



Grenadier Guards Association

FOUNDED 1913

Patron: Her Majesty the Queen

President: Colonel E.H. Houstoun OBE

General Secretary: Major A J Green

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02 November 2011

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT WELLINGTON BARRACKS AT 1400 HRS WEDNESDAY 26 OCTOBER 2011

ATTENDANCE

1. The following were present:

Colonel E H Houstoun OBE	-	President
Mr G Severn	-	Chairman of the Finance Committee
Mr S Vaughan	-	London & Kent Area Representative
Mr Derek Money MBE	-	Southern Area Representative
Mr G Hallam	-	Eastern Area Representative
Mr R E Jones	-	Midland Area Representative
Major J O D Fox	-	Officer Commanding Nijmegen Company
Captain B D Double	-	Life Vice President
WO1 (RSM) G Snazle	-	The Sgt Major 1 st Battalion

2. Apologies were received from:

Brigadier D J H Maddan	-	The Lieutenant Colonel (Away on Duty)
Lt Colonel P R Holcroft OBE	-	Financial Advisor
Major G V A Baker	-	Director of Welfare & Regimental Adjutant
Major R G Woodfield MBE	-	Western Area Representative
Lt Colonel J M H Bowder MBE	-	Commanding Officer 1 st Battalion
Lt Colonel T J Tedder	-	Life Vice President

3. Major (Retd) A J Green the General Secretary was also in attendance.

OPENING REMARKS

4. **Welcome.** The President opened the meeting by welcoming all those present and expressing his thanks for their attendance. He reserved a special welcome for the Sgt Major of the 1st Battalion and Major James Fox the new Nijmegen Company Commander. Colonel Houstoun went on to describe the agenda as busy and one which would emphasise our investments and how we manage our money, Welfare, the 'Reames' Association Survey and the usual update on affairs and business of the Regiment and Battalion.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 28TH OCTOBER 2010

5. The President made the following observations:

a. The Colonel's Fund 'snapshots' at Para 25 were really not for discussion at Association meetings but invaluable **for information**, particularly in relation to expenditure. He related that he was always asked interested and concerned questions at Branch gatherings, so had asked the General Secretary, with Colonel Holcroft's permission, to produce a 6 monthly summary describing expenditure in general terms, for example:

- 1) Modifications to cars and houses.
- 2) The 'take-up' of Investment advice.
- 3) Holidays for the bereaved and seriously injured.
- 4) Financial support for families whilst their Grenadier is still in hospital.
- 5) Assistance in combating PTSD.

b. Colonel Houstoun described the above as just a 'snapshot' of the many calls on the Fund, but said that they will help us all to gain a perspective of why continual support for the Fund, is so utterly worthwhile.

c. Without wanting to pre-empt Financial Sub-Committee thunder he made reference to the discussion to follow with regard to raising the Branch external audit level which had been proposed at the last AGM in March. He hoped that if should such a move be agreed that it would save the majority of branches from this expensive requirement in the future. He did however state that this would not exonerate these branches from internal audits and all branches from the production of immaculate accounts in the correct format on time every year to the General Secretary.

d. The President also confirmed that there was still a need to nominate an Executive Committee member for the North Midlands Area vice Mel Robins but that a potential candidate for the Northern Area, Major Michael 'Bones' Owen who may be known to some would be approached to fill that particular vacancy. He also said that he would appreciate any further nominations from the Executive Committee.

6. **Proposition.** It was proposed by Mr G Hallam and seconded by Mr D Money MBE that the minutes as read be accepted as a true and accurate record: **CARRIED.**

REVIEW OF INVESTMENTS

7. In the absence of the Financial Advisor, Lt Colonel P R Holcroft OBE, the President briefed the committee with regard to the present state of the market as supplied by Cazenove Capital Management as follows:

8. **Valuation.** As at 30 September 11 the Association funds with Cazenove Capital Management were valued at £1,148,483. The income requirement of £36,000 has been met from the yield of the portfolio and at these levels we believe this is a sustainable demand on the portfolio.

