



June 2016

THE Wire



The Magazine of The Royal Corps of Signals



Corps Formation: 28th June 1920

Corps Motto: Certa Cito

Contents

JUNE 2016 Volume 70 No: 3

Editor: Amy Petersen
wire@royalsignals.org (preferred for submissions)
**SO3 Digital Communication
and Publications:** Stephanie Hamlett
depcomm@royalsignals.org

RHQ R SIGNALS, Griffin House, Blandford
Camp, Blandford Forum, Dorset, DT11 8RH
Mil: 94371 2817/2818 Civ: 01258 482817 /482818

Articles:

Please email submissions in Microsoft Word format, together with related photographs to the e-mail addresses above. Digital images should be in JPEG format, kept separate (and not embedded within the article) and supplied with captions.

Contribution Deadlines:

15th February for publication in the April edition.
15th April for publication in the June.
15th June for publication in the August.
15th August for publication in the October.
15th October for publication in the December.
15th December for publication in the February.

Subscriptions:

All enquiries regarding subscriptions and changes of address should be made to 01258 482087 or subscriptions@royalsignals.org.

Last Post:

These will be inserted free to all past and present members of the Corps.

Contents:

Authors alone are responsible for the content of their articles. The opinions expressed in the articles of this publication are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy and views, official or otherwise, of the Royal Corps of Signals or the Ministry of Defence. All articles and submissions are published at the discretion of the Editor. This publication may contain official information and should be treated with discretion.

Advertising:

All communications regarding commercial advertising should be made direct to depcomm@royalsignals.org.

Printed by Holbrook Printers Ltd, Norway Road, Hilsea, Portsmouth © Crown Copyright

FEATURES

Corps Engagement Team	2
White Helmets	4
Corps Subscriptions Update	55
10 Signal Regiment Royal Visit	68
1 Signal Regiment celebrates its first birthday	70
The Life of a Signalmán in combat in 1952/53	112

REGULARS

News from Formations	8
News from Regiments	12
News from Squadrons / Tps	73
Other Units	76
Royal Signals Association	108
Last Post	111
Obituaries	111

SPORT

Ski/Snowboarding	86
Tennis	86
Cricket Tour	88
Boxing	90

ADVENTURE TRAINING

Ex Nordic Tiger	92
Ex Tiger Planina	94
Ex Tiger Piste	96
Ex Dragon Snow Sword	97
Ex Dragon Manski	98
Ex Mau Slope	100
Ex Ice Bambi	102
Ex Diamond Alpine Gauntlet	104
Ex Felix Piste 3	106

Front Cover: The Royal Signals Motorcycle Display Team Opening Show - full story on page 3. Photo by Basia Howard-Harwood

Back Cover: 50 Sig Sqn (37 Sig Regt) - Popping Smoke



Note from the Editor

Welcome to the June edition of the Wire magazine, in addition to the usual Regimental and Squadron inputs we also have some interesting articles from the White Helmets, the First Birthday celebrations with 1 Sig Regt, the Royal Visit at 10 Sig Regt and the Corps Subscriptions update 2015. There is also plenty of updates from both Sport and Adventure Training.

We have had many submissions for this issue, thank you for all your efforts, however, not all of the content would fit so if your article is not in this edition be assured it will be in the August edition!

A reminder that all photos need to be sent to us in JPEG format, be of good quality with a caption and documents should be in word format. Further details are available on the Contents page with submission deadlines and e-mail addresses. E-mail confirmation will be sent upon receipt of your article, if you do not receive a receipt please do contact us.

Feel free to email your comments and thoughts on the magazine and let us know if there is anything else you would like to see included.



SO3 Digital Communication & Publications
Mrs Stephanie Hamlett 01258 482818



Subscriptions
Mrs Jess Lawson 01258 482087



CORPS ENGAGE

Leeds Schools/Careers Fair – 7 Mar 16

On the 7th March members of the Royal Signals CET deployed to the sunny county of Yorkshire.

We arrived at our accommodation near to Central York and prepared ourselves for the busy week ahead which consisted of visiting various local schools and colleges followed by an Armed Forces Careers fair in Leeds City Centre.

The first school visited was the Leeds City Academy, to the western outskirts of the city and lets just say they were a rowdy bunch! However, they were very fun to work with and we had some really positive feedback for the duration of our stay.

LCpl ‘Hey guys’ Lee had a good laugh introducing students to the Army’s field telephones, whilst myself, **LCpl Hudson**, put the students through their paces in a Mast Building Challenge where a team of girls won the best mast of the day. You go Girls!

After the first day we then moved on to two other schools before heading into Leeds City Centre for our main event - Armed Forces Career’s Fair in the Leeds Civic Hall. The event was very well prepared by the local recruiting office; with two buglers from the Rifles welcoming guests at the main doors, free tea, coffee and biscuits on tap and a whole range of Engagement Teams attending the event with various attract pieces.

What more could you ask for?!

The event wasn’t as busy as we had hoped for but that didn’t stop the morale of the team shining through.

After the event the team then joined the Royal Engineers recruiting team to enjoy a well deserved meal at an all-you-can-eat Brazilian BBQ. What a great way to end a positive week on the road!

Headquarters Royal Signals Team Building Day – 12 Apr 16

After some brilliant preparation and a lot of organisation, the Headquarters personnel were very excited for our ‘Team day out’ to Osmington Bay/Lulworth Cove.

The weather did us a delightful favour and we awoke to a beautiful clear blue sky which made the day much more pleasant!

For the first part of the day the team split into two groups which consisted of those cycling and those walking.

The two teams met outside the Headquarters nice and early to prepare the bikes for the arduous journey ahead. After the tyres were checked and the chains oiled we set off with **Lt Col Al Balsdon** leading from the front. There were a total of 7 cyclists for the day and the rest of the team boarded the minibus to Lulworth to start their 6 mile trek. All in all the cyclists covered a distance of 26 miles. We managed a few quick admin stops along the way and made good time, taking approximately 2 ½ hours.

The sun was beaming as we made it down the coastal path into Osmington Bay where we were met by a fresh coastal breeze; a refreshing feeling after a long cycle over some hilly terrain. **Lt Col Balsdon** took a moment to call in **LCpl Lee’s** forfeit, some knees to chest, after he was caught walking his bike up one of the hills on the cycling route!

After arriving at Osmington, we took a moment to admire the beautiful surroundings, putting our photography skills to the test before the group of walkers turned up to meet us. Shortly after, the bikes went into the van and we began our 6 mile walk to Lulworth Cove. It was then determined that **Major Kelly** clearly wanted to win the outfit of the day award, turning up



MENT TEAM

by LCpl Emma Hudson

in his pineapple infused shirt, issued boots and a very cool hat! The sun wasn't giving up and the weather was glorious, perfect for an ice cream.

The route to Lulworth took us along the coast line and we admired the fresh blue waters as we plodded along, even Little **Teasel** the Westie had a grin on her face.

After a few hours walking we finally arrived in Lulworth Cove to meet the rest of the Headquarters party and we dived straight into the pub, obviously. The sun was still beaming and we headed straight for the beer garden for some well deserved drinks (or two), before sitting down for a delicious meal which was organised by **Sue 'Essex Gal' Parry** and the team!

After the team meal we then headed back out into the sunshine for some relaxation. We didn't mess around and proceeded straight over to the ice cream stand for a tasty dessert! **Lt Col Balsdon** then decided to treat the Headquarters staff to a round of selfie snapshots showcasing his best pouting technique which have since been printed off and given to him to keep!

Overall a wonderful day out for the Headquarters team, the weather truly worked in our favour and we had some lovely views for photo opportunities.

Stockport Schools Visit – 13 Apr 16

Members of the CET deployed to the Midlands ready for three days of schools visits.

Our first visit was to Buxton & Leek College and we could not get over the amazing architecture of the building. Definitely the first time we have visited a college inside a huge dome which made a difference. The building was originally built in 1859 and was first used as a hospital and is now a thriving college.

The afternoon involved taking students through a Royal Signals presentation followed by various command tasks which were delivered to a mixed group of IT and Public Service students. These guys interacted well with the command tasks and had a lot of questions to ask us about the Royal Signals.

After arriving back at our hotel in Wilmslow, Manchester we soon found out it was a haven for the Manchester based footballers. Myself, **LCpl Emma Hudson**, and **LCpl Aaron Mills** turned into football stalkers driving past the houses of the rich and famous, but unfortunately we caught no glimpses of the famous!

The next day was a very and they thoroughly questions. We even had some recruit them!

we visited Cheadle & Marple Sixth Form College, just outside of Stockport. This productive day, we had some brilliant feedback from the Public Service Students, enjoyed our Voice Procedure command tasks and were brimming with lots of of the teachers asking for a career change with which we duly obliged in trying to

After a lovely buffet lunch the college had provided, the very eccentric Public Services tutor had us outside for a Royal Signals orientated photograph with the college students. We then headed back to the luxury of the hotel for a team meal and a chance to wind down from the days activities.

The Friday morning took the team to Aquinas College, Stockport. The college was a brand new build with excellent facilities. The students thoroughly enjoyed our command tasks throughout the morning and the tutor was very pleased, (he has even invited us back, bonus!)

After a debrief from the local recruiting office representative and a brilliant few days recruiting, the team packed the cars and headed back down the M6 to Sunny Blandford.





THE ROYAL SIGNALS MOTORCYCLE

Selection 2015

On 5th October 2015 the annual selection course for the Royal Signals Motorcycle Display Team took place with 12 budding participants, along with the new Team OC **Capt Jon McLelland**, new Team SNCO **Sgt Michael Arnold** and team REME SNCO **Sgt Christopher Wynn** all taking part and staking their claim to becoming an acclaimed White Helmet. For most of the course participants, riding a bike was completely new to them, so with a quick-fire crash course in how to ride, taken by then Chief Instructor **Cpl Ian Greenhalgh** and returning team members **Cpl Dan Ascott** and **Cpl Adam Huber**, along with other team members acting as training staff. The course had to run before they could walk as the two week selection was just as demanding mentally as it was physically.



Potential White Helmets putting in the effort

Into the first week and the potential future riders were being taught various tricks and manoeuvres that would all culminate at the end of the course in the form of a show. With a few unfortunate injuries, the course numbers had dropped, so the remaining participants had to dig deep and cover those positions and tricks left by those injured few.

Those remaining showed great determination and aptitude in learning all they needed to learn. Taking part in other tasks such as a bike run involved the course team being split into two and competing in a race against each other, showing that it doesn't just take a good rider to be part of the team but other factors as well.

Into week two and it was time to build a show to perform in front of a small audience, showcasing all they had learned throughout the course, which culminated in the new rider's first fire jump, showing that fluidity and timing is just as important as the riding itself. The course paid dividends as the team selected 7 new riders to join us in January 2016 ready for the new season.



2015 Selection course showboard

Training Camp

With the newest riders having finally arrived it was now time for the team to undergo its annual six week training camp at Dalton Barracks, Abingdon. With **Cpl Greenhalgh** leaving the team at the turn of the year, it was down to new Chief Instructor **Cpl Huber** charged with leading training and building the team's show for the new season. Under the wing of **Cpl Huber** the new team members were once again taught the basics and put through their paces, mastering all they had covered in selection but also learning a host of new tricks and positions as the season progressed. With the second and third year riders being taken on reverse ride school, run by fellow instructors **Cpl Ascott** and **L/Cpl Dan Holdcroft** in order for them to progress and learn the more advanced tricks of the team.



New Helmets on training camp



Sig Grieve performing the Eagle

Alongside riding, the newest members were learning the history of the White Helmets as well as being allocated their secondary jobs within the team; Team Medic being undertaken by **Cpl Jamie Clarke**, taught by current medic **Cpl Jack Gooding**, showing once again the team is not just about riding and every person contributes in different ways for the team to run efficiently.

With the first two weeks of training camp, dedicated to learning the individual tricks, it was onto the third week and time for the whole team to come together as one and put together a show in preparation for the season opener on April 16th.



ORCYCLE DISPLAY TEAM 2016

With training camp going well and the run throughs starting to look more and more like a show each time, the team's morale was high despite the poor weather conditions making things difficult.



Dirty work!

The team, having the most members it's had in years, was turning in some good performances throughout training camp, and with the numbers to do so, the training for the infamous 6 Bike Fan began to take place; a trick not performed by the team since 2008. Along with the first years learning the art of the car and fire jumping, things were starting to look good with the opening show only a few weeks away. However, the team's time to iron out every last crease was getting shorter.

The last two weeks were solely dedicated to smoothing out the order of the show, everything was looking good and with less bumps and falls than the first few weeks the team was very optimistic, albeit nervous, about the season opener just 3 weeks away.



Capt McLelland jumping through the fire

Opening Show

With the morning of the opening show upon us it was the culmination of everything the team had trained for over the last couple of months, including the six weeks in Abingdon and 3 weeks back home at Blandford. Everyone was feeling confident about the day, despite the weather not being exactly what we had wanted, resulting in a slight delay to the show starting. After finally getting the green light everything was ready and introduced by the Team OC **Capt McLelland**, handing over to the day's commentator **Maj Ted Tedby**. With the Corps Colonel,

Col Hutchinson in attendance, the team began its show. Each individual put in maximum effort, demonstrating everything it takes to be a part of this prestigious group of soldiers.

With the show at its midpoint, it was time for the team's newest members to finally receive their White Helmets after months of hard work, from their very first day of selection leading up to this day. In front of their friends and families they received their White Helmets and a special mention to **Sgt Christopher Wynn** who at the same time was the recipient of his Long Service and Good Conduct Medal.

Perhaps the most impressive feat of the day, the team performed the Six Bike Fan flawlessly, not seen since 2008, to the applause of both the watching families and former members. It was an incredible moment for the team and everyone involved.

From the moment the first bike started to the last bike leaving the arena, to the cheers of all, it can only be described as a wonderful, successful day, and with the new season finally here the team can only look forward.

New Team Members who received their White Helmets:

Capt Jon McLelland
Sgt Michael Arnold
Sgt Christopher Wynn
Cpl Jamie Clarke
Cpl Daniel Coughlan
Cpl Danny Goodwin
L Cpl Dayne Ryan
L Cpl Perry Willson
Sig Brian Grieve



Start of the 6 bike fan





RSMDT OPENING



Photos: Basia Howard-Harwood



NG SHOW 2016



NEWS FROM FORMATIONS



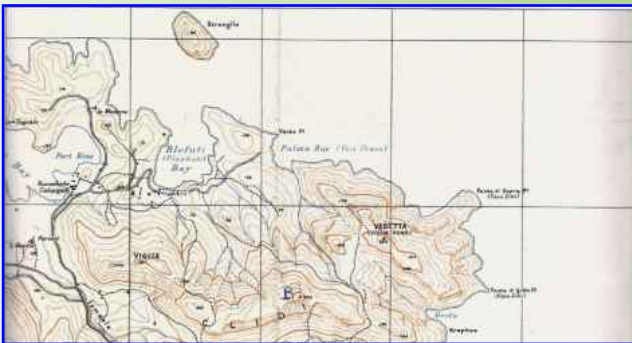
1 SIGNAL BRIGADE



EXERCISE JAVELIN ACCOLADE 11-15 Apr 16

- by Capt Nick Perkins

Ex JAVELIN ACCOLADE was HQ 1 (UK) Sig Bde's Battlefield Study for 2016, which took place on the Greek island of Leros, one of the Dodecanese Islands located in the Aegean Sea a few short miles from the Turkish coast. The study focused on the little-known 1943 campaign to occupy the Dodecanese islands by both British (under the banner of Operation ACCOLADE) and German forces following the capitulation of the Italians on 8 Sep 1943. The resulting clash boiled down to two battles fought on Kos, an action that lasted a mere 24 hours, and Leros. Both were German victories and the upshot was the loss of any foothold in the Aegean for the Allies.



Reproduction of the map used by Brig Tilney during the battle

The battle of Leros was fought by an under-resourced British and Empire force commanded by **Brig David Tilney** (late RA) who had taken over command of the defence of the island a mere two weeks prior to the German invasion (Operation TAIFUN). He commanded 234 Inf Bde, a formation lacking significant combat experience and consisting mainly of hastily trained territorial battalions. He also had at his disposal a limited number of guns; a smattering of anti-aircraft weapons; a handful of Engineers and some special forces. His force on the island numbered approximately 2,500 British and Empire troops and 5,000 Italians of dubious morale and loyalty, some of whom manned the coastal guns. He was supported by the handful of long-range fighters that had the range to operate over the island from Cyprus or Alexandria, and what shipping could evade the ever-present threat presented by the Luftwaffe?

He faced total German air superiority following the loss of the region's last British held airstrip on Kos a few weeks prior, and superior numbers of Nazi Germany's finest assault troops in the form of Brandenburg commando *Kustenjäger*s (amphibious assault troops) and *fallschirmjäger*s (paratroopers). Perhaps doomed from the outset by the decisions of his political masters, Tilney's troops gave an outstanding account of themselves and capitulated after five days of fighting described by one Brandenburg (a veteran of much of the hardest fighting in all theatres of the war) as the toughest fight he had experienced.

A campaign whose overarching strategy on both sides is hard to fathom, the Dodecanese campaign offers lessons on political friction, strategic decision making, working in a coalition, operational planning, joint cooperation and the employment of special forces (the Long Range Desert Group (LRDG), SBS and RAF Regt all featured significantly in the campaign), among others.



WO1 (RSM) Witham of 30 Sig Regt and Capt Baynes of 299 Sig Sqn (SC) on the 'Long road to Leros'

War correspondent **Leonard Marsland-Gander's** account of the campaign is entitled 'Long Road to Leros'. His designation felt entirely appropriate as 21 personnel from across the Bde, ranging from **Sgt Mitten** of ARRC Sp Bn right up to the Bde Comd, **Brig Nesmith**, stepped off the Dodecanese Seaways ferry onto Leros at lunchtime on Tue 12 Apr 16, having left unit locations as early as the evening of Sun 10 Apr. Unlike Marsland-Gander, our long road had been punctuated not by wailing Stuka dive-bombers, but by the equally well-aimed opening brief delivered by the battlefield tour guide, **Mr Toby McLeod**, which took place in the Martina Hotel on Kos and ensured a common baseline of understanding throughout the group.



Mt Appetici and Pandeli Castle from the approach. The German landing was at the base of Appetici where the rocks meet the water



In glorious sunshine and above average temperatures for the time of year, our approach to the island from the eastern coast of Kalymnos had been below Mt Appetici and Pandeli Castle and into Alinda Bay. This was the approach taken in 1943 by the eastern assault group who secured the first foothold on the island by scrambling up the rocky slopes of Appetici. Unprepared for a scramble landing and assault, we were grateful that the ferry captain elected to disgorge his human cargo on the jetty in a (very slightly) more civilised manner.



Toby McLeod delivering a payload of education on the summit of Mt Appetici. The OP in the background is post-war

Over the next three days the ex saw a total of six well researched syndicate stands delivered on Appetici and Meraviglia (Tilney's fortress HQ) in the central sector, and Blefuti bay and Mt Clidi in the North of the island. The high ground offered spectacular views of the terrain, surrounded by the deep blue of the Aegean. It was easy to see from atop the mountains why the Germans chose to drop their paratroopers on the isthmus between Alinda and Gurna bays in an attempt to link up both sides with the kustenjagers; such an action, if successful, would cut the island in two and in doing so severely damage the cohesion of the defending force.



The obligatory group photo; this one is in the private museum of local enthusiast Gianni Paraponiari

The study of the battle, through the medium of vignettes delivered by the guide and syndicate presentations, was interspersed with cultural and interest visits to Pandeli Castle, the private war memorabilia collection of local enthusiast Gianni Paraponiari and the various war memorials in and around Lakki on Portolago Bay. The ex also paid its respect to the fallen in a short ceremony and wreath-laying at the CWGC Leros War Cemetery, located in a pleasant spot on the water's edge in Alinda Bay.



Sgt Mitten lays the wreath at Leros War Cemetery

Hosted and fed very well by **Antonis** and **Luna Kanaris** of the Eleftheria Hotel, all participants appeared to enjoy all aspects of the ex. Indeed, such was the level of engagement from the students that frequently, dinner table conversation was overheard returning to the debates that had been born of the day's presentations.

The study was wrapped up with a final discussion at the picturesque chapel of Agia Isidoros in Alinda Bay, after which the Bde Comd gave her final thoughts on how such study is of benefit to those going forward to LECB and more senior staff and command positions. A quick ice-cream stop then set the group on the equally long road home from Leros.



The group departs Agia Isidoros after the final discussion

The study of such a little-known campaign, constrained in space and time and which has generated a limited amount of written history and analysis when compared to more oft-studied battles, has certain advantages. For the level of experience of attendees (mostly first time Battlefield Students), the scope of the campaign and limited amount of reading material made the study accessible, whilst the size of the island eliminated the long drives between stands that are a feature of some other campaigns.



Brig Nesmith enjoying the ride

Of course, after all the effort and thought that went into the planning of the ex, it was not at all gratifying to me as the organiser that the highlight for most seemed to be the trip by high-powered RIB between Leros and Kalymnos which was brought about entirely by accident as a result of changes to Greek navigation laws. However, should the ex be offered a reprise next year I will of course ensure that the RIB features again!





11 SIGNAL and WEST MIDLANDS BRIGADE



Exercise ROMAN RESILIENCE

As the Army's Regional Point of Command (RPoC) in the West Midlands, 11 Sig and WM Bde recently undertook Ex ROMAN RESILIENCE; a command and staff trainer Main Procedural Exercise (MPX) validated by the Command and Staff Trainer (UK Operations) (CAST(UK Ops)). The purpose of this ex was to provide command and staff training to Bde staff in order to prepare them for operations in support of the civil authorities. With the support of a large number of civil responders and agencies drawn from across the Police, Fire Brigade, local council, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and Birmingham Airport the Bde Staff were put through three challenging scenarios.



Command briefing during Ex ROMAN RESILIENCE – photo by Cpl Timothy Jones

The MPX was preceded by a deliberate planning ex whereby the Brigade Plans Branch planned a notional G7 Summit centred in Herefordshire that was subsequently handed over to the Operations Cell for execution on day one of the ex. Thereafter, a cycle of high-tempo planning for an outbreak of foot and mouth disease and subsequently, an increased threat to civil and military air assets in the West Midlands kept the Plans Branch busy. With numerous and creative scenario injects thrown into the execution phase of each scenario, the Operations Cell were kept on their toes as the ex culminated with them managing three distinctly different operations. The exercise provided an ideal opportunity to strengthen relationships with our local civil responders who in the event of a real UK Operation we could potentially be called upon to work with.



The West Midlands region commanded by 11 Sig & WM Bde – photo by Cpl Timothy Jones

Exercise ROMAN SKI 2

On 6 Feb 16 members of the Bde HQ staff departed for Tignes Les Brevieres to gain their Ski Foundation Level 1 (SF1) qualification, instructed by **Capt Sam Smith** and **Maj Gerry McGachy**. Accommodated in Chalet Hattiers, the town was picturesque and a great location for access to the slopes. Tough weather conditions endured throughout the week, testing even the most seasoned of skiers. A casualty of the first day was the Bde Sgt Maj, **WO1 Chris Moore**. His accident reminded everyone to ski cautiously and with thick fresh powder falling on all but one day and restricting vision there were some tired skiers amongst the group. All gained the SF1 qualification and improved their technique during the week whilst tackling some of the most notorious runs. The Espace Killy range offered some steep delights including 'La Face', the 1992 Olympic Black run and 'La Sache' featuring moguls the size of a Bowman detachment! The week was challenging and enjoyed by all. Not least **Brig Anderton-Brown** who ensured that the Chief of Staff, **Lt Col Andy Lucas** put the miles in; clocking over 60km on the final day.



WO1(Bde Sgt Maj) Chris Moore, day one and out



HQ 11 Sig and WM Bde, the only sunshine moment





Maj Gerry McGachy, textbook posture

7 SIGNAL GROUP – Preparing for Contingency

Comd **Col David Craft**
ACOS **Maj Pete Stowell**

As the days get longer and we move into Spring the exercise and training tempo of our units has really started to ramp up to what will be a another busy and varied year.

The Group HQ and 3 (UK) Div Sig Regt have had the lead with Ex GRIFFIN STRIKE. This UK-French exercise has involved a great deal of complex and detailed planning to bring together shore-based naval and air headquarters, as well as ships and

land forces of each nation. The interoperability challenges between nations and components have required a great deal of hard work and detailed engineering effort, but will ensure that by the time government ministers visit the exercise they will be viewing a credible joint force. The development of the Joint Force Communications and Information Systems (JFCIS) concept of employment (CONEMP) for contingent operations is a key output of the exercise and the engineering solutions to provide technical interoperability between French and UK systems has shown the innovative nature of the people of our Corps.

Whilst this is in place, 2 Sig Regt are in the final preparations of their validation as part of the EU Battle Group. With 219 Sig Sqn leading, they will enable 4 Inf Bde and the EU partners to deliver the high readiness EU response force from 1 Jul to the end of the year.

Not to be out done, 1 Sig Regt are working hard with 20 Armd Inf Bde as they build up to assume the role of Very High Readiness Task Force from 1 Jan where they will spearhead any NATO response. With exercises in BATUS, Germany, Poland, Norway and, of course, Salisbury Plain the Regt will be well and truly ready come the end of the year.

Congratulations also to 15 and 21 Sig Regts who have recently completed a really successful deployment supporting 104 Log Bde's Vanguard Enabling Group in Jordan. The exercise was designed to assess how land forces would be projected into an operational theatre and allowed both Regts to practice their skills in a challenging environment.

Never a dull moment for the Regts in 7 Group!

Legion d'Honneur

At a Legion d'Honneur ceremony in Thiepval Barracks Lisburn on the 25th February, ex Sgt **N Henshaw** R SIGNALS was presented the Legion d'Honneur by the French Consul **Mrs Regina McCullough**. **Mr Henshaw** was amongst 15 other ex WW2 Veterans to receive this prestigious French award.

Neville Henshaw was born in Nigeria in Nov 1924 to two missionaries who were working for the Sudan Interior Mission, who were from Liverpool. At the age of 5, **Neville** came back to Liverpool with his parents and attended school there. In early 1943, he was called up, having previously served two years in the 'Home Guard.' His initial service was in Berwick upon Tweed, where he did his military training, before going onto further training as a wireless/teleprinter operator in the R Signals first in Shropshire and then at Basingborne finally finishing up at Gosport. This is where we received orders for France. When I asked **Neville** what it was

like, all he said was "We received orders to embark a LST, this was either on the 3 or 4th June, but they cancelled, and we were ordered to disembark. It was Tuesday I believe the 6th June, and our LST was earmarked for Gold Beach, we were being fired at by a German Pillbox situated in land, I jumped off into about 3 feet of water and scrambled across the soft sands." Neville then went on to say "We were crossing in groups of four men, but suddenly two of my group got shot in the legs, and my mate '**Georgy**' was shot dead, I was the only one in my group to make it across the sand, where I set up communications between nthe various regiments of 2nd Army under Dempsey."

After the beach landings, **Neville** was sent to Ostende to assist the RAF air sea rescue unit as they were short of radio operators, however life there was also hectic and in one incidence, (now promoted Sgt), **Neville** said "I was sent to investigate some lines that were down with two JNCO's in a truck, suddenly there was an explosion, I was hurtled through the air, landing in a field close by, badly shocked and bruised but intact, however the two linesmen with me were dead, apparently we had gone over a German teller mine, I was found by a army patrol and taken to a field hospital."

Neville continued in Belgium and went onto Holland and Germany before being released from military service.



NEWS FROM REGIMENTS



1st SIGNAL REGIMENT STAFFORD



CO **Lt Col PRD Muir MBE**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) J Scott**

NORDIC & BIATHLON SKI TEAM

OIC **Lt Macaulay**
2IC **Lt Stuart-Hil**



The 1 Sig Regt Team

Norway - by LCpl Fleck

After almost 18 hours of driving, we arrived in Norway for an initial 4 week training camp. The aim of the camp was to develop skills and technique and to train novices to compete at a military standard. The training sessions were delivered by ex-Olympians and were particularly useful for the novice members of the team, **LCpl Corcoran** and **Cpl Moore**, who demonstrated some excellent falling skills throughout the week.

The tough training days usually consisted of skiing in the morning, lunch and a nap, biathlon ranges in the afternoon and a technique session in the evening. All the hard work paid off and by the end of the four weeks, we had been placed 1st in the Corps competition. Following the success of the camp we were ready to move to Ex SPARTAN HIKE in Austria.

Obertiliach

After a short break at Christmas, we moved to the next training camp in Obertiliach, Austria. This time we only had a week to fine-tune our skills and prepare for the competition, a task that was made more difficult owing to the increase in altitude. Obertiliach was over 1000 metres higher than where we had been training in Norway and acclimatisation was not easy. Breathlessness and sluggishness slowed us down a lot in the first few days but that was short lived and the training

phase saw the team regularly skiing 15-20km, before firing up to 500 rounds in the sharpshooting target training. After a successful preparation week we were then ready to compete in the 15km cross country classic event, the 4x5 cross country classic relay, the 10km individual Biathlon, the 4x5 team relay Biathlon and the final 30km patrol race.

Heavy snow on the first day turned the 15km race into a 15km hamstring-burning trudge. The next few days saw the team fighting falls and the adverse affects of the cold (the face drool for example), to climb up the leader board until there were only 2 rival teams left to beat. At this point only the last biathlon race stood between the team and victory, so it was up to **Lt Macaulay**, **Lt Stuart-Hill**, **Cfn Mein** and **LCpl Fleck**, to work as hard as possible to acquire the required points. In this final biathlon race, despite a number falls and some missed targets, Team Rhino still managed to achieve the all important place in the top 10, which allowed us to qualify for the Army Nordic Skiing and Biathlon Finals.



The Military Patrol Race

Ruhpolding

Shortly after arriving in Ruhpolding, we realised that we would be skiing alongside very experienced teams. Not allowing the GB Olympians and National teams to knock our confidence, we waxed our skis and raced as hard as we could throughout the scoring events for the SAS Cup. With only 1 race left to go we were in a reasonable position, but the patrol race was the hardest of them all. Carrying a weighted day sack, an SA80 rifle and enough tinned food to stock Morrisons at Christmas, the team set off in trepidation of the 20km endurance element of the patrol race and the 10km sprint with range practices.

Unfortunately that day did not start well. After experimenting with 10 different ski waxes, we could not get any to stick to the test track. In the end we chose a wax which had very little grip, in the hope that the speed on the down-hill legs would



make up for the inevitable slowing on the uphill stretches. Minutes into the race though, we started falling over and ground to a halt; very quickly realising that we had used the wrong wax for the conditions. So in an attempt to overcome adversity we took off the skis, strapped them to our day sacks and 'doubled' the remaining 3.5 km.

Even after the patrol race fiasco, the team finished 17th out of the 25 teams. A respectable result for a new team and one we will certainly be working harder to beat next year.

The Corporals' Club - by WO2 (YofS) Brown

PMC Cpl Bradley
PEC Cpl Fisher



The Corporals' Club

On 26 Feb, the newly formed 1 Sig Regt Cpls' Club conducted an educational visit to the Royal Hospital Chelsea. The visit began with a lunch, where the 22 members of the club had an opportunity to meet a number of serving Chelsea Pensioners and a tour of the hospital. The tour consisted of visiting the very cold, but very welcoming bar and a number of briefs on the history of the institution, the personalities of past and present, the membership process and the daily routine for a serving member.

Following the briefs, the club proceeded to an 'accommodation through the ages' exhibit. Examples of the early 'berth' accommodation demonstrated just how basic the provisions at the hospital used to be and a video detailed the changes and upgrades which have been made in more recent years. The exhibit provided a great opportunity to see how the simple rooms have been developed into state of the art facilities.

During a Q&A session after the tour, the club members were able to find out about the origins of Chelsea Pensioner status. The tour guide explained that the in-patients gained their name as a result of the hospital originally being used as a location to draw a military pension. Interestingly, it also came to light that although traditionally the in-pensioners were all male, there are now female in-pensioners living at the hospital.

The tour ended all too quickly, but not without a visit to the museum. The extensive museum held a vast collection of memorabilia dedicated to the pensioners, including war souvenirs and a collection of cap badges worn by members of the hospital. Visiting the museum was a great way to see the history of the hospital and its people throughout time.

The visit was a fantastic opportunity to promote team cohesion within the Cpls' club and also to understand the origins of the famous hospital.

200 SIGNAL SQUADRON - by Sig Pickford

OC Maj N Pryce-Jones
SSM WO2 (SSM) D Jackson



Sgt Cameron's chain disaster

Ex DRAGON GAUNTLET was the annual 200 Sig Sqn spring AT exercise and consisted of three AT activities: mountain biking, hill walking and surfing. We were all a little apprehensive for Lt Stuart-Hill's off road mountain bike route as we set out from RAF St Mawgan on the first day, but once we reached the Devoran car park for the start of the Great Flat Lode Cycle Route, we were excited and ready to begin the journey to Portreath.

Not long into our ride, Sgt Cameron managed to acquire the first mechanical issues of the day whilst jumping off mounds just off the track; snapping his bike chain twice in a short space of time! Once back on the track again, it was then Cpl Dugmore's turn to experience an issue, although not mechanical this time, he did manage to show us how to successfully (or unsuccessfully) cycle up a half pipe hill. As fate would have it, he came to a halt and quite impressively shoulder rolled down with his bike in tow.



Finally at the top

The second part of the journey was mostly made up of long steep hills on the road. As we grew more tired, we found that we eagerly anticipated the top of every hill and the phrase "where there is an uphill, there has to be a downhill" soon became our mantra! On the final stretch of our journey, the view and scenery was incredible all the way into Portraeth and once we had finished for the day, we made the most of the nice sunny weather by exploring on the beach.

The second day consisted of hill walking with SSgt Williamson. Our initial thoughts were that it would be less exciting than the previous day's activity; however it turned



out to be the exact opposite. With gale force winds blowing in all directions, walking around on a coastal path was both difficult and exhilarating. We were still able to get really good views of the town from the cliffs and even managed to get onto a beach to explore some caves along the coastline. The combination of the scenery, the sounds of distant waves and the added bonus of being able to explore the caves led to another excellent day of AT.



Surf's up!

The final day was the most eagerly awaited, it was time to go surfing! The majority of us had never tried surfing before and so once we got to Fistral beach and donned our wet suits, we were all very excited. After a lesson on the basics, we got into the water and the instructor taught us how to stand on the boards. Although it was not easy at first, once we applied the instructor's guidance and finally managed to balance on the boards, many of us were able to surf the waves. **LCpl Cawthorne** even made it to the beach on a number of occasions.

Overall, this AT package has been the best I have attended since joining the Army and I would happily do it again.

201 SIGNAL SQUADRON - by Lt Hurst

OC **Maj P Andrews**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) R Horsburgh**



The calm before the storm

On 6 Feb 16 a Tp from 201 Sig Sqn deployed to Salisbury Plain on Ex STEEL SABRE 16 (SOUTH). The ex held at Avon Compound West, was the 1 ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance) Bde's first deployed ex in an austere location and tested several units within the Bde, in their ability to FIND, UNDERSTAND and EXPLOIT.

With varying levels of TacCIS HQ experience, the personnel from 201 Sig Sqn had a steep learning curve to conquer during the setup of the MDOR and HQ Dismount equipment. Under

the watchful eye of the Bde YofS, the Tp set about constructing a HICON and emulated Bde HQ. With a total of 64 VUDTs, 4 HQ Dismounts, 4 Switches and many, many Cat 5 Cables, it was no small task. Nevertheless, with the wealth of experience from **Cpl Sutherland** and **Cpl Nash**, the G6 build was finally in place by Day 3.



So much Cat 5 cabling

Alongside the work of the CS Ops and the CS Engs, the RSEs were busy building the complex power network which was to feed the enormous build. With more generators than a Div HQ, **Sgt 'H' Harrington's** extensive power plan ensured that the ex could be run in the austere location. With the likes of **Sig Ratandi** to help, all power was in place within a very short time.

As is always the case at the beginning of any new ex, the first phase of the FTX began with a few teething problems. However, after an extensive RFC meeting, the final changes were made to the lay down plan and the re-build began under the watchful eye of **SSgt (Fofs) Oxley**.

Not hindered by the sub-zero temperatures, the driving rain or the 90 mph winds, the first 3 day phase began late on Sunday night and was designed to test the Bde staff in their ability to coordinate ISTAR within the Virtual and Physical training environments.

The second and third phases were subsequently designed to test ISTAR Tac Gps in their ability to work with 14 Sig Regt and the MI community. The arrival of the Tac Gps and the unrelenting power issues tested our fault finding skills to the limit; with all individuals gaining a full understanding of the temperamental nature of the BNAU and the DNS Server as a result!

The constant changing nature of the ex allowed for a continuous Bowman and COMBAT learning, which has proved to be invaluable preparation for 201 Sig Sqn's new role as the VEG HQ Sqn later this year. Our thanks are extended to all of the G6 Staff within 1 ISR Bde for their excellent hospitality and the opportunity to gain an insight into the ISR environment.



The final build



211 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj E Swift**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Davies**

Exercise BATTLEAXE MERCURY (12 – 15 Mar 16) - by LCpl Cole

After an intense week of PACEX and lessons, 211 Sig Sqn deployed early on a Saturday morning to Swynnerton Training Area. Once we had collected our crypto and had completed all of our pre-move checks, we headed to the parade square where our vehicles joined the Sqn line up. As much as we all wanted to deploy on a cold Saturday morning, one of the Falcon trailers definitely did not. After detaching itself from the truck, we were left with a non-taskworthy trailer that could not deploy. Luckily having to move all of the kit out of the trailer onto a MAN SV greatly improved morale.

As soon as the packets arrived at the FOB the lessons began. Firstly, **A/Cpl Sullivan** delivered a Camouflage and Concealment lesson where everyone got an opportunity to attempt to cover the Falcon det. However, as every good operator knows, this is not a simple task and so practice definitely made perfect. **Sgt Rudra** and **Cpl Masson** then delivered a Site Recce lesson, where they taught us how to site a Falcon det practically and correctly. Finally, after a quick set of orders the det then re-deployed onto the training area. Obviously, as expected from first class Signallers in the Royal Corps of Signals, once in position the WAN was easily established within the required timing.



A Falcon det proving its off-road capability

On Sunday, after a swift Commanding Officer's visit to the training area, we then began a vehicle navigational exercise. Most dets did not fail to find the locations, except for the det crew who found themselves at Burger King. After acknowledging an error in navigation, the crew assured anyone who would listen that no Whoppers were purchased. This ex tested our navigational skills and gave us a bit more confidence for future deployments to unknown locations.

