



The NetWorker

Newsletter of The Pen & Sword Club. Issue No. 1, October 2008

At the request of a significant number of members a concerted effort is being made to revive and upgrade the activities of the Pen & Sword Club. To this end Colonel Mike Peters has been asked by the club committee to undertake planning for the move forward.

In the last few years the Pen & Sword Club has met nationally a number of times, the most successful being the House of Commons annual dinners. However, elsewhere, there has been a diminishing range of events and our support and connections with The Media Operations Group (V) have somewhat fallen by the wayside.

Regionalisation

Says Mike: "Our membership is widely dispersed and purely national events are not the best way to move ahead. I have approached a number of the club members with the idea of regionalisation. As a consequence we now have two full chapters of the Club established with Colonel Bob Purvis working as Regional Chairman for Wales and The Marches and Lt. Colonel Graham Barnett moving into the same role in The Westcountry.

Already Bob Purvis, together with Major Mervyn Wynne-Jones, who has volunteered to be secretary and treasurer of the region, has held a club weekend near Ross-on-Wye in Herefordshire which gave a whole hearted seal of approval

to the new system. As well as regional members, Roger Goodwin from Preston and Mike Peters travelled to join in.

Sue Nelmes has volunteered to be secretary and treasurer of The Westcountry region and she and Graham are well into planning for the area with an emphasis on 2009 onwards.

In the South East a number of members have been contacted to see if there is a volunteer to run the region and the Midlands and the North are next on the list.

Media Operations Group (V)

In his role of link person with the unit, Mike has also been in touch with Colonel Alistair Bruce and the Commanding Officer, Lt. Colonel Tim Purbrick to improve contact between the club and the unit. The approach has been well received and we are working with the CO to establish the best way ahead.

On a personal note of contact Mike has also presented a new trophy for competition in the unit alongside the Alan Protheroe Bayonet. The Bayonet is presented to the officer who has made the most significant contribution in the year.

MOG (V) is now an all ranks unit and Mike has presented an antique Silver Bugle that will go annually to the unit's champion shot. Mike's Bugle was originally presented to the Bugle Major of the Somerset Light Infantry after the Second World War and has been in regimental use until recent times.

Tim has already offered a number of ideas that are being discussed and one includes an opportunity for the club to visit the new Headquarters at Kingston – on-Thames to see the unit and its highly equipped press information centres. Older members of the club will be surprised at the new Ministry of Defence approach to the unit which now has equipment once long sought by the TAPIO Pool. The unit is supported by a full permanent staff.

Incidentally the new MOG (V) tie has appeared around the necks of many club members. Have you got yours? Requests to Major Doreen Cadwallader at Soldier Magazine.

The club is also working with the unit on the production of a joint Christmas card. Major Doug McArthur who runs a successful design and print service in Abergavenny is looking at how this card can be adapted for a number of uses including greetings and invitations.

The Networker

This first issue of The Networker is the precursor, we hope, to an internet based news sheet and a club web site. At this time Majors Paul Doughty and Alan Frost have their heads together to see how quickly we can produce our own password protected site.

We hope that the newsletter will stand up to its name because one of the reasons for the success of the club has been the networking between members which has produced interesting results. Not only has it led to social outings like trips to Paris and battlefield tours it has also resulted in an exchange of consultancies and some “ nice little earners “ between those who are still practicing their communications skills. Others have benefitted from references and advice on communications and business matters.

Any ideas for The Networker or the club web site will be gratefully received. Please contact Paul if you can contribute! We want The Networker and the web site to carry stories of what club members and the unit are doing now. To help old comrades stay in, or re-establish, contact with those who once shared a vital and recognised role in the Army and had fun doing so.

Luncheon Club

Members should be aware that members who regularly travel to London have been meeting on the first Tuesday of each month in the Army & Navy Club off Pall Mall. This get-together is highly successful and lasts usually no more than two hours but is an opportunity for an inexpensive lunch and a few drinks. Any member who would like to drop in is welcome provided they contact either Mike Peters or Lt. Colonel Lawrie Phillips beforehand. The club is a secure environment and we have to make appropriate arrangements.

On November 29 some 16 members will start their Christmas season with a black tie dinner at The Rag.

Planning 2009

We are currently putting together a diary of events for 2009 as an essential tool to meet our aspirations. The committee emphasise that they would like to see as many members as possible at any of the events but recognise that to achieve a 100 per cent attendance is impossible. Therefore, events will be planned well in advance and with some exceptions the number of places available will have to be limited. This is so that we avoid last minute cancellations.

Regional events are in the planning as well and the whole 2009 diary will be published as soon as possible.

At national level you can expect to see an annual dinner in either the House of Commons or the House of Lords which will be jointly arranged with the Media Operations Group. This will be an ideal opportunity to catch up with old friends but also with the serving members who are doing such sterling work in places like Iraq and Afghanistan.

Also planned nationally is a battlefield tour to Normandy and a repeat of the April in Paris trip which proved so popular with the partners of the small group who took the champagne journey on The Shuttle.

Attendance at the 2009 annual Remembrance Day Parade, where we hope to march alongside our Second World War counterparts – the Army Film and Photographic Unit is being discussed. We also hope to lunch with them and, perhaps, get a presentation of their work during the war.

We are looking at an idea of a week end, or slightly longer, trip to see the Le Mans Classic sports car meeting. This is very near the scene of the battles of the Falaise Pocket and we could take this as a great opportunity. There are a number of classic and sports car enthusiasts in the Club including the President, Colonel Hugh Colver. We welcome contact from anyone who would like to consider this outing,

Colonel Martin Newman, who is looking at events which may attract the Midlands and Northern Groups in the club, is a regular attendee at many of the defence exhibitions and the club will be asking him how we could include these in our diary. Also on the list are Beating Retreat on Horse Guards and we wait to hear if the rumour that the Royal Tournament is to be revived is true. This year some attended the Army v Navy cricket match at Lords and the rugby at Twickenham.

If there are any archery enthusiasts in the club please let us know. We may have a surprise up our collective sleeves?

It's Your Club

To paraphrase Senator Kennedy. Ask not what your club can do for you. But what can you do for your club.

If you have any solid or vague ideas, thoughts, or you want to volunteer to help please contact Colonel Mike Peters on 01202 559950 or michaelpcoms@btinternet.com.

Otherwise consult your regional chairman and discuss your suggestions.

We want to make 2009 the best year ever for the Pen & Sword Club – help us do so.