, sadly his retirement didn't last long as he was blown up in a boat by the IRA.

I continued to play for the Army until 1967 although I missed a couple of games in 1966 but got my place back in 1967 I first heard of my posting through the Army rugby, they had been approach by Survey to see if I was required for the following season, I gather their reply was that it was up to me, I had had a good run and would have to take my chance next season. I had no hesitation in taking the posting I was off to Singapore again with promotion to WO2. Also I had been having some knee problems and didn't know if I could survive another season at that level, so it was a good time to bow out. I had almost decided to retire and while in Singapore I could spend more time with my family. Little did I know what was around the corner!



Eastern Counties v Middlesex 1962

A flying tackle at Richmond. R. Letman (Middlesex) is upended by R. A. Braybrooke (Eastern Counties) in the Rugby Union county championship match

1967 Arrived in Singapore in August ready for a relaxing tour! Day two and I received a call from a friend who was on the Army rugby committee. They had heard I had arrived and was wondering if I was going to be playing any rugby? I said I wasn't sure, then they said there was a Combined Services Tour to Western Australia at the end of the season so why not come down to training and see how it goes. So I did and that was the start of 3 years of great rugby and wonderful times. It was almost like I hadn't been away for 7 years. I got straight back in the Army and Combined Services sides, played for All Malaya Services, The South Malaya Combined Services & Civilians Versus the North, and Finally the Singapore National side in the Asian Tournament, the last one being held in Bangkok. We had annual visits to Ceylon(Sri Lanka), Hongkong and Thailand, Singapore was now a popular touring place, so we often had teams from Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and even England played us on their way to Japan.

Out of all the teams I played against out there Fiji was the hardest and I was pleased we didn't play them every week. Japan were the most skillful, that season even England had two close games with them, unfortunately for them size is always going to be a problem.

The Tour to Western Australia was the highlight of my first season, to me its a great country and now I go back every year thanks to my daughter deciding to emigrate 10 years ago.

Through my connections with Singapore Cricket club on my last tour, I was approached and asked if I would like to play for the them, as a serviceman and also non commissioned I wasn't normally allowed to join, even Officers only got a membership through a Block membership from their mess. This was overcome by two of their players proposing and seconding me and the rugby section paying my membership, all I had to do was settle my bar bill at the end of each month. This went through with no problem and so I became a full member of the club, which I am pleased to say I am still a member and go back regularly for reunions. My time at the club I would rate as the happiest period of my life, it is sometimes good to get away from the military environment and socially it couldn't be better.

Up until now I haven't mentioned the knee problem I was having in my last season in UK, with firm grounds and warm weather I was very lucky and had no problems at all, so thanks to the posting my rugby life was extended by 3 years, Normally the tour would have been two and a half years, but due to the Army pulling out of Singapore just eight months after I was due home, I managed to persuade Survey directorate over a game of golf to let me stay on and do the handover, This saved sending someone out for 8 months, although I forget who was due to come, I doubt if he was very happy.

I think I could write a book on Singapore and how it influenced my rugby career, the first tour gave me a lot of experience playing with and against players from different countries, when I got back to UK aged 25 I had the experience to progress to Army, Combined Service and County rugby, this lasted 7 years so when I went back to Singapore as an experienced player it was easy to stay at the top of my game out there.

To help keep fit out there I joined 'Singapore Hash house harriers' This club always met on a monday evening at different venues around the island, each week two members volunteered to find a 5 miles route and lay a trail, it used to be shredded paper, then it had to change to flour, they usually set off an hour before the start so that the trail would be fresh and they could organise the finish with drinks, when all was in we would head for a food house for a meal and drinks. It was great fun and you met up with people from all walks of life. when I first went back to Singapore after leaving the Army I contacted the Hash and joined one of their runs and to my surprise I met up with 5 members who I knew from the old days, The Hash still exist and have clubs worldwide now.



Singapore Services
V Western Australia
Perth, 1968

Ricky Braybrooke making a break



Hash Hpuse Harriers Singapore 1968

(I am leading the rear group)

Singapore Cricket Club 1969



Ricky Braybrooke

Singapore Services - Winners - Malaya Cup 1969



tain Wong Hin Jee.
 Man of the match was without doubt the Services
 scrum-half, Ricky Braybrooke. A former British Army and
 Hampshire player he proved to be the inspiration behind
 this large victory. His penetrative, darting runs round
 the base of the scrum, which brought him three tries, were
 of the highest order.
 Braybrooke and fly-half Ian Matthews formed one of the
 best half-back combinations seen in Malaysia for many a
 year.
 Their loose trio of Val McCarthy, an Irish triallist,
 captain Mike Miller and Peter

