THE SAPPER CHARITY

Royal Engineers Association

Newsletter

News and events from across the Corps and Sapper Family

November 2026



Many of you will have taken part in Remembrance events over recent weeks. It has been particularly encouraging to see the Sapper Family so well represented, not only in London but at services and commemorations across the UK. The presence of serving personnel and veterans remains important: honouring those who have served, engaging with local communities and, of course, catching up with old friends.

The photographs below capture a moving Armistice Day service at Brompton Barracks, attended by the Corps Colonel and Corps Sergeant Major, alongside members of the wider Sapper Family. Throughout this edition, we also showcase photographs submitted by branch members and volunteers, reflecting Remembrance activity across the country.

We will remember them.













This month, we share the story of Stuart Mendleson, whose life changed dramatically following injuries sustained on Operation HERRICK 11. His experience is a reminder of why our support matters. With working-age veterans expected to account for almost half of the veteran population by the end of the decade, the need for lifelong support remains as important as ever.

We also welcome the newest members of the Corps who recently received their Stable Belts at Minley, marking an important milestone in their Royal Engineer careers and connection to Corps traditions. Elsewhere, you will find details of events and activities planned for 2027, offering opportunities to stay connected in the year ahead.

We were delighted to receive six nominations for this year's REA Badge of Merit. Those selected will be confirmed following consideration by the Operations Committee in December.

As always, we are enormously grateful for your continued support. Your generosity enabled us to provide more than £24,000 in benevolence support during October alone, helping serving and veteran Sappers and their families when they needed it most.

Finally, look out for the launch of this year's Sapper Charity Calendar, celebrating the people, history and spirit of the Royal Engineers while raising funds for our community.

With Christmas approaching, the elves are also hard at work preparing this year's Spot the Difference, quiz and festive word search. Watch this space!











REMEMBERING TOGETHER

This page showcases just some of the incredible dedication shown by our branch members, volunteers and supporters throughout this year's Remembrance commemorations.

From the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey and Sappers marching at the Cenotaph, to remembrance events organised by our branches in Liverpool, Leeds & Wakefield, and countless acts of remembrance carried out by our amazing volunteers across the country, we are proud to share your efforts.

Thank you for helping to honour and remember the service, sacrifice and contribution of the men and women of the Royal Engineers community.

We always enjoy receiving your photographs and sharing your stories on our social media channels. If you have pictures from a remembrance event, parade or commemoration, we'd love to hear from you.

Please send them to **marcom@reahq.org.uk**

Together, we ensure that their service is never forgotten.








Support The Sapper Charity at no extra cost this Christmas through EASYFUNDRAISING!

Simply sign up, shop online as normal, and participating retailers will donate to the charity on your behalf.

Find out more and sign up by clicking **here.**

WELCOMING THE NEWEST SAPPERS

HAN ALPHA TROOP






JEMAPPES ALPHA TROOP






This month has seen a number of Stable Belt Parades at Hawley Hard, welcoming more than 50 new Sappers into the Corps. What an incredible milestone!

Everyone at The Sapper Charity would like to extend a warm welcome and our heartfelt congratulations to all the new Sappers as you begin your Royal Engineer journey. We wish you every success and look forward to seeing all that you will achieve in the years ahead.

We'd also like to congratulate all of the prize winners who were recognised for their hard work, dedication and outstanding achievements.

Welcome to the Corps! Be sure to check out our social media channels for a closer look at the celebrations and highlights from the parades.

Standard Bearers Workshop

It's more than likely that you will have seen the Standards of the British Legion and our very own REA Standards on remembrance parades. Standards are a tangible, visible link to the Corps. Not only are they paraded at civic occasions but more poignantly at funerals for Sappers.

The head office often receives feedback saying how much it meant to have the standard bearer present. And it's the presence which we are keen to maintain.

So if you want to learn the tricks of the trade, represent the Sapper Family sign up for the Standard bearers Workshop taking place at Chetwyn Barracks on Saturday 23rd, 10:00hrs-1500hrs.
For more information contact:

philip.tatterton@reahq.org.uk

Burns Supper

The REA Burns Supper (Open to REA Members and the Serving Corps) is taking place on the 23rd January at Chetwyn Barracks.