The next set of deployment orders saw us move to the other side of the training area. Our recce had led us to believe that it would be suitable for the Falcon det to drive on to, however the heavy vehicle got stuck in the wet, muddy ground almost immediately and without REME support, we were trapped. That was until members of the Ops team came down and helped push us out of the deep mud. Once finally free, the det was given a new location to move to (just 200m away

owing to the small training area at Swynnerton) and we completed a complete setup taking only 3 hours.

As Tuesday morning came around and with all training objectives complete, we managed to get our workbooks signed off, the vehicles lined up on the parade square and began the route back to Stafford for the final turnaround.

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj J Dempsey**
SSM **WO2 J Cordery**

Ex PREMIER WARRIOR was the 1 Sig Regt PNCO course, which ran from 28 Feb – 11 Mar at Warcop Training Area. The 26 students were split into 3 sections, with each section controlled by an experienced Cpl (**Cpl Moore, Cpl Metcalfe and Cpl Coombes**), who deployed as the Section Commander and mentor.

Warcop is located 120 miles north of Stafford in Cumbria and is renowned for being wet and extremely snowy, which meant deploying to Cumbria in Feb didn't come without risk. The first PLD was not easy and running through the Cumbrian fells certainly blew a few cobwebs out of the lungs for some members of the course. The terrain and weather came as a particular surprise to some, especially when it snowed just before deploying on the field phase of the ex.

Despite the weather, morale was kept high throughout by a number of individuals. **Lt Flewitt**, the Platoon Commander, managed to maintain morale by requesting a KFC every night on the resupply demand. Unfortunately the nearest KFC was located some 50 miles away, so he was out of luck. It was **Sgt Heyden's** reminder to 2 Section, of Gore-Tex being only required in extreme weather conditions and not for keeping your MTP trousers clean, that really kept the morale high.

The ex finished with a dawn platoon attack where the troops were put through their paces, taking a notional 3 casualties before extracting to the HLS. High standards and a strong determination to succeed, was displayed by all those who completed the PNCO course and it was particularly rewarding to see such enthusiasm from the junior members of the Regt.



2 section proving they have what it takes to be a JNCO

On completion of the course, the Regtl Training Wing hosted an end of course dinner night at Stafford Rangers FC, where **LCpl Fleck** was awarded both the Top Student and Top Soldier awards.





2nd SIGNAL REGIMENT YORK



CORPS SNOWBOARDING CHAMPIONSHIPS - by LCpl '24 hour clock' Clare

How not to deploy on AT

Where should I start? I should have met at 0100 with the 2 Sig Regt team in York, but I 'forgot' that there was two 1 o'clocks in the day. So as the team was setting off to catch their flight at Gatwick I was still in bed dreaming of going snowboarding tomorrow afternoon. When I woke up at 0700 in the morning I looked at my phone then the bombshell hit me - 20 missed calls and messages like "where the hell are you?" I came to the realisation what I had done one word came to mind - IDIOT! Trying my best not to flap too much I started searching for the next available flights to Austria and then it was planes, trains and automobiles from Manchester to meet up with my team.

When I finally arrived

In the morning I met my team members and after some 'gentle' abuse for my appalling admin we headed off to the mountain to be placed in our groups: advanced, intermediate and novice for the week under the instructions of the RIPSTAR team. I was shocked to be placed in the advanced group, and even more shocked when the first thing that came out of the instructor's mouth was "Let's practise technique - now jump this fence!" I was thinking he was mad but we followed anyway. At the end of the day we made our way back to the apartment, my team consisted of team captain **Capt 'Make It Rain; Ford, Sig 'The Virgin' Smallwood, LCpl 'The Breath' Robinson, Cpl 'FLASH' O'Donnell, Pte 'The Bed Ridden Toad' O'Brien** and later on **Sig 'I love Yugio' Anthony** who would join us for the 2nd week following the Army Championships.



Capt Ford setting the example before his spectacular fall

As well as the competitive snowboarding, the highlight of the trip was often the mistakes made by the novices. The undoubted highlight being when our team captain, **Capt Ford**, after 2 weeks of snowboarding, managed to apparently 'e-purge' everything he knew yelling "I forgot how to snowboard" while falling down the mountain. We will make a snowboarder out of you someday **Jon!** In the events as a team we were very successful with **Sig Anthony** winning the PGS, SS, SBX and overall open male champion. **LCpl Robinson** won the Novice PGS, came 3rd on the Novice SBX and was awarded overall Novice champion and most improved rider on the ex. **Capt Ford** reminded us that it was all down to his leadership as Team Captain and we couldn't have done it without him. In the end I think we all had a great time, learnt a number of new skills and it was well worth my extra expense, can't wait to go back next year.



LCpl Robinson and Sig Anthony with their awards

219 Sig Sqn CAST (N) Exercise - Sig Gurney

219 Sig Sqn were given the task to provide both a HICON and the European Union Battle Group (EUBG) Formation HQ element that included TacCIS and OpCIS for an exercise at CAST(N) in Catterick.

This ex was almost immediately after the Sqn had returned from another EUBG ex so the turnaround and preparation time was incredibly short. This normally would not be a problem however, it would be the first time we had built the FHQ and as it is almost a Div sized HQ this would be more tentage than many of us had seen in our careers. To save a lot of messing about in Catterick we erected the complex on Imphal Barracks to identify and fix faults prior to our deployment. This worked well as we realised the tents looked like a planetarium from the inside and tank sheets would be needed to stop all the kit from getting soaked.

The deployment phase of the ex went smoothly under the guidance of **SSgt (YofS) Smith, SSgt (FofS/IS) Froggett** and **Cpl 'The task master' Reid**. The main complex went up in a day with the GS tables and chairs in. The wiring was a different story altogether though, requiring much head scratching, but a solution was eventually sought and the ex could proceed in earnest. Once the surge was complete we had continual maintenance to complete, a service desk to man and a



watchkeepers log book that needed filling in. Although it was cold and slightly uncomfortable for the Staff Officers, the ex went well and overall 4 Inf Bde were happy.

All in all it was a successful deployment and the three weeks LSA will come in handy at the end of the month. We, as a Sqn will look forward to the upcoming EUBG CERTEX down in Salisbury in the coming months.

Exercise ASKARI STORM 2 KENYA - SSgt Amritman Gurung, 246 GSS

246 GSS have recently been tasked to provide HICON and ex support on Ex ASKARI STORM 2 in Kenya. 15 members of the Sqn were deployed to Kenya to support both 11 Inf Bde and BATUK during 1 RGR BG ex. This support consisted of the preparation and testing of comms and CIS equipment and the provision of personnel on a variety of G6 tasks across the AO.

At the start of the ex we deployed to Archers Post (AP) training area for 10 days. Half of our team then deployed with the BG (1RGR), with the other half taking on other duties. These ten days were an unforgettable experience for us as we experienced temperatures of 40 degrees Celsius and observed wild creatures in their natural habitats as the ex continued.

At the end of this ten day period, we moved from AP to the main camp at LAB(E) here we spent two days preparing our equipment for the next phase of the ex where we would be supporting the BG FTX on the Lolldaiga training area. As the ex began we were joined by the staff from 11 Inf Bde and also hosted a number of V.I.Ps including the DCGS, **Lt Gen Pope CBE**.



Members of the supporting team with the VIP visitors

Throughout the ex we became integrated within 11 Inf Bde and feel proud of our close working relationship we have developed with them. At the end of the ex we were invited to go on a 10 km run with them and we all enjoyed an 'ENDEX'



11 Inf Bde staff and G6 support at ENDEX

dinner with them, during which we were awarded a plaque in thanks for our contribution to the ex.

It is fair to say that the members of 246GSS, who deployed on Ex AS-2, gained a great deal from the experience and look forward to supporting other exercises in the future.

Exercise KHUKURI STONE - Sig Satkar

Ex KHUKURI STONE was planned as a Collective Training Level 1(CT 1) ex and completes MATT for year 2016-17 in Swynnerton Training Area (STA) taking place from 6 - 11 March 2016. The objective of the ex was to refresh, revise and practice basic close combat skills and to complete MATT training to enhance Sqn deployability. For some, it was also an opportunity to prepare for upcoming career courses like PNCO and JCLM.

The Sqn's exercising personnel all wheeled off from York bright and early on Sunday morning and were dropped off to STA. Upon arrival, Ex Co-or **Sgt Magar** and his DS & Instructors team were there to welcome and brief us about the ex. The ex orbat was with a Platoon consisting of three full strength sections. Without further delay, we had our evening meals and then commenced with our MATT lessons. We received a short motivational and confidence booster speech from **WO2 (SSM) Gopal Saru**, encouraging us to take on board four key factors that was going to help us perform better throughout the ex; Positivity, Courage, Motivation and Determination. With our minds fine-tuned with those factors, all of us were very excited for the schedule that was planned for us throughout the week.

On the first day the weather was glorious to support us on the ranges to do our ACMT. **SSgt Sekendra Gurung** also introduced a section competition by using one of the matches from Bisley Shooting Competition. The section competition challenge made the boys enthusiastic and competitive as it tested both individual and team skills.

Concurrently, **LCpl Om Gurung** took the sections through a revision on BCD & BLS theory which was to prepare us for our 'surprise' practical test on the subject the following day. In the evening, **SSgt Saindra Chemjong** taught MATT 5(Navigation) followed by a test which everybody passed.



SSgt Saindra instructing the Sqn navigation

On Tuesday morning, the sections took part in an urban environment scenario with casualties where our BCD & BLS skills were put to test and was closely monitored and assessed by **LCpl Om**. It was a good laugh in some aspects as **Cpl Tirtha** was adding chaos to the serials by acting as a 'battle-shock casualty' and running off. After lunch break we conducted a practical assessment. Our times and checkpoints collected contributed towards the overall section competition which was to be announced at the end of the ex. In the evening, we received our orders from **Lt. Kuizinas** and **Cpl Keshav Karki** (PI Sgt) for our deployment to the harbour location the next day. We kicked off Wednesday



morning with a series of lessons prepared by the DS & Instructors which included CASEVAC, Patrolling, CPERS, Quick Attack Estimate and Harbour Drills. As a platoon, we then patrolled up to our harbour location where we established our position.

On the final day, we all geared up and prepared ourselves for the platoon attack. The attack lasted a good four hours or so and it was finished off in style with a section CASEVAC race. The CO and RSM 2 Sig Regt, **Lt Col Hargeaves** and **WO1 (RSM) Stephenson**, had also come to visit the exercising troops in the midst of the attack. The attack came to a stop and we were treated with a well-deserved curry lunch in the field. Subsequently, the winner of the overall section competition was announced. **Cpl Ramesh** and his section emerged victorious.



246 GSS deployed troops at ENDEX

The last evening of the ex was wrapped up with delicious BBQ dinner prepared by our Gurkha chef, **LCpl Shankar** and his team. An award was also given out by 2IC 246 **Capt Bharat Shrestha** to **Sig Satkar Shahi** as Best Endeavour for the exercise for his valiant efforts throughout the duration of this ex.



Sig Satkar taking a firing position during the Final Attack

The ex, not only refreshed and revised our skills and drills but also brought us closer together as a Sqn and we are eagerly waiting for the next ex.

Exercise WESSEX STORM - by Sig Keating

On the 25th Jan 16, 219 Sig Sqn deployed from York to Westdown Camp on Ex WESSEX STORM to support 4 Inf Bde HQ. Our main effort was to provide a HICON Ops room, a Fwd HQ and to deploy RRB detachments.

The first phase was to build and establish the HICON element within Westdown Camp, this was achieved using a Modulated Dismount Ops Room (MDOR). However, to ensure there was a suitable working environment for the Bde Staff Officers, this involved a number of individuals having to crawl under the floor tiles to lay the cable and coaxes, it looked like a scene from 'The Great Escape'. During the first phase we also deployed **LCpl Arneaud** and **Sig Millar** (from 214 Sig Sqn) for a two week period on a RRB detachment to Sidbury Hill. Although they were initially happy with going, morale started to dip when the weather turned and the water started to rise within the tent.

The second phase of the ex was to deploy a Fwd HQ onto Salisbury Plain Training Area (SPTA) in order for the Bde staff to conduct a ChoC with HICON and control the ex from the field. The HQ was setup in quick time with no problems, once completed the Bde staff assumed control and carried on with the ex. Once the HQ was no longer required, control was passed back to HICON and we remained in place until the next morning as the Bde Staff Officers wanted to conduct their last briefing in it. Once completed we then took to the tear down with pace and effectiveness in order to get it packed away and head back to WestDown Camp.

After 3 long weeks, endex was finally called on the 11th Feb at 0400hrs, after a full tear down we returned to York on the 12th Feb. Overall the ex went well and 4 Inf Bde were more than happy with the Sqn and what was provided.

Charity Lunch in aid of Ramesh Damai - by Cpl Robin Gurung

In keeping with the ethos of the British Army and the Bde of Gurkhas, we are always looking at how we can help those less fortunate than ourselves. In 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn, we helped transform the life of an 11 year old boy **Ramesh Damai** from Bhimghite in Baglung district, Nepal. He suffers from a rare skin condition, Ichthyosis. However, due to the financial difficulties faced by his family he was unable to receive any further diagnosis or treatment.

We managed to speak to **Ramesh's** parents through a Nepal journalist, **Saral Gurung**, who was organising for Ramesh's transport to Kathmandu Medical College (KMC) in the hope of him having treatment. Ichthyosis is a chronic condition which has no cure. It can be alleviated by moisturising and exfoliating the skin every day to prevent dryness, scaling, cracking and the build-up of skin cells.

In order to help **Ramesh**, **Cpl Robin Gurung** and the 4 Gurkha wives came up with the idea of organising a charity lunch for the Sqn. The key Regtl personalities from 2 Sig Regt were also invited to attend the event on 16 Feb 2016 at Imphal Barracks, York. The lunch was a traditional 'Nepali Khaja' with a menu of; Pulau rice, Sel-roti, Chicken curry, Aludum, Momo and Chutney. The Nepalese Community in York and the Gurkha community provided overwhelming support to the event, with both culinary expertise and donations to help **Ramesh**.

On the day, there was a long queue with over 100 soldiers outside the Bhetghat and the lunch was incredibly popular. During the lunch there was a round of Tombola which was enjoyed by all. The lunch raised £1026.50 and there were no costs as this was all covered by the generous Gurkha ladies. This resulted in 162,287 Nepalese rupees being handed over directly to **Ramesh's** family to help with his continuing treatment.





Charity lunch team preparing for the event

I would like to thank, **Mrs Soney Gurung, Mrs Rojina Gurung, Mrs Amisha Gurung and Mrs Nitu Gurung** for all their efforts to help me organise the event and cooking such delicious food. Also to the support from all personnel in 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn, in particular Officer Commanding 246 GSS Saheb **Maj Whillis** who supported and encouraged the event to take place.



Lunch in full swing

“ Helping one child will not change the world but surely for that one child, the world will change forever”

Exercise SOLDIERS SHADOW by - *Capt P O'Brien, OC LAD*

In late February 2016 14 (EW) Sig Regt hosted Ex SOLDIERS SHADOW, the Army Cyber Competition. Teams from across the Army arrived, set-up a wide variety of hardware and eagerly awaited their first orders. 2 Sig Regt team consisted of **Sig Wylde, Cpl Williams, Cpl Westall and Capt Banting, Lenehan and O'Brien.**

The range of abilities present was wide, from novices who had just been introduced to their first Linux command line interface through to experienced Intelligence Corps analysts and R SIGNALS operators who had years of experience, either professionally or personally acquired. With this in mind, the first day focussed on frameworks underlying cyber, including the overarching legalities and RoE implications of cyber warfare.

Dawning crisp, clear and bleakly isolated as only Brawdy can, the second day saw the competition begin. Again, to cater for all levels of ability, instruction was provided in the morning and a reading list the night before; the challenge itself began in the afternoon. The first task was to defend a friendly web-server, wired infrastructure and Wi-Fi access point being used for positive information operations which had been previously

disrupted by enemy cyber activity. Our team, which was composed of novices, struggled initially as none of us had used the tools and utilities required. However, after a few false starts and both remembering what we had just learned and teaching ourselves as we went, we surprised ourselves by finishing in fourth place from the fifteen teams entered.

On the second day of the competition the nature of the challenge shifted, in line with the Army Cyber Framework to Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR). We were briefed that an insurgent, suspected to be connected with people smuggling, gun running and SIED facilitation was known to use a secured wireless network within an urban centre. Our task was to gain access to the network, identify his computer and those of any of his known associates, identify and exploit a weakness in order to deliver a payload capable of gaining access to his files and retrieving any useful intelligence material. We achieved these goals, managing to not only gain and analyse convincing intelligence that the suspect was indeed involved in people trafficking, but also to identify his boat and gain a real-time GPS track and data on its previous movements.

Moving into the final phase, we were tasked with disrupting an enemy propaganda campaign by replacing their website with our own but without altering their webserver. Our approach saw us gaining entry to a secured network and compromising a DNS server to divert traffic to our own 'positive messaging' website.

The growth of Cyber within the Army is continuing at pace, focusing in ways that are outside the scope of this article to discuss. However, grass-roots talent is required at all levels and this competition was definitely a good way to spread the word across the Army. Personnel at all levels of experience are encouraged not only to continue to study, tinker and develop in their own time but also to attend events like this and to engage with their Chain of Command to develop their own tactical Cyber capabilities.



Operation MARMAT 2 - by Lt Walker

Op MARMAT 2 saw 6 members of 2 Sig Regt deploy to Nepal in support of 70 Gurkha Field Sqn working on a number of reconstruction and new build projects after the devastating earthquakes on the 25 Apr and 12 May 2015. The MARMAT series of deployments started immediately after the earthquakes with members of the QGE deploying to provide clean water and building materials for welfare pensioners; this included the construction of a number of Pre-Fabricated buildings up until the 2015 monsoon season set in.

Op MARMAT 2 was designed as a much more deliberate operation; four areas were identified that had been most seriously affected by the earthquakes. These were, Jiri and Netrakali in the East and Jaubari and Pachok in the West of the country. At each site two Pre-Fabricated buildings were built. Over the first two and half months of the deployment 5 Schools, 2 Community centres and 1 Area Welfare Centre were built. In the middle of January 16 work was started on 4 brand new houses for Welfare pensioners; these were of a new earthquake resistant design and were some of the very first that were started on behalf of the Gurkha Welfare Scheme.



The new Area Welfare Centre in Jiri

The members of 2 Sig Regt deployed provided much needed assistance throughout the operation working in a variety of roles; from manning the ops room, escorting vehicles across



2 Sig Regt personnel



A new house for a Welfare pensioner in Pachok

the country, helping the G4 team back in Kathmandu and even getting stuck in with the construction tasks! The QGS personnel deployed took every challenge in their stride and quickly proved their worth. I can say with absolute confidence that each one of them represented the QGS and R SIGNALS to the highest of standards and truly showed that each of them brought more than just their trade skills to the deployment but also a real drive and desire to help.

The biggest issue that affected the deployment was the ongoing dispute between the various political parties in Nepal following the introduction of a new constitution. This situation materialised as an unofficial blockade of the entire country, impacting the ability for the country to function as crucial materials were stuck at the border, including fuel, medicines and building materials. This meant that all those deployed especially those in the hills were working not just in extremely isolated locations but without the required fuel to run generators for more than the bare minimum! As always however the true spirit of the Gurkhas showed at all times and morale never took a major plummet even when the outside temperature dropped below freezing!

The final and what I feel most rewarding phase of the operation for all involved was the construction of 4 permanent houses for Welfare pensioners. While the Schools and Community centres built will benefit all in those areas; these houses, although simple will provide a permanent place for a former member of the Brigade of Gurkhas to live.

Op MARMAT 2 has offered the opportunity for the British Army to give something back to a country and people that has served them loyally for over 200 years. I am extremely proud of the team that I deployed with and all that they managed to achieve.





10th SIGNAL REGIMENT CORSHAM



CO **Lt Col B Fitch**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) C Steers**

81 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj C Milligan**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Blatcher**

Fleet Half Marathon – by Maj Steve Clout

Thirty-nine runners from 10 Sig Regt (81, 241 and 251 Sig Sqns) competed in the Army Half Marathon Championships which was held as part of the Fleet Half Marathon which is held every March. It was perfect conditions for running and there were some notable performances from soldiers across the Sqns that competed. There were around eight hundred Army Runners with the team from 10 SR being the third largest. They came out just short of a medal in the Army Team Competition but all who finished thoroughly deserved their finishers' medal and the chance to put their feet up on Sunday afternoon. All the finishers seemed keen to have another go next year, let's hope the team can stay that keen for the next 365 days!

Fleet Half Marathon - by Sgt Phil Welch

On Sunday 20th March 2016, along with other soldiers from 10 Sig Regt, **Maj Clout**, **Capt Green**, **WO2 'TC' Trebilcock**, **Sgt's Tomblin & Welch**, **Cpl's Lazenby & Badger** and **LCpl Underwood** represented 81 Sig Sqn competing in the Fleet Half Marathon. For some, namely **Maj Clout** and **Capt Green**, this was business as usual for seasoned half marathon runners, for the rest it was an opportunity to put their hard training to the test.

We all arrived at Fleet bright and early and met at the Regt's tent. A quick warm up session followed by plenty of photos it was eventually time for the race to begin. Leading from the front **Maj Clout** and **Capt Green** attempted to gain a head start by rushing to the front; for the other ranks the game plan had already started.

The atmosphere on the day was fantastic and the whole community in Fleet really made everyone feel good all the way round. Volunteers ensured that all the runners had water as well as sweets for that all important sugar rush. **Sgt's**



Tomblin and **Welch** along with **Cpl Badger** decided to run together and kept each other going but once they had **Maj Clout** and **Capt Green** in their sights at the 8 mile mark there was only one thing on their mind and that was of course to beat them. They remained in their sights all the way to the finish and knowing that they had a good few minutes on them due to their eagerness to head to the front at the start, their game plan had worked.

The whole team thoroughly enjoyed themselves and have all committed to doing it again next year, hopefully with a few more volunteers from the sqn, and yes the result was good for the Sgts' mess but we won't dwell on that too much. In terms of results the best run time on the day was from **Cpl Stu Lazenby** again!! Well done **Stu**.

225 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj O Finnie**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) J Barratt**

38X Inter-Unit Volleyball Competition 2016 - LCpl Baines

This year's volleyball team was hastily assembled from a vigorous training camp... the day before the tournament. Some people from the Sqn didn't quite make the cut and were disappointed. The lucky few who made it showed great strength and determination to get on the team. After our afternoons training camp in which we also learned the rules of volleyball, we were ready to take on the other teams at Aldergrove.

We arrived at Aldergrove and to our surprise it was a professional set up, but we all noticed that the nets were a lot higher than what we had trained with the day before, so we gave ourselves an hour to practise our serves with the regulation nets before the start of the tournament.

Our first game was against 5 AAC, which we won 11-5; we were happy with our performance but knew we had more to give.

Our second game against 321 EOD was a much tighter affair, winning 15-14. This is where the first few cracks in our team started to show. We seemed to be cruising by quite a few points when we had a mini collapse - the team started to get sloppy with silly mistakes and crazy decisions. No person was guiltier of this than **Sgt Stu Porter**, who decided to try and head the ball over the net, but the ball didn't quite go over - the team was in disbelief, but we got away with it.

In the third game we learnt from our mistakes and we cruised past a 38 Bde team winning 22-5. Here we started to get a real feel for the sport, with **LCpl Martin Dodd** serving like a man possessed.

Our fourth game was against NIGSU. We lost 15-8; starting well, but faded away as the game went on. Our final group game saw us come up against the reigning champions 1 SCOTS. Here, our dream of silverware came to an abrupt end. We lost the game 18-4 and were outplayed by a very



impressive team. Maybe fatigue and tiredness had crept in with lots of silly individual mistakes being made. The dream of the championship was over.

1 SCOTS went on to win the 38 Bde volleyball championships and deservedly so.

Northern Ireland Cross Country League Females - LCpl Wilson (AGC(SPS))

August had come around and that meant the cross country league had started up again in Northern Ireland; which seems to be prime monsoon season over here. However, as ever 225 Sig Sqn (ECM(FP)) would continue to compete in the league and perform well.

The female league was compromised of some of the best trail runners in the Province and was always a tough and competitive race. The time of year had meant conditions were wet, muddy and generally miserable but there were still smiles on faces as **Sgt Gunn** and I claimed a 6th and 3rd place finish at the Tardree Forest track. However, being a league, more races were to follow and other courses occasionally suited runners differently with varied conditions and terrains throughout the league races. As the end of January approached it meant Crawfordsburn Park in Newtownards was the next venue we would participate in. This route boasted a scenic running trail which led out to a sea view, accompanied by a lovely and bitterly cold breeze in the winter time. This time round **Sgt Gunn** brought her A-game and claimed an impressive first place finish for the Veterans female race, this was a great result, especially as it was the Northern Ireland Championship race, where also our Female team claimed the runners-up prize for the Championships.

January's running events were not yet finished for the month as one more race was to follow: 225 Sig Sqn hosted 10th Sig Regt's CO's Cup Competition Cross Country Race. This time a more familiar venue of the Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon park of Lisburn was to host our event. The course is known for a rather strenuous horseshoe hill which proves the difference in the otherwise fast paced trail. Another top 3 finish for **Sgt Gunn** in the CO's Cup Race and then we headed back to 225 Sig Sqn for the evening's events and award presentations. Overall, though we do not have many female soldiers out in Northern Ireland at the moment, those that we do have are representing the Sqn well across their own sporting fields.

Swimathon - by Cpl Booth



The Swimathon is a nationwide challenge that is held annually to raise money for the Sports Relief charity. The challenge aims to encourage more people into the pool and achieve new swimming goals. The event involves individuals swimming distances from 1.5k up to 5k or teams swimming 5k as part of a relay.

225 Sig Sqn had a total of 6 swimmers taking part this year, **Maj Owen Finnie and Cpl Chris Booth** took on the individual 5k challenge, completing the distance in 1hr 23 minutes and 1 hr 51 minutes respectively. The remaining 4 swimmers each swam 2.5 km as part of 2 man relay teams. **SSgt Ewan Darlington** and **Sgt Lee Butcher** finishing with a time of 1 hr 47 mins and **Cpl Jack Taylor and LCpl 'Katie' Tunstall** 2 hrs 15 mins.

The 5k challenge is a difficult task to complete; it equates to 200 lengths in a 25-metre pool and can become slightly tedious as the lengths build up. However, raising money and pushing yourself to new personal best times and distances keeps you going.

All of the swimmers put in 100% effort in their swims but the event could not go ahead without the help of **Cpl Booth** organising the swimmers and booking the lanes. **LCpl Jack Proctor** and **LCpl Ian Whitaker** also had a part to play counting the lengths of the individual swimmers and looking after the swimmers.

A special well done must go to **Maj Finnie** whose time broke the Garrison's five year old record by over 5 minutes. Unfortunately, this new record only lasted around ten minutes before being comprehensively beaten by an RLC Captain. Don't worry Sir, there is always next year!!!

The challenge was a success with all swimmers completing their distances and raising vital money for Sports Relief.

241 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC(Des) **Capt Ben Edworthy**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) MC Beckett**

Exercise LIGHTNING STRIKE - by Lt N Ayling

Ex LIGHTNING STRIKE took place from 19-21 Feb 16 in Blandford Camp. The aim of the ex was to showcase the capabilities and different job roles in the Corps to the various University Officer Training Roles (UOTCs) to inform their decision if they decide to pursue a Commission.

The ex consisted of several Regts and independent Sig Sqn's erecting stands to display their roles and specialities. All the stands included a challenging element and the UOTC teams were scored as they toured the stand.

The weekend culminated in a dinner night in the Blandford Garrison Officers' Mess for the Officer Cadets.

Representing 10th Sig Regt, 241 Sig Sqn were set on the case and under the experienced hand of **Sgt A Jackson** the stand was set up with no problems and the rehearsals went perfectly. The stand consisted of a variety of stations giving the Officer Cadets a well-rounded brief of what 241 Sig Sqn do. Ranging from the rather precise task of creating a functional fibre optic patch lead using ST hotmelt heads and making Cat 5E cables, to the far less precise task of pulling communication cables as far as possible.



The Officer Cadets studied some weird and wonderful subjects ranging from Zoology to Nuclear Physics, unfortunately all the time spent studying didn't leave them any better prepared for the task. The record for the day being a half completed fibre optic cable and a sum total of 3 Cat 5E cables. The technical tasks were overseen by several instructors from the Cable Systems Wing of Blandford, who rated the work of the Officer Cadets sometimes a bit leniently with **LCpl Jase 'Banshee' Buley** handing out half points.

Much of the stand was conducted under shelter and so the inclement weather failed to dent the morale of everyone. Even our resident PT guru **LCpl Garrard** stood firm against the elements refusing to put on gortex or warm kit in favour of a rather more fetching PTI t-shirt.

After the final team departed we toted up the final scores and collapsed the stand, loading all the stores into the back of the combi-van. Disaster struck however as we left the training area as an errant stone found its way into our tyre. Fortunately the tyre finally gave out within metres of cable systems and the vehicle limped in to unload the stores as we pondered how to get to the spare wheel hidden under the vehicle.

At dinner the prizes were dished out and all the Officer Cadets thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The following morning the teams departed with slightly fuzzy heads and bleary eyes, but a good time was had by all and the weekend had achieved its aim of spreading what the Regiment and more specifically 241 Sig Sqn do.

Kenya Surge (17 Jan 16 – 14 Feb 16) - by Sig Steventon

It started on a wintry Sunday morning as we left the warm comfy confines of the block to make our way to Heathrow fully loaded with kit and ready to face the warm climate of Kenya. We arrived at Heathrow all wrapped up, embarking on the nine hour flight from London to Nairobi. The flight, comfy as it was, didn't quite prepare us all for the blast of heat that we felt as we disembarked the plane. After dragging all of our equipment off the baggage carousel we made our way outside to await the transport that would take us to Nanyuki and the camps that lay within.

After a long wait, the transport finally turned up due to the streets being quite busy at that time of day. We loaded up our belongings and decided the best course of action would be to sleep the entire 4 hour journey to Nanyuki. Waking up on the bumpy roads of Nanyuki itself we entered the current main camp of Nanyuki Show Ground or NSG as it is locally known. We slowly emptied the bus of ourselves and our kit and went about sorting our accommodation and transport onward to the new camp that we would be staying at which was called Lab East. With a bit of running around and a road trip through Nanyuki we got to Lab East where we would be staying for the duration of the surge.

The next few days went by in a bit of a blur as we all went through the arrivals process. Whilst this was happening, we sorted out all of the materials that we would need throughout the surge such as PVC trunking, cat 5E cable, galvanised steel basket and other stores without which the job could not be completed.

With the minutiae out of the way, **CPO SSgt I Lawson** and our surge leader **A/Sgt D Swan** walked the team through the two buildings that we would be flood wiring during our stay in

Kenya. This helped the team to visualise what we would be doing over the next 4 weeks. They went through all the necessary health and safety briefs that we would need to keep in mind as we worked in the area throughout our time here.

The team was split down straight away to maximise what we could achieve with some of us putting up the PVC trunking that would form containment for the cables, whilst another group built and secured the cab in the NER. A third unlucky team were upstairs in the roof doing the same with the galvanised steel basket which would transport the cables to their intended destination.

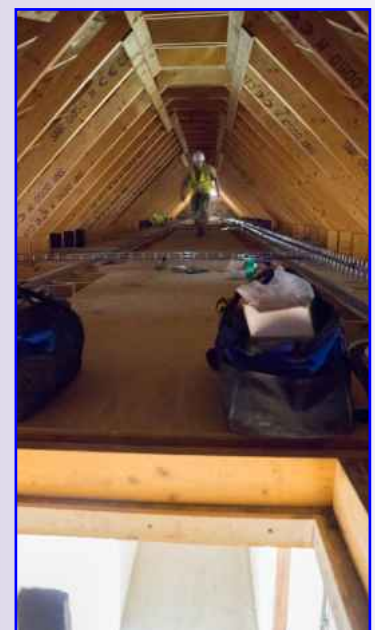
The first building offered a few challenges, with no existing infrastructure, we got to work putting in the trunking and cables and conducting our testing. The second building though required much less work overall, because most of the internal infrastructure had already been installed by local contractors. This is not to say that it went smoothly.



LCpl Landroit and Sig Cunliffe hard at work

Upstairs was a bit more friendly this time as there was actually plenty of space to walk around upright, however, as things are when working with something someone else has installed, you always have a few niggles to deal with. Being the resourceful team that we were we worked around the issues and pulled the cables up, through and down into the NER where they were correctly labelled ready to go for termination in the cab.

Everyone was on termination duty now with all of the outlets and the patch panels in the cab to be terminated. With the terminating cracked, it was time to do the dreaded testing. The team quaked with anticipation, waiting ominously for the beep that could spell doom and more hard work. Again, quality craftsmanship meant the important beep of a pass was heard throughout the building and the team rejoiced with a silent prayer to the God Mech.



The next phase of the build would require the team to do a cable pull from the two buildings we had flood wired to the CIS Detachment on Lab East camp. This is where all the magic would happen to supply them with the much needed communications we were there to install.



With the break in work, our resident Reservist veterans, **LCpl Hanson** and **LCpl Brittain**, suggested that it would be a shame to be in this beautiful country and not see at least some sights, to which the team heartily agreed. Plans afoot and transport sorted we all packed for a two day safari in the Samburu reserve near Archers Post where the majority of the military exercises take place.

Entering the reserve we were immediately greeted by elephants galore wandering their merry way around the area and before we knew it we had seen giraffes and antelopes too. With a day of safari under our belt we turned in to where we were staying to get some well-deserved rest. The next day we all got up early to meet our local guide who would take us on a tour of the area with the hopes of finding a lion or leopard. Sadly this was not to be as the animals were playing coy and having an extra half an hour in bed much to our dismay.

Lunchtime passed and we headed out again in the hope of finding our elusive prey. This time though we ran into a menagerie of animals; with bull elephants fighting over territory, scores of antelopes grazing in the sun and giraffes. Luck on our side we spotted a lion prowling on the other side of the riverbank.

Back on more travelled paths and with night approaching luck struck again when, atop a rocky outcrop, we spotted a leopard casually surveying the area. A couple of pictures later and somewhat closer we suddenly realised there was not one but two leopards on the rock. Eventually one of them decided it was time to head out and search for some food. Feeling brave we followed the leopard and got some fantastic shots

of it from our resident photographer **LCpl Gurung**. With dusk fast approaching the team headed back to reminisce on the days wonders, and the unique and exciting opportunities this deployment afforded us.



The team with the locals during the safari

Back on camp, reinvigorated from our safari and more importantly with the pits completed and ready to go, we would do the dreaded cable pull which in this case would be a 24 core SM fibre cable and a 48 core SM fibre cable. With plenty of pits open and people manning them, the team went about the laborious process of guiding all the cables through the ducts with the dirt and grime that accompanies such a task.

The final part of the project would be a bit more of a task as the two buildings we had outfitted had no lights or power meaning the splicing would be done in relatively dusty darkness. At this point we diligently cleaved, cleaned and spliced both ends of the cable that we had installed between the buildings. Again we came to the crucial phase, testing. With grim faces on and testers at the ready the team awaited the all-important beep of a pass on each core. Beeps were heard and the team rejoiced on a job well done. A little tidying up and we could say the job was complete.

The last day approached and we had to say goodbye to sunny Kenya and make our way back to Nairobi and our flight home. As things were apt to go it just so happened that the President of Kenya was visiting several villages along our route to the airport, which caused absolute chaos on the roads. Fortunately we had a skilled bus driver who took us the rather scenic yet bumpy route. Arriving at the airport we all piled out and grabbed our belongings as it was getting close to check in. Luck with us again, we made it in time and boarded the flight home.

Stepping off the other side the cold was a shock to the system, but we said our goodbyes and looked forward to some well deserved downtime having enjoyed a job well done in Kenya.

243 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Capt J Thomas**
SSM **WO2 P Brown**

BFBS Army Flexible Working Interview - by Cpl Rolfe

In a typical civilian workplace it is not unusual to come across some kind of flexible working arrangements. This can be anything from reduced working hours to flexible hours to suit the employee whilst still being of value to the company. It should come as no surprise then that the Army has realised that this is potentially a key issue in retention of personnel



and therefore is worth running a trial to see if and how this can run successfully within the service environment. Starting in December 2015 the trial was running until November 2016. This has now been extended to March 2016 before the main policy comes into effect; and to help give other serving personnel an idea of how the scheme works and how it can help them BFBS thought it'd be a good idea to talk to someone on the trial.

I was selected from a cast of limited numbers, it all started with an informal chat with **Maj Kace** who was coordinating the on-air interrogation. He explained that they were looking for someone on the trial to talk about flexible duties from a soldier's perspective and my reasons for applying to join the trial.

It was due to this that on a slightly damp and misty Wednesday morning I could be found in a converted bungalow in Bulford. We were greeted by **Chris Sturgess** who is a larger than life character who presents on the breakfast slot for BFBS Salisbury Plain. Once settled in his office **Chris** walked us through how he wanted to do the interview. He would start with **Maj Kace** for an overview and to refresh the listener to what were the aims and objectives of flexible working, before then moving over to me to get the 'lived experience.' This was my moment for me to say in my own words why I applied for it and the impact it has had on my working and home life.

The interview routine was sorted and there was a quick sound check before we got onto the serious business of picking a track to play between the interview segments. This is where **Maj Kace** stepped up to the challenge of trying to find the longest song on radio. He gave **Chris** the suggestion of Lynyrd Skynyrd's 'Freebird' although despite his DJ magic he could only come up with the full 10 minute version so that ended up with somewhat slightly truncated play between segments. We weren't there to make **Chris'** job harder, but his DJ-Fu was letting him down badly when he also struggled to find Lou Reed's 'Perfect Day' and instead I had to settle for The Eagles, 'Hotel California' though at a mere 6:30 that meant at least Chris had time to squeeze something else in from his must-play playlist!

We seemed to be sitting around for ages for the interview to start, but the time suddenly flashed by and we were all done and dusted. Quick photo with **Chris** for BFBS (and The Wire) and then we were on our way back to our normal lives, our two minutes of fame was over.



