

The Welch Fusilier

February 2007

R.W.F. Comrades Association,
Aberystwyth Branch Newsletter

No. 4

Presentation to Mr Richie Evans



Mr Richie Evans receiving his medal for long service to the comrades. Presenting Richie with his certificate and medal is Mr Martyn Thomas.

Welcome Comrades to the 4th newsletter.

Firstly to those comrades that did not attend the annual draw in Aberystwyth recently, what a good night you missed.

I would like to thank those of you who have given articles for this issue of our newsletter. We have a few interesting stories from members and some very interesting photographs from the past. Please keep up the good work and send more in. The web site is receiving large amounts of hits with other comrades reading our newsletter. Please put pen to paper and support us.

If you have a story, please e-mail your word file or text to myself at,

mikebinks05@aol.com.

or by post to Sunnybank, Pendre, Llanbadarn Fawr,
Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, Wales SY23 3SZ.

Mike Binks (Editor).

The Black Cat

Photographed in The Black Cat, Plymouth in 1963 is Sgt. Roy Bedington and L/Cpl Bill Williams, then part of "B" Coy 6/7th Bn. R.W.F. T.A. based in Aberystwyth

L/Cpl B. Williams was a serving soldier in the R.A.'s during the 2nd World War Coastal Defence.



St. David's Day Dinner

The branch secretary Mr. Paul Hinge has had official confirmation in writing that Lt./Col Leader will be our Chief Guest on 10 March 2007.

Our annual St. David's Day dinner that will be held at Plas Antaron in Penparcau

Were you on parade for the 300th Anniversary

An interesting topic was held in the bar by JCT Morris at a recent meeting.

Members were wondering how many people that were on parade at Powys Castle that were not Royal Welch Cap badged. i.e. Cooks, REME. etc.

Do you know anyone, then write to the editor.

R.W.F.
Comrades
Branch Aberystwyth

New Executive 2007/08

Executive
Committee Officers:

President –
Mr Ron Taylor

Chairman –
Mr Mike Binks
(Also Editor of Newsletter)
E-mail: mikebinks05@aol.com

Vice-Chairman -
Mr J C T (Colwyn) Morris

Treasurer –
Mr Peter (Sam) Lansley

Welfare Officer–
Mr John Bitchell
01970 624863

Hon. Secretary –
Mr Paul Hinge
10 Tregerddan
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**Next
Meeting Dates:**

RWFCA Executive 16th February
(Secretary on Executive)
28th February Branch Meeting
10th March St David's Day
Dinner
22nd March RWFCA Secretaries
Meeting Newtown
28th March Branch Meeting
25th April Branch Meeting
23rd May Branch Meeting

Xmas Draw 2006



A grand feast was had by all during the annual draw at the naval club.

Btn. Visit to Aberystwyth.

During the celebrations for St. David's Day, Lt./ Col Leader will also be in Aberystwyth for the weekend with 3Btn members. They will be marching through Aberystwyth and will have a display on the prom during the weekend. It is hoped that the leek eating ceremony will be conducted by members of the unit.

Newletter articles from members

Please note that the committee members of the RWFCA and its members are not responsible for any article submitted to them by fellow comrades, the contents of any such articles or photographs.

It accepts no liability for any work submitted that is published.



Mr Peter (Sam) Lansley and Maelor Evans churning the drum for the raffle tickets during the draw.



Colour Version on the W.W.W.

If you have a computer you can view the newsletter as an electronic publication in full colour on the R.W.F. web site. You must register to use.
www.rwf-forum.co.uk

MY FIRST JUMP

by Terry Weston

Yes, I thought the title would create interest. However, this narrative is about my first parachute jump which took place on 17th April 1976.

The idea of going parachuting had been on my mind for some time and I decided to make enquiries before committing myself. I therefore contacted Sue Kunicka (Hon Sec of the Hereford Parachute Club) at Shobdon Airfield for details. Before training could take place I was told I had to have a medical, be kitted out, and of course pay the appropriate fees.

The medical was straightforward. I had by now been with the 3rd Bn R.W.F. for five years and was as fit as I had ever been. However, my Doctor also had to complete a form to assess my mental stability. The last question was "In your opinion is the person being assessed of sound mind". I can remember Dr Roberts looking at me after reading the question. He hesitated and then came out with a classic line. "Quite frankly Terry, I think anyone who wants to jump out of a plane is nuts." Nevertheless he completed the form. As I was leaving he made a comment I will never forget. "Terry, when you are old and grey at least you will not sit there wishing you had gone parachuting, you will never live in the land of vain regrets."

My attention was now turned to obtaining the kit required. In essence this consisted of head protection, a coverall or overall without buttons or fastenings that could snag the parachute lines, and sturdy boots to support the ankles. I borrowed a crash helmet off a friend in work, bought cheap white overalls from Peacocks and decided my boots D.M.S. were ideal for the job. I was ready to roll.

I sent off the appropriate paper work and fee and received confirmation of my booking. The training course started on a Friday afternoon and the first jump was scheduled for the following Sunday. The first event was a check of kit to ensure the safety requirements were met. To my surprise I found out my fellow students were kitted out in what appeared to me the latest fashions with multi-coloured jumpsuits incorporating huge diagonal brass zips and flared trousers. The instructor (Les Melhuish ex Parachute Regt) took one look at me and asked if I was there to paint the huts.

