

My life since leaving PRS - Joe Kinson

Having sat and passed the Army Apprentice Tradesman's entrance exam at PRS on 1st Dec 1949. I enlisted on 6th Feb 1950 and travelled from Essen on 14th Feb 1950 to report to Chepstow on 15th Feb to start three years training as an Army Apprentice Tradesman. The accommodation had been used as a First World War prisoner of war camp, which I shared with 1000 young men. After two and a half years at PRS, with 250 pupils, many who were beautiful young girls, what a culture shock my new situation was! On completion of training as a Fitter, on 6th Feb 1953, I joined the Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers (REME) at 39 Base Workshops REME at Bicester as a Craftsman. I lived in a nissen hut at Bicester, a bit different from using them as classrooms at PRS. I had a very interesting and rewarding career, and some wonderful jobs. I passed through every rank up to WO1 (ASM) and served in many places around the world, with my last posting being 8 years in a Maintenance Advice Group at Woolwich. I retired on 17th Jul 1981, just short of 32 years service man and boy.

Dorothy and I married on 20th July 1956, and subsequently had two children, a daughter in 1957, and a son in Germany in 1963. Due to difficulties when our son was born at BMH Rinteln we subsequently adopted a baby girl who was born in 1969, and we took delivery of her at about 10 days old. They have each provided us with two children, a total of six grandchildren. Sadly Dorothy died in June 1994, after years of extremely poor health, just weeks before I found out about the existence of The Wilhelmshaven Association (TWA). How she would have loved to attend our reunions, but it was not to be.

I decided to continue working for the Crown and took employment teaching Army Apprentices at Arborfield, which I did for 5 years, and only changed occupational group employment, as the duration of the apprenticeship was going to be cut drastically, which I felt was wrong. I therefore became part of the Professional & Technology Group of the Civil Service, and worked in Woolwich (again) for the MOD, writing Equipment Manuals for use by the Army, and in some cases other services. I decided to retire at age 62, in 1997. Just in time to be free of work commitments to attend the 50th Anniversary Reunion at our old home in Wilhelmshaven. A reunion that many of you will now know I was determined not to miss, no matter what obstacles got in the way.

My career will be very mundane compared to some, but having sworn allegiance to the crown, I maintained that allegiance until final retirement, having served the Crown a total of 47 years. I was delighted to discover TWA, and joined immediately, and for almost 3 years have been privileged to be your Vice Chairman, and have always made a point of meeting people from all years at PRS. Long live TWA!

Joe Kinson (Rodney 1947-1950)