9. **Performance.** Over the last twelve months to 30 September 11 the performance was -0.9% and over the same period the FTSE 100 returned -4.4% and the FTSE All World ex UK -4.9%.

10. **Commentary.** A year ago we thought that a setback in markets was possible and, in particular, had little confidence that the UK consumer was capable of driving a recovery in the economy and we therefore adopted a defensive stance in the portfolios, i.e. we have been underweight in equities and owned defensive holdings where we did hold equities. In the UK this meant favouring blue chip companies who derived the majority of their earnings from overseas. While this cost performance at the end of last year when the US announced a further round of quantitative easing it meant that the portfolios were relatively well positioned for the set back in markets this summer.

11. As has been reported earlier, we believe in the long term growth stories of Emerging Markets and the Far East but these are currently better accessed through western companies who have interests in these regions. We therefore continue to favour the developed markets and in particular the US and core European markets. Whilst the markets are looking to the European politicians for some firm leadership and a definitive plan to counter the debt crisis there are still good quality companies within the Eurozone and we have recently slightly increased the exposure to this area at the expense of the United States, which has held up relatively well.

12. Our outlook remains largely unchanged. The large swings in the market are being caused by concerns about the strength of the global recovery and the lack of decisive leadership by the politicians countered by the fact that, on valuation grounds, many shares look cheap - equities are now yielding more than government bonds which either means that equities are undervalued or government bonds are overpriced. We remain cautious but on signs of a resolution to the European debt crisis would increase the risk in the portfolio as opportunities arise.

THE DIRECTOR OF WELFARE'S REPORT

13. In the absence of the Director of Welfare the General Secretary reported as follows:

14. **Introduction.** The Association budget continues to support Grenadiers (and their families) in need in a variety of ways. Grants have again included Supplementary Benefits, Holidays for the Elderly, and substantial financial support in the form of Individual Welfare Grants to past and present Grenadiers. The Colonel's Fund continues to be the source of much needed and very welcome support to the bereaved families of those killed on recent operations and to those who have suffered physical and mental injury. The employment of Mr Andy Hill as the Regimental Casualty Officer is proving to be a great success.

15. Much of the Association's expenditure is supported by an annual grant from regimental funds which is currently £50,000.00

16. **Supplementary Benefits.** This benefit is paid at £7.50/week, £97.50/quarter, £390/year; currently 31 people are in receipt of this allowance. Recent spends:

a.	2009	£18,629.00
b.	2010	£16,613.00
c.	2011	£13,162.50 (to date)

17. **Holidays for the Elderly.** The annual budget is to be increased to £12,000.00 for 2012. Recent spends:

a.	2009	30 pers	£6638.00
b.	2010	20 pers	£7351.00
c.	2011	27 pers	£11,080.00 (not including a 5% rebate which is yet to be received).

18. **Christmas Gifts.**

a.	2009	£9400.00 (470 applicants at £20/head).
b.	2010	£8340.00 (417 applicants at £20/head).

19. **Individual Welfare Grants.** Grants have been made as follows:

	2009	2010	2011 (to date)
Total requests	121	98	100
New cases	95	70	70
Repeat requests	26	28	30
Home Imp	10	10	20
Mobility	37	22	17
Brown/White Goods	18	20	23
Debt relief	28	20	13
Misc	28	26	27
Total Cost	£40,622	£36,364	£32,985

20. **Gulf War Illness.** We are monitoring 11 cases. These are reviewed as regularly as required and at least once/year.

21. **The Silver Jubilee Trust Fund and the Guards Home Fund.** These two funds have now been incorporated into The Household Division Welfare Fund. The terms of reference of the new fund are to be confirmed (and possibly widened). There have been no requests for grants from this fund during 2011.

22. **The Colonel's Fund.** Detailed figures will be available after the next Colonel's Fund meeting on 01 November. The majority of welfare grants made from the fund continue to be for:

- a. Mobility aids/improvement.
- b. Home modifications.
- c. Career/family loss of earnings.
- d. Bereaved family & injured personnel holidays.
- e. Financial advice.

FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

23. The Chairman of the Finance Sub-Committee briefly reported on a successful meeting held earlier in the morning the details of which would be published in the minutes

24. The one recommendation that he brought to this meeting was, as mentioned earlier, that the Branch external audit level be raised from the present level of £7,500 to £12,500. This recommendation was agreed by the Executive Committee.

25. Further debate ensued with regard to the take up of Charitable Allowances and it was agreed that they qualifying criteria should be reinforced to Branches and that full use should be made of the allowance for those in need and that qualify. The requirement to look at the rate at which it is paid was raised by Captain Double and the General Secretary agreed to review it.

THE REGIMENTAL ADJUTANT'S REPORT

26. In the absence of the Regimental Adjutant the President reported as follows:

27. Almost immediately after the 1st Battalion's move to Lille Barracks Aldershot in March, it was heavily committed to work up training for Ex PRAIRIE THUNDER in Canada. The exercise was a great success, marred only by a field firing accident in which LSgt Smith, acting as Range Safety, was shot and badly wounded, losing a leg. An awful accident mindful of the realism of training these days.

28. In early August, Lt Col Roly Walker, DSO handed over command of the Battalion to Lt Col James Bowder, MBE. The Battalion is now starting its pre-deployment training for Op HERRICK 16, and was scheduled to deploy to Afghanistan in Mar 12. However, because the Battalion has been given the task of taking over from the Danish Battalion that is being withdrawn, this has been brought forward with the Command and G4 teams deploying in mid-Jan followed by the remainder of the Battalion towards the end of Feb. So less than 2 years since Op Herrick 11; our last deployment to Afghanistan.

29. Nijmegen Company moved from Woolwich to Wellington Barracks where it joined No 7 Coy COLDM GDS and F Coy SG as part of the London Central Garrison. The Company found No 4 Guard for the Queen's Birthday Parade

30. During summer leave a team of 12 (with a support team of 5) from the Company, led by their intrepid Company Commander, Major Rupert King-Evans, bicycled from Lands End to John O' Groats, covering the 892 miles in 11 days. The Ride was in aid of the Colonel's Fund and the Team raised in the region of £8k net of all costs. A fantastic effort.

31. Major Rupert King-Evans has now handed over command of the Company to Major James Fox.

32. The Regiment is still well recruited with both Officers and Guardsmen, and hovers around full strength. 6 Officer vacancies last year with 20 applicants. 48 recruits at Catterick and Harrogate under training; with a further 25 in the 'Recruiter's' pipeline. However, the Regiment's deployable strength is still a concern and efforts continue to be made to improve this statistic. You should be aware that in November 2012, recruiting will be outsourced to a civilian organisation.

33. The Band has been extremely busy supporting the Regiment throughout the year. Captain Mike Smith, a former Bandmaster of the Regimental Band is now the Director of Music. In July the Band performed at the Modena and Basel Military Tattoos, both of which were most successful and much enjoyed.

34. The main event for RHQ amongst other pressures has been the organisation for Betty Blue Eyes, which raised £90k for The Colonel's Fund. I would like to pay tribute to those many individual members of the Association and Branches who have contributed, often, I suspect, giving rather more than they can truly afford. It is so much appreciated. The Fund continues to offer support and help to bereaved families, the families of those who have been wounded, and of course to the wounded themselves.

35. This support (and I would say that it is **THE** most valuable support that The Colonel's Fund offers) is being delivered by the Regimental Casualty Officer, Andy Hill (formerly RQMS RHQ) who assumed the appointment in the Autumn of 2010. He has been busy with all aspects of welfare all the time increasing his knowledge and contacts in the Welfare "world", and particularly in providing support to bereaved families. Some families still have uncertainty about the circumstances of their son's/husband's death (often caused by erroneous media reports, thoughtless comments by individuals, books on Afghanistan etc), and Andy Hill has been instrumental in setting up meetings, chaired by the Commanding Officer, between the bereaved family concerned and those who were involved with the death; the purpose of these meetings is not to re-run the inquest, but to answer the "nagging" concerns straight from the horse's mouth in an a more informal setting. These meetings have been well-received.