We were then briefed on the training programme and told that we would be packing our own 'chutes for jumping. We were also told that all instructions were to be acted on immediately and if we were not happy with these arrangements we were free to leave. Nobody did !.

After this introduction I expected a high-tech training programme to be implemented (big mistake). We started off by climbing up a step ladder supported by two fellow students and jumping off it. After a few bumps and bruises Les explained that we were not landing correctly and we needed to roll on hitting the ground so that the impact of landing was absorbed. The ideal was to keep ones legs together and, on touch down, to roll so that ankle, calf, thigh, hip, arm, shoulder hit the ground in sequence.

Les cheerfully told us the actual landing was similar to what one would expect if one jumped off the back of a lorry doing 20 m.ph. Now who, in their right mind, would want to do that? This training continued until we were so battered and bruised the fun element had ceased.

At this stage Les thought it would be a good idea to show us the aircraft we would be using. I assumed we would be using a custom built aircraft (another mistake). We were taken to an ancient Cessna 182 which had static line attachments fitted to the floor. Yes, the floor, not at all like the movies. One door had been removed, and a foot square plate had been fitted above the landing wheel and beneath the wing strut. Les explained that we would go up aloft in groups of three. On the way up to 3,600 feet we would check our static lines and mentally go through our exit drills,

A lot of attention was given to the exit drill as no-one, least of all me, wanted a cock-up. After climbing to 3,600 feet and dropping a marker the pilot would level off and fly at about 140 knots. He would then cut the throttle so that the air speed dropped to about 80 knots. This is where the real fun was to begin.

It was explained that as the plane was throttled back the instructor would shout "Go". At this point one had to reach out through the doorway to grab the wing strut while at the same time placing one foot on the aforementioned plate. in a continuous motion the trailing foot also had to be placed on the plate. The next move was to look back into the cockpit and, on a signal from Les, push oneself away from the plane. Les emphasised that all this activity had to be completed as quickly as possible as at 80 knots the plane was close to stalling speed. Having done his best to put us off parachuting he decided we would have a fun afternoon learning how to pack parachutes.

This was accomplished by first unpacking a parachute and then stage by stage re-packing it. Each stage was recorded as completed on a card, signed by the packer and, if the job had been done properly, counter-signed by Les. We all agreed that packing ones own parachute certainly concentrated the mind.

This was followed by emergency drills. If the parachute we had packed failed to open then we were to utilise the emergency 'chute which (high tech again) was of World War 2 vintage. If that also failed we were told we were on our own.

Sunday morning arrived and we students stood around assuring each other that everything would be alright whilst silently hoping the weather would deteriorate - it did not.

The moment of truth eventually arrived and three of us clambered into the plane. I was last in so would be first out. As the plane climbed I checked my static line and pulled my sky diving goggles down over my face. This action made me virtually blind as my glasses steamed up. I couldn't see my hand in front of my face let alone anything or anyone else. This crisis was resolved by lifting the corner of my goggles to equalise the temperature.

As we levelled out Les tapped me on the shoulder and give me a reassuring thumbs up. The pilot throttled back and Les shouted "Go" so I went. As per training I started counting "one thousand, two thousand, three thousand, four thous....THWACK. I raised my head to check the deployed chute and there was a beautiful, beautiful, 28 foot double L canopy above me. I reached for the toggles in front of me and slowly pulled one down. I was in charge now and wanted to enjoy the descent.

I landed safely to be told that my exit was not as per the manual. Quite frankly I wasn't unduly concerned,

after all I was still alive and in one piece. I gathered up my 'chute in the prescribed manner and started the long walk back to the rigging shed to

prepare for my second jump.....but that's another story.

Terry Weston 28/11/06

Royal Welch Fusiliers Comrades Association

The AGM of the RWFCA Aberystwyth Branch took place on Wednesday 24th January 2007 at the R.N.A. Club, Market Street, Aberystwyth.

The minutes of the previous AGM were passed and the election of officers for 2007 took place:

Branch President 2007	Mr Ron Taylor
Chairman 2007	Mr Mike Binks
Vice-Chair 2007	Mr J.C.T. Morris
Hon. Secretary	Mr Paul Hinge
Treasurer	Mr Peter Lansley
Welfare Officer	Mr John Bitchell
Standard Bearer	Mr Stephen Evans

A full executive meeting followed the AGM where arrangements for the St David's Day Dinner on 10th March were discussed together with other internal issues of concern to the membership.

All members are encouraged to make every effort to attend. Returns for the St David's Day Dinner would be appreciated as soon as possible.

Next Meeting will take place in the R.N.A. Club Market Street, Aberystwyth on Wednesday 28th February at 2000hrs.

XMAS DRAW

The branch would like to thank all members for all the hard work undertaken for the Annual Xmas Draw.

Special thanks to the ladies for preparing the food, the Naval Club for use of their facilities and most of all, to all those members that turned up for the draw night.

Branch Meeting's

Branch meets on the 4th Wednesday in the month at the Royal Naval Club, Market Street, Aberystwyth, at 20.00hrs.



Photographed is Mr Maelor Evans, who outsold everyone by selling the most draw tickets.