

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED POLICE OFFICERS



NORTH SUSSEX BRANCH



A CHRISTMAS STORY

T'WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS,
HE LIVED ALL ALONE,
IN A ONE BEDROOM HOUSE,
MADE OF PLASTER AND STONE.

I HAD COME DOWN THE CHIMNEY,
WITH PRESENTS TO GIVE,
AND TO SEE JUST WHO,
IN THIS HOME, DID LIVE.

I LOOKED ALL ABOUT,
A STRANGE SIGHT I DID SEE,
NO TINSEL, NO PRESENTS,
NOT EVEN A TREE.

NO STOCKING BY MANTLE,
JUST BOOTS FILLED WITH SAND,
ON THE WALL HUNG PICTURES,
OF FAR DISTANT LANDS.

WITH MEDALS AND BADGES,
AWARDS OF ALL KINDS,
A SOBER THOUGHT,
CAME THROUGH MY MIND.

FOR THIS HOUSE WAS DIFFERENT,
IT WAS DARK AND DREARY,
I FOUND THE HOME OF A SOLDIER,
ONCE I COULD SEE CLEARLY.

THE SOLDIER LAY SLEEPING,
SILENT, ALONE,
CURLLED UP ON THE FLOOR,
IN THIS ONE BEDROOM HOME.

THE FACE WAS SO GENTLE,
THE ROOM IN DISORDER,
NOT HOW I PICTURED,
A TRUE BRITISH SOLDIER.

WAS THIS THE HERO,
OF WHOM I'D JUST READ?
CURLLED UP ON A PONCHO,
THE FLOOR FOR A BED?

I REALISED THE FAMILIES,
THAT I SAW THIS NIGHT,
OWED THEIR LIVES TO THESE SOLDIERS,
WHO WERE WILLING TO FIGHT.

SOON ROUND THE WORLD,
THE CHILDREN WOULD PLAY,
AND GROWNUPS WOULD CELEBRATE,
A BRIGHT CHRISTMAS DAY.

THEY ALL ENJOYED FREEDOM,
EACH MONTH OF THE YEAR,
BECAUSE OF THE SOLDIERS,
LIKE THE ONE LYING HERE.

I COULDN'T HELP WONDER,
HOW MANY LAY ALONE,
ON A COLD CHRISTMAS EVE,
IN A LAND FAR FROM HOME.

THE VERY THOUGHT BROUGHT,
A TEAR TO MY EYE,
I DROPPED TO MY KNEES,
AND STARTED TO CRY.

THE SOLDIER AWAKENED,
AND I HEARD A ROUGH VOICE,
"SANTA DON'T CRY,
THIS LIFE IS MY CHOICE;

I FIGHT FOR FREEDOM,
I DON'T ASK FOR MORE,
MY LIFE IS MY GOD,
MY COUNTRY, MY CORPS.."

THE SOLDIER ROLLED OVER,
AND DRIFTED TO SLEEP,
I COULDN'T CONTROL IT,
I CONTINUED TO WEEP.

I KEPT WATCH FOR HOURS,
SO SILENT AND STILL,
AND WE BOTH SHIVERED,
FROM THE COLD NIGHT'S CHILL.

I DID NOT WANT TO LEAVE,
ON THAT COLD, DARK, NIGHT,
THIS GUARDIAN OF HONOR,
SO WILLING TO FIGHT.

THEN THE SOLDIER ROLLED OVER,
WITH A VOICE SOFT AND PURE,
WHISPERED, "CARRY ON SANTA,
IT'S CHRISTMAS DAY, ALL IS SECURE."

ONE LOOK AT MY WATCH,
AND I KNEW HE WAS RIGHT.
"MERRY CHRISTMAS MY FRIEND,

AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT."

This poem was written by a Peacekeeping soldier stationed overseas.

The following is his request. I think it is reasonable.

PLEASE. Would you do me the kind favour of sending this to as many people as you can? Christmas will be coming soon and some credit is due to all of the service men and women for our being able to celebrate these festivities. Let's try in this small way to pay a tiny bit of what we owe. Make people stop and think of our heroes, living and dead, who sacrificed themselves for us. Please, do your small part to plant this small seed.

The Secretary's Bit

New Members

Welcome to Ian Barnes and John Arnold (transferee from Brighton Branch) who have recently joined our branch.