36. Regimental Remembrance Sunday will be held on Sunday 20th May 2012 and will follow the normal format. Grenadier Day is likely to take place at Lille Barracks Aldershot on Sunday 1st July.

37. Remember to keep the whole of July 2013 free in your diaries for the Centenary celebrations, the Queen's Company Inspection by HM the Queen, the presentation of New Colours to the Nijmegen Company and our Garden Party and ALL on the same day.

38. In summary, the Regiment is in good heart and in good shape.

39. **Battalion and Nijmegen Company Update.** The Sgt Major and Major Fox were invited by the President to give a short personal update and they did so in a most positive and informative manner which was greatly appreciated by the other committee members.

THE ASSOCIATION SURVEY

40. Colonel Houston updated the committee as follows:

41. The Association Survey (The Reames Report) was completed by a quite excellent 1,204 serving and retired Grenadiers and highlighted that first and foremost, there is a tremendous loyalty to the Regiment and a strong desire to support an Association and see it flourish. Traditions and standards are held dear, but that these should not be impediments to progress and a vibrant Association.

42. He related that there was a general desire for modernisation and change, less formality and more variety to widen our appeal. There is also acknowledgement that those who have kept it so alive over the last decades should have neither their views nor interests ignored. However, the time for change, hastened by technology and how we communicate, has come.

43. The Feedback from the Survey he stated really condensed into 4 main areas or themes:

- a. Closer integration between the Association and the Regiment and more particularly, the First Battalion.
- b. Better use of technology to communicate.
- c. Widening the appeal of Events.
- d. Improved support on transition to civilian life.

44. The President concentrated briefly on the first of these themes (Integration) with the following comments:

- a. Technology, is not a substitute for personal involvement it is a crucial modern bridge to help involvement on its way.
- b. We must establish and build interest and links as early as possible with serving Grenadiers and the Association creating a sense of “family established”. We need to build relationships to describe what the Association is, how it works and what it can offer (A ‘Flier’ in the early days of recruit training, but particularly when they leave).
- c. The Battalion needs to focus more – Branch visits to the Battalion, a notice board showing events with key contacts on the board, telling young Guardsmen of their ‘home town’ Association contacts. Invite the Association to more events, rugby/football/boxing, the Nairac Cup for example. Make Grenadier Day a real focus for the year and not just a ‘fatigue’, for serving Grenadiers.
- d. ‘Leavers’ could be published in the Gazette (Freedom of Information permitting) with the essential contact details but essentially we must encourage Grenadiers to feel that from the moment he joins there is a useful conduit to what could be for him a thoroughly useful organisation – The Association. The Regimental web site is a key adjunct to communication but we are also picking up the use of Facebook as the catalyst for several informal gatherings of younger, recently retired Grenadiers in the last few months. Perhaps, each Branch should have its own Facebook address, easy to administer and an accepted form of communication, in this day and age.

e. Whatever, when young(ish) men turn to the Association perhaps some years after leaving the Regiment we must not harp-on about falling standards with those who have done more operational tours than most. Some, and only some branches, are seen as stuffy, rank conscious and almost a carbon copy of the social hierarchy of a Mess, with far too much formality.

45. In concluding his comments on this theme of integration he confirmed that a party from Regimental Headquarters was to the First Battalion on the 21st of November to take the process forward.

46. The President finished away from the Survey, by emphasising that the Change we will institute will in 'no way' upset the status quo in relation to our surviving branches. A regional approach to the structure of the Association will have its place in the future but only when it is required.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

47. Mr Hallam kindly thanked LSgt Ellingham and the General Secretary for planning and executing such an enjoyable battlefield Tour to Italy in September. His comment was gratefully received.

48. The Sgt Major requested that he be informed of any letters to serving Officers or Sgts' Mess members from branches that went unanswered.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

49. Subject to confirmation it was agreed that the next meeting would be held prior to the next AGM on Saturday 24 March 2012.

CLOSURE

50. There being no further business to discuss the President closed the meeting at 1520 hrs.

Andrew Green

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