251 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj M Cox**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) N Cansfield**

Royal Signals lead the way with British Army Motor Racing - SSgt Wood



On 26 February 2016 the British Army Racing Car Team (BARCT), gathered for its Annual General Meeting and track day at Abingdon airfield. This year has seen the team grow from a handful of racers to a team of 15+ drivers, including 5 from the Royal Signals. It is a well known fact that a lot of soldiers have a passion for cars and motorsport in general but feel that actually racing would be out of their reach. With the knowledge and support from the BARCT, as well as help from an array of sponsors providing discounted parts and equipment, it has made this sport more accessible to soldiers who may wish to take their passion of motorsport a step further. Help is also provided with the racing fees which are decided on a rank specific structure with the most junior soldiers receiving 100% of their fees back.



Abingdon Test Day – LCpl Palmer, Cpl Tedstone, Cpl Leese, SSgt Wood



SSgt Chris Wood at Silverstone

This year the Army team will be racing in the Armed Forces Race Challenge which competes against the Navy and RAF. The AFRC sees the team racing at circuits such as Donnington, Rockingham, Croft and Snetterton with a season finale at the prestigious Holy Birkett 6 hour endurance race at Silverstone. Any Royal Signals personnel wishing to find more information regarding any Motorsport discipline is to first look up the British Army Motorsport Association (BAMA) website or look up the British Army Racing Team Facebook page.

Any support is most welcome with the first race meeting on 20 March 2016 at Donnington Circuit.



Sgt Will Ashmore at Cadwell Park

Support Command (UK South) Inter Unit Basketball Championships 2016 - by LCpl Adams



The day started on Wednesday 23 Feb 16 at 0800. The team gathered in the AGSC under **Cpl 'Reach Around' Crammond** while our illustrious team Captain, **Sig 'Haggis' Hobbins** went to register the team. After a quick whip round to collect the registration fee, the team was placed into Pool 2 alongside teams from the KRH, 3 Sig Regt and our local training partners, 10 QOGLR.

Our first match was against 3 Sig Regt, who are a tough team containing Corps players. We were undeterred however and eager to start the day well. The team got off to a good start with **LCpl 'the White Shadow' Morrin** getting some early points. We controlled the game early on however, 3 Sig Regt took the lead as they capitalised from the free throw line. Both teams showed some good skill, however unfortunately 3 Sig Regt won the match. The next match was against the KRH; a tough team who won the previous year's competition. 10 Sig Regt took the lead almost instantly with some good plays shown by **Capt '3 points' O'Toole** and **Sig 'Haggis'**

Hobbins. Cpl 'Razor' Renouf and **Sig 'the Turtle' Turton** made their basketball debut and both showed potential. Although a close first half, we were passing and moving well as a team and our shots were on target. In the second half our fitness shone through, which gave us the upper hand and we were able to capitalise on this, winning 33-23. A special mention goes out to **LCpl 'Super Mario' Brown** for managing to stay on his feet for a whole game.

Our win gave us a well needed confidence boost going into our last match with our training partners, 10 QOGLR. 10 QOGLR are a team we know well and who are difficult to play due to their youth and size. Both teams started strongly, however 10 QOGLR took the lead at the half way point and were shooting very well, despite the best efforts of our defenders. In the last quarter our Team Captain called a Time Out for a quick pep talk and we emerged back onto the court knowing what we had to do to win the game. **LCpl 'Twinkle Toes' Sylva** took the point guard position and showed some great ball handling skills, whilst **LCpl 'Richie' Palmer** put in some good play up front before being subbed, as he was starting to show signs of a man in his thirties. It was a tense last few minutes with some good shots from **Cpl Crammond** and **Sig 'Scoff House' Daobry**, however, in the end 10 QOGLR just edged a victory. It was a hard fought game, but unfortunately lady luck was not on our side.

We did not make it through to the next stage but we performed to the best of our ability, playing some amazing basketball and most importantly, enjoying the game. We are now fired up for the Corps Championship in May 2016 and are ready to build on our success last year, where we reached the semi finals.

Exercise SOLDIER'S SHADOW - by LCpl Chidgey

On 22 Feb 2016 five soldiers from 10th Sig Regt attended Ex SOLDIERS SHADOW; the Army's first cyber competition, which was hosted by 14th Sig Regt (Electronic Warfare).

The four day long exercise comprised of each team being allocated both lessons and tasks at the start of the day. The first day started with defensive cyber operations and moved on to culminate with offensive cyber operations. The tasks were designed to test the team's abilities to strengthen networks, gather information and break into wireless networks. The team which was split into two two-man teams, **Cpl Nelson** and **Sgt Thompson** on one side, with **LCpl Pearson** and **LCpl Chidgey** on the other, with **FofS Pauley** closely supervising to ensure both sides were completed successfully.

Unfortunately, the team didn't make the top three on the score board, however, each member was left wanting more and **Sgt Thompson** will be lucky enough to have this opportunity, as he was successfully selected for the Inter-Services competition.

Exercise TARIK PATROL 16 - by Sig Donaldson-Crook

10th Sig Regt deployed to Gibraltar on 7 February 2016, as part of their standing commitment to temporarily replace the Royal Gibraltar Regiment (RG), who were busy sunning themselves on their annual exercise in Brecon. The primary role for 10 SR was to take on the security responsibilities of the RG, namely their commitment to providing a guard and QRF to Devils Tower Camp. In addition, there was an OP half way up The Rock to man, which was firstly used to identify Spanish vessels if they entered Gibraltarian waters and



secondly to search for smugglers trying to get contraband into Spain. Some members of 10 Sig Regt were also selected to be part of the ceremonial Convent Guard. The Convent is the official residence of the Governor of Gibraltar, so they undertook this daunting task with care and precision.

While not on guard there were plenty of other activities put on for exercising troops. There was a week of AT, which included sailing with instructors **LCpl Richie 'The Offender' Curran** and **Cpl Sean 'Big Mac' McCarthy**, as well as mountain and road biking with **LCpl Ray Dowson**. Fortunately the hour long slog biking to the top of The Rock was quickly forgotten on the five minute journey back down. Lastly there was a guided tour and caving provided by **WO2 Peter Jackson**, which was really interesting and included an in-depth knowledge about the different cannons found on the Rock.

In addition, there was a week of community engagement which saw all the troops split between renovating **Princess Carolina's** battery and de-weeding a 200 year old cemetery, which was in need of some attention. This was greatly received by the local populace and the tourists visiting Gibraltar.

Lastly, there was a military phase of the ex which took place on Buffadero Training Camp. This included section attacks, break contact drills, OBUA and OTAC (Operating in Tunnels and Caves). Everyone enjoyed this as it provided an opportunity to learn something new. It also gave the more junior soldiers, like **Sig Josh 'Les' Dawson**, the chance to take on the role of Section Commander and Section 2IC, which will prove to be invaluable experience for when they attend PNCO in the future. The training culminated in a platoon level attack through the tunnels, which was given the name of Op NIGHTHAWK. This was followed by Op CATALINA WINEMIXER, a dawn attack on the village where insurgent soldiers, who looked suspiciously like the AT team, had gathered.

The ex was an enjoyable experience for all who took part and many are keen to return again next year.

CO **Lt Col B Fitch**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) C Steers**

Exercise TARIK PATROL - by WO2(SSM) Sean Peart

Ex TARIK PATROL started in South Cerney where most elements of the personnel first met. Once the briefs and Mil Skills revision was complete we were able to focus on the ever reliable flights to Gibraltar.

With an experienced advance party in place, the transition was smooth. Once the RSOI package was complete, the troops slipped effortlessly into routine. Each troop rotated through the Mil Skills package, Security and the Multi Activity package.

The security detail was the highest priority for deployment and the first troop soon found that the various elements tested their manning to its limit. The elements included camp security, manning the QRF, the Observation Post (OP) and the ceremonial responsibility.



LCpl White manning the Op SOVEREIGNTY observation post, tracking illegal shipping transits

The ceremonials in Gibraltar are unique and extremely important to the local population. The Gibraltarians hold the Royal Gibraltar Regiment (RGR) in the highest regard and take great pride in the ceremonial piece they conduct outside of the Convent where the Governor of Gibraltar works. When soldiers from Ex TARIK PATROL commenced their duty, many spectators watch on with great interest and suffice to say our soldiers did not disappoint. Whilst the veterans from the RGR looked on with a critical eye, the smile on their face and the pride in their eyes said it all.

Hard work and dedication was the absolute minimum that all members of Ex TARIK PATROL put in. The team work and camaraderie amongst the soldiers spoke volumes of their positive attitudes and professionalism from start to finish.

Throughout the ex all soldiers had opportunities to enjoy the many luxuries that Gibraltar had to offer. The traditional tourist attractions were popular such as the dolphin tour, cable cars, ape sanctuary and the siege tunnels. Every moment well earned!!

Finally, I want to say how proud I was of the exercising troops' performance during Ex TARIK PATROL and how grateful I am for the efforts of the supporting staff.

Well done all!!



Exercise BRUNO ASSAULT- by Sgt Daz 'I'm going fishing' Rowe

Ex BRUNO ASSAULT was the military training phase on Ex TARIK PATROL 16.

The ex consisted of a 5 day package run out of Bufferdero Training Camp which is situated on top of the rock with excellent views of Spain and Morocco. The week was broken down into 4 individual days of training; ranging from basic soldiering skills up to platoon level attacks through various environments, this all led to an 8 hour final attack; bringing together all that was taught throughout the week.

Once the 'back to basics' was out of the way, the training then progressed into FIBUA and tunnel warfare lessons; highlighted by many as the most enjoyable phase of Ex TARIK PATROL 16. As with all training packages, there were quite a few mishaps. A few to mention are: **Lt 'I'm the man' Thompson** who whilst his platoon were under fire stepped up to the mark to extract a casualty. This obviously ended in chaos when he didn't even





put one foot in front of the other and fell into a bush along with his injured man.... **LCpl's Croad and Horsham** were conducting pre deployment administration and came to the Ex DS with an equipment problem; they were convinced that they had sand in their magazines and couldn't understand why as they had not been near a beach since arriving in GIB.... It was kindly pointed out that this was not sand inside their magazines making the noise but it was the gunpowder inside the blank rounds!

Overall BRUNO ASSAULT was positively received by all that exercised and visited. A special thank you to **SSgt Bill 'Golden Maggot' Reddy** for joining the training team at short notice.

Challenge Pursuits and Cultural Package - by Lt Craig Sumner

Planning for what was initially detailed as the Adventurous Training (AT) element for Ex TARIK PATROL 16 started with a quick read of the previous PXR and a swift recce of the rock. From conception to delivery, the plan changed approximately 15 times: with group sizes, activities and instructors all playing a role on the final programme.

Gibraltar offers a superb array of activities, although the focus on the AT package was to encourage group cohesion, increase self-efficacy and challenge individuals to learn new skills and push themselves outside of their comfort zone. All the buzz words considered there was an important link to relaxation and taking advantage of the opportunities afforded to the participants on Ex TARIK PATROL 16. After a brutal elimination phase the final activity list was drawn up, dinghy sailing, climbing wall taster session, biking, RHIB tour, lower caves tour and following up at the rear the cultural tour. It was with a heavy heart that kayaking did not make the final cut of 7 activities to be delivered to the 100 personnel deployed, new restrictions on the delivery of sea kayaking hindering rather than helping.

Upon arrival in Gibraltar the instructor team led by **LCpl R Dowson** unpacked all the gear, built and serviced the bikes and went for a refreshing test ride with the OC and 2IC around the rock. **LCpl Curran** and **Cpl McCarthy** spent time fixing the local dinghies and of course test sailing them. **LCpl Mills** took time to learn the surrounding sea areas and assist the others before the inevitable familiarisation on the power boats, resulting in a white knuckle ride for all being driven by the AT centre manager.

Throughout the rotations each troop would take part in a separate activity each day, weather permitting. The first weeks weather was mild, not quite the Gibraltar special and the wind was too high for sailing at points.

The dinghy sailing took place at four corners, overlooking the smugglers or Brewster's run across to the Spanish boarder. The participants were taken through an introduction to the dinghy and the principles of sailing by **LCpl Curran**, a superb instructor and experienced sailor, known throughout for his tash growing skills. Supported in the safety boat by **Cpl McCarthy** the team offered a tailored session to each rotation and throughout each individual put in great effort, whether in high wind or no wind. A special mention to **LCpl 'Padre' Wright** returning to the fray and putting in a good innings following an introduction to the boom, winning most improved sailor for the ex.



The Rock boasts some great climbing locations; however, due to the local nature reserve and potential for rock falls, we were not allowed to climb on the natural rock. As luck would have it there was a climbing wall at the camp, offering just enough for an introductory morning of climbing for each group. Led by **LCpl Dowson** each group were introduced to the basics of bouldering, knot tying and belay practices, followed by the mandatory man test on the overhang, **Sgt 'Aye Can Do It' McKenna** boasting the most impressive pull up.

Following the climbing and a hearty lunch, each group were encouraged along the Tour De Rock, made famous by **Capt 'El Diablo' Collier** working his brakes so hard the inner tube disintegrated in a large explosion. The route followed a local circuit clockwise around the rock, climbing to the impressive peak and the monkey sanctuary. *'There is more up than down but the ice cream at the end was good'* exclaimed **Lt H Thompson** on completion of the route. Although no yellow jersey was on offer, **LCpl 'Armstrong' Dowson** claims he was not beaten to the top, some suspect cunning played a major part in this.

Gibraltar has some impressive cultural heritage and historical significance, so a trip to Gibraltar would not be complete without the obligatory cultural tours. Headed up by **WO2 Pete Jackson MBE** of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment everyone was taken on a tour of the historic sights, learning about each cannon on the rock and in fact cannons not on the rock. The route culminated in a tour of the WW2 tunnel network along the great northern road; inaccessible to tourists it is a great insight into conditions and the significance of Gibraltar over WW2. An in depth tour full of education and wonder **Lt Teddy 'Barbra' Tippet** summed it up with a fine essay *'The cannon that rocked the world,'* which I am sure he will be publishing in the not too distant future.





The final part of the cultural tour RHIB tour followed by the St Michaels Lower Cave tour. The RHIB tour driven by **LCpl 'Salomon' Mills** and delivered by **Lt Sumner** took each rotation out to view the rock from afar and discuss the strategic value of Gibraltar and naval tactics of the late 1500s. Through varying levels of weather **LCpl Mills** offered superb boat handling skills and must be credited for safely delivering everyone back to shore in one piece, although he still maintains the thousand yard stare is not due to 'that day'. Hit of the trip must be awarded to **LCpl Hannah Wilson** who was so intrigued by the naval tactics that she did not see the second wave coming.



Community Engagement - Gibraltar Heritage thanking the Sqn for renovating a historic gun position



After the RHIB tour each group met up with **WO2 Pete Jackson MBE** again, put on climbing helmets and headed down to what was the clear highlight of the package, the lower St Michaels cave. Boasting some of the most pristine natural features in any cave, the Lower St Michaels cave was the easy highlight of the AT package. The formations and the size of the tunnels cannot be underestimated in their geographical value, and it was a great opportunity to access these caves for the whole ex.

Overall the package achieved what it set out to do; the frustrations associated with the planning restrictions imposed did not detract from the delivery of some challenging and educational activities. The participants must be thanked and praised for their efforts at each stage, and taking the time to enjoy and explore Gibraltar. The frame work is in place for next time, and building on working relationships established in the last two years, there is plenty of scope for expansion in the future.



Ex TARIK PATROL Sqn – Devil's Tower Camp





14th SIGNAL REGIMENT (ELECTRONIC WARFARE) HAVERFORDWEST



CO **Lt Col Stoter**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) Robinson**

223 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj Francis INT CORPS**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Wellstead**

Army Major Unit Squash Tournament - *LCpl Menzies*

The end of the squash calendar brings with it the last event of the season, the 'British Army Major Units Squash Championship'. The competition was laid out with 10 teams split into 2 groups. Every team in each group played each other once. Teams seed their players 1 to 5 in reflecting their ability in the team, with the strongest player being seed 1. Participants play their opposite seeding from the opposition team.

The opening day of competition brought about a bye in the first round of group matches for 14 Sig Regt, because of this lack of action the tea and cream cake break that followed felt undeserved. With full stomachs we took on the tired and emotional youths of 1 CS REME team after their night of team bonding, serving up a 17 - 6 hammering. The team earned their cream cakes in the next round of matches with a plethora of talent on show to leave RTR in their tracks with a score of 20-2 to our boys. With the day's squash concluded and a string of ruthless performances the team felt upbeat about their chances of advancing through the group stages and marching into the semi-finals. Only one win on day 2 would guarantee it.



LCpl Brooks warming up

Day 2 of the competition started positively with successive individual wins over 14 Eng (Geo) Regt. One more individual win would deliver overall victory and a place in the semis. The Geo's rallied and the next 3 matches went to the tireless opposition, 14 Sig Regt had hit rocky terrain, finishing the round 3-2. This wasn't quite the landslide result I was hoping for to ensure this pun would work. Despite this set back the team focused themselves again to play 6 REME Battalion who

had wiped the floor with every opposition so far and not lost an individual match. 14 Sig Regt started fearlessly, daring to defy the odds and cause an upset. The first match went to 14 Sig Regt, however the looming 3rd match saw the number 1 seeds lock horns, our own **LCpl Brooks** took on a very established Army player. This produced one of the stand-out matches of the competition. Unfortunately the crafty REME player provided too much and powered his way to victory. This proved to be the catalyst for the REME team who subsequently steamrolled the remaining matches. Falling short but certainly not embarrassed, we needed RTR to win over 14 Eng Regt - RTR tanked it.

This signalled the end for 14 Sig Regt. We could not advance to the final day and compete to be the best major unit team in the British Army. Although this year has ended with heartbreak, it is the express intention of **Captain Owens**, OIC squash, to develop a hungry committed core team of players, who can compete at the very pinnacle of Army squash. I am confident that we are a team moving in the right direction and next year we can compete for major honours at both Inter Corps and Army Squash Competitions.

Exercise WYVERN ENDEAVOUR - *LCpl Hillcoat*

On the 28th March, 223 Sig Sqn deployed on Ex WYVERN ENDEAVOUR at Longmoor training camp. The aim of the exercise was to get as many members of the Sqn through a comprehensive MATTs package. After an epic 7 hour journey from Brawdy, we had a quick prep for day one which was to be a day and night on the ranges.

Monday's ACMT passed without serious incident with the whole Sqn getting through, some, with a little coaching. A short break followed before redeploying to the range at dusk to conduct the night shoot. Whilst waiting for the darkness to envelope the range, the Sqn were entertained by the 223 all male choir led by **Sig Tom Stickler**.

Tuesday it was straight onto values and standards, where **Maj Francis** struggled to suppress an attack of the giggles whilst discussing the risks of genital warts. To prevent death by power point, we took a short break to complete a PFA in the windy wet conditions reminiscent of our home at Brawdy. Then to finish off the day we had CEO theory presented by **Cpl Sean Bonner** of 245 Sig Sqn and CBRN theory by **Cpl Paul Eldridge**.



Maj Francis prepares for the chamber



Wednesday morning began with a refresher on navigation theory from our SSM, **WO2 Wellstead**. These skills were then put to the test when we were split into 2 groups, to complete our nav and CBRN practical. As soon as it was dark we were dropped off at Bramshott Common for the night nav. This was where the Int Corp showed their excellent skills with **Cpl Oscar Sagra-Stansbury** ending up at the wrong finish point and **LCpl Olly Yardley** getting check point 3 confused with 4, reading the directions as 900 miles instead of 4900 miles. Eventually everyone managed to find their way back to the bus for the short trip back to Longmoor.

Thursday morning and it was time for the dreaded LOAC. Once everyone had been woken up it was onto the practical elements of CEO and BCDT, followed by a CFT around the training area. After a busy week the Sqn then retired to the Officers' mess for a well-deserved social and, for some, a late night at the local town.

Friday morning with a couple of sore heads and reds eyes the Sqn handed back the accommodation and prepared themselves for another 7 hour journey back to windy Brawdy.

226 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj Watson**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) O'Reilly**

Exercise DRAGON'S PISTE - LCpl Bright

We had mentally prepared for it, but now it was actually happening. The absolute mammoth of a bus journey to take 14th Sig Regt (EW) from sunny Brawdy to the dizzying heights of Val Thorens had begun. The 2016 regtl ski trip was taking place in the French Alps, home to some of the best ski resorts and mountains in the world. Even though the bus was incredibly swanky, fitted with leather seats, a toilet we could actually use and approximately 5 TV screens, the journey was still a test of endurance. We arrived at Dover and jumped on the ferry, all pleased we could stretch our legs. This was a great opportunity to get a beer and start bragging about our skiing experiences. After wasting far too much money in the arcade we were back on the road. Another lengthy stint on the bus commenced and finally 25 hours after departure, we arrived in Val Thorens.



A busy day on the slopes

We were issued our skis and boots, some were better quality than others, not that I am bitter. The accommodation, the Cheval Blanc, provided us with was small but homely. They were six man rooms with a balcony overlooking the slopes. We made the most of the party atmosphere and hit the town on the Sunday night. The vast amount of bars and clubs was incredible for the size of the town and they certainly did not disappoint! One of the main clubs in the town was called Malaysia. This underground club witnessed some incredible dance moves and performances throughout the week, so good that words cannot justify them.

It was time to hit the slopes after being placed into our relevant groups. Day one gave us a chance to get comfortable on our skis for those with previous experience and for others it was a great opportunity to master the pizza slice and french fries. Anyone with any skiing experience will know how vital these two food based stances are for the beginner. We were introduced to the resort, making our way around on runs we were comfortable with which helped familiarise our surroundings without pushing anyone too far on the first day. Slightly more importantly, we discovered Bar 360 halfway up the mountain which facilitated some essential après ski!



Fancy dress and après ski!

The days were long but nobody was complaining, all eager to get as much skiing done as possible. Slowly but surely our skiing skills were improving and our confidence grew as each day passed. Every now and again we would get a reality check, crashes were common as we started to embrace speed and increase the difficulty of the runs. Perhaps the best piece of advice we received all week was "If in doubt, egg it out." In other words, adopt a sort of standing foetal position and hope for the best. The weather and conditions remained perfect all week and we took full advantage of this, everyone going from strength to strength. With everyone competently skiing around the mountain due to the incredible work and dedication from our instructors, we finally got a full turnout in Bar 360.

Our time in the French Alps was coming to an end but not before we managed a days skiing in fancy dress. A number of Batman and Robins were followed by Super Pig, Captain Underpants, Darth Vader, Banana man, an actual banana and Spiderman to name a few. The people of Val Thorens could only look on in sheer bewilderment as this incredible cast of heroes and villains made the slopes their own, putting all their hard work that week into practice. Wrapping up an incredibly



successful skiing trip, everyone gained at least a level 1, 2 or 3 Ski Foundation qualification in the process. At least there was plenty to talk about on the 25 hour bus journey home.

237 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj Fogarty**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Peake**

Judo - by LCpl Hawkes

2015 proved to be an exhilarating and exciting judo journey which brought me successes beyond my wildest dreams. 14SR(EW) kindly gave me the opportunity to pursue judo full time from April 15. Since then my judo has gone from strength to strength. Not just in physical terms, but I have also developed an inner strength and a positive mental attitude that has allowed me to dig deep when the going got particularly tough. As a result of a demanding training programme set by professional coaches at the Welsh Academy of Judo in Cardiff and the continued support from the Army Judo Association, I have managed to retain my Army and Combined Services judo titles.

In addition to the military titles I have also won a number of medals at many GB ranking events held throughout the year. It was thanks to this success that I was placed number four on the national ranking table for Great Britain in the under 70kgs weight division which gave automatic qualification for me to compete at the 2015 British Senior Judo Championships. This was my first year back in competitive judo, and I was at the lower end of the age group and experience bracket, therefore I was both surprised and delighted with qualification. It gave me an extra incentive to go that final step and to perform well enough to earn a place on team GB judo for 2016.

Determined to succeed, I arrived at the Championships which were held at the England Institute of Sport in Sheffield on 12th December 2015. I was very nervous in front of a large crowd of judo fans who had travelled the length and breadth of the United Kingdom and paid good money to watch the best British judo athletes in action. I was also very excited to be fighting against the top British players, yet I knew that my pre-competition training and coaching would mean that I had the inner belief that I could beat anyone on the day. In order to win my bronze medal I had six tough fights; winning four of these by ippon (the highest score possible in judo). I unfortunately lost to **Jemima Yeats-Brown** (a former world medalist) and **Megan Fletcher** (who is on track for 2016 Olympic qualification), the eventual silver and gold medallists.



LCpl Hawkes winning her bronze medal

On learning I had achieved a bronze medal I was simply over the moon, and very proud to be on the podium to receive the medal for the British Army and my unit. As a consequence of my British Judo Championships success, I have been selected to be a part of the Great Britain Senior Judo Squad for 2016. With the full support and additional funding from the Army Sports Control Board, many more opportunities to compete on the European judo stage will be on offer to me in 2016. I know I will need to train even harder in order to step up to this level, but I now have the self-confidence and belief that I can achieve anything if I put my mind to it!

With more experience (and hopefully success), the plan will be to follow the pathway from a GB squad player to a GB podium potential athlete. With a fair wind, and a little luck, the planets may align to help me realise my '2020 Dream' and the chance to compete as an Olympian for Team GB in Tokyo, Japan, the home and birthplace of judo.

245 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj Hodges**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Craven**

Exercise MOUFLON NERVE - by Cpl Dangerfield

On 22 Feb 16, 245 Sig Sqn deployed on Ex MOUFLON NERVE, arguably one of the most unusual exercises that many of us here at Brawdy have even been on. The exercise took place in the city of Bristol, to the joy of almost every member of the sqn, with the exercising troops wearing civilian clothing throughout, for reasons that will become imminently clear.

First thing Monday morning the junior members of 245 assembled at sqn lines where they were surprised by the arrival of two civilian profile helicopters that inserted them in to Bristol, thus beating all of the rush hour traffic. Upon arriving we were informed of our first task by **SSgt YofS (EW) Forde**; to find an enemy HF transmitter located somewhere in Bristol City Centre. Exercising troops were broken down into 4 x four man teams, three using our current collection kit and one using shiny new equipment that we will be issued in the near future. Unsurprisingly the team armed with the new kit outperformed the other teams in all areas, locating the enemy transmitter with ease. Reassuring news for all involved, and showing how Electronic Warfare can be employed in an urban environment.

Tuesday turned out to be just as interesting. We were broken down into different teams and given a variety of challenges as part of a scavenger hunt. These ranged from the relatively simple, such as a photo with a wild animal and pouring a pint, to the complex; in this case sneaking into one of the main police stations in Bristol to collect an envelope placed on the desk of the station inspector. Fortunately for all involved the inspector was informed and complicit with the plan, however he kept all of his staff in the dark, as a form of ad hoc penetration testing. Unfortunately for the inspector, **Cpl Pratt** and **LCpl McSherry** were successful in retrieving their designated envelope. This secured their team an easy win over all the others.

The final two days consisted of urban a surveillance exercise. Something new to all to those involved. 245 Sqn tailed members of Bristol's UOTC through the city in efforts observe a meet between two people, ably played by the students. The surveillance was a success and resulted in the mock arrest of one of the students by the civilian police, much to his surprise.





245 in Bristol Zoo

Overall, Exercise MOUFLON NERVE was an enjoyable and challenging exercise for all involved. It showed the capabilities of our new equipment and pushed everyone out of their comfort zones at various points. Perhaps, most importantly, provided a valuable team building experience for us to advance into our training year with.

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj Wilford**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) O'Connor**

Exercise ATLAS DEVELOPER - Cpl Chris 'Taff' Dowle

Earlier in the year, members of Sp Sqn went to Cardiff Castle and the Millennium Stadium for a historical and educational

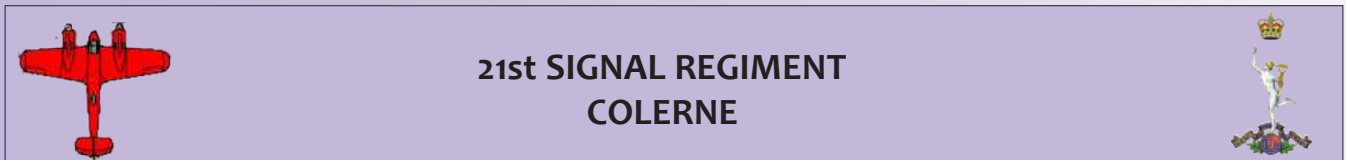
tour. Cardiff Castle is home to the Royal Welsh Regiment museum, the museum is an accredited museum that celebrates the Welsh soldier over a period of 300 years: a time which saw ordinary Welshmen travel the world, carrying out military service at battles such as Waterloo, Rourke's Drift and more recently in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The day started with perfect Welsh weather (torrential rain!) but luckily the museum was indoors. We were greeted by the museum staff at the front door and then taken to a back room where they stored every rifle the British Army has used since the 1700s. We were given short stories on each rifle about where they were made and what wars they were used in. We were also allowed to handle the rifles which made **LCpl Dave Walker** very excited and allowed him to pose for photos with his thousand yard stare.

After the rifle demonstration, the 15 of us were set loose to roam the museum. One of the highlights of the morning was when **LCpl Andrew 'Stanners' Stanbury** and **Cpl Alex Kerr** found replica historical uniforms, tried them on and wondered around the museum looking very scruffy.

After the giggling, we made our way out of the museum to the home of Welsh rugby: the Millennium Stadium. The stadium is only 16 years old and is one of the most technologically advanced in the world with an opening and closing roof. **Sgt John 'Smudge' Smith** couldn't get over the fact that they actually paid £3 million for a television. We also got to sit in one of the executive boxes which cost around £1500 per game (cheap day out!)

It was an enjoyable, educating day and gave some of the younger soldiers a good insight of what the British army used to be like in the past and how proud the Welsh are of their rugby achievements.



204 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj Chamberlain**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Stowell**

Regimental Cross Country March 2016 - by *LCpl Spicer, Rhine Troop*

I was invited by **Sgt Butcher** to participate in the final race of the season for the Regimental Cross Country Cup, along with 5 other members of the regt. I had only ever done cross country running in school before so I saw this as a good opportunity to get back into it. The race itself was located at Larkhill Camp.

We set off from Azimghur Barracks on a short one hour drive to Larkhill. The race was not due to start until 1330 and we arrived approximately one hour early so we all had time to warm up and prepare for the race. There were a host of different regts present from different Corps across the Army.

We had a quick safety brief and overview of the route before setting off. The weather was unforgiving as it was raining heavily with very strong winds, making it extremely difficult to run in! To make it worse the ground was torn up from the

rain making it extremely slippery and a lot of people had a hard time staying up. The race itself was 10km long including some difficult hills, with all the members from the Regt coming in under 50 minutes. **Sgt Butcher** achieved the best time out of us all.

Overall it was a good experience and hopefully I can pursue cross country more next season.

Exercise RATS WARRIOR - by *Cpl Britton, Messina Troop*

During a fresh morning on the 22nd February the 204 Sig Sqn commenced Ex RATS WARRIOR 1, their CT1 communications and dismounted training. During the week the Sqn revised and were reminded of the basic DCC skills for any potential deployment that may come their way. Day 1 consisted of a number of lessons including occupying a harbour, principles of defence and vehicle/person search. This was good refreshment for some if not all of those that participated. During the person search some relished getting close to one another with **Sig Gibson** finding the experience particularly rewarding. In the afternoon it was time to watch some BAFTA award winning acting from **Cpl Slater** and **LCpl Emery**, whereby a slick demonstration was given to the Sqn of "how to and how not to do" duties of a sentry. The last lesson of



the day was contact drills where finally it was time to get motivated.



CT1 contact drills

On the second day of the training the Sqn had a busy day on a rotation of Ops room construction, standing patrols, patrolling skills, vehicle contact drills and VALLON training. This was the penultimate portion of in camp training prior to receiving orders and deploying to Caerwent.



AAR from Cpl Tait

At Caerwent zic's were put through their paces issuing radios, ammunition and expense equipment required by their sections. Then we were off on the insertion tab to our defensive position. Once in place and given the orientation, section commanders built up a plan to fortify our location with trip wires and stand to positions. 2 section stayed at the building on a guard rotation and works party to finish building up our position. Meanwhile 1 section went out to recce a likely harbour area. Whilst on task they had to think fast and talk to the LN's preventing them from taking vital rations in a negotiating stand, **Cpl Slater** was far too kind giving the Tp Comds food away.

Latterly in the ex intelligence was gathered of two likely enemy positions. Section commanders then planned on how they would deal with clearing the area. With only 2 sections, manpower was tested and commanders had to earn their money and have a good situational understanding. Position 1 opened up, 'contact front' and we were away. An elongated commanders pause occurred then it was battle stations. Victory was sought by 204 and troops were given a hot debrief on their efforts.

As a whole the training proved to be beneficial to refresh and consolidate the fundamental skills required before moving forward to CT2 and beyond. Honing in on our skills and testing the zic's and preparing them for their upcoming PNCO courses.

Exercise BEAUFIGHTER SKIER 16 - by LCpl Onyekpe, Alamein Troop

The first week of the Regtl ski trip, 4th-12th March, commenced with a comfortable twenty-two hour coach journey from Colerne barracks. Surprising, four Royal Marines from 30 Commando joined the trip at the last minute, as vacancies became available. Our destination was Les Trois Vallées (The Three Valleys), in particular, Val Thorens. Located in the French Alps it is the highest resort in Europe, at 2,300m altitude.

It felt great to finally step off the coach and arrive at our accommodation, 'Le Cheval Blanc', at about mid-afternoon on Saturday. Firstly we all checked into our various rooms. Following this was the rental of ski gear all under the brilliant direction of 204 Sqn Ops Officer **Capt Andrew Houlbrooke**, who ultimately managed the trip. The last thing on the agenda was to establish our groups for the week based on skiing experience, i.e. Ski Foundation 1 (SF1) for beginners, SF2 for the intermediate and the continuation course for those to hone their intermediate skills before attending SF3. SF1 was my group as I am a novice skier.



SF1 Group

Sunday, was the first day we got out onto the slopes and being only a stone's throw away from our lodgings was a huge bonus. SF1 was instructed by the CO, **Lt Col Corkery**, who is an exceptional skier. He began by teaching us the basics, i.e. the plough (a.k.a. pizza, in which the skis are positioned in an upside-down 'V' made to resemble a wedge of pizza), the parallel (a.k.a. chips, now both skis are lateral and in the same direction, hence looking like two lone chips) and how to turn by shifting one's bodyweight between skis. At the end of the first day most of the novices including myself felt shattered, the combination of acclimatising to high altitude (it felt like I was wearing an altitude training mask all day) and the slight shin ache from the boots was quite odd.

As we progressed throughout the week we adapted and the enjoyment of the whole experience increased exponentially. SF1 advanced from green (beginner), to blue (easy), to even red (intermediate) pistes, however black (difficult) was not attempted as it was deemed above our ability. We even



ventured off-piste, which was challenging yet rewarding as we could carve our own path on fresh powder.

Undoubtedly the best day of the trip was definitely saved till last. The SF1 group was deemed competent enough to ski unsupervised. Although black pistes were prohibited, ski partners could be of different abilities hence my partners were **Sig Thirkell** (fellow SF1 novice) and **LCpl Tyrell** (SF2). The highlight of the day wasn't the feeling of a personal accomplishment and improvement, but the breath-taking view of the Val Thorens valley from the top of the 'Col' (red piste) at 3130m. The final hurdle was getting down the mountain in one piece, before braving another lengthy coach journey back to Colerne.



View of Val Thorens valley from the top of the 'Col' - 3130m

215 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj Jon Hooker**
SSM **WO2 Jamie Davis**

Since the last round of wire notes, 215 Sig Sqn has continued to be busy at readiness, supporting 1 Armd Inf Bde HQ in the field and proving ourselves ready for deployment during exercise TRACTABLE 16. This was the culminating readiness event for the Sqn, marking the end of years of work to reach readiness. Looking ahead, the Sqn is likely to focus on developing ourselves further and consolidating skills to assure our commanders that we are ready for anything.

Exercise TRACTABLE 16 - by Sig Suter, Bengal Troop

Ex TRACTABLE 16 was held on Salisbury Plain Training Area (SPTA), focused at Old Carter Barracks near Bulford. 215 Sig Sqn, supporting 1 Armd Inf Bde, were to test their ability to deploy in good order within the notice to move period issued. The ex was all about massing the Lead Armoured Task Force (LATF) at SPTA over a number of days, followed by a PACEX and culminating in a 50km road move around SPTA in order to assure commanders of fleet availability.

This ex, unlike most the Sqn deploys on, started thirty days before deployment with a series of orders requiring the unit to step its work and prepare the manpower and fleet for deployment; this involved some serious maintenance work across the armoured fleet, ever reliant on the LAD to keep the fleet going. The preparation phase culminated in a Sqn PACEX, confirming that all communications systems were in and working; it ran smoothly and we were ready to deploy. This PACEX also served as a useful means of learning, allowing everyone to get reacquainted with the equipment by getting hands on with suitable supervision.

The following week we deployed; the RLC transporters arrived on the Monday morning to provide transport to Old Carter Barracks for the Bulldogs. Early the next morning, the wheeled vehicles departed. I was in the first packet as part of Bengal Troops RRB; we arrived an hour or so after leaving, greeted by an impressive set up: the 'tented village' was constructed in the two weeks prior to our arrival, and included an excellent field kitchen as well as welfare provision. We proceeded to set up the HQ, which would provide support for the Bde on the 50km Road move; it was up in a couple of hours with no major issues.



An external view of the small TRACTABLE 16 HQ

As the next couple of days passed the designated vehicle lanes started to fill up with more vehicles as the remaining Units arrived. On the Friday we began the LATF PACEX; it was vital to ensure that all communication equipment across the LATF was in good order and working as it should be before carrying out the road move. As I was working on the RRB it was a great opportunity to top up my knowledge of the required set up. The PACEX went well and we were ready to deploy on the Saturday; this was the day before the road move was scheduled to begin.



An aerial view of the LATF A Fleet

After a few last minute checks we headed for Sidbury Hill to set up one of three RRBs. This wasn't without drama, as we got bogged in as we moved to location! The set up went smoothly after we self-recovered and we were straight into routine. The following morning the road move began with the wheeled vehicles; as we monitored the net we could tell it was running smoothly. All the vehicles made it round with no problems. Then it was the armours turn. Needless to say this took a bit longer than the earlier wheeled packets, but by the



next morning they had all completed the loop and returned safely to Old Carter Barracks, with only a few breakdowns en route. We tore down and proceeded to follow them to the welcome sight and smell of the field kitchen, where that night we were treated to a mixed grill! For the remainder of the day the Sqn carried out concurrent activity, in other words CT1 training under the SSM – it's 215, not 9 to 5!