To find out more scan the QR Code:

Benevolence to Branch Members

Branch members (Less international branches and Ubique members) are able to request benevolence directly from the Sapper Charity Case Worker.

To find out more watch the video at the QR code:


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We're Still Here:

Sapper Stu Mendelson's Mission to Keep Veterans Connected

As the nation pauses this November to remember those who have served and sacrificed, it's also a time to recognise the veterans who continue to carry the lasting impact of service long after their military careers have ended. Few stories highlight that reality more powerfully than that of veteran Royal Engineer, Stu Mendelson. Stu served in the Corps from 2005 to 2010, deploying to Afghanistan with 39 Engineer Regiment during one of the most intense periods of Op HERRICK. Looking back on why he joined the Corps, the answer is straightforward.

"The Engineers were the Army's builders. It just felt right."

Like many Sappers, he was drawn to the Corps by its strong sense of purpose, teamwork, challenge and skill. That sense of camaraderie would become especially important in 2009, when Stu's life changed forever. While serving as part of an Explosive Methods of Entry team in Afghanistan, Stu sustained catastrophic injuries in an IED blast, resulting in the loss of his right eye. He was evacuated through Camp Bastion before returning to the UK. Remarkably, in the immediate aftermath, his focus wasn't on himself.

"I remember worrying that I'd somehow let the team down. My training just kicked in. You don't stop and think about yourself, you focus on the mission and on everyone around you. You just keep moving forward."

That mindset stayed with him long after he left the Army. For years, Stu approached civilian life in much the same way he had approached service, pushing on, carrying on and refusing to slow down. After leaving the Army in June 2010, Stu entered the civilian world carrying significant trauma. Despite building a successful career and appearing to thrive on the surface, he found himself fighting a very different battle behind closed doors. PTSD, addiction, isolation and declining mental health gradually took hold.

"I felt that if I stopped to think about what had happened, everything would catch up with me," Stu reflects. "So I just kept going. That's what I'd always done. Focus on the next task, the next day, the next challenge."

For many veterans, the emotional impact of conflict can take far longer to heal than physical wounds. Despite reaching out for support, Stu struggled to find the right help.

"I often felt and was deemed too complex for many organisations. You ask for help, but you don't always fit neatly into the support available."

As the years passed, the weight of carrying those struggles alone continued to grow. By 2020, Stu had reached a crisis point.

Finding a Way Forward

Things began to change after Stu received support through BLESMA and later attended Tom Harrison House in 2023, a veteran-specific recovery centre that supports former service personnel struggling with the lasting effects of trauma, mental health challenges and addiction, helping them rebuild their lives through specialist treatment and peer support. There, he found not only the specialist support he so needed, but something he felt had been missing for years: connection.

"The support was amazing, but it was being around people who understood. That made a huge difference."

One of the most significant turning points in his recovery came through equine therapy.

"Working with horses helped me reconnect with myself in a way I never expected."

The experience had such a profound impact that Stu went on to train as an equine therapist himself, determined to help others facing similar challenges! His journey ultimately led to the creation of The Muster Point, a veteran-led community project established to help serving personnel, veterans and families reconnect through camaraderie, conversation and mutual support.

“Whether it's over a cup of tea, a bacon sandwich or simply being around people who understand military life, The Muster Point creates opportunities to bring people together and identify those who may need additional support before they reach crisis point. The idea is simple. Get people talking. Check in with each other. Create a space where nobody feels they have to struggle on their own."





A New Song, A Familiar Message

Ahead of this year's Remembrance period and the festive season, Stu has also embarked on an ambitious new project.

Following the release of last year's parody Christmas song, Do They Know It's Muster Time?, he wanted to create something original that truly reflected the Armed Forces community. The result is We're Still Here - a powerful song created by and for veterans. Featuring veterans from across the UK alongside the Military Wives Choir, the song shines a light on a message Stu feels isn't heard often enough: that the effects of service don't disappear when the headlines fade.

"People move on from conflicts. The news cycle moves on. But WE are still here. It's a message of resilience. It's about the strength of our community and the support we continue to give each other."

Music has always played a powerful role in military life, capable of transporting people back to significant moments and emotions. For Stu, creating the song became another way of bringing people together. After nine months of work, the final piece of the puzzle came when veterans, the choir and members of the Armed Forces community added their voices, transforming it into a truly collective project.