Death of Widow Member

Sadly I have to inform you of the death of Mrs Kathleen Barnes, one of our widow members who lived at 47 Guildford Road, Horsham. Kathleen passed away in April 2010 but for whatever reason I was not informed by Lewes. I only found out by making a visit to her former home. I have since been in contact with her daughter and offered our belated condolences.

2011 Subscriptions

As from 1st January 2011 the annual subscriptions will increase by 60p per year from £16.92 to £17.52. This equates to £1.46 per month, an increase of 5p. This increase is in line with the 3.1% increase in Police Pensions as from April 2011. The annual subscription will be deducted from your February Police Pension. I will send out a reminder to those members who pay their subscriptions direct to the branch.

Forwarding emails

Can I ask that if you forward on any emails I send you would you please delete my email address as I recently had a telephone call from a person in Shropshire who had received one of the emails I circulated. Also, please use the bcc facility when forwarding emails to multiple recipients.

Christmas Dinner

From Jill Donaldson: Members who had booked to attend the Christmas Dinner on 2 December are aware that it had to be postponed due to the adverse weather conditions. The dinner has now been re-arranged for 6 January 2011, 6.00pm for 6.30 at the college. There are still a few vacancies so if anyone who could not make the December date but now wish to attend can they contact Jill on 01293 523037 or email donaldson@lineone.net



Margaret and I would like to wish the Branch Committee, all our Members and their families a Very Merry Christmas and a Prosperous and Happy 2011. May you all get what you wish for throughout the New Year.

Thank you for your help and support over the past year.

Adam Christie
Branch Secretary

The Treasurer's Bit

“... every man ... , waking or sleeping, good or bad, had had a kinder word for another on that day than on any day in the year; and had shared to some extent in its festivities; and had remembered those he cared for at a distance, and had known that they delighted to remember him.” See above,



Sussex Police Charitable Trust

Update

The Trust continues in its excellent work of supporting its members. As a Trustee of the charity I thought you might be interested in a short snap shot of the type of assistance we have been able to give to Sussex Police pensioners, many of whom are members of Sussex NARPO branches.

I have been asked, “Do our members really get any support from the Trust?” The short answer is very much **YES!** It is true that retired officers cannot be granted loans but other valuable assistance is on offer in the form of support from the Trust’s liaison officer, Dave Thomas who offers practical advice and assistance including helping with claims for various benefits.

Additionally, retired Sussex Police officers and their dependants may be entitled to grant help where the charitable remit has been met. Applications can be made via Dave or through referrals from NARPO branches.

Sussex Police pensioners can also apply for a break in the Trust’s recuperative facility in Christchurch to aid recovery from illness, surgery, etc. Priority is given to serving officers, but many pensioners have been able to benefit from this facility. More details can be found by visiting www.sussexpolicecharitabletrust.org

You may also find the following of interest:

- In 2010 the Trust received donations totalling £600 from varying NARPO branches.
- The total cost to the charity of the pensioner service is £36k so far this year.
- Financial benefits to retired officers in 2010 have so far totalled £8.6k.

Please remember that retired officers make no further contribution to the Trust unless it is by way of a voluntary donation or a legacy, which is always gratefully received. If you do decide to make a personal donation, then please do remember to Gift Aid it.

The Trustees have increased their marketing activity to promote the charity and any assistance in this or any other support is always welcome.

Lastly if you are aware of any retired officer or dependant who is in need, suffering hardship or is in distress then provided the officer contributed to the Trust during their service the Trust may be able to assist them. If in doubt then please contact:

Dave Thomas the Trust's Liaison Officer on 01797 226101 or email:

spct@sussex.pnn.police.uk

The Chairman's Bit

Christmas is traditionally a time for giving and so I make no apology for asking you to think of others who may be need of some support. Charity, they say begins at home. That being the case I would ask you to consider making a Gift Aided donation to the Sussex Police Charitable Trust which helps so many serving and former Police Officers. Many of the latter being our members.



I do hope you all have a very Happy Christmas and both a Peaceful and Prosperous New Year.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the members of the branch committee for all their hard work on your behalf and I would particularly like to mention Jill Donaldson the Events Secretary, Adam Christie the Branch Secretary and Colin Moules the Branch Treasurer for keeping me on the straight and narrow.

As always the comments and views expressed in this newsletter are mine and do not necessarily reflect those of the local branch or the national association.



In short, The Buck stops here!

**Ahmed Ramiz,
Branch Chairman**



Happy New Year 2011