Over the next few days we returned in packets to Colerne. The wheeled vehicles first, followed by the armour, then the exercise turnaround! This mainly involved accounting for all of the kit and making sure it was serviceable, with faults and deficiencies reported as per normal routine.

Overall, the exercise was deemed a success as we achieved all of the aims from the PACEX to the road move. It was definitely one of the most comfortable exercises I've ever been on, considering the quality of the food and other facilities available. Despite this we welcomed the return to camp on the final day of this essential readiness proving exercise.

220 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj Plested**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Dinsdale**

Exercise SOLDIER'S SHADOW – Army Cyber Competition - by LCpl Harvey

In February a team of six members of 21 Sig Regt entered the Army Cyber Competition, held at 14th Sig Regt in Brawdy, Wales. They competed against 14 other teams from across the Regular Army and Reserves.

We turned up on Monday morning not sure what to expect but excited about what was ahead of us, and eager to find out the different skill levels we all had compared to our opponents. The first day involved us getting to know our team, setting up our computers with Kali Linux and brushing off the cobwebs. We spent time familiarising ourselves with the tasks ahead and the command line interface of Linux. The afternoon was all lesson based, getting to know the instructors and what was expected of us throughout the exercise.

Our team consisted of **Lt Lindsey Wood** (Secret Linux Guru), **FofS(IS) Neil Pope** (Report Guru), **Staff Russell** (Secret Geek), **Cpl James Lamont** (Firewall Geek), **LCpl Adam Yates** (Google Man) and myself (Chief Wifi Cracker).

The second day involved more lessons on basic networking such as the TCP/IP and OSI models. In the afternoon we started the challenges, the first of which was a defensive exercise. This involved securing our Wifi Access Point and our webserver, then providing logs and a detailed presentation on the security flaws, what measures we implemented to secure it, and future actions we could take to further secure it. **Lt Wood** was in charge of our team and took control of getting us all working on the areas we were strongest at. **FofS(IS) Pope** was in charge of the report with the help of **SSgt Russell**, I was in charge of the AP and **Cpl Lamont** was in charge of the webserver. We had **LCpl Yates** on standby for any google requests we needed. Finishing second, the day went well and we were in high spirits ready for the next day.

Day three started off with lessons on certain tools used within Kali such as Aircrack and Nmap, followed by an introduction

and a presentation by a whitehat hacking team. It was really interesting to see how they use social media to find out everything they need to infiltrate a suspects' machine or just set up surveillance outside their house. In the afternoon **Lt Wood** got her brief on the next challenge, an information, surveillance and reconnaissance challenge. We had to break into a wifi access point, identify a target, then gain information and produce an intelligence report. The only information we had to go on was two partial MAC addresses, with this in hand **Lt Wood** set to work on tasking us off with certain details to get the job done. The first hurdle was getting into the WEP encrypted WiFi which I thought would be easy... an hour later and about a million IVs sent, **SSgt Russell** finally cracks it on his poundland laptop. Then we had to find the corresponding IPs for the partial MAC addresses given. I managed to find one on the AP and one from scanning the entire network range using Nmap and looking at the ARP table. With this in hand **Cpl Lamont** and **SSgt Russell** set to work using tools such as NESSUS to find weaknesses in the systems to find a route to gain access to the suspects machine. Gaining access was the easy part, the next step was the problem for us, as we could find the Int, but we couldn't extract it and we ran out of time before we could finish this task. The day concluded with us a little annoyed as we didn't finish the tasks after having such a good start. We felt that this would affect our 2nd placing that we had managed to acquire so we went and had a quiet few words with ourselves.

The last day was upon us and we were ready to face the last remaining challenges, yet again we had a few lessons in the morning on how to crack WPA encryption and using Metasploit but instead of starting after lunch we started at 11am. Before we started we found out that we did indeed take a hit from the previous day and we came joint 5th which we were still happy with. The final challenge was an offensive one. Our task was to redirect a target's web address to a webpage we had created. We set to work and our first challenge was to crack the WiFi which I was more than confident to smash after the previous day getting beaten by **SSgt Russell**. I had access within 5 minutes by deauthenticating a user on the AP, gaining the handshake and then using a dictionary attack to gain the password. Whilst this was being hacked **Cpl Lamont** was creating a webpage using HTML coding. The next step was to gain access into the suspect's webserver but we didn't know the IP address or the DNS server address so again we had to scope out the entire network until we found it, **SSgt Russell** again beat me to finding it. We managed to complete all our tasks comfortably with over an hour to spare so we packed up, got changed and waited to find out who was the overall winner of the competition. Finishing joint 1st on the final challenge we waited eagerly to find out the overall results.

There was no award given but the pride of 1st place, this was taken by 11th (RSS) Sig Regt, with our team finishing 5th overall out of 15 teams. The night followed on with a curry provided by 14th Sig Regt and a few well deserved refreshments, overall I enjoyed being part of this experience and being part of 21 Sig Regt's cyber team. **Lt Wood** then went on to compete as part of the (winning) Army Team at the Inaugural Inter Services Cyber Competition the following week.

Exercise SCORPION MERCURY - by Sig Riddick

At 0600 on 29 Feb 16, everyone was waking up for their delicious Elixir breakfast before making their way over to the



armoury and crypto cell to pick up the required items for this CT1 exercise. Once the kit was packed everyone lined the vehicles up in their packets for the journey to Swinnerton training area. After a short delay, the packet order was confirmed and the Sqn were ready to set off. It was a 4 hour journey with varying levels of comfort; from a Man SV truck to the back of a GS Land Rover with all everyone's kit. Once we arrived at Swinnerton all the vehicles were parked up, rifles and crypto were secured and we received our brief about the plan of the ex before heading back to our accommodation to get in our bouncing bombs.

At 0830 on 1 Mar 16 we started our day of lessons, ranging from erecting masts to crypto and management paths through the Falcon detachments. We were split down into trade groups, so the CS Engs could do fault finding while our RSEs staged on. After a day of lessons and tearing up all the grass on camp with the detachments, we retired for the night.



Fighting the guy ropes to get the mast up

The following day we continued to have lessons while starting to PACEX the vehicles and carry out the IBDP ready for the ex phase. Once we started we discovered how much of the kit was faulty, which wasn't much of a surprise to everyone as we all know how temperamental Falcon is.

After a week of lessons and PACEX, including a Falcon Friday, everyone was given the chance to relax at a BBQ organised by the Sqn. **LCpl David Jenkins** managed to give us a decent meal however we still don't know where he sourced the meat from. After the meal everyone headed to the bar for a pint and to watch 'Ant and Dec's Saturday Night Take Away' before getting our heads down in preparation for the ex phase.

On Monday we started the ex phase with a round robin layout to teach the newer members of the Sqn how Falcon works, both as a CP and as a WASP. The ex phase itself lasted just over 24 hours and the blokes were lucky to get any sleep at all. It gave them all a chance to experience what their job is on exercise and some had the opportunity to do the role of detachment commander.

On the final day we moved the vehicles into packet order for the move back to camp. However, the Reacher trailer, which had been parked on the grass, decided to get stuck. Luckily a group of Reservist recovery mechanics were on the training area and managed to help us out and get the trailer free, taking half of the grass with it. Once all the dramas were sorted the move back went smoothly and we managed to get the rest of the vehicles back to camp in one piece (via burger king of course).

Exercise BEAUFIGHTER SKIER - by LCpl Ralph

On Friday 4 Mar 16, 21 Sig Regt set off for France at 1800, heading down to Dover for the start of what would turn out to be a 21 hour coach ride. We hit the seas at 1200 UK time and after a short uneventful ferry ride, we were over in Calais and from there it was a long slog down to Val Thorens. Trying to sleep on the coach proved to be an absolute nightmare so the ride seemed to drag on forever and getting stuck in traffic all the way up the mountains to the resort didn't help as everyone seemed to be going up but no one going down.

We finally arrived at about 1500 local time and after getting our stuff into rooms we collected our gear ready for the next day.

Sun 6 Mar 16 was the first day of skiing. Since me and my group were all complete novices to skiing, and only doing the SF1 course anyway, we started off very gently on the novice slopes doing basic moves under the watchful eyes of **Lt Col Corkery**. It was an eye opener to see groups of 5-8 year olds just flying past us when we couldn't even do the pizza move, which would turn out to be the go to move for the week and saved my skin a few times when I was going a little too quick. We worked our way up slowly and by the end of the day we very slowly went down our first green route.

Come Mon 7 Mar 16, we naturally considered ourselves experts. We started increasing the difficulty a little today, sticking the actual routes and getting our technique better. The characters in the group were starting to come out a little more by now and the 2 Royal Marines that were with us, **Louie** and **Elliot**, were clearly the braver of us and willing to pick up a lot more speed whenever they had the chance. Not always to good effect though as they probably spent more time on their backs than anyone else. There was also **Gabriel** from one of our sister sqns who by now had become renowned for taking people out - the guy just loves it so much he never wants to stop, literally.

We hit our first blue route on Tue 8 Mar, which was probably my favourite route, difficult to do as it was fairly smooth but all downhill so you could pick up some good speed and play a little. By now we were starting to get to grips with turning smoothly and keeping together as a group. In the evening we finally ventured out to check out the local nightlife and it's safe to say that French resorts love Irish pubs as they outnumbered every other pub or bar combined.

We left the Val Thorens valley on Wed 9 Mar 16 and tried some routes in the Méribel valley just over from us. We had to get pretty high to go over the valley and some of the chair lifts were pretty eerie but provided some cracking views and selfie opportunities. We were starting to clock up almost 20 miles a day in ski travel by now, **Adam** was a real slave driver but he certainly knew his stuff, watching him just spin and ski backwards all the while talking to us then spinning again and zooming off was almost disgusting in how easy he made it look.

So by Thu 10 Mar 16 I had got myself a phone app so I could track distances and most importantly speeds which went down well with everyone else who all gave it a try. I managed to clock 55.1 mph at one point and it was all mostly under control using the "egg" position where you are just hunched down but it's a real leg burner. We tackled our first red, which was tough, as it's so bumpy and you're almost constantly going out of control; although I like to think I got the hang of



it eventually. It was entertaining getting down almost first and watching others stacking it but I'm sure they would say the same about me as I fell over a lot.



The view from the chalet

We spent a lot of Fri 11 Mar 16 doing off-piste skiing which just means going off the marked routes. I thought this sounded easy enough and after getting the hang of skiing greens, blues and reds how hard could it be. How wrong I was. I decked it plenty of times and it felt like I spent more time digging myself out of the snow than moving forward. I know which type of skiing I prefer that's for sure. The others in the group all managed with varying success but at least we all ticked it off working towards the ever close SF1 qual. We all went out for a group meal that night at a traditional French restaurant. I shared some giant cheese fondue dish which was amazing, even the morning after.

On our last day on the slopes we were just skiing for the morning as we were due to leave at 1500 but more importantly we were allowed to go off in small groups and play on our own. Me, **Blaine**, **Chris** and **Matt** (the last 2 being from the continuation course) just did some blues and reds, enjoying the nice weather and ability to just ski without needing to stop for lessons. We stopped after lunch and returned our kit and set off for a much quicker trip home. Once again everyone seems to be going up but not coming down – I have no idea where these people all vanish to.

My legs were sore, my back was inclip and my face was sunburnt to hell but it was one of the best weeks in the Army so far for me. Met a great bunch of guys from all over the Regt as well as the Royal Marines attached to us and I'm already planning my own ski holiday as well as getting my name down for SF2.

Exercise SCORPION MERCURY 1 - by Sig Baron

The first comms training ex of the year took 220 Sig Sqn to Swynnerton, Stafford at the end of February. We spent nine days at Swynnerton training camp and on the area going through the basics of Falcon and building it all up which culminated in a two day field exercise.

To start the week off lessons were delivered by Cpls and Sgts in 220 Sig Sqn which involved mast erection, fault finding, FEPS overview, setting up links and cam and concealment. Whilst most of the lessons were just a brush up, for most it was a good first look at Falcon in the field going 'slow-time' for some of the Sqn. For the field ex part of the training we were split into groups and a round robin of three tasks were

put together that would take place over two days.

The first task involved pushing out onto the area in a CP detachment to set up a field headquarters which involved setting up a space for staff users in a building of opportunity. The first job was to set up a link back to a detachment back in the main camp, in the area that we had around us careful planning had to be made due to obstacles and space available. Next was setting up the room for the staff users which involved the setting up of phones and laptops along with the help from the Sqn RSEs to provide the power.

The second task was setting up a detachment in the main camp in support of the headquarters nearby as link out to the area, it involved erecting a 18m mast with a Band IV Antenna to connect to the group that were currently out on the first task. The other job for this task was to connect to the HQ so that they could provide housekeeper capabilities.

The third task was to set up a main HQ in a building on the camp. The different aspects of this task were laying out a room for the staff users with laptops and phones, we were also tasked with the job of cable management and assessed on how we would use the space given. After this was done the job of setting up user accounts and testing them so they were ready to be used.

Reacher was also deployed out which gave the team that usually works on it time to refine their skills with it in field conditions, they were also given the chance to take part in lessons to help broaden their knowledge of Falcon.

When it came time to tear down and get everything packed up it all seemed to be going smoothly until it came time to move the Reacher detachment. We had not foreseen that the bit of poor weather we had would make the area which it was sited in so difficult to manoeuvre in. The vehicle and the trailer became bogged in and all our ideas to move it only made it worse. Luckily, we were able to acquire help from **106 Battalion REME** and their recovery vehicle who were, fortunately for us, late leaving the area. With some clever thinking from the REME and help with some tricky manoeuvring, it was not long until we had both vehicle and trailer out and we were on our way back to Azimghur Barracks.

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj McGrail**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Dolan**

Exercise SUPPORTING ENDEAVOUR 1, CT1 Training Exercise *- by Sig 'Jodie' Coulter*

On a wet and wild winter morning in March, Sp Sqn deployed on a three day CT1 training ex to the Revetments. The training refreshed and revised the fieldcraft elements of each individual. The morale was high as we collected our weapons from the armoury, on the first day, smiles galore and everyone was raring to go. Everyone was split down into 2 Sections; **Cpl 'Paul' Hyatt** was 1 Section IC and **LCpl 'Will' Dennet** 2 section IC.

We patrolled to the ex area tackling obstacles on the way, the weather decided to 'open' up, with hail bouncing off of our faces. This finally dulled some of the original smiles. On arrival to the training area, **Cpl 'Paul' Hyatt** formed everyone into a snap ambush; with the 'all clear' the Sections then proceeded to carry out the harbour location drills. Normal routine



proceeded and we deployed our bashers for shelter, sorting our kit for the next serial, prepping our weapons for firing and ensuring that we had enough ammo to 'kill the enemy'.

The first morning we carried out dry training which consisted of contact drills just to 'get our tactical heads on'. We were revised in our Sections practising individuals, pairs and fire team manoeuvres. This kept us warm and refreshed our brains with the skills and drills. The training allowed us to revise command and control and also enthused those preparing for their respective CLM courses. After we had 'warmed' up, the Sections confirmed the drills, with speed and aggression.

Later on, the morale started to disappear, as the weather turned on us and it was like being deployed in Brecon with its own 'weather system'. **SSgt 'Scotty' Johnson** (with his funny scouse accent), gave a lesson on CIED with the use of the VALLONS, some using it for the first time. This kept the morale up, due to the cryptic noises that the equipment was making. The Sections then participated in a confirmatory exercise trying to find any ground sign awareness or suspicious objects that **SSgt 'Scotty' Johnson** had sneakily buried. We then went through the procedure of what to do and how to act on finding anything suspicious. The last lesson was also taken by **SSgt 'Scotty' Johnson** searching vehicles, where we searched the vehicle for any unusual objects or anything that looked abnormal and taking into account the procedure that needs to be carried out when something suspicious is found.

1 section was tasked to carry out a recce patrol on a possible enemy location; we patrolled out of the harbour area to the recce location where we were met by **Sgt 'Pete' Kirkman**, who was acting as a ground agent. 1 section IC was given information and the whereabouts of the enemy. The Section 2IC and 3 others went in closer to gather as much relevant information and get as close to the enemy without being seen. The rest of the Section held a defensive position covering all arcs in the 'Brecon weather system'. Once the recce was complete, the valid information was passed to the Section, as 'everyone's a link man'.

The final lesson of the night was a stalking exercise at night, where the aim of the lesson was to get as close as possible to the road without being seen. I thought this was a fun lesson and very funny as well, we had to be very quiet and tactical as well as crawling with all our kit on without being seen or heard. We had 40 minutes to complete this task without being caught. Most of us were seen by the DS and I'm pretty sure **Cpl 'Colin' Paterson** fell asleep, as he got nowhere near the road by the end of the task and did not hear the whistle or see the landrover lights flashing either.

The next morning, reveille was at 0600 hrs, carrying out 'your weapon, your kit and personal admin'. Once again, the heavens opened with hail and rain, we all stood around trying to have a laugh and keep the morale high and start the confirmation lanes. The CO visited the ex area after the weather front had shifted, whilst we looked like bedraggled lunatics. I can honestly say that I have never been so cold and wet in my entire life, but as soon as we started the lanes, I warmed up. The final lesson was CPERS with **SSgt 'Ratts' Rattenbury**, giving us a quick refresher and then got straight into it in our sections, carrying out what we had learned throughout the two day ex. We advanced as a fire team and conducted the correct drills when searching a CPERS, this was new to some.

Our final phase of the day was 'managing a casualty' with **Sgt 'Elf' Watson**. A scenario was given and then we patrolled down a lane and came under contact from the enemy. The enemy took multiple casualties due to our reaction to effective enemy fire and after winning the firefight, the IC tasked the Section with Triage, defensive positions and control. After saving the enemy forces from certain death, we had a debrief, then ENDEX was called...morale was skyhigh when we heard that word!

CLM PNCO March 2016 - by Sig Hulse, Regimental MT

21st Sig Regt ran a Pre-PNCO in preparation for the actual course which was to take place two weeks after.

The pre course took place 22nd – 26th February up at the regts training wing. During this week we were taught the basic fundamentals we would need to pass this career course. Unfortunately due to other exercises happening at the same time only a very small handful of soldiers were able to attend. But to our advantage we were able to learn on a more personal level. In my opinion it's a massive benefit doing a pre course such as this one. It doesn't just show you what the instructors are looking for but also where your own strengths and weaknesses lay.

Sunday 6th March. Everyone arrived at the Regt up at the training wing. All looking smart and presentable with a look on their faces not knowing what was to come. Myself I was having a similar feeling as when I first joined the Army and now we were all taking this first step up the career ladder together. We were welcomed by the training wing officers **Capt 'Tony' Turner** and **WO2 'Milf' Miller**. The biggest point that was expressed was 'This course is easy to pass but hard to do well in'. For those who had done a pre course strongly agreed with that statement. Come Monday nice and early we had our kit packed ready for the physical risk assessment which consisted of a 6 mile tab followed by a stream run to dictate our position and section. The rest of the day and in fact the rest of the week was utter death by PowerPoint.

The following day it was time for the first of two PLD'S by the famous **SSgt 'Scouse' Johnson** who had a way of expressing the fun side to it, however I don't think we were convinced as much. It is just one of those things that has to be done, you griz through it together no matter how hard things get because you know in the back of your mind it's only temporary. After long days of presentations and long nights of revising came Exercise Shake Out which was a 24hr period located at Tin head Farm in Salisbury. This part of the course was to 'shake out' any issues leading to next week's testing phase. Those 24hrs probably felt like the longest ever.



Everyone was physically and mentally tired so before we could head back to camp we had to complete 8 section attacks, each taking up the role of 2IC, and even though it wasn't really necessary we also took the role as IC just so we had a basic understanding of the different roles and also something to aspire to become. After what felt like an endless week we were all given the weekend off. GODSEND!

After a good weekend off preparing our kit and presentations on the history of passed military Op's came Ex Battle Strike. This was the moment we had all been waiting for. A mixture of nerves and excitement. The coach came and everything was packed on including the chef's special brown horror bags to head back to Tin Head Farm. As soon as we arrived it was all go, kit on distribution of all ammo etc. we were cleared onto the area and began our tab to the location. As soon as we set up the harbour each section was tasked with their orders. Come night time it was everyone's worst nightmare....stag. But thankfully we had **Sig Burke's** snoring to stop those falling asleep on stag. During the daytime we would go out on our patrols dealing with CPER's, casualties and most of all coming under contact. Come the final night we were passed down our orders for the platoon attack. Everything we had learned had come down to this last bit. 0300 began revile. We tabbed out to the Bergan cash point, then tabbed a little further to set up the hasty harbour. 0400hrs we lay waiting for the mortar strikes to initiate the attack. As we waited watching the plants and grass slowly frost over it all suddenly kicked off. Around 5 minutes of bombardments we had the go ahead to push through the enemy positions. After fighting through 6 enemy locations the best words to hear on any ex ENDEX. We finished off with an ally photo as always and began our brass collection which wasn't so ally. We all sat in the lovely warm sun having a laugh and joke while cleaning our weapons waiting for the coach to come collect us and take us all back to camp.



Friday 18th March the last day of PNCO. Again we collected the weapons used to give them a final clean; once that had been complete we had to wait for the training wing officers and the CO for prize giving. The two awards up for grabs were Top Field Soldier and Top Student. The soldier to win both prizes was **Sig 'AB' Pike** 216 Sig Sqn and the runner up was **LCpl McLaren** so a massive well done to them as it was told they were neck and neck for the title. This course had a lot of strong and unique characters and to that end many new friendships were made. You never know maybe in the near future we'll be seeing each other on the next career course taking that next step on the ladder. The horror stories you hear about PNCO should be taken lightly, I'm sure many from the course would agree it was actually enjoyable and a lot was learnt. I would strongly recommend those signallers wishing to progress to get on this career course.



22nd SIGNAL REGIMENT STAFFORD



CO **Lt Col A Fawcett**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) D Seymour**

Introduction - by Lt Jack Clarke

Life at 22 Sig Regt is never quiet; maintaining its standing commitment to the ARRC, fulfilling its many training requirements, and at the same time improving the lived experience of its soldiers through a variety of extra curricular events, it has been a busy few months!

March saw the Regt conduct its first CT3 level exercise of the year, Ex STAFFORD BEACON 1, initially exercising the Regt's CNR capability followed by a scaled deployment of several HQ ICS elements. 248 Sig Sqn have deployed to Cornwall in support of Ex GRIFFIN STRIKE, 217 Sig Sqn are preparing to deploy to Romania on Ex STEADFAST COBALT 16, a NATO interoperability exercise, and 222 Sig Sqn are fulfilling OP TEMPERER commitments. And of course don't forget 252 Sig Sqn, who will regularly remind you that they are on operations 365 days a year.

The Regt hosted the Bde boxing night in March which was a truly excellent exhibition of the Corps' amateur boxing talent. Not to be outshone by the boxers, the Regt's footballers took

part in the first CO's Cup competition of the year; a six a-side round robin tournament which saw 222 Sign Sqn take the top prize for a second successive year.

February saw the Regt bid a fond farewell to **WO1 (RSM) R Gleave** who leaves the British Army after 22 years of service. We welcome **WO1 (RSM) D Seymour** and wish him all the best during his tenure.

Regimental Boxing Team - by LCpl Little

In February the 22 Sig Regt Boxing Team deployed to Cyprus for Ex WESTON ENDURANCE, the penultimate stage of a very intensive training program; the altitude training was designed to improve our fitness levels in preparation for the Bde boxing night. Months of training had already passed; the training was physically demanding however all that hard work brought us to a high standard of mental and physical fitness. The ex involved the boxing team taking part in countless strenuous training sessions including high tempo circuits, running, and sparring.

Although the days were long the team made time to relax in Cyprian culture, visiting various restaurants and a number of beaches, not surprisingly the weather was fantastic which



made the blood, sweat and tears training sessions somewhat bearable. In summary the experience proved invaluable to the teams' physical endurance and team bonding.

The Bde boxing night on the 10th March 2016, was hosted by 22 Sig Regt at MOD Stafford. ARRC, 22 & 30 Sig Regt boxers took part in the various weight bouts, all fighters showed a true passion for the sport and a friendly rivalry.

They say it's not the fighting that's the hardest to train for but the commitment and confidence to get in the ring, and they are true! The feeling is hard to describe to someone who has never stepped into the ring. If you ask any of the fighters from the night "would you do it again?" the majority of the boxers would reply "when is my next fight?" A sport that many people love to watch and possibly have a go at themselves but the fear of the physical training, time and dedication 7 days a week for 3 months is seen as a hurdle.

It is hoped that by watching the Bde boxing night other Regtl personnel will see the achievements they can accomplish, most of the boxers had never had a fight until that night and all walked away proud of themselves and honoured to have represented their Regt. No military event would be completed without a few awards, 30 Sig Regt were the overall competition winners, however this was extremely close as 22 Sig Regt put on a fantastic performance against a more experienced team not only on the night but during the prelims. The much discussed best boxer went to **Sig Watson** representing 22 Sig Regt and finally the most gallant boxer of the evening went to **LCpl Little** also representing 22 Sig Regt.

Final mention must go to the coaches for their dedication and instructional abilities taking non-fighters to credible boxers in such a short time, the referees for their unbiased judgments, the judges for fairness and the admin team that set up the infrastructure for the night, simply outstanding.

The Boxing Team:- SSgt Lord, Sgt Kavanagh, Sgt Wilson, Sgt Smith, Cpl Cartledge, Cpl Magee, LCpl Rogerson, LCpl Forbes, LCpl Little, Sig Alee, Sig Sisson, Sig Miller, Sig Walsh, Sig Watson, Pte Gartland, Pte Kilburn,

Coaches:- Capt Scarrott, Sgt Forsyth, LCpl Green, LCpl Philcock, LCpl Thomas, LCpl Nabin, Sig Wright.

Sportspersons' Dinner - by LCpl Raja Subba

On 2nd Feb 16, 22nd Sig Regt hosted the Annual Sports Dinner in celebration of its soldier's achievements and the contribution given in various sports throughout the year. We were privileged that evening in meeting the Guest Sports person, **Mr James Hillier**, a previous national athlete and one of the current National Coaches. His speech to the soldiers was very inspirational highlighting his success and the opportunities that sports can provide.

The evening included soldiers gaining Regtl and Corps colours for their commitment and achievements to their chosen sports. There were awards for the best sportsman and sportswomen of the year which was awarded to **Cpl Krishna** and **LCpl Turbit** respectively for their outstanding contribution in their own sporting fields.

It was an outstanding evening for the Regimental Orienteering Team who received numerous awards throughout the night. The following were successful recipients of their Regtl Colours: **Sig Gam, Sig Arjun, LCpl Nar**

and SSgt (FofS) Darlami with the following receiving their Corps Colours: **Maj Pollitt** and **Sgt McNally**. Both were awarded Corps Colours for their significant contribution towards this sport over a considerable time. However, the night belonged to the Regtl Orienteering Team who were awarded the overall Team of the Year award for their extremely successful season across a range of Army, Corps and Regtl events. A special mention has to be said for **SSgt Jagat** for his overall contribution to the Regtl Team throughout the season.



217 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj K Biggins**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) S Hopkins**

Exercise CENTAUR HOPTON 16 - by Cpl Glasgow

217 Sig Sqn deployed onto the first battle camp of the year, a well-executed ten day FIBUA style exercise organised and run by **Sgt Ken Lawson**.



Ex CENTAUR HOPTON 16 formed the annual Sqn battle camp, training the soldiers' military skills. In anticipation of future operational commitments, this year focused heavily on operating and fighting in the urban environment. The first week was spent at Swynnerton Training Area, revising and developing basic skills to dust the cobwebs off soldiers more used to siting antennae than

fire teams. In addition to patrolling and simple fieldcraft, theory was delivered and tested through practical lessons on FIBUA, casevac, CPERS, C-IED and GSA. We were fortunate enough to receive some specialist training towards the end of the week as **YofS Lock** called in a favour from contacts in 264 Sig Sqn. Covering building clearance and communicating with team mates in the chaos of the urban environment were their key takeaway points. This was very well received from **LCpl 'Hodor' Hilton** who is now contemplating the course. The enemy consisted of injured and downgraded members of the Sqn but due to lack of numbers in the first week they were roped into assaulting buildings. **LCpl 'Franco' Francis** didn't see the funny side and subsequently waved his laminated sick chit in the DS' faces.

The second week took place on STANTA training area, providing an extended opportunity to place the troops under pressure while improving their battle skills. As with previous





217 battle camps there was incentive to do well in the form of the coveted “Top Field Soldier” and “Top Section” prizes. Day 1 and the Sqn paraded at 0400 for the long drive East. The promise of bacon sandwiches was swiftly halted as the chefs didn’t fancy getting out of bed, but one quick Mcdonald’s stop quickly raised morale. We eventually arrived at STANTA but not before a little hassle with the route card taking our TCV convoy to a council estate in Watton. It turns out

Google Maps isn’t a reliable tool for creating route cards, a lesson **Sgt Smyth** has now learned the hard way.

The first day of the exercise was meant to involve minimal activity, consisting of the usual safety demos then onto occupation of a FOB. However this day went on longer than it should, with **Cpl ‘Mustard’ Hearne** leading the platoon the longest way to the lodge where safety demos were to take place. This “planned route” led the Platoon straight into a Platoon attack which was unexpected and not initially briefed. Confused and hit with the element of surprise, the Platoon quickly adopted its previously rehearsed attack drills. On assaulting and regrouping onto the enemy position it was very clear to see by the Royal Artillery flash on the enemy’s arm that this had nothing to do with us at all. We had actually walked right into the path of another unit’s Section attack. Wiping the egg from our faces we completed our patrol and were taken through the mandatory safety briefs in a wind so strong almost none of the instructions could actually be heard. With the Health and Safety paperwork in order, we were finally free to start the ex properly. The platoon, after an initial recce of a local village (complete with realistic villagers) took over FOB JABBA. They started to get into routine, with **LCpl ‘Dad-bod’ Taylor** making an early claim for golden pillow by getting in his sleeping bag at 2000 and not getting up till 0530.



A reasonably uneventful second day followed, in which framework patrols were conducted and patterns of life established. Intelligence reports were received to suggest the whereabouts of known militants and on capture they yielded vital information for future operations. On the third day (second night?) **Lt ‘PI Comd’ O’Sullivan** felt the need to step it up a gear and issued night vision, monkey hammers and ladders. With 1 Section protecting the FOB, 2 and 3 Section were tasked to clear compounds within the village. **Cpl Mohan** led 2 Section to provide covering fire on the first compound whilst 3 Section led by **LCpl ‘Dad-bod’ Taylor** assaulted it. On the assaulting phase 3 Section moved into compound fully equipped up. 3 Sect lead man **Sig ‘Nelly’ Nelson** was tasked to “knock” the rhino door with the monkey hammer in order to gain entry to the compound. Unfortunately en route to the compound his monkey hammer shook around in his daysack so violently it managed to knock his night vision from his helmet and he was forced to give the knock “blind”. This was probably not the best option as in the pitch black of night he managed to kick his assault group partner in the stomach mistaking him for the building door. One job, **Sig Nelson!** However despite the midnight kick boxing performance provided by the platoon executed two very successful compound clearances resulting in one compound becoming our new building of opportunity to provide future operating tasks in the week.

Moving into the village provided excellent opportunities to conduct further raids on buildings which initially would have stretched the Platoon too far. It should be noted here that we were not operating alone; throughout we were supported by the fictitious and purely notional Kukhri and Pegasus callsigns (a product of **SSM Hopkins’** overactive imagination). This increased “presence” within the village allowed us greater freedom of movement which more importantly translated to less sleep. Intelligence reports on the local troublemakers continued to flood in, requiring us to search and capture as required. STANTA’s village public address system was put to good use with airstrikes and riots broadcast throughout. A special mention should be made here to **Sig Wignall** who, despite the noise and confusion, demonstrated heroic strength in extracting **Sig ‘Cranks’ Crankshaw** from a night-time IED-initiated ambush. Physically lifting **Cranks** onto his shoulder (Osprey, daysack, webbing, rifle and all) he ran some 150m back to safety.



After numerous attacks, recces and stags within the village the final attack came. The Platoon was tasked with clearing half a village (thanks Kukhri and Pegasus). With a good twelve hours of training value to be had, the enemy was tasked with making this as difficult as possible. Corrugated iron, barrels, bicycles, burning tyres and broken bottles littered the streets and stairwells. A mixture of talc and water was especially well received by a young Signaller running up a set of stairs (**Cpl McInnes** was very proud of this). Moving through the large compounds the Platoon were definitely getting better, faster and slicker clearing rooms. Unfortunately, and quite ironically, **Lt O'Sullivan** didn't read the script and was the only man to be killed during the ex. (Editor's note: this isn't technically true. **Sig Nelson** was obliterated by **Capt Joseph** who remained on a balcony until a building was incorrectly declared clear before peeking back inside and giving him the good news).



Overall, the ex was a success and was enjoyed by everyone involved. Best Field Soldier was awarded to **Sig 'Nelly' Nelson** (despite his epic death above) after working very hard, never complaining and always having a smile on his face. The best section award went to 3 Section led by **LCpl 'Dad-bod' Taylor** however a lot of credit must be given to **LCpl 'Chong Li' Ninam** who has been in the best section two years running and goes largely unnoticed.

222 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj S Macpherson**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) J Roberts**

Exercise HOPTON BATTLE - by Capt Orme

Ex HOPTON BATTLE was a battlefield tour of a local civil war historical site where the round-heads and royalists fought over the castle town of Stafford in 1643. The site of the battle happens to be co-located with another historical gem in the form of the RAF museum storage depot in MoD Stafford. We conducted a walk of the battlefield while **Lt Orme** regaled the Troop with the tale of how 1500 Parliamentarians were held back by 1200 Royalists after a hard day of fighting into the night. Having toured the battlefield site and passed around a ridiculously heavy cannon ball that **Lt Orme** carried in his day sack all day, the Troop explored this Aladdin's cave of lost treasures.

Inside the depot we were met by the curator who kindly showed us around the vast warehouse containing the expected aircraft parts and some surprising items. The

most unnerving items were the disarmed nuclear bombs. Thankfully, we were assured that the devices were inert and the radioactive material long since removed. They also had some disturbing Nazi party relics from WW2 including an ornate wooden chair that once belonged to Himmler. We were also pleased to find a warehouse full of uniforms from across British Military history. Most significantly among these we discovered the WW2 RAF uniform of King George VI. We knew it was his because he had 'The King' written on the inside label. It seems even the King knew that you should always write your name on your kit.



252 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj C Raynor**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) B McLean**

A Day At The Races - by Cpl Wilkinson

As the world famous Cheltenham Gold Cup is only on our doorstep, **Sgt Chris Johnson** decided to organise a Sqn function to the opening day of the festival. So on a cold, miserable day in March a minibus containing only the finest that 252 Sig Sqn has to offer, set off to win their fortunes!

With Kowloon Tp OC **Lt Gallagher** and new Singapore Tp OC **Lt 'Big Duncs' MacLachlan** showing the rest of the Sqn the best way to wear tweed, we quickly mingled with the rest of the approximately 60,000 other punters hoping to win our weight in gold! **SSM Brian 'Elmer Fudd' McLean** and **SQMS Kev Smith** were quick off the mark in finding the closest bar rubbing their hands in delight at knowing it was only going to cost £6 for lager in a plastic glass!

As the day had 6 races, many people tried to start the betting low, hoping to build enough funds to go big on the last race and win enough to buy a second drink! As the day started to move though, it seemed evident that no-one had bothered to read up on the horses running that day! Everyone's cash reserves started disappearing quicker than Aston Villas premiership hopes, until **LCpl Jim 'How do odds work?' Harris** began to pick a few winners! After picking one with a good name, and another whose name made him laugh, he found himself almost £200 up going in to the final race. After some gentle persuasion from the crowd he decided to place half his winnings on one final nag in the hope of that big score. Unfortunately his horse decided it would be funnier for the rest of us to not win, leaving **LCpl Harris** a little bit down but definitely not out for the day.



The Eye Of The Tiger - by Sig Slevin

On the 10th of March members of 252 Sig Sqn travelled up to MOD Stafford aboard the party bus full of anticipation for our boxers, cheap beer and an afternoon out of work. Upon arrival we found that the newly built gym's "cherry" had been saved for us on this special night, after the mandatory explanation of the rules relating to watching Army boxing had been read to us outside we were led into the new sports hall which had been done out to give the event some extra atmosphere. We took our seats to then be given the same speech by the **RSM 299 Sig Sqn** before waiting for the guests and VIP's to arrive "fresh" from the mess.

After the introductions were over it was time for some boxing which we all agreed started well and continued to get better and better throughout the night, as the weight classes increased so did the quality of the entertainment as each extra few pounds made the boxers a little more thoughtful and tactical in order to keep their faces safe. Midway through the bill we had some female boxing before a break where we got a little time for refreshments. When we re-entered the gym it was time for our Sqn's boxer **Sig Chris 'Rocky/ Swellhead/Only on the face' Watson** to take to the ring. We all had seen him sparring but a proper bout is an entirely different proposition. He acquitted himself well and won his bout quite convincingly on his way to being awarded the best boxer award on the night. He did his best to forge himself a nickname by using his face to block everything his opponent **Sapper James** threw at him. Despite this the fight was won by **Watson** inside two rounds.

After his fight we had some heavyweight bouts which provided some good entertainment with everyone cheering a little louder thanks to the half time fuel. Before we knew it was time for the boxers to receive their awards. Which meant it was time for the Officers to clamber into the ring in their tight mess dress which was a real sight. Highlights included **COS ARRC** splitting his trousers swinging his leg over the ropes and almost every Officer from Lieutenant to Brigadier and beyond jump up in unison to be the one to help **Brig Nesmith** in her mess skirt out of the ring and down the steps.

Once the presentations were done it was time for the boxers to be treated to the mess for curry and beers to undo all their hard work towards their great looking bodies. The rest of us went to the camp bar for a short time before we had to get the bus back down to Innsworth. All in all, it was a good night of boxing.

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj N Pollitt**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) P McGeever**

Exercise SUSTAIN STONE ONE - by WO2 D McDermott

On Thursday 11th February 16, Sp Sqn deployed to Swynnerton training area to take part in Ex SUSTAIN STONE 1 (Ex SS1). The purpose of Ex SS1 was to develop leadership skills; team work capabilities; command and control; communication and test individual's core values in a controlled but challenging environment. The event would form part of the OC's cup competition and would run as a one day round robin consisting of six different stands.