"There are no big names on this track. That's the whole point. It's about the community."

Supporting Recovery

At The Sapper Charity, we're incredibly grateful to individuals like Stu who continue to advocate for the wellbeing of veterans and their families. As we remember this November, We're Still Here serves as a timely reminder that support shouldn't stop once service ends. Recovery is a journey and, for many veterans, the right help at the right time can make all the difference. The Sapper Charity proudly supports Sappers accessing life-changing services, including placements at Tom Harrison House, helping veterans rebuild confidence, reconnect with others and take positive steps towards recovery.

As Stu's story shows, no one should have to face those challenges alone.

To learn more about The Muster Point and listen to We're Still Here, visit their channels and help spread the message this Remembrance season:

Veterans are still here, and their stories still matter.

SAPPERS NETWORK

Ready for your next career move?

Whether you're preparing to leave the Royal Engineers or have already transitioned to civilian life, Sappers Network connects Sappers with employers who value the skills, experience and leadership gained through service.

Explore opportunities across a wide range of sectors, from skilled trades and technical roles to senior management and executive positions, and discover organisations actively looking to recruit Royal Engineers.

Take the next step in your career and explore Sappers Network today.

Click here for more information.

UPCOMING EVENTS 2027

23 January - Burns Supper, Chetwynd Barracks

(Tickets available on the App now)

23 January - Standard Bearers Workshop, Chetwynd Barracks

(PoC: philip.tatterton@reahq.org.uk)

25 February - Royal Hospital Chelsea Tour

(Tickets available on the App soon)

16-18 April - R Mons Painting Event, Monmouth Castle

8 May - Pre-Sapper Sunday Social, Victory Services Club

(Details TBC)

9 May - Sapper Sunday, Royal Hospital Chelsea

11-14 June - Gibraltar Weekend

(Details TBC)

28 June-1 July - Sapper Games, Gibraltar Barracks

(Details TBC)

17 July - Sapper Gathering, Leeds Royal Armouries

(Details TBC)

August - Royal Hospital Chelsea Tour

(Details TBC)

18-19 September - Corps Memorial Weekend

(Details TBC)

November - Royal Hospital Chelsea Tour

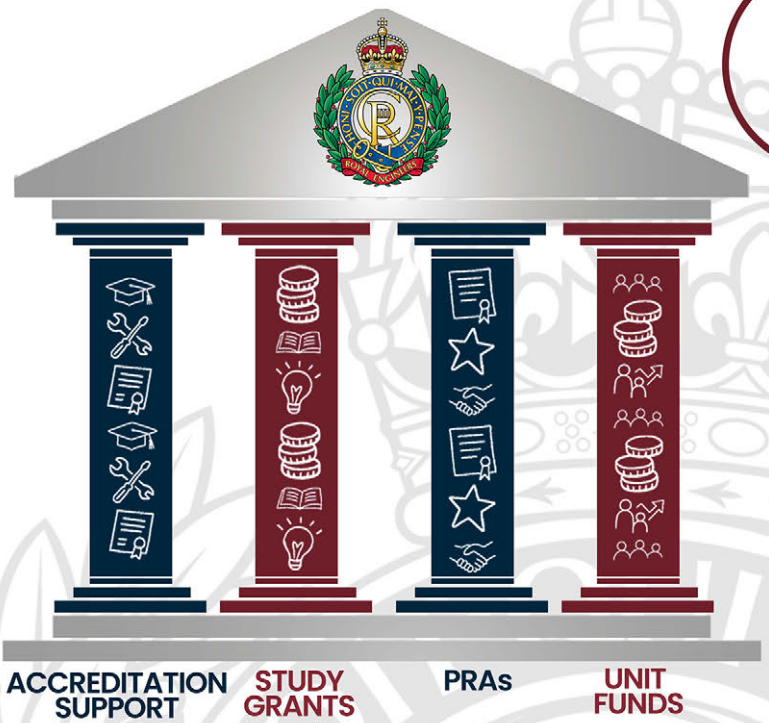
(Details TBC)

ROYAL ENGINEERS

CPD

MAXIMISING TALENT THROUGH CONTINUOUS PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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INVESTING IN THE CORPS

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4. ACCREDITATION SUPPORT

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