1970 I was posted back to SMS, aged 35, it was time to retire from rugby. The School had a good hockey team so I was able to continue playing sport, luckily I got in the team and we enjoyed a lot of success in all the cup competitions. This wasn't the end of my rugby, the Army had just started a Colts side and asked me if I would coach them, I had coached in Singapore so I agreed. During the next 4 years I was able to go on coaching courses run by the Welsh Rugby Union, England RFU and I went as an Observer to the Scottish Coaching conference. Through the RFU I attended more courses and qualified as a Senior Coach, then Staff Coach and finally to be the England Colts Coach, which was a big honour for me and the Army. The Army was able to use my Knowledge and coaching experience, to help them set up a coaching system based on the one the RFU were running, so I spent a lot of my time running courses and also examining potential coaches, this enabled the Army unit coaches to also qualify for the RFU preliminary award. This had its perks as I was able to have some nice trips to BAOR, usually arranged before Xmas to do my duty free shopping. My Service in the Army was also extended by 3 years, conveniently a post was created at SMS as WO1 Training and Development Team, something new to survey but I did get sent on a course to learn what it was all about. It was an interesting job which didn't interfere with my rugby.

Hockey champions complete hat-trick



SCHOOL OF MILITARY SURVEY
ROYAL ENGINEERS
ARMY MINOR UNITS HOCKEY CHAMPIONS 1971/72

Maj Batterham	WO2 Mackenzie	SSgt Gostling	Sgt Farquhar	SSgt Johnson	Lt Wildman	SSgt Evans	WO2 Braybrooke
	Maj Matthews	SSgt Bevis		SSgt Henry		SSgt Percival	

Finally my Army career came to an end in 1977 with no regrets. To show their appreciation the Army made me an 'Honorary Life Vice President' which I am proud to be, if you look at the list which is very select I am at the bottom, a plain 'R. Braybrooke Esq' The only one to this day who was a Non commissioned officer. I still go to Twickenham once a year to be wined and dined before the Army v Navy match a nice perk to have.

When the Mess dined me out, I was presented with a Bronze Sculpture of a 'scrum half', it still holds pride of place on my sideboard. I do have a quiet smile when I look at it and wonder how I managed 25 years in the Army of continual sport. Not a bad life was it?

I would like to add a postscript to say life doesn't end in retirement. I have always believed in fitness and my motto has been "Healthy body, Healthy mind"

When I left the service I continued running to keep fit, at the age of 50 I ran my first Marathon, at 70 I ran my last, only due to having to have a knee replacement, My cartilage went while running a 10k in Sydney. My running helped a lot of charities and gave me a purpose, even at that level there are goals to achieve, all these I managed, under 40 minutes for the 10k, under 90 minutes for the half marathon and under 31/2 hrs for the marathon.

When my wife died I took up golf seriously determined to get to single figures, this I managed 2 years later when I was playing of a 7 handicap, now I play off 14 still with a goal in sight of getting a round in under my age, I am currently 1 stroke off this.

Now with the age of 80 in sight I play golf 3 or 4 times a week, the other days I am in my gym, rowing, cycling or doing weights. It doesn't guarantee eternal life but what I have I can do happily with no regrets.

Ricky Braybrooke Appointed England Rugby Coach

HIGH HONOUR FOR SURVEY WARRANT OFFICER

From School of Military Survey

ONE of the best known characters in Army and Combined Services rugby circles, W.O.1 Ricky Braybrooke, has recently been appointed coach to the England Colts—the under 19 team. This is yet another honour gained in twenty years of distinguished service to rugby.

Enlisting in 1952, he was soon recognised by 1 Training Regiment and within a week of arrival was playing for them in an Army Cup match. He recalls that his half-back partner in that game was Lieut. (now Brigadier) Bill Withall. Owing to injury and numerous moves it was 1954 before he again began to establish himself, since when he has played for the Corps in Egypt in 1954 and 1955, and for the Corps, the Army, the Joint Services Singapore, and the All-Malaya Services between 1957 and 1960. He was in the Corps, the Army, and the United Services teams in the United Kingdom from 1961 to 1967, and from 1967 to 1970 he represented the Corps, the Army and the Joint Services in Singapore as well as playing for the Singapore national team. Along with Capt. Andy Hoon, Capt. Hamish Bryce and the late Lieut. Mike Handfield-Jones, he has gained the most Army caps of any Corps player since records began in 1907.



W.O.1 Ricky Braybrooke



Finishing the London Marathon for the first time under 3 hours 30 minutes, Well worth a smile

Taken from the 'Sapper Magazine' in 1976