It was a cold frosty morning, but well wrapped up against the cold, the DS gathered in the QM's Department for a last brew



before deploying to set up the stands. The teams arrived promptly to the training area and received a short brief from **Sgt 'Be Be Cue' Rai** before launching onto their first tasks. The tasks were a mix of physical and mental team events and command tasks; like the Crystal Maze without the bald bloke! Aimed primarily at the junior end of the Sqn, the SHQ element and the heads of departments were on hand to offer encouragement throughout the day, however special mention should go out to the team ringers: **SSgt 'I would make a great Siggie again' Lower**, Padre **'This soldiering lark is not for me' Pratt** and **SSgt 'Welfare not warfare' Danbahadur Rai**. On completion of all the stands, the Sqn formed to hear the results. LAD won, but were run close by the QM Dept and the award for best individual effort was given to **Cpl Hunter** from the RGB. Prizes awarded, the Sqn retired to the cookhouse for 'not BBQ'd' burgers and a well deserved beverage or two.



Overall, it was a successful day where all participants were tested mentally and physically, and a rare opportunity for Sp Sqn to come together en masse. It demonstrated the essence of individual command, leadership and initiative in the modern asymmetric battlefield environment. All participants and directing staff worked really hard to achieve this significant result.

OC's Football Tournament - by LCpl MCarthy

It was a very cold and crisp Thursday morning in Stafford for all players who took part in the Football tournament on the recently laid brand new 5th generation all weather pitch. As normal everyone met in the wrong place and at the wrong time, so that left me stood on my own wondering where everyone was, but slowly and surely everyone eventually got to the right place for the tournament to start just 10 minutes



later than stated on the joining instructions. The 7 teams that played were given an opening brief and I explained the rules and regulations of the tournament, layout and how the next 2 hours were going to pan out.

As the clock came to 0830 the teams were warmed up and the first whistle blast sounded for the first games to commence. It took a few minutes for the first teams playing to settle down due to a shaky start and it wasn't long for the first strong challenges for the ball came flying in. As the morning passed the teams got better and better as most of them had never played together before and some really good football was on display, with a few of the Regtl and Corps players standing out the most with their movement and skill, sense of special awareness and sheer reading of the beautiful game on and off the ball.

Referee **LCpl Tom Power** raised the whistle to his lips and blew to signify the end of the tournament with some relieved and tired faces out on the pitch. The players that took part grabbed their fluids and gathered around the table for the winners to collect the trophies and medals. **Maj Pollitt** then delivered his closing address and congratulated everyone who played.

The table was really tight coming in to the last game to determine a winner of the tournament but overall the team that came out on top was the Regimental MT team 1 with **LCpl Beech** as Captain and goalkeeper throughout who pulled off some tremendous saves to keep them at the top of the table throughout. Overall, the day was a success and everyone played with passion and belief they would win every game.

Stafford Half Marathon - by Sig Harris

So the day had finally arrived for Sp Sqn's assault on Stafford Half Marathon. After months of arduous training, we were ready. As it came closer to the dreaded start time, we then made our way to the start line, making the final preparations for the race. **LCpl Turner** was not feeling all too brilliant at the beginning as he didn't get as much sleep as he should have. At 10 am, the race started even though, it took us all over two minutes to get across the start line because of the sheer number of competitors, but no matter we were off to start our 13.1 mile course.



Sig Harris was off to set a record for the quickest time set in a pair of £12 Tesco's finest trainers, although it seemed like a good idea at the time, it turned out to be a bad mistake as the trainers started to fall apart 4 miles into the run. **LCpl Martin** was also struggling with injury before the race but he still started and achieved his aims.



As the race went on, it became clear how hard the course was as it seemed that Stafford was flat but it turned out to be undulating. With **SSgt Howard** and then **SSgt Patterson** passing me it was clear they were racing each other in an inter QM department battle.



LCpl Laffety was the first in Sp Sqn to finish with a chip time of 1:24:57. That wasn't enough for him as he decided to run back round the wrong way (baffling the race marshals and all the other competitors) to come and give his support to the rest of us stragglers in his unique PTI way. A special mention has to be made to **Sgt Wilson** as he managed a chip time of 1:25:50 despite not doing any training because of boxing commitments, and turning up with two magnificent black eyes.

Despite being a tough test for all of us, we all still managed to finish with respectable times all round. As we all tucked into our fair trade bananas and receiving our T-shirts and medals, OC Sp Sqn **Maj Pollitt** came to congratulate us on a job well done. We then headed for the mini bus knowing we had conquered Stafford half marathon 2016 and to look forward to next year's event.





30th SIGNAL REGIMENT BRAMCOTE



CO **Lt Col M Fayers**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) M Witham**

244 SIGNAL SQUADRON (AIR SUPPORT)

OC **Capt MB Goodman**
SSM **SSgt BR Rizza**

Exercise GLOBAL VINE 16 - by LCpl Thomas

On 13 Feb 16, Romeo Troop of 244 Sig Sqn (AS) deployed from RAF BRIZE NORTON heading to Cyprus for a two week CT1 training exercise, Ex GLOBAL VINE 16. The aim of the exercise was to conduct training on all ICS capabilities held within the Troop, enabling the more junior members to gain experience before key exercises supporting the Joint Helicopter Command later in the year.

The advance party had deployed three days prior to our arrival and were at RAF AKROTIRI ready to greet us after our seamless deployment. All deployed personnel were pleasantly welcomed by higher than average temperatures and soon adopted short sleeve order.

Phase one of the exercise involved utilising a building of opportunity to use as our detachment HQ. Training on Falcon, Skylark, Housekeeper and Magpie OLRT was headed up by the Detachment Commanders. The training would prove to be vital for the deployment forward phase of the exercise.

Along with training in the Network Equipment Room, the OLRT crew had a number of opportunities to deploy around the local area to set up and send reports back to EXCON for training purposes. These locations included Bloodhound Camp, RAF AKROTIRI and a local radio site, where it was rumoured the OLRT had knocked the power out attempting to send vital emails. This phase was invaluable to the detachment as it enabled a more hands on approach to the training.



FOB SPARTAN

After three days of in house training, the Tp OC, **Lt Thorogood** briefed **Sig Paddock** and I on a recce we had to carry out for the potential move of the entire ICS detachment. The recce

was carried out on FOB SPARTAN and this was deemed a suitable location. Our mission was now to carry out a complete ICS detachment move, set up and to establish robust communications, all within 48hrs. Apart from minor issues with Falcon, which **LCpl Carter** was quick to fix, the detachment was fully set up and communications established in less than 24hrs. A great effort by the Troop and proof that the training carried out prior to the move was first rate. Following a period of routine living in an austere FOB, this phase was brought to a close.

Once the kit had been powered down, accounted for and packed ready to be sent back to the UK, our focus turned elsewhere. Our hard work allowed us free time to head to the local beach and take part in an inter-troop volleyball championship. The dream team consisting of myself, **LCpl Fidler** and **Sig Paddock** eased to victory over 'the old boys' of **Lt Thorogood**, **SSgt Chamberlain** and **Sgt Nimmo** and then over 'the youths' of **LCpl Dulson**, **Sig Richards** and **Sig Renwick**.

Focus then turned to the Ex GLOBAL VINE 16 AT package. Organised by **SSgt Chamberlain** the Troop took part in a spectacular day scuba diving at Akrotiri. A day Hillwalking around the Troodos Mountains and Mount Olympus followed, including a detailed brief on the area by **Sig Richards** with some researched expert knowledge. This also involved a dip in the icy waters beneath a waterfall. Further water based activities and a testing coastal walk in the vicinity of Paphos provided lots of chances to enjoy the climate, views and to top up our winter tans. The final day of the AT enabled us to take part in Go-karting with a Grand Prix at Akrotiri's impressive outdoor karting track. **LCpl Boag** won and was quick to pose for a photo with his winner's medal.



T Tp after a hard day scuba diving





LCpl Boag victorious!

Overall, the ex proved to be beneficial to all members of Romeo Troop in terms of ICS training, hands on experience and understanding of the Troop's role in deployments all over the world. All personnel enjoyed the experience of deploying at reach. We now look forward to Ex GRIFFINS STRIKE and Ex SWIFT RESPONSE that will undoubtedly test the skills we had learned and honed in Cyprus.



Romeo Tp at Bloodhound Camp

250 GURKHA SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj TJC Walton**
 SSM **WO2 (SSM) Indra**

250 Gurkha Sig Sqn has had its usual busy start to 2016. Completing **Ex SWAN CONNECTION** in Jan, the Sqn handed over its Air Assault Task Force ICS Det to 244 Sig Sqn, but gaining the 1* Standing Joint Force Logistic Component (SJFLogC) Headquarters and ICS commitment. A new focus has started a flurry of activity, resourcing the new HQ and getting to know the new supported staff over a series of capability demonstrations and meetings. The Sqn now looks ahead with excitement to **Ex JOINT VENTURE**, which presents the first opportunity to run out the new HQ as part of a joint exercise. The Sqn also deployed on its annual battle camp, **Ex PLATINUM KUKHURI**, delivering a superb opportunity for the soldiers to revise their soldiering skills in Nesscliffe. Under the coordination of **WO2 (SSM) Indra** and leadership of **2Lt Bunnett** and **Sgt Surrendra**, the exercising personnel have

demonstrated both finely-tuned rifleman skills and aggressive spirit. We now look forward to another exceptionally busy period of exercising, with **Ex JOINT VENTURE**, **Ex STONEY RUN**, with our partnered unit 44th Expeditionary Sig Bn and of course our premier QG SIGNALS deployment, **Ex TRAILWALKER!**

Exercise PLATINUM KHUKURI - by *LCpl Bibek Gurung*

Members of 250 Gurkha Sig Sqn deployed on **Ex PLATINUM KHUKURI** over the period of 14-18 Mar, co-ordinated by SSM 250 GSS **WO2 (SSM) Indra Thapa**. It took place in Nescliffe training area. It was planned and designed to brush up and develop our low level military skills and to enhance our command, leadership and management elements. The other focus of the exercise was to complete a number of MATTs. In the early morning of 14 Mar 16, after accounting for all the personnel, we left the camp for Nescliffe training area. On arrival at the location, we were given a camp familiarisation brief by **SSgt Robin**. On the same day we managed to complete a few MATTs including MATT 7 (Op Law), MATT 9 (CIED), MATT 8 (SERE), MATT 3 (BCDT/BLS) and MATT 1 (WHT). For the first two days we were given walk-through-talk-through battle lessons on CTR, section attacks, harbour drills, casevac drills and the orders process by **Sgt Bhesh** and **Sgt Kishor**, which we would be tested on later during the Exercise. The Exercise culminated in an attack in the early hours of the Friday morning. We were divided into three sections. One Section took over the first enemy position. I was in Two Section and we assaulted through the next enemy position. After Three Section finished their assault, the Exercise came to an end with the words of command of "STOP, STOP, STOP" by **Sgt Bhesh**.

The Ex, without a shadow of doubt, brought my faded military skills back on track. It has definitely helped me to improve and enhance my military skills. I am looking forward to implementing these skills on future military exercises and in my future career.



Exercising personnel during the Ex PLATINUM KHUKURI

256 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj IJ Kirk**
 SSM **WO2 (SSM) B Wildman**

Exercise LOCKED SHIELD - by *Capt MacDonald*

Ex LOCKED SHIELD is an annual cyber defence exercise centred on the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE) in Tallinn, Estonia. What sets the exercise apart is the scale and nature of the scenario. The Green Team (GT) comprise of information security, industry and telecommunications experts from across NATO, they are



responsible for building the virtualised network and the scoring systems. The scenario is fictitious however; the infrastructure is as realistic as possible - ranging from VOIP systems, through standard server systems, through to ICS and SCADA systems.

Teams playing the role of Rapid Response Teams (RRT) must quickly enumerate and harden the networks that the designers have built before the Red Team (RT) begin their attacks. There is a two-day network familiarisation period that allows Blue Teams (BT) (the good guys – us), to recce the network, however any changes they make are reverted before STARTEX – just to ensure all of the RT backdoors are still open and all the pre-built vulnerabilities are present!

This was the first time that the UK had entered and the scale of the task soon became clear. Half of the battle was actually identifying people within Defence who had skillsets relevant to the team (there is no JPA competency for Linux firewalls!). A good network of contacts allowed a team to be identified and a week's PDT in Blandford was organised by **FofS IS Steve Hiorns**. This week of training by **Paul McCreeth** and **Joe Sloane** was excellent in allowing specialities within the team to be identified.

After some exceptionally last minute admin, Blue Team 19 (BT19) arrived in Estonia ready for the competition. We were assigned a computer lab in the University technical school to work from, which was excellent. We set about making it more functional and went to the local supermarket to buy “black nasty” and whiteboards. We must have succeeded as when the university staff came to check on us later that day their facial expressions spoke a thousand words. Our new layout would have kept even the most pedantic Telemech happy and each team member had a minimum of three screens and 30m of cabling. Obviously I immediately commandeered the 60-inch TV and dragged in a £900 chair found in the corridor and set myself up in the middle of the room and began to replicate Minority Report.

The team consisted of both regular and reservist personnel from across the three Services. Members came from 10SR, 30SR, the ISOC, JCU, Royal Navy Reserve, MCSU in Navy Command and 591 Sqn RAF. We assigned specialities based on people's interests and their experience levels. The level of learning required across Linux, web apps, network monitoring, incident response, firewalls and antivirus was truly stratospheric and it is to the individual's credit that they managed to achieve so much in such a short period.

The competition began in earnest on the Wednesday morning and we had 30 minutes to implement any quick fixes before the RT began their attacks. **LCpl Peter Bass** and **LCpl Nimesh Lama** immediately moved to 30 000ft and began inputting ip tables rules like their life depended on it while **Cpl Dipen Gurung** began the task of securing 20 servers and 80 workstations as fast as possible. After that it was all hands to the pump to react to incidents while preventing website defacements, domain controller attacks and data exfiltration.

There were very nearly fireworks when I received an email to say that the server room was overheating and that the servers were 3 minutes from shutting down. In EXCON was a board filled with sensors and detonator caps that were set to explode when the temperature rose too high.

Investigation revealed that the RT had used a prebuilt backdoor to disable the air con pump. Rapid spamming of

the ‘Run’ web interface averted disaster while **Cpl Neil Corliss** implemented a fix to prevent it happening again.

The exercise ended with BT19 finishing in 11th place out of 20, the highest any newcomer to the exercise had ever finished. Given the exceptionally short time in which we had to prepare and the fact we were competing against NATO partners and full time incident response teams, this is an exceptional result. We secured an invite to the EXCON social that evening and met the RT and GT staff, which was a great learning experience. Sadly, many of the RT tips were lost in the mists of the free bar, however there was time for another catch-up the next morning.

We had a day or so left in Tallinn so took advantage of the beauty of the Old Town in Tallinn, a UNESCO World Heritage site and famous for its local beer houses. **Sgt Stu Houghton** and **Dan Frost** are pleased to report that the local dining is excellent, working their way through deer, wild boar, elk and bear in three days.

The exercise was a fantastic opportunity to recognise the diversity of skills that both the Corps and Defence possess and use them in a real, live-fire cyber scenario. The knowledge gained and relationships formed can only bode well for the future and plans are already underway for Ex LOCKED SHIELD 2017!

Exercise RAM SNIPER - by Sig Crosthwaite

Back in March **Sig ‘Babymaker’ James** was set the task of organising a day out that would be both fun and competitive while also building team cohesion throughout the troop. The obvious choice of paintballing was unanimously decided by all and the date was set. The morning came and the excitement of a Thursday out of work was quickly diminished when it turned out the road to the paintballing centre seemed to have been built in prehistoric times and led to people off-roading their own cars through fields and giant pot holes.

On arrival we were welcomed by the centre's staff and given the obligatory safety brief. From there we were put into teams along with some civvies and received our overalls and equipment, kindly declining body armour, and purchasing our ammo for the day and pizzas being ordered for lunch. It was at this point that **Lt Ambrose** produced a banana suit from nowhere and presented it to **LCpl Curry** to wear for the day after a ‘slight’ blunder he had made the week before.

The klaxon went and the first game began. Two teams started at either end of a field with only wooden fences as protection. At this point it was obvious that all training and experience went out the window and a “free for all” began with people running in all directions firing wildly at anything that moved and at any glance of the bright yellow banana. The game was completed quickly and we moved onto game two, ‘storm the embassy,’ where a VIP was selected to be protected and escorted from one checkpoint to the other, while the other teams job was to kill the VIP.

Game three utilised riot shields to storm a bridge and capture the enemy's position. As this was more of an open arena, the likelihood of getting hit greatly increased which was certainly what happened. The game ended which meant one thing. Pizza. Twenty pizzas were quickly polished off by all and the last game of the day was looming. For the grand finale it was decided that it would be a military vs civilian affair, to which the civilians didn't seem to be overly confident about. The



game was a 'capture the flag' scenario within a castle. We decided we would assault first and so it began. After the initial few minutes of getting used to the area, myself and **Sig Powney** made a break for it using the woodland for cover while the rest of the team provided fire and looped around to the rear to smash down the back door. Once in we raised the flag and that was the round easily won. The teams then switched roles and it's safe to say that the civilian team lasted no more than 5 minutes and got nowhere near the flag. With the day finished we packed kit away and compared injuries on ALL areas of our bodies and headed back to camp. A brilliant day was had by all and certainly achieved the goals that it set out to achieve and all are looking forward to the next opportunity that we get to try something new again.



Bastogne, 1944...

Exercise RAM BASELINE - by Sig Baker

On Monday 14 Mar 16 all junior ranks of 256 Sig Sqn deployed on Exercise RAM BASELINE, a five day BCCS package produced by **WO2 (SSM) Wildman**. This exercise was designed to enhance the basic military skills of every soldier in the Sqn.

The week prior to deploying all exercising troops were subject to what seemed like back to back kit checks daily and nightly until every item of kit was presented, although World War Three nearly erupted after the lads realised they had to buy a couple of items for the first time ever!

The exercising troops arrived at Beckingham Camp Training Area at 1000hrs to begin the package. The four mile insertion TAB with full marching order proved a worthy first obstacle for some members of the Sqn, but all managed to make it to the harbour location in one piece. Straight after a water parade they were greeted with a demo on how to construct both a fire trench and a shell-scraper, which must have seemed like a bottomless pit to some people.

The challenge of constructing a triangular harbour with night and day time apex's along with shellscrapes for each pair must have seemed colossal, however the lads knuckled down and the task was carried out with personal pride and humour by all, especially **LCpl Drury** who really showed his ground working skills from his RAF Regiment days. From there **SSgt Summerfield**, **Cpl MacNamee** and myself gave lessons on personal admin in the field, battlefield discipline and duties of a sentry. A member of the DS was also assigned to stay in the harbour overnight to make sure the sentries were carrying out their duties correctly and also that **LCpl Williams** hadn't frozen.



Life's a ditch

Every morning after Stand To an inspection was carried out by the SSM checking what the exercising troops had been taught the day before. After this, lessons were carried out for the remainder of the day including map reading theory and practical, cam and concealment, fire control order and target indication.

As the lads grasped the fundamentals they moved onto patrolling which encompassed hand signals, short, long halts and contact drills. This progressed onto individual and pairs fire and movement, culminating in a BCDT battle picture

followed by a fireteam attack and casevac. This BE was conducted through an irrigation ditch stretching one hundred meters after which the casualty was evacuated a further kilometre by stretcher to the ERV. The physical element of this phase really separated the men from the boys, no names mentioned!

As the final fireteam entered the ERV endex was called and the troops were greeted by **Cpl 'Colonel' Gains** and **Cpl 'Stretch' Armstrong** who had a BBQ waiting for the drained and mud covered soliders. After extensively cleaning their weapons the troops mounted up onto the coach and headed out of the arctic conditions of Lincolnshire, back to Nuneaton for tea and medals. Every single person felt they had gained much needed basic military skills during the exercise which will now be put to the test on the Sqn LFTT package in May... No pressure lads!

Regimental and Corps Boxing - by LCpl Brown

On 11 Jan 16, 20 or so men and women from the Regt gathered in a warm boxing gym ready to start an arduous 8 weeks of boxing training, some for the first time, some not.

We were welcomed by **Sgt Al Mousley**, who I personally had never met before. Speculation that he was P Company trained and a PTI who could melt you with a look, was thrown around. At a glance, he was a man that looked like he'd boxed before and might have a shouting decibel similar to a Boeing 747. Half was true, but after introducing himself and setting out a training plan for us to follow, it was clear we had an excellent coach and a knowledgeable teacher.

After the formalities were done, we began training. It was pretty much like the training scene from Rocky IV every day; running in the snow, lifting heavy objects in barns, chopping wood and doing almost no sparring – honestly, take a look at the Rocky IV training montage on YouTube. Ivan Drago has a purpose built gym and what I can only imagine are quality sparring partners... how did he lose? But I digress.

Morale throughout our training was pretty high, even at times when we were forced to do sprints around an icy track or around the entire stair formation of Leicester City Football Club.



But we all had our ups and downs. I had niggles from week 2 until the end of training, I was dubbed *Victor Meldrew* by **Sgt Mousley**. **Sig Boyde's** and **LCpl Galloway's** nose was being popped constantly. **Sig Munday** often boxed in the style of an interpretive dancer, no one really knows why. **LCpl 'KFC' Singh** had a constant battle with shedding weight due to his obvious addiction to, well food. **LCpl Waryck** couldn't stop making animal mating noises when he threw punches. I believe it aided him in winning the physiological battle with his opponents.

We made regular visits to a local boxing gym to offer us the chance to have more than just each other to spar with. We even spent a week training with the Royal Engineers Corps Boxing team, which was a steep learning curve for all. All the while our diet and overall fitness progression were being monitored, enabling us to peak at the correct time.

After 8 weeks came the fights. 7 – 10 Mar 16 was the Brigade competition that saw 30SR, 22SR and ARRC Sp Bn compete against each other. It was our first competition and some team member's first experience of a boxing competition, fight and atmosphere. An exhilarating / nervous time for all that took part, but successful too. **Cpl Waryck**, **LCpl Whitaker**, **LCpl Singh**, **Sig Bryant**, **Sig Bennet** and **Sig William's** were all victorious in their bouts.

During 14- 17 Mar 16, 30SR hosted the Annual Corps Championships. The results were fantastic with **Cpl Lewis Waryck** winning the Heavy weight class, **LCpl Harinder Singh** winning the Welter weight class, **Sig Micheal Williams** winning the Light weight class and **LCpl Emma Curwood** winning in the Female Bantam weight class. All other members of the 30SR Boxing Team boxed well but narrowly missed out in their respective weight categories.

To sum things up 30SR won the Corps Boxing Championship for the 4th time in a row, winning seems to be the standard now. As a Regiment we also won the 1 Signal Brigade Cup. I imagine we will be winning both again next year too.

I've competed in other sports as a civilian and in military but the training for boxing has been the most fulfilling and hardest. Respect is due to all the 30SR team and all who we competed against.

258 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj P Hodgkinson**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) P Wood**

Exercise BLUNT BEAR 16 - by Sig Brown

On the 18th of Feb 16 Foxtrot and Delta Troops of 258 Sig Sqn deployed from Gamecock barracks in Bramcote to the Thetford training area for a two week CT1 exercise, Ex BLUNTBEAR 16. The purpose of the ex was two-fold, the first objective and week was aimed squarely at bringing on our technical ability and the second week was all about developing our military skills. Both these objectives would prepare us for both Ex JOINT VENTURE and SWAN RANGE later in the year.

Foxtrot Troop being the largest headquarters set off in the early hours and we were on our way to the smallest of the two FOB locations and some cramped living conditions. Delta Troop on the other hand (as the smallest HQ) arrived to find themselves in palatial surroundings with rooms aplenty.

Foxtrot remained upbeat however in the full knowledge that the ever important Field Kitchen and the truly resourceful and talented Army Chefs were to be co-located with them.



Mast Erection



Comms In

As the week progressed we were blessed with Sun throughout (though the wriggly tin roof did make the nights pretty cold) and bore witness to the RAF's new JSF doing some impressive flyovers. We even managed to get the comms in on time and achieve some experimental objectives set by Sqn Ops. Of particular note was the never before tried erection of the Falcon 18 metre masts. With much deliberation and referencing of manuals (not to mention an entire Troop in collaboration) we got it up only to discover how invaluable a PPA is (having not completed one). Undeterred we 'fought for comms' and got there in the end, much to the relief of the FofS and Ops Officer.

The remainder of the week was taken up with lessons ensuring our competency on the wide range of systems found in the Troop. Be it

Falcon, Magpie, Dii, VTC, Power or lighting we were all cross trained to ensure we had at least a basic understanding outside of our core equipment. This I hope will pay dividends when faced with Staff Officers and their often weird and wonderful requests come Ex JOINT VENTURE.

All too quickly (given we were accruing LSA) it was Friday and it was time to tear down before undergoing the journey back to Camp. The journey was both long and uneventful and we soon found ourselves in the familiar surroundings of Gamecock barracks. All that remained was the turnaround of the equipment and a look forward to the weekend knowing full well that we were back out on Monday for the Military phase.



SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj M Eastman**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) P Munslow**

Exercise DRAGON ALDERNEY WINTER

Ex DRAGON ALDERNEY WINTER was an Alpine Skiing expedition conducted by members of 30 Sig Regt in February 2016. The aim of the expedition was to conduct a challenging winter skiing expedition to France, and deliver a distributed training package for members of Sp Sqn. The expedition was intended to allow all skiers to progress their skills, both on and off-piste, and introduce ski-touring in a challenging environment. It also allowed team cohesion to be built amongst members of a supporting element, who would not normally be given the opportunity to train together, due to supporting commitments. Travel to France was via 4 x different means – Civilian Hire Coach from Nuneaton to Folkestone to then meet the Snow Express Coach. All change onto the Snow Express before embarking the Ferry. Off the ferry, and back onto the Snow Express Coach to Bourg-St-Maurice (the transport hub of the French Alps). Finally a 40 minute transfer on a French Coach to our accommodation – the UCPA Les Arcs 1600. Once all settled at the UCPA, the ski training started the next day.

The remainder of this article has been put together with views from all levels – Novice, Intermediate, and Ski instructor.

Novice - by Sig Cross

Ex DRAGON ALDERNEY WINTER was an Adventure Training expedition located within the Tarentaise valley at the Ski resort Les Arcs. The main purpose of this exercise was to attain the qualification Alpine Ski Foundation Level 1 (SF1), as well as progressing the intermediate skiers to a higher level. Before the week had started, all members of this expedition were split down into appropriate ability groups dependent on their experience. In my case, I was placed within the novice group, as I had never skied before.

Day one consisted of an icebreaker between all members and also an introduction from our instructor **SSgt Jon Greaves**. Initially we were told about the general clothing a skier should wear and also given a brief lesson on how to use and adapt to our skis. The first day was quite memorable as weather conditions were perfect for skiing and the scenery was spectacular. By the afternoon, our instructor was already setting up very basic obstacles for us to practise our turning and manoeuvres. At this point, it was quite clear who was progressing and consequently by the end of day one, three people had already moved up to the next group.

It seemed by day two, our instructor decided to give us more time to perfect our skills and allowed us to attempt more daring slopes, to build our confidence. In my case, I think I became a little too over-confident and found myself sliding down a slope on my face instead of my skis. As my instructor said, "If you're not falling over on the slopes, you're not trying hard enough." I totally agree. This continued into Day 3 and 4, where our group were making some mistakes, but as a whole, we could start to see a vast difference in our improvement.

By day five, members of the group who had initially been behind were now at the same level as the whole group. We were told at this point we would be assessed throughout the day on what we had been taught for our Ski Foundation Level

One and notified at the end of it if we had passed. We all managed to pass but were all quite tired at the end of it. We didn't quite anticipate the physical aspect of skiing, so at the end of every day we would attend a 'stretching' class provided by the hostel we were staying in which helped a lot.

The last day was a free ski day which was designed to allow everyone to try different routes. This was my favourite day, as it allowed me to put into practice what I had learned, but also see if I could keep up with more experienced members. To my surprise I did keep up after attempting a few Black routes, which are graded as a hard slope.

I think this opportunity has allowed me to develop on my skiing ability and potentially pursue skiing in the near future. Remember *Certa Cito!*

Intermediate - by LCpl Babb

Skiing in Les Arcs was an amazing experience, being my first time skiing in France, it set up nicely for future visits. Setting off on the Friday afternoon we didn't arrive until the following evening, which you can imagine is a very stressful journey on a coach for 24 hrs+ with little leg room and no shower for some time. We eventually made it to our place of stay, UCPA 1600.

Sunday was our first day skiing, although you would have thought you were on a beach holiday with the weather. Clear blue skies and hot enough to sit around in just your t-shirt, in the mountains may I just add. We were split into ability groups with **SSgt Gerrard** leading the intermediate group which I was placed in. Finding our footing, or ski if you want, was quite tricky for us at first as it had been a while since many of us had been out on the slopes, so our instructor took us on blue slopes to ease us in. Since this was the case there weren't too many dramas on the first day.

On Monday everyone was a lot more confident so **SSgt Gerrard** took us to the very peak of the mountain where we could ski down. As you can imagine his suggestion of doing the black route down did not go down well with many of us so we all settled on the red slope. Later that day we started off-piste skiing which brought many dramas for the majority of us, people creaming in left, right and centre, which brought much amusement for **SSgt Gerrard** who skied down it with ease. He then took us to a black route which had moguls through the majority of it. We had a lot of falls but many weren't too much of a drama, until mine. I managed to fall, then noticed only one ski was present and then watched as the runaway ski continued down the slope. Nightmare!

As **SSgt Gerrard** probably had many laughs the day before off-piste, he decided to start our third day doing just that, and a laugh he got indeed. **Cpl Tom Thayne** managed to come off his skis so badly that his ski snapped, yes snapped! This meant a replacement had to be sent for, while we sat halfway up the mountain waiting. The weather was reasonably bad on the day and the visibility was very low.

Again on Wednesday we continued off-piste, and again we had more funny falls. Notably **Cpl Gaz Donnelly**, who managed to fall into some deep snow and get stuck with just his head, arms and legs popping out the snow. In the afternoon we met up with another group and as it was the first time for many of them off-piste the instructors had new content to have a chuckle at.



On Thursday we went over to the twinned resort of the area - La Plagne - to try out some new slopes. As everyone was at the peak of their confidence now, there were not many falls and the day ran rather smoothly resulting in us getting a lot of skiing under our belts.

The final day of skiing had arrived and everyone had thankfully passed their Skiing Foundation Level 1, which meant we were allowed to free ski in groups of at least 3 (with instructors nearby). My group returned to the black mogul slope that had beaten many of us before, and also nearly taken my ski away from me, and we managed to conquer it with ease. Thankfully on the last day we had good weather, not as good as the first, but nearly ending it as we started it.

Overall, it was a successful AT trip with everyone gaining their first skiing qualification out of it, and many people wanting to strive towards their next.

Instructor - by WO2 (SSM) Wildman

At the start of the year I was asked to assist in delivering Ski Foundation 1 training for Sp Sqn's AT Ex DRAGON ALDERNEY WINTER. The location: Les Arcs, France and the accommodation was provided by UCPA. This is a charity organisation that essentially provides basic digs and 3 square meals, ideal for our package. Master of Ceremonies was **WO2 Dudley** who had given up valuable early knock off time for at least 3 weeks to organise the package and had done so with a thrifty mind-set from the off.

As with many AT packages the drive to and from the resort is a labour of love. This was no exception: 3 changes, excessive coach heaters and the inevitable M25 car park sapped our will to live. Some 25 hours later we arrived at the UCPA and were met with a slick organisation headed by the smooth talking Frenchman William, who was well versed with dealing with tired groups of people. The set up was great: ski store, WiFi, a bar, everything was there, self-contained, slap bang on the edge of a slope. Within a short period of time we were all equipped and accommodated ready to go. This efficiency even presented a small window of opportunity to rehydrate, which **Sig Baker** fully embraced.

Day 1 saw the usual 'ski-off' to determine ability groups and I struck gold getting the most advanced skiers. My group consisted mainly of Officers and SNCOs who were already at a

good standard and just needed tidying up. This allowed me to ski them hard from the start. The Chief instructor, **Capt Roberts**, initiated an end of day meet at a restaurant on the slope each afternoon. This 'restaurant' unbeknown to us turned into a bar with DJ, come 1530hrs, which with the clear blue sky was a fantastic finish to the day.

During the week **Capt Roberts** celebrated her birthday and a few members decided to visit the single local bar to commemorate the occasion. However the logistical burden of moving from the UCPA to the bar was significant. The route involved descending, in arctic like conditions, through treacherous narrow paths. We then had to navigate through an odd shaped hotel cut into the hill, not dissimilar to the Missile Silo stage on Nintendo 64's GoldenEye. Finally arriving at the bar we were greeted with a rock band playing magnificent songs from my youth. The return journey was equally hazardous; with **Sig Baker** aiming for a light through the treeline which he was adamant was the hotel. It was later discovered to be the moon.



Cpl Tom Thayne somehow manages to snap a ski

The remaining week saw a raft of weather fronts strike the resort all presenting a range of challenges to the novice skiers. As the week rolled on we all became accustomed to the leg burn from skiing, confident that it would enhance our burpee output on Regtl PT. All the groups progressed really well and come Friday a number of students were displaying genuine potential for SL1. The week finished off with a collective meal and awards ceremony with **Sig Baker** earning the accolade 'Best Endeavour' for his refusal to do anything other than snowplough.

The return journey back to the UK reinforced the collective opinion that 'next time, we are flying.'

The full PXR for Ex DAW can be found on ATSYS, and contains more detail for those planning skiing expeditions in the future. Overall, this was a very successful ski trip, with 16 x skiers qualifying for Ski Foundation Level 1. Looking to the future, a number of these skiers will likely be pushing for SF2 during the next winter season. AT is the way forward!



The Team





32nd SIGNAL REGIMENT GLASGOW



CO **Lt Col J R Knight MBE**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) J Blowes**

Exercise SNOW LION - by Cpl Ross Aitken

Ex SNOW LION is a tri-service ski and snowboarding competition which was held on the Cairngorm mountain range over the 1-6 Mar. The competition is open to all levels of skiers and boarders, ranging from 1 week's skiing experience to recent competitors at the Army and Corps championships. Feeling confident from recent ski training in Austria on Ex NORTHERN GEO KNOWLEDGE, 32 Sig Regt entered a four man ski team into the competition to compete in both the individual and team slalom and giant slalom events. The team consisted of **WO2 Ian Conlan**, **SSgt Mark Lane**, **SSgt Gary Fletcher** and **Cpl Ross Aitken** and was captained by **Maj Kevin O'Neill**. Although I have skied before, this was my first time competing under race conditions, so I was a bit apprehensive beforehand, as racing can be dangerous.

The first day of skiing was eventful, with whiteout conditions reducing the visibility and adding an icy coating to the course on the famous White Lady – a black run. The conditions were too much for our ex-Army team racer, **SSgt Gary Fletcher**, who wiped out after a few gates on the giant slalom, damaging one of his knees which put him out of the competition for the rest of the week. He also managed to snap a £100 ski pole in half, which the team was more concerned with as we borrowed them from the Corps race team! As only the best three results are recorded for the team competition, it meant everyone else had to finish the course or the team would be disqualified. However, the team put in a good performance and managed to win gold for the reserve forces category. **WO2 Ian Conlan's** performance was good enough to win the best reserve individual category, which is not too bad at his age; although I wasn't too far behind him, there's always next year.

As the week progressed, the event moved onto the slalom category where the gates are closer together than that of the giant slalom. This caused problems for the whole team, with **WO2 Ian Conlan** missing a gate on his first run and **SSgt Mark Lane** falling over, although he still managed to complete the course. I also had some problems; I entered a rut too fast and got a bit of air time - if only they gave points for freestyle skiing! This unfortunately got the team disqualified, and will no doubt be recorded in my SJAR as "has potential, but could try harder". However, **WO2 Ian Conlan's** aggregate time was pretty good and he won the best individual in the reserve category.

Overall the team did extremely well - especially in the individual seeding with **WO2 Ian Conlan** ranked 19th and **Cpl Ross Aitken** ranked 27th, **SSgt Gary Fletcher** ranked 34th and **SSgt Mark Lane** ranked 38th. I still have no idea how **SSgt Fletcher** managed to out-seed **SSgt Mark Lane**, considering that he never raced the whole week after his injury. This concerned **SSgt Lane** somewhat as well, and we will be sure to remind him of it constantly. 32 Sig Regt is in a good place for the next ski season, with the ski program introduced by **SSgt Mark Lane**. We have x4 beginners, x8 SF1s, x8 SF2s and a Regt Race Team. We are now looking forward and planning for Ex

SNOW WARRIOR for the SF2s to gain their SF3, as well as Ex NORTHERN GEO ADVENTURE (the 32 Regt Ski Camp in Austria for novice-SF2). Also the race team will be attending the Corps Race Training on Ex MERCURY GLACIER.



SSgt Mark Lane, WO2 Ian Conlan and Cpl Ross Aitken



The successful ski team

2 (CITY OF DUNDEE & HIGHLAND) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj L Bertram**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Cowan**

MATTs Weekend - by Cpl Scott McDonald

During the period 8 -10 Apr 16, 2 Sig Sqn held their first MATTs training package of the 2016/2017 training year. This is an early opportunity for the soldiers to get all MATTs (less PFA) completed for the year, or the last opportunity to qualify for the 2015/2016 certificate of efficiency (for those of us in the Sqn who had to apply for extensions to the training year). The two troops (Aberdeen and Dundee) paraded at their respective reserve centres on Friday night and carried out



final preparations before deploying out to RM Condor, Arbroath for a packed weekend of MATTs. The Sqn believes in the ethos that “Reserve soldiers train Reserve soldiers” and are lucky enough to have enough trained instructors to have all MATT’s delivered by our Reserve soldiers.

Friday night consisted of bunk allocations, in the transit ‘delux’ accommodation block, and briefings followed by weapon handling tests, carried out by **Sgt David John** and **SSgt George Callander** in preparation for the range package the following day. We drifted off to sleep to the sounds of IA drills and function tests echoing round the accommodation. Saturday was to begin with the much-anticipated AFT so the Sqn assembled in the porta-cabins for an early breakfast provided by **Sgt Sheila Chalmers** before heading back to the transit block to carry out our pre-AFT rituals. The AFT route had been modified by **SSgt Jock Castle** from the normal “loops round the airfield” to include several smaller loops, twists and reversals of direction that ensured the only thing able to tail the squad was the unused safety vehicle. Everyone successfully completed the AFT with a couple of minutes to spare and returned to the accommodation to get showered and changed before heading to the cookhouse for brunch which fortified us for a round robin of CBRN, taught by **Sgt Cat Duncan**, ranges run by **Sgt Rod Hamilton**, **Sgt David John** and **SSgt George Callander**, and BCD/BLS superbly instructed by **Cpl Scott McDonald** and **Maj Lynn Bertram**. The soldiers were split into 2 sections which allowed a certain BCD instructor to tag along with 2-section to complete his overdue MATTs training.

The CBRN package introduced several members of the Sqn to the General Service respirators and **Sgt Cat Duncan** succeeded in persuading them that they really did not need to hold their breath and shut their eyes for the whole of the canister changing drill, leading many of the old hands to lament the passing of the waves of panic and spluttering that used to follow the fumble of a dropped canister on the old S10. The range package also introduced new equipment to many of the Sqn with the weapons sporting their bipods. The package took place on the 25m range and allowed our new sights to

be zeroed followed by Live Firing 3 to enable soldiers to get used to firing the weapon with the bipod attached. Results varied widely, but it was our chef, **Sgt Sheila Chalmers**, that adapted quickest to the new system and walked away with the prize for the smallest group size. Obviously she is more than just a chef.

The two sections then gathered at the porta-cabins to commence MATT 3 and also start the task of weapon cleaning. **Maj Lynn Bertram** had prepared the lessons while **Cpl Scott McDonald** had been gallivanting around the other stands and she instructed the soldiers in Basic Life Saving skills. **Cpl Scott McDonald** took the sections through their Battlefield Casualty Drills. Due to the number of MATTs that needed to be covered in the weekend, MATT 3 was completed after our second trip of the day to the PAYD facilities and another interesting meal. The evening continued up at the sports pavilion with the mandatory training on Values and Standards, Security, Healthy Living and Substance Misuse delivered by **WO2 (SSM) George Cowan** and **Maj Lynn Bertram**. The lectures carried on well into the evening, leaving very little time to get changed and catch the minibus into Arbroath to put the alcohol misuse theories into practice, which resulted in the slower members of the Sqn contenting themselves with a trip to Asda for a few healthy snacks.

Sunday continued with more classroom-based MATTs. **SSgt Ian Stewart** took us through map reading to complete MATT 5, **2Lt Dave MacDonald**, guided us through the minefield that is the Law of Armed Conflict while **Sgt David John** helped us spot those mines with his MATT 9, C-IED instruction. An extremely busy weekend finished on Sunday afternoon with another round of weapon cleaning for the Dundee Troop, while our Aberdeen-based contingent made their way back North (where the red bit of the compass needle points, we were listening). All training objectives were achieved and the mandatory training was completed for many of the Sqn for another year. Looking forward, this will allow the instructors to start including more task-related scenarios in the next round of MATT training to start relating the training to Sqn’s real-world role



37th SIGNAL REGIMENT REDDITCH



CO **Lt Col T J Downes**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) Morrison**

As the training year comes to end, we can reflect on a busy and productive year for the Regt; it saw a record number of Reservists on ADE and a record number of individuals completing Phase 1 Training (44) and Phase 2 Trade Training (41). Support to Op SHAKU (flooding) was one of the highlights of our support to UK Ops, a conceptual study period to Italy (Monte Casino) and Adventure Training in Austria and the Grand Canyon, ensured that training and activities were varied and interesting throughout the year. There were some notable sporting successes along the way, including a football semi-final in the Army Reserve Cup and in the New Year’s Honours list, an **MBE** for **Capt Nav Muhammad** along with a number of GOC FTC commendations. The year ends and so does another chapter in the life of 37th Sig Regt, as we say farewell and best wishes to 50 Sig Sqn on their re-subordination to 32nd Sig Regt.

Royal Signals Inter Unit Cross Country Championships

The Royal Signals Individual and Inter Unit cross country championships were held at Beacon Barracks, Stafford on the 10th Feb 16 for the 1st time and once again the unit had both male and female team representation. The course was 4 miles for the females and 6 miles for the males; winding around the local area with a full array of road, gravel, mud and sand, to go with the very undulating course. With a very strong head wind in places, the course proved to be extremely demanding and challenging. **SSgt Kev Patterson** led the male team home, coming 27th overall, with **WO2 Steve Brooks** not far behind in 32nd place. This resulted in the Male team coming away as Minor Unit’s runner’s up and **SSgt Patterson** as 3rd Veteran. **Capt Sandy Hennis** was the 1st female home for the team followed by **SSgt Cat Smith** with **LCpl Gallagher** coming home as 3rd female for the team. Again, the team came away as Minor Unit’s runners up; so congratulations go to both teams.

continued on page 59

THE WIRE, JUNE 2016



CORPS SUBSCRIPTIONS UPDATE FOR 2015 (SERVICE DAY'S PAY GIVING)

by Col (Retd) Terry Canham, the Regimental Secretary

What is Service Day's Pay Giving?

Service Day's Pay Giving (then the "One Day's Pay Scheme") was introduced in 1965. It is an administrative procedure, adopted Army-wide, for the collection of subscriptions to Corps or Regimental Charities from serving personnel. JPA deducts monthly subscriptions to the scheme from an individual's pay and then distributes the total monthly subscriptions to the military charity he or she has nominated.

How much do I pay?

Since 1965 the Corps has encouraged all Regular Army Royal Signals soldiers to contribute 110% of one day's gross pay annually to the Royal Signals Benevolent Fund (RSBF). The RSBF is divided into sub-funds, the main ones which all ranks contribute to are the Welfare/ Veterans fund and a general purpose "Corps Fund."

In 1997 Warrant Officers and SNCO's elected to raise their subscriptions from 110% to 140% to enable them to establish a Sergeants' Messes Fund to enhance sergeants' messes throughout the Corps and to subsidise main mess functions. Officers contribute 190% of a day's gross pay annually and also have their own fund to subsidise Corps Guest Nights and a small number of formal dinners and lunches each year, as well as much of the cost of Corps Heritage and of the Royal Signals Institution (RSI). All payments, which are notified through individual pay statements, are deducted monthly by the Army's pay system to the RSBF's nominated bank account.

The Royal Signals Reserve contributes at a rate calculated for each unit and individual representing, as far as possible, the same rates as the Regulars but reduced to represent the number of days of service actually given. This is under review as the Corps may move to a new JPA-based system in due course.

What about Transferees into the Corps?

It is an individual responsibility to ensure that your Day's Pay Giving is given to the correct charity. If you have transferred in to the Corps JPA will continue to give your subscriptions to your old capbadge unless you take specific action to stop that payment and start payment into the RSBF. To do this you need to complete two copies of form JPA E14 which is available from your RAO.

What is the Royal Signals Benevolent Fund?

The RSBF is a registered charity and not an MOD fund. It operates under a Charity Commission scheme which specifies the charity's aims (known as "objects") and how subscriptions and income from other sources can be used to further them. These are in 3 main areas:

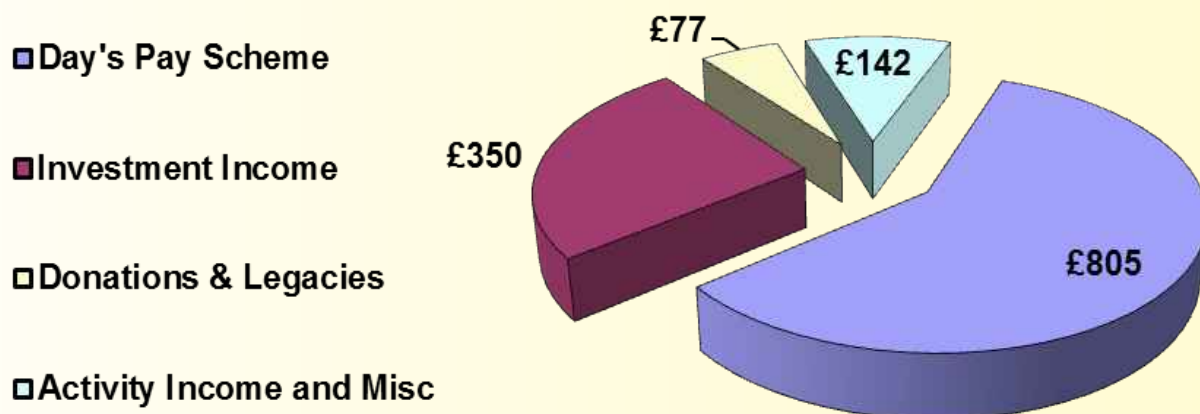
- Welfare grants to support Signallers or former Signallers and their immediate dependants in need. This includes both Regular and Reserve personnel and former ATS/WRAC personnel who served in Royal Signals units. In other words, anyone who has worn "Jimmy."



- A broad range of grants to support the “morale and efficiency” of the serving Corps.
- Grants to charities with similar aims to the RSBF.

Queen’s Gurkha Signals officers and soldiers may also contribute to the RSBF at the same rates as their R SIGNALS counterparts. However, the Corps then passes 100% of a day’s pay to the Gurkha Welfare Trust which then takes responsibility for all welfare grants for QG SIGNALS personnel; the RSBF will, however, consider requests for morale and efficiency grants.

The Service Day’s Pay subscription income does not cover the full cost of the charity’s work, the remainder being made up from investment income, donations (used only for welfare), legacies and other miscellaneous sources. This pie chart gives a break-down of the main areas of income that the RSBF received in 2015 (£000s):



Our total income for 2015 was £1,525,891 although this also includes the increase in value of our shares (£150,687) in addition to our investment income – a figure which fluctuates as stock market values rise and fall..

Who controls the RSBF?

The Master of Signals appoints a board of volunteer directors who, together, form Royal Signals Trustee Ltd (RSTL). Only the RSTL Board of Directors can authorise expenditure against the RSBF. The activities the charity pursues, and its income and expenditure are also subject to an independent audit each spring. When the audit process is complete, accounts must, under charity law, be passed to the Charity Commission for review and publication on its open website.

What happens when I leave the Army?

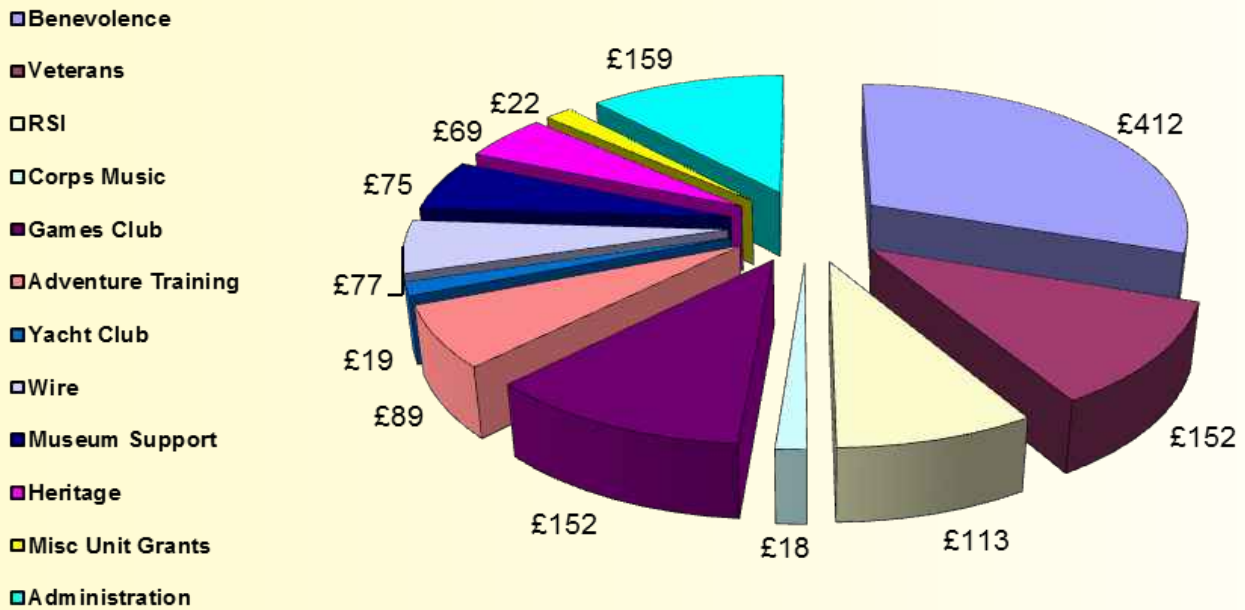
When you are discharged from the Army your military pay ceases. At the same time your Service Day’s Pay subscriptions automatically cease as they are drawn from military pay only (not from military pensions). However, access to benevolence support continues and remains open to you and your immediate dependants.

For what purposes was the money used in 2015?

The RSTL Board Directors are legally bound to ensure that all expenditure against the RSBF is in the furtherance of the charitable objects laid down in its Charity Commission scheme. The value of the RSBF, as at 31 December 2015, including our investments, was £10,492,471. This is a lot of money but we rely heavily on our investment income, as shown in the first pie chart, to supplement the income received from Service Day’s Pay Giving and, at this time, the stock markets are very volatile so we have seen that figure rise and fall a good deal over the last 6 months.



For the second year in a row our income was unexpectedly slightly greater than anticipated, mainly due to a pick-up in investment income in the last quarter. The following pie chart shows, to the nearest thousand pounds, the **main** benevolence and morale and efficiency expenditure in 2015 not including the officers' and sergeants' messes funds (000s):



Our total 2015 expenditure £1,413,152 so we had a slight surplus, in terms of a fund of this size, of £112,739.

What do the pie chart slices mean?

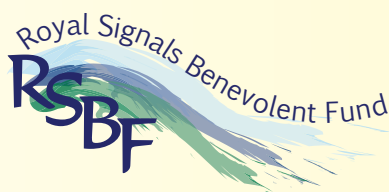
- Benevolence.** This is the highest priority for the charity. Under Queen's Regulations, the RSBF must spend at least 50% of its day's pay subscriptions on benevolence. All serving and former members of the Corps and their immediate dependants are eligible to apply for benevolence assistance in times of hardship and financial need, irrespective of whether they paid into Service Day's Pay Giving or not. The RSBF spent £421,506 on benevolence in 2015, covering 553 individual grants, a £33,500 annual grant to the Army Benevolent Fund (who provided over £79,000 in additional support to Signallers in need and remain the Corps second priority after the RSBF for fundraising), grants to various homes and organisations taking care of disabled or elderly Corps veterans and our staff/office costs.
- Veterans.** The RSA acts as a focus for Corps benevolence and contributes to our morale and efficiency by fostering comradeship. The fund pays for central costs including staff, publications such as the annual Newsletter and the major RSA events but branches are, otherwise, self-funding.
- Morale & Efficiency.** The RSBF supports a number of different elements promoting esprit de corps:
 - Royal Signals Institution.** The RSI is very largely funded by officers' subscriptions but is increasingly becoming more widely available so some costs fall to the main Corps Fund. Other than lectures and seminars, the RSI produces two Journals a year and covers the cost of course prizes at DSCIS as well as all Corps Awards.



- **Corps Music.** Despite the formation of the Corps of Army Music, the R SIGNALS Band still has a dependency on the Corps to offset the cost of some ceremonial uniforms. The Northern Band (Reserves) and Royal Signals Pipes and Drums are not funded publicly and, therefore, depend much more heavily on the RSBF for their financial support.
- **Games Club.** The Corps currently recognises 31 sports. The Corps Council and RSTL Directors place a high priority on supporting Corps sport, not just for the “gladiators” but in a process which starts with 11 (RSS) Signal Regiment and is aimed at helping new sportsmen and women develop and succeed. Corps Sport has again a budget of £150,000 from Corps Funds in 2016 as well as external sponsorship.
- **Adventurous Training (AT).** The Corps assists in providing adventurous training grants for exercises or expeditions approved through the Joint Services Adventurous Training Form (JSATFA) process. Details are contained in Royal Signals Policy Directive 168. The 2016 budget for AT is £100,000 and over 760 grants have been approved for the year to 31 April 16.
- **Royal Signals Yacht Club.** The RSYC maintains a small fleet of yachts, dinghies and wind-surfers for use by Corps personnel as an extra element to adventurous training and sport.
- **The Wire.** This is issued free to all units and every officer and soldier in the Corps ought to be able to read a copy at no charge. Some personnel opt to receive their own copy and pay for this by additional subscription, as do many retired personnel.
- **Museum Support.** The Museum has been assisted in terms of staff costs whilst preparing for their successful re-accreditation but RSBF will continue to provide support for specialist staff and maintenance in the future.
- **Heritage.** The majority of heritage costs are covered by the officers’ fund although those items benefiting every member of the Corps are covered from the main Corps Fund.
- **Unit Grants.** The Corps makes a range of grants which support units in different ways, including the provision of funds to assist in the hosting of visits by the Colonel in Chief, the entertainment of Corps guests and some special events such as the JNCO Course dinner.
- **Administration.** Our administration costs are modest in comparison with many civilian charities because we have a number of MOD staff and operate from MOD premises. However, we still need to pay Corps employee salaries, for legal and investment advice as well as for our auditors with many smaller costs ranging from postage to the payment of trustee and staff travel and subsistence expenses.

Summary.

Over 95% of Corps personnel support our Service Day’s Pay Giving with new recruits joining during Phase 2 training. This generous support allows the Master of Signals and RSTL trustees to provide financial assistance to past and serving members of the Corps, their dependants and to R SIGNALS units and establishments. If you have a query relating to your personal subscriptions you should address it through your RAO.





37 Sig Regt Inter Unit Cross Country Championships; Male and Female Minor Unit runners up

54 (QOWWY) SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj D Dewfall**
SSM **SSgt P Hall**

It has been another busy period for the Sqn. Our soldiers put their military skills to the test on Ex GLOBAL WARRIOR in February and then polished up on their field detachment skills on Ex GLOBAL CANTER in March; which was extremely beneficial for a lot of the new Reservists as this was their first time as a trained operator. As always, the members of the Sqn Recruiting Team were hard at work under the leadership of **Sgt Taylor**; this time providing a successful stand on EX LIGHTNING STRIKE at Blandford for potential officers over 19-21st Feb, that received particular praise for their professionalism from a number of high profile officers, in particular COS HQ Royal Signals, **Lt Col Baldson** – well done.



LCpl McCormick's snowboarding crash

On the sporting front, 2 members of the Sqn represented the Regt at the Signals Snowboarding Camp (MSR 7) in March 16. **Sig Marshall** and **LCpl McCormick** were doing well, before the latter proceeded to demonstrate to everyone how to get a free helicopter ride; after face planting and breaking his collarbone, rather than finish the race “get well soon.” Finally, congratulations go to our own SSM, **WO2 Hall**, on his promotion from SSgt to WO2.

Exercise LIGHTNING STRIKE 2016 - by Sig Marshall

The Regt Stand at this year's Ex Lightning Strike was provided and manned by members of 54 QOWWY Sp Sqn RRMT. We were supporting the annual ex, an undergraduate competition held at Blandford Camp, with University Officer Training Corps (UOTC) and Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme (DTUS) units attending to compete in a number of command tasks and stands.

Two vehicles left our unit bright and early to travel to Blandford, fully loaded with kit ready for the weekends ex. After navigating a few traffic jams and nurturing the Landrover uphill we arrived and began the process of setting up. This was a challenge in itself, our site being on a hill of exposed land kept us on our toes, anchoring the 12x12 tents in the wind, one of which almost escaped!! Once set up, Friday was concluded with a run through and team brief, ready to go! Cook house here we come!



Ex Lightning Strike opening brief to UOTC students

On Saturday we presented teams with a UK based scenario focusing on the flood relief effort. After a VTC brief in our command tent, teams split into three groups, each in separate 12x12 tent, representing Silver HQ, East and West. Their task, using Bowman Man Packs, was to manage a situation that included flooded locations, prioritising stranded individuals and identifying potential emergency shelter points. The participants had only 15 minutes to communicate this information before receiving a full debrief.



Ex Lightning Strike Comms Ex and map marking

The command task ran perfectly, with all participants thoroughly enjoying the challenge. Our team from 54 Sup Sqn also enjoyed putting the teams through their paces. All were in agreement that the ex was a success. With the wind subsiding our get out was straight forward; we even managed



to dodge a puncture on the way out, others weren't so lucky! So home it was. A rewarding experience for all and a weekend not to miss! Personally, I felt we had the best stand in the exercise, and thanks go to **LCpl Brown, Sig Marshall, Sig Thompson and Sig Vaughan** for their invaluable support.

33 (LANCASHIRE) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj A Bowdler**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Jolliffe**

33 Sig Sqn - Exercise PHOENIX FLIGHT 1

Ex PHOENIX FLIGHT 1 provided 33 Sig Sqn with the opportunity to build on their infantry skills in preparation of ADE 2016. The weekend's training started off on the Friday night as low key and in slow time, giving the opportunity for the newer sqn members to correctly fit their webbing and take advice from the more experienced old and bold, on what and what not to pack when deploying into the field. During the journey to the training area, the normal squaddie banter was replaced with a strangely sensible conversation about interaction on Defence Connect, and how good a communications tool it is for the sqn across all levels. Arrival at Altcar Training Area soon ensured that the squaddie banter returned to expected levels of sarcasm and ribbing.

The training commenced with a safety brief and pyro demonstration conducted by **SPSI SSgt Jimmy Bond**, giving the opportunity for the troops to set up trip flares and fire off shermulies. This did, however, result in a visit from the none-too-happy Range Warden, complaining that the wind had blown one of the flares over the adjacent training area where someone else was exercising! The Flaregate 5 suspects all denied it was their flare that "drifted off in the wind"...

After the pyro demo **CSgt Nigel MacDonald** was happy to abandon his RSUSO desk for the weekend's fun, and took the lead in instructing 4-man contact drills; using well known examples from Hollywood which showed both bad and good examples of contact drills. The training started off with slow-time rehearsals allowing newer trainees to take on board the new skills, and for more seasoned members of the sqn to blow off the cobwebs on their latent infantry talents. Slow time rehearsals also gave **Cpl Stevie Hilton** the opportunity to test and adjust his helmet! This built to full-on contact drills, giving the troops the skills, drills, speed and aggression to react to incoming fire from any flank. With the adrenalin



Infantry Skills Training

flowing, **Sig Khumalo** directed all his fire at a random bush and not the enemy! Whilst **Cpl Lee Fidler** started to think too much about what drills should be followed. Some aggressive encouragement from the DS saw **Cpl Fidler** safely withdraw his team out of the kill zone, and into the nearby covering woods 10m away, which for some reason had thus far been ignored...

The DS commended the troops on their effort and enthusiasm, and the feedback to the DS was all very positive. Lessons learnt: bounds should be no more than 2 metres and banana, banana, banana is the amount of rounds to get down before moving position; also, **Cpl Douglas Anthony Stewart** can use his nose to operate his phone, and **Cpl Peter Leatherbarrow** can sleep propped up against a tree throughout a whole contact! Luckily he wasn't on stag!!



Armed and Dangerous

After the practical training, **CSgt MacDonald** then went through the theory of threat levels and the utilization of QRF teams. This lesson being delivered in a nice warm classroom probably wasn't the best move after a long day's arduous work! The day ended off with extensive weapons cleaning, scoff and a shower before a very enjoyable evening, celebrating **Cpl Wayne McGarry's** recent engagement. The Sqn is very happy to congratulate **Cpl McGarry** in finding someone willing to put up with his CONSTANT talking, and while we all look forward to our invites to the main event, we aren't particularly looking forward to his speech!

48 (CITY OF BIRMINGHAM) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj S Cherry**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Fowler**

11 SIGNAL BRIGADE DRIVER TRAINING CAMP 4-18 MAR 16 - by LCpl Cowie

On the evening of 4th March 2016 members of 48 Sig Sqn made their way to Swynnerton Training Camp in Staffordshire. This would be the start of either a one or two week driver training camp, in which our students would be able to acquire some very beneficial driving qualifications for both their military and civilian careers.

Upon arrival we were all allocated accommodation and advised that this was a serious course and that we would be treated as adults; just make the morning briefing in the correct dress carrying the specified kit. This would be the format for the duration of the course. The following day everyone was put into smaller syndicates and assigned a



driving instructor. For those on licence acquisition, we ended up with about four students per Civilian Instructor. The General Service (GS) Wolf Land Rover course would have a two to one ratio with a Military Defence Driving Instructor. The week then would be broken into varying phases for both groups of students. For those on licence acquisition, this started off with familiarisation on the given vehicle, which for me was a brand new Automatic Volvo Coach which is a Category D (Bus) licence. Other students had the honour of Cat B (Car), Cat B+E (Car and Trailer), Cat C (Lorry) and Cat C+E (Lorry and Trailer).

The first day was gentle with all students taking it in turn to adjust to the handling characteristics of their chosen vehicle. The days seemed to fly by for myself, finding it very rewarding. From being nervous, taking the keys for the first time, to perhaps being over confident by the testing date; eager to prove the newly acquired driving skills on my Cat D (Bus). Each training day would be no longer than 8 working hours, so as not to over expose the drivers, which we all felt was about right. The testing area for us was in and around the Donnington area which is right next to 11 Sig Bde Headquarters. This was also the same location where we had to take a DVSA Theory Test a month or so before being submitted for this Driver Trade Camp. As said, time flew by and we could all see that each day we had a steady outflow of successful students, who would exchange their driving licence document for a seemingly almost gleaming piece of white test paper, with a big Pass written on. The Pass was more of a challenge to some than others, depending on how much work had been required on behalf of the instructor and student to achieve the required test standard. We could then be either dismissed from Swynnerton Training Camp for our homes or for some candidates, the fun had only just begun, as they would have the second week GS Land Rover Wolf course booked.

The GS Wolf Land Rover syndicate would in contrast have to prepare themselves for many hours in the classroom and in the field. This course may upon first thoughts seem to be slow and boring. The first few days having to cover off the many insurance and technical data points, in which signing for and driving a military vehicle entails. The course gets much better as the week develops and the students soon start logging the kilometres travelled into three digits daily. The main difference between the GS course and Licence Acquisition course soon transpires; the first time the Wolf Land Rover is taken off road and a member of the Directing Staff (DS) is shouting at the student to hold the Land Rover at some obscene angle on the side of a hill, looking up into the deep blue sky on one side and down into a muddy pool of water on the other. Over the following days, these trials only get more perverse, however each builds up layers of confidence. The culmination is a night convey onto Nescliffe Training Area, tactically deploying (Zero Lights) into a wooded zone. Then, using night reversing signals to bay park in the smallest space possible between two trees. Then, again with no light, deploy camouflage netting to further conceal the Land Rovers to the DS's satisfaction. When the DS has approved your efforts, the process is reversed and in effect Bugged Out, with a recovery move back to Swynnerton.

Both courses again represent an excellent opportunity for individuals to gain transferable skills for use in both their military and civilian careers. I myself, would highly recommend any driving camp the Army Reserve has to offer, having now been fortunate to complete my Cat B, Cat B+E, Cat D1 and GS Wolf Land Rover - result.

50 (N) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj N R Coatsworth MBE**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Ross**

Exercise GLOBAL WARRIOR 2

Ex GLOBAL WARRIOR 2 was to be the final training weekend organised by 50 Sig Sqn on behalf of 37 Sig Regt and witnessed personnel centralising on 'sunny' Warcop training area, over the weekend of 19-21 Feb in order to conduct military training in the form of a patrol competition. The exercise began with the Commanding Officer, **Lt Col T Downes** awarding the CO's Coin for outstanding work, to several members of the Regt. Following this, the soldiers were divided into sections and deployed out onto the training area ready to participate in a variety of activities, each requiring different degrees of proficiency.

At each stand participants were all treated to a brief 'remind and revise' lesson, prior to commencing the activity; this was particularly useful on the Pair's Fire and Manoeuvre and Section Attack stands; both of which presented their own problems due to the muddy conditions and unpredictable squalls of wind. These conditions led to some quite spectacular pirouettes, unintended forward rolls and in one instance, a complete Fosbury Flop! One section rather cleverly utilised these poor conditions to disguise their slips, trips and falls by 'popping smoke' at the exact moment the wind changed direction, blinding the assault group and fire support team all in one!

The inevitable skill fade aside, the sections were presented with even more challenging stands throughout the day, including a patrol lane and OBUA. Both of these activities were extremely popular and utilising our airsoft weapons enabled participants to engage targets at close range and test a different style of marksmanship principles. The Junior NCO in charge of the OBUA stand was one **Cpl (Andy) Williams**, a man who would be renowned for his patience, understanding and happy-go-lucky attitude, if he didn't have the patience of a petulant 10 year old (he's a nice guy really). Shooting skills tested to the max, a bayonet range was also included in the package and reports that targets were still being missed have been strenuously denied by both students and DS!



Bayonet Practice



The Mass Casualty stand had been organised by **Sgt (Sean) Sweeney** and was almost certainly the most challenging of the day. Beginning with a simulated helicopter crash (who would have thought that a 12x12 could fly?), sections had to clear the wreckage (12x12) before stumbling out into thick smoke, effective enemy fire and several screaming casualties suffering from varying degrees of injury, some of which were dealt with rather 'matter of factly.' **Cpl (Pam) Baxter**, who was suffering a simulated severe trauma to her arm, was actually rugby tackled and pinned down by one of the exercising troops - and this was after the enemy fire had been suppressed!! **Sgt (Stu) Jones**, a shock victim, was completely ignored by one of the sections who claimed they thought he was a member of the DS. Pale complexion, clammy skin, confused nature, chest pain and unconsciousness..... they might have had a point.

Other activities were less physically demanding; the observation tower and the blindfolded driver challenge were both informative and fun, although it would appear that some of the participants who had attended the observation tower (following the driver challenge) may have forgotten to remove their blindfolds. Possibly the most eagerly anticipated stand was the 'cook-off', organised by the **RCWO, WO2 (Fritz) Holland**. This activity involved section members attempting to make an [edible] omelette in the fastest time possible - the record being set at 44 seconds. Many participants argued that this was not sufficient time to make an edible omelette, an opinion eventually shared by the record holder - a rather rueful **LCpl (Heston) Twist** who may have spent a good deal of that evening sat down!



Omelette Challenge

Upon return to Warcop camp there was time for the obligatory weapon cleaning, personal admin and a couple of beers before being woken for a PFA and Bergan Tab across the 'gentle rolling hills' of the training area. By lunchtime that same day, everyone had dispersed and 50 Sig Sqn had participated in its final event under command of 37 Sig Regt. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Commanding Officer, officers and soldiers of 37 for all their support over the past 18 months. We now look forward to working with 32 Sig Regt once again.

64 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj McHenry**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Howes**

Ins & Outs - by **WO2 (SSM) P Howes**

In the past couple of weeks both the OC and I have had the pleasure of attending CMS (RES) Phase 1(B) Consolidated Pass Off Parades at ATR Pirbright. The completion of this course is a milestone in the careers for our soldiers: in mid-March it was **Sig Kieran Carpenter** and on the first weekend of April it was the turn of **Sig Helen Teasdale**. **Sig Carpenter** even managed to pick up a 'Best Drill Recruit' award. Congratulations to you both, well done and welcome to the sqn. BSS and trade courses await you next, so get those course applications filled in!

As the flow of soldiers into the Sqn continues, so does the inevitable exit that will come to us all eventually. **Cpl Mick Wasden** has finally hung up his boots after many, many years. **Mick** came to the Sqn from the Worcester & Sherwood Foresters Regt along with a number of others in the dim and distant past. He is justifiably proud of his crossed axes and could be easily side tracked by the mention of pioneer activities! He will be remembered for his tireless work in MT and on the Sqn's generators, although he did prove to be quite the operator too; him being the font of all knowledge when it came to the old Airwave Gateway Vehicles that we used to have. The Sqn offers you its thanks for your years of service and wishes you well for the future.



Sig Carpenter receives his Best Drill Recruit trophy from the inspecting officer Col Kevin Hearty QVRM VR Assistant Commander 101 Log Bde

Diary from CS Op Trade Camp March 2016 - by **LCpl E Coke**

Arrived at Blandford Camp from Nottingham in the early hours of 4th March, 0030hrs to be precise, ooh what a long drive that was! My room was not lavish and hut would be a better description. Certainly not as swanky as our fellow Phase 2 trainees in the Regulars in their fancy SLAM blocks. When I entered, my room mates were already asleep and out for the count!



Saturday - we were up for 7am and in for a Pay as you Dine breakfast. I'd hoped for more. The first lesson was map marking at Princess Mary Hall, nice building was my first thought. My brain began to hurt shortly after this point though. Even more so when we found out the map marking cards that had been handed out had some mistakes on ... ooops! Our instructors knew their stuff and they were patient with us every step of the way. They needed to be especially with the fundamentals of A&P. I've got the memory of a small goldfish and he wants some of it back. I fought to take it all in and stay awake. I wrote fast and furious before the slides changed. My head was bursting with radio systems information - the spectre of frequency waves of electronic hertz rolled through my mind. I am not a natural at this! That was the first day out the way. That night I revised.

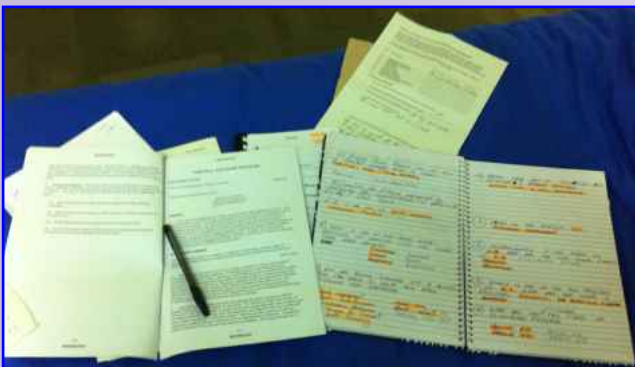
The next couple of days held more of the same; my lights were on but the current flow wasn't going in the right direction at times. I desperately needed the optimum antenna length in my mind... I think we all get the picture here; my brain was hurting all week!

On the Wednesday we had our first test. We had to put into practice what we learned indoors and relate it to the outside world. As the old saying goes "if it ain't raining, it ain't training." Well the Blandford weather did not let us down; hard rain and hurricane like winds, with a chill factor for good measure. My hands were freezing but the show must go on. Why? Because it is training that's why! One mast got blown down, but mine stood fast the whole time. I was so, so proud when I was told by the instructors we'd passed - whoopee!

Sorry, can't remember all the days as it was all a blur; eat, write, eat again, write some more, eat yet again, revise, sleep, repeat. That was the first week in brief.

Week 2, it's time for Bowman training. Yep, it was all good stuff. Who doesn't like filling their sets and having a good e-purge at the end of a hard day's work? Not me that's for sure. I found it a bit difficult to start off with, but the more we used the equipment the more I got the hang of it. Initialising the BNAU was time consuming, but boy did the time go fast and before we knew it, the week was over. Some struggled but we all eventually broke the barrier to enlightenment.

We had all passed and had our photo taken with our certificates being handed over to us. This numpty forgot his certificate, I phoned, I text, I heard nothing for a week but then a breakthrough... my boss had sorted it! I now have a black and white copy. Soon to be a colour copy of a copy of a copy. All's well that ends well I guess. Coke over but not out!



Read, read, read, learn, learn, learn more. Enjoy!



Recruiting activities - by LCpl T Storr

As part of our FR2020 activities, the regiment runs a 'look at life' primarily aimed at the many colleges in and around squadron locations. This time around it was aided by our paired regular unit, 16th Sig Regt.

The week-long surge comprised of a PT session, team tasks, ranges, kit lesson, weapon familiarisation and a rifle stripping/ assembling competition on each day. We collected the students and tutors from their colleges and dropped them off afterwards. As you can imagine it takes a lot of prior planning to get everything in place. **Capt Paul Garner** (OC RRMT), is the main man for liaising with the colleges, with **WO2 Mark Reynolds** (ROSWO) running the event on the day.

The response from the students was fantastic, twenty eight contact coupons generated during the week-long event. Of course not all those numbers will translate into soldiers on parade in a few months' time, but time will tell on that one.

Exercise Global Canter 3: 4 - 6 MAR 16 - by Sgt D Hammett

The original aim was an A&P exercise on Beckingham training area, but the clash with Mothering Sunday meant that too many people had other family commitments, so the plan was adapted.

On Saturday morning, **Capt Emma Holt** and I joined the recruiting team on Nottingham's Old Market Square to engage with potential recruits, their parents, or friends, employers or whoever could influence someone who could join. Overall a productive event with several contact coupons generated.

LCpl Graham Casey found a spare moment to take a photograph of the event from the balcony of the Town Hall. The balcony had been especially furnished for the Queens visit to Nottingham in her Diamond Jubilee year, but there was no glamour in this assignment, as it is now inhabited by pigeons and everyone comes away with some souvenirs!



The view of Nottingham's Old Market Square

At lunchtime we needed to return to the Army Reserve Centre (ARC) so that we could head up to Sheffield for a 1400hrs O'Group with the OC. However, our 'pre-arranged' lift from the Army Air Corps was handily cancelled. We had to find some way of getting back! To add to the fun of riding public transport in uniform, we also had no cash with us. A kindly bus driver came to our rescue by offering the best possible military discount (free! result). We arrived at the ARC

and made our way up to Sheffield in an FFR arriving just in time.

WO2 Kevin Tharby MBE was teaching IBDP to **SSgt Karl Shaw** and **LCpl Michelle Woods** who are re-training from electricians to become CS Ops. Also there were **Sgt Helen Toft AGC** who was 'clerking' and **SSgt Babs Bedford RAMC** 'medic-ing'!

Once the conference was finished, we took our turn with routine EC and enjoyed cleaning rifles for a while. That evening, the local Chinese takeaway gained a lot of extra business. On Sunday morning I joined in practicing IBCP with the two Sheffield students until lunchtime when we went back to Nottingham troop; alas, without our FFR, which had developed a fault, and is now sadly awaiting repair.



71st (CITY OF LONDON) YEOMANRY SIGNAL REGIMENT BEXLEYHEATH



CO **Lt Col HJ Scott MBE**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) P Robertson**

Exercise PHOENIX CANTER – Blandford - by 265 Sp Sqn

The Christmas break was a dim and distant memory, February was doing its best to remind us it was still winter, although thankfully the weather was dry, if a bit chilly and windy. 265 Sp Sqn deployed with the rest of the Regt to the home of the Royal Corps of Signals, Blandford Camp, as part of **EX PHOENIX CANTER**, where aside from mopping up the last of the MATTs training, all troops would be subjected to some interesting lectures on other capabilities within the Corps and a round robin command tasks designed to test and stretch the imagination.

265 Sp Sqn had been detailed to run the Command Task stands where mixed teams of the Regt would cascade through to complete 3 of the 5 stands. Thanks to our SPSI **SSgt Donaldson** who had conducted a recce a few weeks ago, all should have been easy. 4 Mil Trg Sqn had all the equipment required, the areas were all laid out, what could possibly go wrong?

SSgt Donaldson managed to hurt himself snowboarding and was confined to bed (something about a minor shoulder injury) so early Saturday morning, **SSgt Haskell** took the reins. He did a good job herding the Sqn OC **Maj Baker**, Ops Officer **Capt Cooper** and 2IC, **Capt Mackay**, ably assisted by **Sgt Sutton** and **Sgt Fraser**, to assist in setting up the stands. **SSgt Haskell** managed to find quite possibly the largest tyre in the army, and along with a collection of ropes, poles, jerry cans, he transformed the pieces into a mentally and physically demanding challenge.

In true military fashion the troops arrived right on time, **Capt Slaney** promptly announced he was in charge of photos and timekeeping; an important job and not for the faint hearted! **Cpl Wiffen** of 68 Sig Sqn clearly demonstrated previous knowledge on one command task; **Capt Mackay**, the stand IC, awarded a 10 minute penalty for not disclosing prior knowledge! Additionally, numerous trade skill stands were included for all operators, including, Antennas and Propagation with **Sgt Morris** and **Cpl Crane** leading VP and practice in the LBTA.

The long journey on Sunday back to the ARCs was well anticipated after the Commanding Officer's final brief. On arrival back at the ARCs, Sqns undertook their turnaround procedures and after final inspections by Sqn OCs & Tp Commanders, troops were released home for a well-earned rest and a late Sunday lunch.



Members of the Regt on the Dead Letter Box Command Task

36 (ESSEX YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj Rowson**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Elliot**

Schools Centenary Battlefield Tour (SCBT) - by Cpl Hughes

In Mar 16 **Cpl Hughes** deployed in support of the Schools Centenary Battlefield Tour (SCBT) programme. SCBT is a government funded initiative which allows two pupils and a teacher from each of the 4400 state schools in England to participate in a Battlefield Tour to the Western Front. The tours are operated by the Institute of Education (IoE) and Equity which is a recognised school tour organiser.

The role of **Cpl Hughes**, and others in her position, was to provide a contemporary view of modern military service in comparison with military service of the First World War period. A First World War historian joined the group to ensure everyone gained a more in-depth insight. Each school in the programme was provided with a soldier and had a battalion/division to research prior to the battlefield tour. **Cpl Hughes'** group was given the 47th London Division.

This first day consisted of ice breaker exercises so all could get to know each other, followed by an assault course consisting of high ropes, zip wires and even a team bonding singing station. The evening activity involved lessons on artefacts and weapons of the First World War and how they compared to the modern equipment we use today; active encouragement was given to allow all the students the chance to get hands-on with the equipment.



An early start was needed for all on day two to board the coaches for the trip to Belgium via the Eurotunnel. The first stop was Tyne Cot Cemetery; here everyone learnt the role of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and how every headstone tells a story. Tyne Cot is a staggering place; it is the largest British and Commonwealth War Cemetery in the world. In all 11,956 soldiers are buried there.

Langemark Cemetery was the second visit of the day and the only German war cemetery in the Salient. As you enter the cemetery you are met with several concrete plinths which are faced with bronze plaques; these hold the names of almost 25,000 soldiers buried in what is a mass grave of more than 32,000 soldiers. Here people took it in turns to read out some record cards of various soldiers buried here, whilst learning their story. The tour historian provided more in-depth history of the site which was fascinating to hear.

Following the Langemark Cemetery, everyone visited the Memorial Museum Passchendaele, followed by Flanders Lodge, which would be the accommodation for the stay in Belgium. Following the evening meal, the groups visited Menin Gate (the memorial to the missing soldiers which holds the names of 54,406 soldiers) where they took part in the Last Post ceremony. **Cpl Hughes** and two other individuals were privileged to be selected to lay wreaths.



Menin Gate

Day three consisted of visiting the Ulster Memorial Tower, Thiepval Wood and Mill Road Cemetery, where everyone learnt about the 36th (Ulster) Division and their attack on the German position known as the Schwaben Redoubt. At this site the tour historian talked through the archaeology and individuals managed to handle artefacts that had been dug out of the ground, including the spoon which very likely saved a soldier's life as it slowed the bullet that struck him in the leg as the spoon was kept in the puttee of this particular soldier.

Sheffield Memorial Park was next on the visit and here the teaching was of the Northern Pals Battalions who lost their lives on this part of the Somme battlefield in 1916. High Wood and Thiepval Memorial finished the day of visits and at this memorial the raising of the flags took place during a special ceremony that was happening. The memorial holds in excess of 72,000 names of those missing and by this point on the tour the students were becoming very aware of the high numbers of losses that were suffered during the time of the war.

This experience was a real eye-opener, the number of missing soldiers on the various monuments and the sea of graves lined up before you really do make you think. The SCBT is a great educational experience and if anyone has the chance or opportunity to participate in this scheme it is highly recommended you do!

68 (INNS OF COURT & CITY YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Major Trevelion**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Cullumbine**
SPSI **Sgt Smith**

Visit to Drapers Hall on 16 Feb 16 - by 2Lt Haron

The Regt is affiliated the Worshipful Company of Drapers, and has been since 1982. The Drapers' support the Regt in a number of ways including financially, providing valuable funds for Regtl adventure training and welfare projects. On Tue 16 Feb 16, the whole Regt was invited to The Drapers' Hall for a tour of its building and an insight into its history.

The evening started with a tour of the beautiful building, where the Archivist gave a detailed, interesting and informative history of the Livery companies themselves, focusing in particular on the Worshipful Company of Drapers.

The Company received its charter in 1364 and is a senior City Livery Company, which is part of the 'Great Twelve' - this order of precedence was set in 1515 by the Court of Aldermen of the City of London, and was based on the Livery Company's economic or political power at the time. The Worshipful Company of Drapers is third in the order of precedence and these days there are 110 Livery Companies.

As its name indicates, the Company was once involved in the drapery trade, the buying and selling of woollen cloth, within the City of London. A member of the company would have had a shop in the then walled city of London, where they would have sold Drapery (mainly wool and cloth). Without being a member of the Livery company they would not have been able to trade in the city. Each Livery company would inspect the goods coming into London to ensure they were of the right quality, an olden day version of trading standards! Nowadays they are now largely charitable organisations who exist in order to provide fellowship and professional expertise for their members.

The Company's first Hall stood in St Swithin's Lane. The Drapers' Company moved into the mansion on the site of the present Hall in 1543. The mansion had been built in the 1530s by **Thomas Cromwell**, Earl of Essex, and following his execution it was forfeited to **King Henry VIII**. The King sold the property to the Drapers' for the sum of 1800 marks (approximately £1200); it then became the Drapers' Hall. The hall was destroyed somewhat by the great fire of London in 1666, and after a second fire in 1772 was rebuilt with a new front and interior in the 1860s and 1898. In its hall, the Company provides banqueting and catering services, an activity that allows substantial number of the general public to enjoy the splendour of the Hall and its treasures. The Company also maintains a fine art and silver collection in the Hall, as well as a unique archive which dates back to 1364.

Following a tour of the Drapers' Hall and an excellent and informative talk by the Company's Archivist, we were privileged to have the Master Draper to present a number of Long Service and Good Conduct and Volunteer Reserve Service Medals to personnel from the Regt. Both medals recognise a significant amount of service across both the Regular Army and the Army Reserve.

Following the prestigious medals ceremony, the Drapers' Company kindly provided an evening reception, for which the regiment is most grateful. We hope that the partnership



between the Regt and the Company continues long into the future.



Members of the Regt receiving the final part of the tour in the Livery Hall

265 (KENT AND COUNTY OF LONDON YEOMANRY (SHARPSHOOTERS))SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC Maj Baker TD
SSM SSgt (A/SSM) Haskell
SPSI SSgt Donaldson MBE

Officer Commanding Update - by Maj Paul Baker TD

The Sqn has had a busy couple of months with a range of social and team building events, as well as on-going trade training and final qualification for our certificates of efficiency. Recruiting remains our key priority and we continue to target key sites in the local area along with on-going community engagement activities. The annual exercise in February based at our 'home', Blandford Camp, was a particularly busy and

productive weekend with activities ranging from command tasks to vital MS training. Looking forward, planning is on-going for a Veterans' Day in July 16, in order to give veterans across and around London the recognition they thoroughly deserve.

Members of the Sqn had a very productive recruiting day in our home town of Bexleyheath in February. Cpl Crane & Sigs Lovett, Wilsher, Caiels, Sutton and Carrigan led a campaign to recruit locals from the London Borough of Bexley. A considerable amount of interest was received leading to an open evening being arranged for the following Tuesday evening; a very positive step towards the Op FORTIFY targets set to the Regt. Even though the Sqn is well recruited at present with 5 current potential individuals and a further 3 ex regulars interested in joining, the Sqn will continue to drive recruitment.



Members of the Sqn Recruiting Team in Bexleyheath town centre with a potential recruit?

Galina International Battlefield Tours

16 Bridge Street Row Chester CH1 1NQ

Group Tours & Prices from 1st June to 31st October 2016

**Ypres Passchendaele Somme Vimy Cambrai Hindenburg Line
Dunkirk Normandy Arnhem Rhine Crossing**

3 day tours from £155 4 day tours from £199

Based on 40 people travelling via Dover ~ Prices via Hull on application



Tel: 01244 340777 www.wartours.com Twitter: @WarTours



SCALEYFEST 2016

THE ORIGINAL – THE FIRST

10th, 11th and 12th June 2016

to coincide with “The Cholmondeley Power and Speed”.

SCALEYFEST – the Original 2016 will be the first festival to be held at Cholmondeley Castle, Malpas, Cheshire.

This is a non-profit making event and we are looking to raise money for The Royal Signal Benevolent Fund.

Full ticket price for the weekend is £55.00. Price includes:

- Entry into Scaleyfest
- Entry into Cholmondeley Power & Speed
- Camping from Friday 10 June to Sunday 12 June
- Use of loos, showers, water
- Music in the evening
- Our own bar
- A flyover by a BAC Strikemaster
- Join us for an amazing weekend
- catch up with old friends

All the details and the chance to buy tickets can be found on our facebook page – Scaleyfest and our website www.scaleyfest.com.



HRH The Princess Royal Visits

On the morning of Wednesday 6 April 2016, HRH The Princess Royal visited 10th Sig Regt at their Sqn based in Bicester Garrison.

Event preparation had taken many weeks, including a lot of mileage and nights out of bed for the geographically displaced sub-units of 10 Sig Regt. As well as thorough rehearsals, the Regt spent hours turning the somewhat dishevelled brown-field site hosting the visit into an area (literally) fit for Royalty.

Upon her arrival at the exercise area, accompanied by Director Reserves **Maj Gen J Crackett CB TD**, HRH received an update on the Regt from the Commanding Officer, **Lt Col B J Fitch OBE**.

HRH was then escorted to 241 Sig Sqn Exercise MERCURY SCORPION, the pre-eminent Inst Tech exercise in the Corps Calendar, where she received demonstrations on the full spectrum of trade skills from installing Fibre and Copper throughout a building of opportunity right through to Battle Damage Repair (BDR) of cable in full CBRN equipment.

The four remaining Sqns of the Regt were then presented to HRH, each briefing on their unique role, skill sets and discrete operational commitments. Capabilities presented included Electronic Counter Measures (Force Protection), Technical Surveillance Counter Measures and OS Intelligence, Ceremonial Duties and Extremely High Readiness support to OGD operations using bespoke cutting-edge equipment; the full spectrum of diverse tasks available within 10 Sig Regt were on display. Despite the difficulty of concentrating troops from 5 dispersed Sqns, over 150 personnel were gathered from a Unit strength of approx 550, all the while continuing to support the various routine Operational and Readiness commitments of the Regiment.

The final stage of the visit concluded with a reception in Bicester Garrison Officers' Mess, where service personnel and their families from across the Regt were presented to HRH. The meet and greet concluded with the reading of her essay entitled "Life as an Army Child" and presentation of a posy by **Miss Kiara Barrie**, the daughter of **SSgt Barrie**.

Photo credit - Redz Photography



10th Signal Regiment



On the Occasion of the Visit of HRH The Princess Royal

6th April 2015



Visit to 10th Signal Regiment



1ST SIGNAL REGIMENT



On Thursday 17 March, 1st Sig Regt celebrated its first birthday, marking the anniversary of the re-designation from 1st (United Kingdom) Armd Div HQ and Sig Regt. In order to celebrate this high tempo inaugural year, a day of Regtl social events was held at MOD Stafford.

In its previous role, the Regt had earned a hard fought reputation founded on professionalism at all levels and Regtl pride. Keeping this reputation alive has therefore been paramount throughout the re-naming and re-designation process and is now referred to as the Team Rhino ethos. Consequently, the birthday celebration was designed to encourage and exhibit this cohesive and competitive outlook.

The Drumhead Service

The day commenced with a Drumhead service led by the new Padre, **Padre Paul Neiland**. With the help of the Royal Signals Pipes and Drums display team, a short service was conducted in the heart of Beacon Barracks to bring the Regt together in a moment of reflection, before the fun and games began.

The Bismarck Games

Over the many years spent residing in Herford, many people will remember that 1 (UK) ADSR hosted an annual grueling 10 km run called the Bismarck Challenge. The event drew its name from the commemorative Bismarck Towers which sat along the 10km route. In order to carry on this tradition, the Regt planned and hosted a similarly grueling physical event called The Bismarck Games. The multi-event, multi discipline endurance competition was designed to test the competitors' functional strength and physical determination in a CrossFit style event resulting in 2 soldiers being declared the fittest in the Reg.



REGT'S 1ST BIRTHDAY



Utilising a variety of exercises regularly seen in the Central Staffs CrossFit box, the soldiers and officers of the Regt competed in teams of 4 to score as many points as possible. The 6 exercises to be completed included: Burpee Pull Ups, a 40KG Farmers Carry, Team Tyre Flips, a Thruster and Calorie/ Row Complex, Body weight Sled Pulls and a 1 Mile Best Effort Run.

The event was sponsored by **Ubi-Tech**, a telecommunications training and recruitment company which is run by ex-Corps members. Prizes were donated by the event sponsors - **Bristol Street Motors Ford**, **Stafford**, **Central Staffs CrossFit**, and **RAWnola**, with prizes going to the fittest individuals and teams within the Regt. The fittest male competitor was **SSgt (SSI) Ash Allen RAPTC** and the fittest female competitor was **LCpl Vanessa Royals**.



The Clock Tower

The next installment of the day saw the Regt's relationship with the City of Herford honoured. In front of the new RHQ building, a clock tower has been constructed to replicate the clock which stood at the entrance to Hammersmith Barracks in Herford. It seemed only fitting that the unveiling of the clock tower be done by the Herford Bürgermeister (the Mayor of Herford), **Tim Kähler**, and his wife. During his visit, the Bürgermeister also attended an assembly at the newly constructed Veritas Academy, in order to visit the children who had previously attended the Lister School in Herford and to establish a relationship between the Stafford and Herford schools.

The Social Events

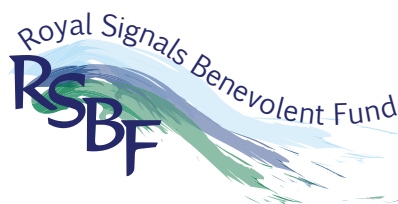
The day concluded with a German themed fancy dress function in the Junior Ranks Hub and The Rhino Dinner in the MOD Stafford Combined Mess.



The Royal Signals Benevolent Fund
Incorporating The Royal Signals Association

Swift and Sure Help for Signallers in Need

Your legacy can help us safeguard the Royal Signals Community



Every year the RSBF helps hundreds of those who have fallen on hard times. This includes serving Signallers injured on operations, the families of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, members of the Corps who need assistance with specialist medical care for their children, or veterans who need help in maintaining their mobility and independence.

Help others in their time of need

There has been a long-standing saying that the “Corps looks after its own” and we help wherever we can. In the past five years the RSBF has granted approximately £2 million to help fellow serving and retired signallers and their families in times of need.

We don't distinguish between Regular, Reserve, National Service, ex-ATS or WRAC who served with the Corps, officer or soldier and their dependants. Any case brought to us will be considered with expert support from SSAFA, The Royal British Legion and the Army Benevolent Fund.

You can help too - by leaving a legacy in your will. It's simple to do and can make all the difference to someone who has worn the same cap badge.

Find out more

If you would like to make a difference please contact the Association. We will be happy to provide information on how to leave a legacy so that others from the Corps might benefit from your generosity.

Contact **Caroline** on 01258 482090 or email rsa@royalsignals.org
Royal Signals Association

NOTICE TO THOSE WHO HAVE TRANSFERRED INTO ROYAL SIGNALS – SERVICE DAY'S PAY GIVING

Transferees into the Corps should note that their voluntary Service Day's Pay Giving (also known as the Day's Pay Scheme) subscriptions will **NOT** automatically change to their new cap-badge's charity on transfer. This is an individual responsibility, but it has become clear that many people are not aware of this, including some who have transferred from Queen's Gurkha Signals to the Corps.

If transferees wish to change their Service Day's Pay Giving to the Royal Signals Benevolent Fund the procedure to do so is straight-forward and can be carried out with the help of RAOs.

All that is required is that individuals complete two copies of JS Form JPA E014, the first to STOP payment to the old Regiment/Corps or Service (including the Gurkha Welfare Trust for Gurkha personnel) and the second to START payment into the Royal Signals Benevolent Fund. The first form should be sent to RHQ or equivalent of the original Service/Corps/Regiment and the second to RHQ Royal Signals.

If you are not sure whether you are paying into the Royal Signals Benevolent Fund, please contact your RAO or the RSBF Subscriptions Officer, **Jess Lawson** by emailing subscriptions@royalsignals.org.



NEWS FROM SQUADRONS/TROOPS



16 AIR ASSAULT BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (216) COLCHESTER



OC **Maj Andy Nicklin MBE**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) Niall Marshall**

The Sqn continues to deliver change at pace, developing the capabilities required to support the Bde at high readiness. This hard work has been recognized by Bde and has seen us rewarded with 10 spaces on the Basic Parachute Course in the first quarter of 2016 already; congratulations go to these soldiers, from across all the trade groups, who can now proudly wear their wings. We had 7 soldiers successfully complete AAPPS in Mar and we have an almost unheard of 32 officers and soldiers from around the Corps attempting the course in Apr. Best of luck to all the runners.

Whilst the Sqn, as always, has been heavily involved on exercises there has also been overseas deployments, AT and battlefield tours, with two separate ski trips to France, a Short Term Training Team (STTT) to Jordan and battlefield tours to France and Italy. As we move forward into the summer months we start to focus on international interoperability again, deploying with our French, German, Polish and American colleagues on exercises in Europe.

Jordan STTT - by Capt Dan Tope

Defence engagement (DE) is a growing commitment to UK Defence and 16X is no different, so it came as no surprise when 216 (Para) Sig Sqn were asked to provide support to a STTT deploying to Jordan. The purpose of this was to help train a new Jordanian unit which would act as their QRF. You only have to look at a map of the Middle East (Jordan shares borders with Iraq and Syria) to see why Jordan requires such a fighting force and it was with this very real threat that we set off to teach the QRF how to conduct Company and Battalion Group Air Maneuver and Air Assault.

The STTT took the form of a week-long teaching phase and then a week long practical, after arriving in pouring rain we quickly discovered that even in February it was baking hot outside and choosing to give lectures on the planning process inside a metal box with no air conditioning was not the best of decisions. However after fighting through the elements and adapting to a very Jordanian teaching style (over a hot *chai*, whilst spinning our dits) we made great progress. It was not all



Teaching Lessons

teaching and we were taken round the ancient ruins of Petra, by the local tribal leader, this afforded the opportunity to learn more about Jordanian culture and take selfies to send back to the Tp OCs who were deployed on CAST at the time.

Overall it was an excellent short deployment to provide assistance to a unit, who will have to engage with ISIL fighters. This long term commitment should also see the Sqn going back out to deliver a J6 specific training package.

ALPHA TROOP

Tp OC **Lt Charlie Dorling**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Martyn Sloan**
Tp Sgt **Sgt Chris Wood**

After the Sqn re-orbat A Troop has steadily been finding its feet and now holds a deployable and scalable Forward Headquarters for 16X as well as holding the Rear Link Detachments for the Air Maneuver and Air Landing Battle Groups. Ever busy, A Troop deployed on the Sqn readiness Exercise MERCURY ENSIGN in which it saw all iterations of Fwd HQ deployed.

March saw us say goodbye to **Sgt 'Ram Man' Bowden** and hello to **Sgt 'Woody' Wood**. Good luck to both of you in your new positions.

Looking forward, A Troop is to test new methods of insertion for its Fwd HQ, notably Air Dispatch from C-130 aircraft and under slinging from support helicopters, confirming that this is truly an airborne capability.

BPC - by Sig Hammand

The Basic Parachute Course is held at RAF Brize Norton and can run for up to three weeks depending on the weather and availabilities of the aircraft.

Before you get near an aircraft you must complete ground training. This consists of; exiting drills, the flight phase and correct packing of your equipment. Once you have completed ground training you progress onto your first jump. **Sig 'Ladyboy' Wilkinson's** face showed the nerves that everyone was feeling as we entered the Skyvan (a Ford Transit with wings). We survived.

The next two weeks consisted of 5 more jumps from both Skyvan and C-130 aircraft, culminating in a sim stick jump at night. At the end of the course we were handed our certificates and the coveted British Parachute Wings.

Op TIDDLING - by LCpl Clifford

LCpl Clifford was chosen to represent 216 (Parachute) Sig Sqn as part of 16 Air Asslt Bde's contribution to the manning of a



task force given the task to designed to temporarily substitute and bolster the work of the Environment Agency's FDI's (FLOOD DEFENCE INSPECTORS).

The work was carried out under the command of Commander 8 Engineer Brigade. Training and familiarisation of Environment Agency (EA) equipment and methodology took place at Chetwynd Barracks, Nottingham. The necessity for Op TIDDLING came from the extensive flooding of the north of England due to storms DESMOND, EVA and FRANK (the Tank). The majority of EA inspectors had been deployed to assess the integrity of the effected flood defense systems, causing a gap in the workflow and manning of the south of England.

The task was described as Military Aid to another Government department under 'work of national importance'.

On completion of the three day training, Military FDI's were sent out to their respective areas to carry out the task. On a daily basis, an FDI would travel to an area due inspection according to EA records, where multiple governed assets, (i.e flood gates, embankments, sluice gates etc) would be assessed and monitored for structural integrity/effectiveness in the occurrence of abnormally high tide/water levels. This was done using iPads holding EA software, just like any FDI within the Agency.

BRAVO TROOP

Tp OC **Lt Rowan Landon**
Tp Sgt **Sgt Scott Nelson**

The start to this year has been typically busy for Bravo Tp, firstly Mini CAST in Colchester, followed by Ex EAGLES CLAW at CAST North. Since then the Tp has been busy preparing for the splurge of exercises heading our way over the next couple of months, namely Ex GRIFFIN STRIKE and Ex SWIFT RESPONSE.

PNCO - by Sig Pike

The course lasts two weeks, the first week being at 21 Sig Regt, Colerne. This first week consisted of death by power point for the first three and a half days followed by a shakeout exercise. The second week was spent putting everything into practise and being on Salisbury plain (RATS).

There were 3 sections in all, I was in two section with **Sig 'Reynolds' Russell** and **Sig Williams**, **Sig 'Pete Danett' Dagnall** was in the not so strong three section. Each individual of the sections got the chance to be section commander and 2ic which was good to do and also good to learn it gave me a clearer insight into what to expect for JCLM (for when I hopefully get to that stage in my career).

At the end of the course I achieved top student and top field soldier which was more than I expected. #Ally Soldier #AB!!

Exercise EAGLES CLAW (CAST (N)) - by Sig Williams

On the 8th of February Bravo (Main) troop took the long mundane drive to Ex CAST North Catterick a trip the many of the lads (for different reasons know very well).

The drive took the majority of the lads around four hours, however myself and **Sig Butlers'** Pinz decided to take six and half hours. We arrived on the parade square and the HQ build

went relatively well, we suffered the usual niggles with broken drash etc., **Sig 'Froch' Scholes** was constantly whining but it still went up quicker than 30th Sig Regts did. #JustSayin.'

When the build was complete the OC of Bravo (Main) Troop, **Lt 'Rowena' Landon** gave a couple of R&R days to the lads for the weekend. Not to go into details but if anyone knows **Sig 'West Ham' Gell** you'll get the idea.

The second week saw 16 Air Asslt Bde HQ staff arrive and the ex phase begin. In the typical 216 (Para) Sig Sqn fashion the ex went relatively well (after a couple of days obviously).

When Friday came it's safe to say the Main HQ has never come down so fast. It was nice to actually see **Sig 'I'll decide' Thornton** do some work. A huge thanks to **Cpl Sam 'All round good bloke' Coote** and his lads for their field scoff throughout. Cheers lads I can still see why we still employ Sodexo.

Boxing - by Sig Scholes

Out of the 216 (Para) Sig Sqn boxing team only one person had fought before. We started training at the end of January, a good routine of two a day, with sessions in the before and after work.

The morning sessions were always fitness like CV to make sure we could be fit enough to last three rounds. The evening sessions were all about skills because we didn't have much prior to the whole endeavour, we started with the basics slowly graduating up to the more complex skills.

In the middle of training we had to deploy on Ex Eagles Claw, we tried to keep the training going and continued the runs in the mornings. We even managed to find a local boxing club in the area where we trained by sparring with the locals, this was a good change to sparring each other.

By fight week we had come a long way, from not being able to throw a punch to (for some in particular) being able to give **Clubber Lang** a run for his money. We arrived on the Sunday evening went to our rooms and waited for the following day to for the big weigh in.

Just before lunch the fights were announced **2Lt 'Cheese' Lovett** was the first bout and after a very exiting fight the decision unfortunately went against him. **Sig 'Butter Bean' Butler** was second up he didn't last long, he put up a good fight in the first round but his opponent's fitness got the better of him and shortly into the third the fight was stopped because **Sig 'Battered Sausage' Butler** had taken too many standing counts.

Finally, the main event, my fight. Needless to say I went on to win with a TKO (technical knockout), my opponents fitness was key in me winning it wasn't very good and he tired after the first round. After progressing to the semi-finals I unfortunately went on to lose on points.

Giving credit to my opponent he was a good boxer and knew his stuff and had fought many times before which showed as he out boxed me.

Lots of appreciation goes to **SSgt Bird** who took the time to and effort out of working hours to train us all day in, day out.



CHARLIE TROOP

OC **Lt Archie Balfour**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Martin Corbett**
Tp Sgt **Sgt CJ Woollon**

C Troop - by Sig Coleman

The year started off well with a chilled week in the garages then straight off to France for a week of AT (skiing). The troop headed off to Val-disere on the slopes which was organised by **SSgt 'Ronnie' Corbett**, for some it was their first time on the slopes for others they gained their SF2 qualification whilst there. After living it up on the slopes for a week the troop headed back to Colchester to get back to grafting.

During the first weeks of February the sqn was deployed to STANTA to for a day of comms training, it was a good chance to brush up on their patrolling skills as well as their comms.

The following week saw us straight into Ex MERCURY ENSIGN 2, the sqn did an R1 call out to test the readiness of the men of the sqn and the troops, the aim of this was to ensure we are actually capable of delivering our R1 commitment. Once all the kit was PACEX'd (easier said than done) and the para kit was issued we were dispatched to Wattisham camp to emplane the C130 and jump onto STANTA training area, unfortunately the visibility on this day wasn't good at all so we deployed by coach instead ... ally. After we had completed all tasks on STANTA training area we were called back in and debriefed by the OC and sent off for some well-earned Easter leave.

Fast Roping - by Sig Mckay

Myself and a number of other personnel from within 216 (Para) Sig Sqn were fortunate enough to be invited to attend a fast roping course by members of 264 (SAS) Sig Sqn in Hereford.

In the morning we underwent a confirmation test which consisted of hanging from a rope whilst wearing webbing for a set amount of time, which was surprisingly difficult. After the test in the gymnasium we went on the 25m range and all got to experience firing a Diemaco.

In the afternoon we experienced the real thing of fast roping. We were taken up in a helicopter and hovered 25ft above the ground. Strangely, I found it easier fast roping out of the helicopter than the practice assessment in the gym. We all got a few go's before we finished. In the evening we had a brief from the instructors on going for selection for service within 18 (UKSF) Sig Regt. After the brief, the training staff had provided us with a dinner buffet and a free bar which we were very thankful for after a long day. Even though it was only a day it was still one of the best experiences I have had in the army and would definitely recommend it to anyone.

Exercise OLIVE GROVE (Jordan) - by Sig Morgan

At the start of February **LCpl Brewster** and **Sig Morgan** deployed to Jordan on Ex OLIVE GROVE in support of Pathfinder Platoon. Our first stop was RAF Brize Norton where we would spend a few hours before departing for Jordan courtesy of the RAF. After roughly 7 hours in the air we arrived and were loaded onto coaches. After an escort courtesy of the Jordanian Army we arrived at Camp Titin

which is well situated next to mountains and overlooking Egypt and the Gulf of Aqaba.

After a few days here to fit the necessary kit to the Jackals we then headed out on the first phase of the ex. This was a combination of vehicle mobility (with British and foreign soldiers being fammed on the jackals) and a week long range package. During this week we got to spend a bit of time on the ranges where we were taken through CQB shoots as well as given an opportunity to fire numerous weapon systems, finally we spent a fair amount of time keeping the locals off the range with our limited knowledge of Arabic! A thoroughly different week.

After this we collapsed back into Camp Titin for a few days where we could get a quick turnaround done and re-cock before heading out for the second part of the ex. The second phase was conducted in the North of the country and although we were expecting it to be a lot colder during the nights we were pleasantly surprised when it was actually quite the opposite.

The final phase of the ex comprised of Pathfinder Platoon running through a variety of serials whilst we manned the safety and working nets. Once this was completed we then headed back to Camp Titin to prepare the kit for its trip back to the UK. Our final couple of nights were spent in 5 star luxury, we were all put up in a local hotel, not too shabby at all.

Finally we flew back to Brize and before we knew it were turning kit around back in the UK hoping another chance like this would come our not too distant future.

If anyone ever has the chance to work with Pathfinder Platoon they should take it; you will see how professional and efficient they are at what they do, as well as providing a completely different experience from your normal Signals ex on Salisbury Plain.

SUPPORT TROOP

QM **Capt Kev Read**
RQMS **WO2 (RQMS) Emma Stainer**

With another busy period of commitments coming to an end, it is only fitting that we bid a fond farewell to **Sig (Now LCpl) Dan Tranter**, all the best with your future endeavours at the Corps recruiting team. We also extend a warm welcome to **Sig Mckay**, who has joined us from phase 2 training at 11 Sig Regt, Blandford.

Arnhem battlefield Tour - by LCpl Jacob

Members of 216 (Para) Sig Sqn were kindly invited to attend a battlefield tour in Arnhem by 16 Air Asslt Bde HQ.

We were gifted to have two excellent tour guides with us; they were both very knowledgeable and provided superb briefings. We were lucky enough to visit a very small glider museum that contained parts of gliders used in the battle at Arnhem. The trip was rounded off nicely with some light hearted paintballing.

The battlefield tour was thoroughly enjoyed by the 6 members of the sqn that attended, despite some questionable food choices. All members learned a lot about the battle at Arnhem and about Operation Market Garden.



OTHER UNITS



UK MOD SANGCOM PROJECT TEAM



Janadriyah Festival - by Maj Shaun Wilson

Al-Jenadriyah is a cultural and heritage two week annual festival held in Jenadriyah (or Janadriyah) near Riyadh in Saudi Arabia. Dating back to 1985, festival activities include camel racing, performance of local music and dancing of the Ardah and the Mizmar. The festival draws more than one million visitors every year and normally falls during the month of February or March. In years gone by, Janadriyah was known as 'Rowdhat Souwais' and was mentioned by numerous historians and writers. The Festival is opened by **King Salman Bin Abdulaziz, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques**. This festival is seen as the jewel in the crown for showing off Saudi Arabia's cultural and heritage and is one of the Highlights for the Saudi Arabian National Guard headed by **His Royal Highness Prince Miteb Bin Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz, Minister of the National Guard**.

SANGCOM and GPT (our prime contractor) provided the usual communication support and advice to the festival organiser, **Maj Gen Abdulrahman Al Zamil**, on how best to deploy and maintain the current communication capabilities and systems. This includes over 1000 analogue and digital phone lines, VVIP communication services to Royal villas, secure mobile radio and deconfliction of communication locations for Civilian ISP and mobile phone communications, to name a few. In addition to this, the SANGCOM team delivered a project to install a number of CCTV security cameras around the festival site. This also included all the training and briefing of National Guard soldiers and Ministry of Interior personnel.

By way of a thank you for all the hard work, the National Guard extended an invite to the SANGCOM team and family members to attend the festival. Ever the excellent hosts, they escorted us to the camel races keeping us suitably refreshed with sweet tea and Arabic coffee throughout. In total, 159 personnel from across SANGCOM, BMM, MODSAP and the British Embassy attended as guests of the National Guard. This amounted to 39 cars and buses who all met at a pre-determined RV on the side of the road just short of the VIP gate to the festival site. Amazingly everyone was able to navigate to the RV using the correct coordinates - everyone except **Mohan Jeganmohan** who was found waiting in his car on the side of the road some four kilometres away looking bemused. Everyone suspects he was a DE officer in a previous life (He is actually in charge of our civil construction projects).

The short drive from the RV point to the camel racing stadium involved a lot of jostling for positions, liberal use of hooters and animated hand gestures out of car windows in order to dissuade the locals from splitting up our convoy. Thanks to our faithful translator, **Lutfi**, and **Maj Shaun Wilson**, the convoy endured nothing more than a number of exciting near misses and everyone was successfully navigated to the camel races. Everyone except **Mohan Jeganmohan** who got lost again within the space of a 400m straight road and mini roundabout.

With families and friends settled and Gaawa (Arabic coffee) and sweet tea distributed, the team spent an enjoyable few hours watching the camel races. This proved to be a revealing experience in itself and everyone was surprised to learn that the camel races were six kilometres long and that these were considered sprint races. The dust and spit from the passing camels left the children and adults in awe and everyone had a good laugh at the amusing gait of the camels. There was genuine concern for the young barefoot camel jockeys who seemed to be struggling to stay on their camels. It was clear from the amount of camels crossing the finish line without jockeys that staying on was a challenge indeed.



Camel races causing huge excitement

As brave as the jockeys were, they were nothing compared to the 'camel catchers' whose job it was to reign in the crazed camels as they crossed the finish line and their jockey's made a jump for safety. Dressed in green riding outfits, these 'camel catchers' did an amazing job to avoid flailing hooves, camel spit and falling jockeys and ensure the camels were organized in the finisher's pen according to finishing positions.



Camel racing - it's not for the faint hearted



Once calm had been restored, the event organiser, **Brig Khalid** invited the SANGCOM Programme Director **Brig Pete Drew** to present the winners and camel owners with their prizes. Following the prize giving, the guests and children were allowed to have their photo taken alongside the sweaty camels and their owners. This proved to be one of the highlights of the day.

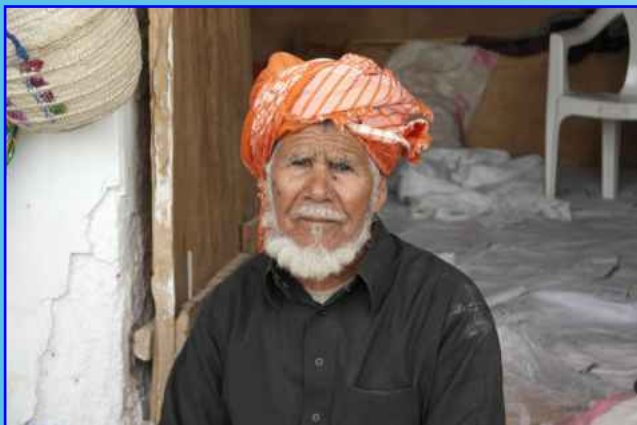


Brig Pete Drew presenting the winners with their prizes

With the camel races over, the team and guests made their way to the main festival site and enjoyed the cultural festivities. This was an ideal opportunity to taste some amazing local foods, watch regional dances and visit the numerous municipal stands that had their cultural wares on show. A great day and evening was had by everyone that attended. Special thanks go to **Sgt Bandar al Fahad** who ensured that the day ran as smoothly as possible.



Lou Wilson enjoying the cultural festival



Saudi Arabian local

Exercise QUADRIGIS SPIRITUS - by Maj Neil Taylor

As the name suggests, Ex QUADRIGIS SPIRITUS was a team building event where SANGCOM team members and their families had the opportunity to get to know each other in a more social environment, away from the stresses and restrictions associated with living and working in Saudi Arabia. Taking place over the weekend 4th and 5th March, the event was centred on a Friday afternoon brunch at the Crowne Plaza hotel in Bahrain.

Day 1: With participants responsible for their own transport arrangements, including the respective police letters to transit the causeway, most elected to depart immediately after work finished on Thursday 3rd March. Having booked out with the duty officer, the first challenge was to safely navigate along the Dammam road, through the numerous check points and across the border. Only an hour into the trip and **WO2 (FofS) Sam Richards** managed to collect an extra piece of metalwork in his rear tyre, resulting in an unwelcome puncture and flat tyre. Removing the wheel nuts proved particularly challenging but then he is a Foreman so no-one in the team was particularly surprised. With the pit stop over and five hours more driving the team arrived at their various hotels in Bahrain, confirming their safe arrival back to the duty officer. For a brief period the Programme Director, **Brig Pete Drew**, was reported as MIA until it was confirmed that he and his family were happily ensconced in their suite.



The first casualty

With some of the team staying in the same hotel, it was an ideal time to share backgrounds and regale each other with life stories. **Maj Shaun 'I've been shot three times' Wilson** took great delight in telling anyone and everyone about his wounds, accompanied by some fairly graphic pictures. He went on to prove that no amount of shrapnel could stop him from still doing the 'Running Man' on the dance floor. Unfortunately for a number of innocent bystanders this also prompted **WO2 (YofS) Mick Sutton** to demonstrate the 'Worm' which neatly cleared the dance floor. With stories all told the more sensible team members retired for the evening to prepare for the following day.

Day 2: Although a few of the team managed an early start by the poolside, most took the opportunity to have a lie in. At lunchtime, thirty personnel from across the SANGCOM team met at the Crown Plaza hotel main restaurant. With **Mrs Kelly Sutton** as the Master of Ceremonies, everyone was briefed on 'brunch etiquette' and most importantly, the shortest route to the buffet. Everyone also received a random envelope which gave them a temporary name, along with a number of false statements to work into conversation during the brunch. Children were allowed to choose their own temporary name but they also had to reverse who they called Mum and Dad.



Punishment for using someone's proper name came in the form of 'measles' (red stickers) and this was policed passionately by **Tom Drew** and **Jess Chandler**, who patrolled the dinner table with sheets of 'spots' ready to fine any wrong doing. A thought should be spared for the hotel staff that were unwittingly forced to take part in the re-naming game. To avoid the attention of the 'spot police', temporary names were used to order hot food items which were then delivered to the table. **Mrs Louise 'Trevor' Wilson** and **Mrs Kelly 'Appu' Sutton** attracted particularly quizzical looks from the staff when ordering their steaks, and further confusion arose when they failed to recognise their own names when the food arrived at the table.

As the afternoon developed and the conversations strayed into new areas, no one believed the story that **Mr Nick Bradshaw** once had a boss that demanded a foot massage every week, but quite a few people were taken in by **Maj Shaun Wilson's** false tale of being christened with six middle names. The brunch also allowed a couple of special events to be recognised, **Maj Neil Taylor** and **Mrs Debbie Taylor** celebrated their 27th Wedding Anniversary and **Mr Nick Bradshaw** celebrated being another year older. After four hours of brunching, telling tall tales and avoiding the measles, everyone retired feeling sufficiently full. At this point the team roughly split into two - families with children took to the pool areas for some fun-time, whilst the remainder chose to explore Bahrain.

Day 3: With check-out sorted and a hearty breakfast at *Ric's Kountry Kitchen*, there was the opportunity for all to visit the US Naval Base in Bahrain. With a sizeable Naval Exchange shop on site, many team members took the opportunity to replenish on western goodies. Whilst most remembered that region 1 DVDs don't work in region 2 players, the sight of **Maj Shaun Wilson** struggling over the dilemma of an incredibly cheap 50 inch LCD TV but only 110v compatible was very entertaining. With the shopping complete it was time to head over the Causeway and back to Riyadh, with a final challenge of finding a petrol station in Saudi Arabia before running out of fuel and being stranded in the desert.

Cultural and Defence Engagement at the Regional Level - by Capt Jim Healey

An Englishman, Scotsman, Jordanian, Palestinian and an Indian could be the start of some culturally intolerant jokes but in reality these are the nationalities that make up the Liaison Officer Western Region (LOWR) team in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Throw in more Indian, Pakistani, Indonesian and Filipino civilians who make up the majority of the nationalities in the prime contractor, GPT, and sub-contractor ranks. Add in a significant number of Saudis, both civilian and military, and you have a melting pot of transnational opportunities for defence diplomacy, one of the key elements of Defence Engagement and cultural education.

Defence Engagement is conventionally seen to be about UK MOD showcasing its capabilities and using them in a positive light to show what we are capable of doing and explaining that we wish to do this in a way that improves peace and security around the world. Whilst it would be easy to say that displaying some radio equipment or the delivery of COTS IP technology to deliver CIS to the Saudi Arabia National Guard is a touch trivial (it doesn't have quite the punch of a Type 45 Destroyer or the extreme agility of the Typhoon FGR4), we do work alongside our Saudi partners in a positive and highly professional manner.

Had I been able to attend the Arabic course at the Defence Centre for Language and Culture at the Defence Academy in Shrivenham, I would have picked up a modicum of the language and learnt something of the Islamic culture. Instead I have had to learn 'on the hoof.' Fortunately, and rather surprisingly, there appears to be a great deal of tolerance of new arrivals into the Kingdom. Coupled with the help of the team translators and our illustrious Liaison Officer, **Maj Paul Williams**, I have managed to navigate the majority of tricky situations that could cause offence. For me the greatest honour came during our support to the annual Hajj pilgrimage where I learnt a significant amount about Islam.

One of the customs that I had inadvertently been doing wrong was in the way that you should greet a group of people in a room. Rather than make a beeline with the senior person it is customary to start with the first person to the right as you come in and work your way anti-clockwise round the room. I had this pointed out to me after a month of doing it wrong, and probably to everyone's amusement, by a Saudi Officer. Of course doing it the Saudi way does buy you time while you work out who each person in the room is and more importantly who the highest ranking person is which might, in Saudi culture, not necessarily be the same person with the highest military rank.

Hospitality is an extremely important part of Saudi life. You are not in a room long before Gahwa (Arabic coffee made from coffee and cardamom) or Shai Maghreb (sweet mint tea) is offered around. Served in small cups with no handles they take some getting used to but are quite pleasant during long meetings. When it comes to food it becomes a matter of scale from mountains of dates to large platters of 'goat grab'. Everything must be eaten with the right hand, which is a skill on its own. The 'goat grab' is a whole roasted goat or sheep placed on top of a mound of rice. Eaten whilst sat on the floor it can be a particularly interesting, if uncomfortable, experience. Firstly sitting cross legged on the floor requires a suppleness that I thought I wouldn't need after I'd left primary school and secondly plunging your hand into the boiling hot carcass and rice to extract morsels of food that are popped into the mouth requires asbestos protected hands.

Food comes into play a lot; during the week members of the LOWR team will bring in breakfast and most Thursdays (end of the working week) is a chance for us to share a lunch together. This is an opportunity for members of the team to exhibit food from their homeland and from across a wide cultural divide. We use this opportunity to invite in external members of either the SANG or the civilian organisations that support us here in Jeddah, helping to strengthen our relationship with them and vice versa.

Opportunities for Defence Engagement are fairly numerous despite the team in the western region being reasonably small (less than twelve military at any given time). We are regularly invited to events at the British Consulate that allow us to meet UK expats and other guests from the wider global communities. One such event was a fantastic evening spent on HMS DEFENDER (one of the new Type 45 Destroyers) as she made an impromptu stop on her way to the Arabian Gulf.

In terms of Defence Engagement, this was a fantastic opportunity where the Navy demonstrated their numerous capabilities and gave the LOWR team an opportunity to mingle with a wide variety of the Jeddah military and diplomatic community.



Life in the remote regions of Saudi Arabia is extremely unpredictable with ever changing priorities. This requires a good dose of patience and understanding. Whilst SANGCOM may not have 'awesome' military hardware like a type 45 destroyer to show off, we undoubtedly do our bit in the world of communications. Our technical expertise coupled with good humour more than make up for any fancy equipment. That, and the ability to eat our own body weight in goat meat, allow us to promote all that is great about Britain.



Maj Paul Williams decides how best to attempt the "goat grab"



Defence Engagement in action

SANGCOM Team Members Take On The 2016 Riyadh Marathon - by Maj Robin Foster

On the 26th February 2016, six members of SANGCOM woke up earlier than most. At approximately 04:00 hrs, alarms were going off in the homes of **Emma Gillespie, Rotimi Akinsiku, WO2 (YofS) Mick Sutton, Clare Scott, Capt Roy (Gloves) Mitton** and **Maj Robin Foster**. The reason for getting up at such an unsociable hour was to ensure a hearty breakfast could be consumed prior to running the Gulf International Bank Riyadh Marathon.

Anyone who has ever attempted to run 42.2 kilometres will tell you that a certain amount of preparation is required if you are to cross the finish line on two feet instead of a stretcher. It goes without saying that large quantities of food and water are consumed prior to the race. What is less well known is the undignified process of preparing for hours of chaffing, sweat and sun. In an attempt to minimise skin on skin rubbing, lashings of Vaseline are liberally applied to unmentionable areas of the anatomy. For male runners, nipple plasters are a must as well as sun cream to cover balding heads and receding hairlines. For the SANGCOM participants, it was no

different but I'm pleased to report that these preparations were conducted in the secluded privacy of our own homes.

But long before these early morning running rituals were carried out, the SANGCOM team had been doing the real preparation of logging daily runs. Distance running takes discipline but in a country like Saudi Arabia, the challenges are increased. Of course there is the heat - although somewhat mitigated in the winter months, sunburn is always a factor, even on the coldest days. In terms of scenic running routes, there isn't a lot to choose from. Most runners are confined to the housing compounds which are generally no more than a couple of kilometres in circumference. In the build up to the Riyadh marathon, it was not uncommon to see members of the SANGCOM team completing 15 to 20 laps of the housing compounds. A few runners were brave (crazy) enough to venture out into the desert for training runs. These long runs were invariably cut short by packs of wild rabid dogs defending their territory. It's no exaggeration to say scenic runs are in short supply in Saudi Arabia and simply 'popping out' for a quick run isn't an option.

And so it was with great relief that the SANGCOM team lined up at the start of the Riyadh Marathon which took place on the outskirts of the city. This is the largest road race in the Kingdom and runners travelled from as far away as Al Hasa and Jeddah to take part. As soon as the horn sounded the start of the race, we knew it was going to be a hot day. With barely two kilometres of the hilly course covered, most competitors were drenched in sweat and in need of water. The water points were well stocked and provided much needed hydration at regular intervals. Better still was the enthusiasm of the volunteers handing out water and sweets and cheering us on. **Kelly Sutton** and **Lt Col Stu Gillespie** were hugely supportive and we genuinely admired and appreciated their keenness. For hours they clapped and cheered on the runners who, with notable exceptions of relatives and friends, must have all looked the same; exhausted, gasping, crippled.



Riyadh Marathon pre-race nerves

The marathon course included a number of sharp hills which had to be negotiated five times each, due to the course being an eight kilometre loop. The entire length of the course cannot be described but suffice to say, the hills made a significant impression on my memory. Technically, the hills were less evil than some others in Saudi, but the mental challenge of running the same hill over and over made it a ruthless task. Like all hills they shared the same characteristics; bends that masked an unwelcome upward slope of road, varied rhythm breaking inclines, sinuous curves revealed by turns, each offering the false hope of a summit.



Most of the runners were forced to use both forms of motion on the hills, running and walking. As for myself, I chose to adopt my usual hill running pose, leaning into the slope with miniature strides, reverent and slow.

Apart from the hills, the rest of the course demanded its own respect. The sheer marathon distance combined with heat



Maj Robin Foster in the Riyadh Marathon

and dust drew away my strength like a dry sponge and 30 kilometres into the race, I was forced to admit I was tired. My precious reserves of energy had been sucked away by the road, by the sun, by the slight wind which dried my sweat and demanded more. For the next 12 kilometres I simply put my head down and ran, however the difference between walking and running was subtle, a fine point of debate between athletic philosophers. It was as though someone had added wooden

parts to my legs because they were not the flexible limbs I have come to know and love. Eventually in time, a lot of time, I hobbled over the top of the last hill, scraped my way around the last bend and with bent neck and hunched shoulders, crossed the finish line.



All smiles from WO₂ (YofS) Mick Sutton



Rotimi Akinsiku and Maj Robin Foster share a few race jokes

In an instant all my ill feelings towards steep hills were swept away, replaced by sentimental feelings like gratitude and joy. The electronic clock blinked wisely above my head and told me that I had run ten minutes slower than my predicted time. It didn't matter, I was over the line. With my hands on knees I looked at the other competitors around me performing a variety of human motions, hugging, yelling, spitting and laughing. All of them were testament to the completion of one of life's major challenges, the marathon, and I'd done it. That thought alone was almost enough to prompt me to fill in the application form for next year's race. But I decided to think it over. Once all the SANGCOM team members were safely over the finish line, we gathered together in the same gregarious mood as the start of the race and managed to stand for a photo. Stealing a few moments for ourselves before we located our car and returned home, we sat in the shade and shared our marathon experience.



Success at the finish line





BRITISH ARMY TRAINING UNIT KENYA



BATUK CIS Troop

SO3 CIS **Capt C Karumba**
CIS Tp Cmdr **Lt B Cauldwell**

Building the Future - by Bdr Demulder

BATUK... A place where so much is achieved for so many, by so few, with so little!

The 8 hour flight from London to Nairobi was somewhat enervating to say the least, giving most of us flashbacks of the Brize to Afghan journey. I have been posted to BATUK since January and like everyone else in the team, have had to hit the ground sprinting. Our first week consisted of the usual orientation and familiarisations briefings with of course, death by PowerPoint. This was followed by a much more welcomed explanation of what to expect in the upcoming few months and a friendly 'Meet and Greet' with our new colleagues within the CIS department.

Seeing the BATUK Forecast of Events, it became immediately apparent that this was no holiday, as we found out quickly on the CIS Bowman vehicle park.

Preparation work had already begun for the FFR Fleet to be handed over to 2 Rifles, who would then in turn hand the fleet over to 1 RGR around mid-February.

Appointed as Exercise NCO, I found the deployment phases considerably daunting; mostly due to the sheer amount of kit I had to take control of. Equipment ranging from Exonaut Systems to Motorola Radios had to be issued and built up within the Hub at 'Archer's Post' which is BATUK's busiest training area.

Setting up EXCON with its vast array of mandatory equipment such as TVs, VHF, HF, UHF, Motorola and Sat Phones was pretty hard graft. Normal shifts would start straight after breakfast at 0700 hrs with lights out usually at 2300 hrs if you are lucky enough to have no faults to fix. The weather in Archer's post is scorching, suffocating and dusty. The free running safari wildlife around you kind of makes up for it but unlike Lolodaiga (the alternate training area), or back at the CIS compound in Nanyuki, the cool breeze running off Mount Kenya is certainly missed.



Maybe we could put the mast over there

Training in Kenya is the perfect opportunity where one can grow, expand and master one's trade through some serious hands-on experience and relentless challenges. Fulfilling a posting here helps better understand our capabilities and doctrine, whilst at the same time providing a World Class Service to the Exercising Troops as part of the CIS Operators and EXCON Team.

This deployment is recommended to all those who wish to improve their trade skills and who are striving to excel. It is certainly not a holiday but is however, a great chance to prove yourself, add value and enhance your career. Wish you were here!

A day on the ranch - by Sig Smith

On the 25th March CIS department organised a troop development day at the infamous Chaka Ranch, a labyrinth of inflatable 'Total Wipe Out' style challenges and obstacles as well as Quad Biking and Paintballing. This was a well deserved opportunity for some of the newest members of the troop to get to know everyone. Once at the resort the Quad Bike fanatics split off to go do their thing whilst others dared to venture into the Paintball arena. For the rest we were split down into two equal groups and much to **LCpl Jordan 'Alpha Male' Cabourn's** resistance, began a simple warm up by the local guide who seemed to actually believe he was a PTI.

As the games began it wasn't long before we heard rumours that the Go Karts had already been trashed over on the track... turns out they weren't rumours at all. I mean, how do you manage to snap a Quad bike Chain? **LCpl 'Prakash' Pun** even decided to test the roll cage on his Quad Bike too!



Excon



Lt Cauldwell Leading from the front



We began rotating through the many and various stations, team A and B competing head to head on every game. The challenges included 'Zorb Football' which was basically a fight to the death inside giant inflatable balls. You had to feel sorry for the local kids who joined in simply wanting to play football properly. However, everyone who took part enjoyed the game and the kilograms lost while sweating inside the hamster balls. We also had a climbing race up an inflatable wall where **Sgt 'Rob' Hill** and **Cpl 'Danny' Bailey** (The two heaviest guys in the troop) almost made the tower collapse whilst racing each other up the rickety structure.



Preparing for battle

We proceeded onwards to an inflatable obstacle course where we left a couple of lads 'Man-Down' in the care of the local St Johns Ambulance. Other games consisted of basketball and football shoot-outs and a gladiator match where we had to knock each other off inflatable platforms using enormous batons. **LCpl Cabourn** wanted the world to know he won against **LCpl Hird**, shouting "I am Alpha Male" as loud as he could. We all took turns jousting against each other attempting to match opponents off using body weight.

Overall it was a great day out for the CIS department and was a perfect way to experience some of the local fun whilst bonding as a new team, despite the injuries.



LCpl Cabourn showing us how Alpha Males do it



JOINT COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT UNIT



JCSU (Nwd) is a 72-man, quad-Service unit based at Northwood HQ which was formed in May 2015 as an amalgamation of ISS Northwood and Deployable Support Group (DSG). JCSU (Nwd) is responsible for delivering dVTC, PJHQ.com and EUOps WAN as well as providing other services to Secret and Above Secret systems. The Mission Statement is:

'It is the Mission of JCSU (NWD) to sustain our focus on supporting deployed operations by delivering JFC and PJHQ with assured close CIS support and C4I services. JCSU (NWD) will achieve this through continually striving for excellence, reinforcing effective lines of communication, nurturing talent and evolving as a newly established unit'.

The unit has 15 Royal Signals posts.

SO1 **Lt Col P Day MBE**
 OC **Sqn Ldr M Basford**

Lightweight BLOS demo 2 – 4 Feb 16 - by Cpl Prescott

A team from JCSU (Nwd) consisting of **Cpl Prescott**, **Cpl Hunt**, **Cpl Porter** and **SAC Knights** set off for Colerne on Mon 1 Feb 16 in preparation for the Lightweight BLOS trials.

The purpose of the demo was to trial T4N, ASH, Tac VTC, SX20 VTC on behalf of ISS with Airbus.

After the initial briefing the Airbus techs configured the IP details for each of the devices. All attendees were split into

teams of 5-6 personnel consisting of Airbus techs, R Sigs, TCW and JCSU pax and followed a testing plan laid out in the BLOS Evaluation booklet.

On Wed 3 Feb **WO2 (FoS IS) 'The Fixer' McNeal** and **SSgt 'Geordie' Lodge** headed to Colerne for a visit via Corsham because the OpsO, **Capt 'I can't read a map' Hitch** gave the wrong location. By Wednesday afternoon all testing had been completed and the kit was packed away ready for the final debrief.

The demo was very well received by ISS, and the JCSU attendees really enjoyed being able to test new kit.



Cpl Porter giving a demonstration to SSgt Lodge



HMS VICTORY Dinner Night – 13 Oct 15 - by Capt Hitch

The Officers and SNCOs from JCSU (Nwd) set off early on Tue 13 Oct 15 to Portsmouth. The visit was twofold; it was to enable members of JCSU (Nwd) to meet with respective members of the Maritime Communications Support Unit (MCSU) who are responsible for the taskings of RNCSS. Secondly it presented an opportunity to attend a dinner night hosted on HMS VICTORY and organised by Lt 'I'm in the Navy' Hayes.

Whilst certain indispensable members of the management team headed off to MCSU for their meeting the remaining personnel took the chance to explore the sights of Portsmouth. This included a spot of shopping at Gunwharf Quays for FS 'I'm only eating a salad' Weatherill and WO2 (FoS IS) 'Ooooh look shoes' McNeal. Lt 'Computer geek' Grayland and Flt Lt 'I know every film quote' Bolton lead the way in introducing the team to a few of the more reputable drinking establishments



Members of JCSU (Nwd) at HMS VICTORY

Shopping and meetings complete, everyone returned to the accommodation to get ready for the evening function, and it was fantastic to see the mix of tri-service mess dress. The carriage for the evening was a minibus which was expertly driven by Sgt 'I can't go over 50mph' Oliphant. On arrival at HMS VICTORY we were greeted by CPO 'Pirate Pete' Cooling who was our expert and charismatic guide for the evening and provided us with an arrival drink of a shot of rum in true Navy style.

After another welcome drink which was kindly bought by Lt Col 'how much for a round?' Day, we commenced the tour of the ship. The tour was extremely interesting and luckily for WO2 (FoS IS) 'oompa loopma 1' McNeal and SSgt 'oompa loopma 2' Lodge they were short enough to not have to duck any beams at any point. The evening's entertainment was provided by Flt Lt 'those steps were slippery' Bolton who decided it was much quicker to just slide down a whole flight of steps on his bottom.

We were provided with a fabulous 3 course meal and plenty of laughs were had. Lt 'Uncle Albert' Hayes even delivered a sea shanty or two. The RAF's contribution in the form of the 'Dam Busters' theme was not as well received, even though Sqn Ldr 'Biggles' Basford did try his best.

For the journey back to the accommodation FS 'I've been in the RAF 30 years' Weatherill took the helm of the minibus with a little unwanted assistance from Lt 'Let me help with those gears' Hayes. Lt 'Never go full Grayland' Grayland

must have eaten something funny along with his 3 bottles of red wine, as he ended up quite unwell whilst having his back rubbed by Lt Col 'there, there' Day.

There were a few sore heads the next morning as we set off on the painfully slow journey back to Northwood. It was a thoroughly worthwhile visit which has created some excellent working relationships with MCSU, and also provided some welcome unit morale.

JCSU (Nwd) visit to National Memorial Arboretum - 24 Feb 16 - by Cpl Menyangbo

A JCSU Force Development visit to the National Arboretum took place on 24 Feb 16. The purpose of the visit was to provide an opportunity for tri-Service military and civilian personnel from the unit to enhance their understanding of each other's Service/Corps heritage.

The National Memorial Arboretum is situated in the heart of the country in Staffordshire. There are nearly 300 memorials for the forces, civilian organisations and voluntary bodies who have played a part in serving the country as well as over 50,000 trees; every single one being a memorial itself. At the heart of the Arboretum is the Armed Forces Memorial, which is a tribute to over 16,000 service personnel who have lost their lives in conflict or as a result of terrorism since the end of the second WW II. The Burma Railway, Gurkha Memorial, Sumatra Railway Memorial, Shot at Dawn are also noteworthy memorials within the site.



Visit to Arboretum

The journey began with a relatively early departure from Northwood HQ at 0730hrs. 0730hrs may not sound early to most, but it is around 5 hours too early to be in proximity of Sgt Sean 'Burpee' Ablott and his hatred of mornings. On arrival at the National Memorial Arboretum at 1030hrs, the party received a guided tour led by a very knowledgeable member of the NMA staff. During the walk three briefings were given by attendees about their respective services (Army, Navy and RAF). Cpl Hedworth (R Signals), SAC Knights (RAF) and Lt Grayland (RN) provided talks about the R SIGNALS, 90 Signals Unit (RAF) and the Yangtze Incident (RN) respectively.





Cpl Menyangbo and Cpl Rai proudly posing on the Gurkha memorial 'Chautara'

The group also had an opportunity to explore the site on their own to observe the evolving Arboretum, maturing woodland landscape and a vast collection of memorials. It was an excellent opportunity for them to pay tribute individually to those who have served or continue to serve our country. It was a very moving, yet enjoyable and educational day.

Northwood HQ Military Relay Competition - 10 Nov 15
by Sgt Ablott

On the 10th November 2015, Northwood HQ held its first annual Military Relay Competition. JCSU (Nwd) entered a tri-service team, consisting of **Lt Leigh Hayes (RN)**, **Sgt Sean Ablott (R Signals)**, **Cpl James Cornick (RAF)**, and **Cpl Suryaman Menyangbo (R Signals)**.

The event consisted of:

- a. One lap of the site with no weight by one team member in civilian attire.
- b. 20 burpees by every team member in civilian attire
- c. Change into MTP
- d. One lap of the site carrying varying weights by each team member.

The team completed the event as follows:

- a. 15kg **Cpl Cornick**
- b. Initial lap and 20kg **Cpl Menyangbo**
- c. 25kg **Lt Hayes**
- d. 30kg **Sgt Ablott**

As the morning of the event dawned, it became apparent that only 2 teams had been brave enough to enter and JCSU (Nwd) would be facing a challenging task against a multi-national team of impressive size and stature and reduced age. However, undaunted and with bergens weighed and rules explained, the team mentally prepared themselves to take on their formidable opponents.

Cpl Suryaman 'Sebastian Coe' Menyangbo was selected to run the initial lap which turned out to be a sprint around camp against a German competitor of some speed!!! Luckily **Cpl Menyangbo's** excellent performance gave the JCSU team a small lead. This excellent start was improved by **Cpl 'I'm in the RAF, we don't do this' Cornick** by over a minute with and **Lt 'Follow me chaps' Hayes** edging the team to a two minute lead, and **Sgt 'I'm getting to old for this' Ablott** managing to bring the team home a good four minutes ahead of the opposition. Contrary to initial expectations, JCSU (Nwd) ended up winning the entire event.

The event gave the team a good excuse to bond and train together alongside the normal unit PT sessions, and it also gave them the chance to fly the flag for the UK in front of our allied nations in a physically challenging event.



CO **Lt Col Andreas Kubitz (DEU Army)**
RSM **CWO Steve Base (CAN Army)**

- by Cpl Navin Gurung

Blandex Open Day - by LCpl Paul Thompson

The exercise ran over the period of 19-24 Mar, 2016. We left Wesel Barracks on Saturday (19th March) and got there on Sunday (20th March). Along with one of our Dutch comrades, we started the epic journey on a Saturday (bad times); we completed the drive to the Hook of Holland port at the torturous pace of 50mph (about as fast as the Sherpa and generator could go without it flying off of the road). After finally boarding the ferry we settled down to watch England win the Grand Slam in the Six Nations (epic!). After arriving in the UK for around 0600 hrs we started the monumental task of getting to Blandford which involved multiple fuel stops looking for petrol stations that would accept our fuel card (basically none) as the Renault Sherpa is less than economical. When we arrived it was a case of setting up displays for the open day and the convoy drivers getting as much sleep as possible for the return journey.

Sgt Greg Smith, MCpl Gibbons (Canadian Army) and myself were part of the DLOS (Deployable Line of Sight) team for the Open Day. We set up on 21st Mar, it took us all morning to set up the kit and the put up the mast; the mast required a little bit of help from one of our Dutch soldiers to attach some of the winches and pulleys to raise the heavy antenna system and we finally resorted to the brute force and ignorance dead lift techniques of **Sgt Smith**. Once the set up was done, we had inspections and had to run through the stand for the CSM and the DCOM.

On 22nd March, we had the Corps Colonel's visit. We delivered our presentation to the Col and the visitors about the DLOS system and also briefly talked about life in Wesel; the Corps Colonel seemed to very much enjoy being there as he had been OC 280 Sig Sqn in the past so it was like a step back in history for him. We then had a parade later on where **Lt Col Kubitz** presented a Campaign medal to one of the members from DCM D who had recently returned from his Afghanistan



tour, the Colonel expressed his pleasure at being allowed to present a medal such as this to one of his British soldiers. He also presented a plaque to the Corps Colonel. The parade then concluded with a speech from the Corps Colonel thanking and praising the British counterparts' role and work in NATO. The next day we had visitors from the training sqns across the Garrison giving the new recruits the opportunity to have an insight of the working rhythm of a unit that potentially they previously did not know existed.

Once the presentations were concluded, we packed up our stands and got ready for our return journey. We left in the early hours of Thursday morning and got back to Wesel for around 2100 hrs.

The Open Day was a success. It was an opportunity for us to meet our counterparts of DCM D and also to show the presence of 1NSB across the R SIGNALS.

Blandford Mess Dinner- by Sgt Greg Smith

On the Wednesday of the visit, after the Corps Colonel had finished visiting the stands and addressing the troops it was time to retire to the Corps Sgts' & WOs' Mess for members of DCM D to be presented their Long Service and Good Conduct Medals. These were presented by the Corps Colonel in the presence of the soldiers' families as well members of DCM D and M&S Company. It is always good to see the traditions of the LS&GC followed in this way especially by a unit away from the mainstream Corps as sometimes these things are lost in the tempo of ops. A nice touch on the day was the son of one of the clerks from DCM D being presented with a medal of his own during his mother's presentation adding to the warm family environment of the event.

Keeping with the traditions, attendees then retired to the bar for the afternoon to celebrate the medals awarded. **Sgt Greg Smith** as the newest member of the mess rang the bell to mark his arrival to the mess, shortly afterwards **FofS Gaz Ward** informed him that he had been 'voluntold' to help trial a new fitness test in the morning ending his festivities before they even began.

Blandex Sgts Mess Function - by Sgt Greg Smith

The final activity of the week was a mess dinner hosted by DCM D; the Corps Colonel and CO 1 NSB were guests of honour. The mess staff did an excellent job of providing everyone with great food and plenty of wine. It is the first mess dinner where anyone can remember the PMC's gavel disappearing from under his nose, causing great amounts of discomfort for **Sgt Freddy Winter** as the PMC stated there would be no comfort break until his gavel was returned followed by there would be no comfort break until 'ALL' his gavel was returned. Once **Freddy** had broken Olympic records to the toilet, we returned for toasts, speeches and fines, **Lt Col Kubitz** and **WO1 (RSM) Steve Base** very much enjoyed witnessing and taking part in the British mess traditions and the Corps Colonel gave an impassioned speech on his visions for the future of the Corps and our part in it. The speeches did get a little awkward when **FofS Pete Frasier** decided to add an 'on this day' part to his speech while sat next to his German CO on the anniversary of the destruction of Wesel home of 1 NSB by the allies in 1945, fortunately the Colonel does follow German stereotypes when it comes to sense of humour. A good time was had by all at the dinner unfortunately due to NATO travel arrangements at midnight many members of 1NSB had to depart for the long journey home to Wesel on the early morning ferry.

8 Regiment RASC/RCT/RLC 15th Anniversary Reunion Dinner

The 15th Anniversary Reunion Dinner will be held at The Village on the Green Club Aspull, WIGAN WN2 1PJ on 22 Oct 16.

It is open to any ex-member of 8 Regiment, with their Partner or Guests and any Cap Badges who served in the Regiment between October 1964 and July 2012.

For further information contact:- Jimmy Aspinall email: jimmyasp@hotmail.com or David Southall email: Dcsouthall@aol.com

Long Lost Friends – Intake 57A

I joined up at the Army Apprentice School in Harrogate early in 1957 and we were known as intake 57A. For the last 35 years I have been trying to track down ALL the lads that joined up with us and have so far found 97 out of 160.

The main section of the intake, about 100, joined in the February of 1957 with the Shadow intake of a further 60 joining after the Easter holidays of 1957, it has been great fun tracking them down and I would like to track down any others. If you were one of these lads please contact me. My details are:

Fred Carslake
Tel: 01454 317112
E-Mail: <mailto:fred.carslake@sky.com>



ALPINE CHALLENGE

by Capt Mark Wilson Ramsay

On the hottest day of the year, I heard the RAF Officers around me talk snow. Six months passed and I arrived with seven others from MOD Corsham at the RAF Ski and Snowboard Championships. From all three Services, a group description would include words like mixed, enthusiastic or amateur to compete against other eager competition. However, our Team's enthusiasm was palpable. News received that the Austrian Alps was due significant snowfall helped greatly.



Daily lessons and tuition from military and local instructors all helped prepare for the competition ahead. The competitions were set over several days, across the ski area. Except the cancelled boarder-cross, spare time was released to hone our race skills more time in fresh snow. Excellent performances all round with some mid-table finishes in the slalom and giant slalom races for both disciplines. OIC Sqn **Ldr Rob 'Franz' Newland** placed 31st in the Giant Slalom, while our Senior Army representative **Lt Col Al 'Flash' Balsdon** placed 56th in the same race. The tri-service team's best performance came from **Capt Mark 'Tray' Wilson Ramsay** with a very impressive 13th in the Inter-Unit Snowboard Giant Slalom.

Sporty... Adventurous... Fun... yes, on all counts. Everyone pushed themselves further, harder and faster on a mountain than ever before. Finally, it confirmed all those friendly jibes; the RAF only do the best hotels.

TENNIS

by Sgt Andy Pott

The R SIGNALS Tennis Team were Champions of the B Division in the Inter Corps Winter League 2016. The winter season finished on an all time high for us this year; having not won any silverware for 16 years it was about time the Corps team showed their full potential. Without losing one game we cruised into victory and secured our promotion into the Division A.

It was however a close call and it was only until we had played our last game that we had secured promotion. The AAC were hot on our heels, they themselves not losing a game all season, but their draw with the Infantry and our final win against the CAMUS/CAV team made us the victors.

This seasons star players were **SSgt Oli Neeve**, **SSgt Gee Gyamfi**, **Cpl Cully Culliford**, **LCpl Sam Terry** and **Sig Bledd Rees** all turning up to the matches to represent the Corps.

Division B							
	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Rubbers For	Rubbers Against	TOTAL POINTS
R SIGS	5	4	1	0	17	1	9
AAC	5	3	2	0	15	5	8
INF	4	2	1	1	8.5	7.5	5
CAM/RAC	5	2	0	3	7	9.5	3*
AMS	5	1	0	4	2.5	12	1*
RAPTC	4	0	0	4	0	14	0

Every year we enter the summer and winter leagues, the matches consist of two doubles pairs (A and B) from each cap badge playing each other in two sets.

The A Division won't be an easy ride mind you, this is obviously where the quality is and we will now have to compete in 10 games in the summer season. I have no doubts however we can continue our success in this division. The Corps has some excellent players two of which (**SSgt Gee Gyamfi** and **LCpl Grant Stevenson**) went on the Army Tennis Tour to La Manga Spain this year.

Please see following page for 2016 League Fixtures.

In addition to the league we have our own Corps annual competition which this year is being held on the 11th – 14th July 16. Everyone is welcome to enter and attend and there is always a mixture of abilities. If you are interested in playing please get in touch or speak to your chain of command.





ALTA SUMMER LEAGUE FIXTURES 2016

Date Team	30 MAR	6 APR	13 APR	20 APR	27 APR	4 MAY	11 MAY	18 MAY	25 MAY	1 JUN	8 JUN	15 JUN	22 JUN	29 JUN	6 JUL	11-12 JUL	13 JUL	14 JUL
A LEAGUE																		
RA 1	RLC (H) (1)	R SIGS (H) (4)	RE (3)	REME (1)				INT (H) (5)		R SIGS (2)	RLC (H) (4)	RE (H) (1)		REME (H) (1)	INT (2)	R S I G N A L S C O R P S C O M P E T I T I O N		
RLC 2	RA (1)		R SIGS (2)		RE (H) (4)	INT (2)	REME (H) (2)		RE (1)	RA (4)		INT (2)		R SIGS (H) (3)	REME (H) (3)			
INT 3	R SIGS (2)		REME (H) (1)	RE (2)		RLC (H) (2)		RA (5)	R SIGS (2)	REME (H) (1)		RLC (H) (2)		RE (2)	RA (H) (2)			
REME 4	RE (H) (3)		INT (1)	RA (H) (1)		R SIGS (H) (1)	RLC (2)	RE (H) (4)		INT (1)			R SIGS (H) (4)	RA (1)	RLC (3)			
RE 5	REME (3)		RA (H) (3)	INT (H) (2)	RLC (4)		R SIGS (H) (1)	REME (4)	RLC (H) (1)			RA (1)		INT (H) (2)	R SIGS (1)			
R SIGS 6	INT (H) (2)	RA (4)	RLC (H) (2)			REME (1)	RE (1)		INT (H) (2)	RA (H) (2)			REME (4)	RLC (3)	RE (H) (1)			

CRICKET TOUR T

With the summer of 2016 rapidly approaching The Royal Signals Cricket Club embarked on a tour of Durban in The Republic of South Africa. The aim of the tour was to give the players a chance to play and adapt to conditions in a different country and help the team bond become even stronger going into the new season.

The side met on a cold windy afternoon at Tollgate indoor centre based in Salisbury for a pre tour net session run by **Sgt Stuart Houghton**. Every member of the touring squad was put through their paces with an intense but light hearted net session. After finishing at Tollgate we moved to Pirbright before departing on the afternoon of February 25th to make the 11 hour flight to South Africa. We arrived in Durban after our connecting flight from Johannesburg to a wall of heat at the King Shaka International airport. Matchday 1 on February 27th was a quick twenty minute drive from our hotel on the Durban beachfront, we arrived at Amanzimtoti Cricket Club to a sea of children playing cricket on the outfield in a KFC initiative to get kids in the community active. The squad then conducted a training session to shake off the rust from the flight and to get our bodies acclimatised to the heat and humidity we were going to be facing. We then played a twenty over game against our hosts for the day, winning the toss the tourists decided to bowl first and it wasn't long before the Signals made their mark with **LCpl Luke Robinson** taking two quick wickets in the first over putting us firmly on top, but the local team dug in and fought back after some strong bowling from the Signals attack and posted a total of 107-6. In reply the Signals never really got going with **SSgt Keith Ford** top scoring with 25, we fell short of the total finishing on 89 all out from 19.2 overs. After the game we were hosted by Amanzimtoti and after presentations and speeches we had a few drinks and a buffet, following a few plates of food **LCpl Josh Cooper** remarked he could beat a champion 400m runner who had been practicing around the pitch.



First training day at Amanzimtoti Cricket Club

After a conversation with the young man's coach the race was set and **Coops** put in a very good effort despite being barefoot and full of food, he finished only twenty seconds behind to a roar and a beer from the rest of the squad. The following day we had a rest day with some of the squad taking part in a stretching session at Crossfit Durban. With the rest of the squad exploring what other parts of Durban had to offer aside from the beachfront shops and the beach outside the hotel.

Matchday 2 was on February 29th against Pinetown Cricket Club in a 40 over game, With the tourists winning the toss and electing to bat first in the heat

we got off to a positive start with **LCpl Josh Cooper** scoring a nice 30 at the top of the innings, but all eyes were on the other opener as **Cpl George Park** was caught fantastically by fellow Signals player **LCpl Tom Pearse** for a score of seven, which will leave it tense at work with the pair both posted to 14th Sig Regt. After losing **Cooper** and **LCpl Jordan BZ** for 17 the Signals were in need of a big innings and again **SSgt Keith Ford** came to the fore along with **Sgt Stuart Houghton** the pair scoring 82 and 46 respectively pushing the innings along with helpful cameos at the end from **LCpl Robinson**, **LCpl Golds** and a fantastic 4 ran in the heat by **Capt Daniel Wall** and **Sgt Bidan Gurung**, to push the tourists up to a respectable 226 for 7 from their 40 overs.

In the second half of the game the home side got off to a flying start with the batsman taking a shine to the openers for the Signals, but the bowlers fought back after two good pieces of bowling from **LCpl Sam Birch** and **Sgt Luke Brereton** helped by the finger of umpire **Sgt Dave Hudson** reducing the batting side to 19 for 2. The batters then took control of the game pushing the score along to 70 before losing their third wicket taken by **LCpl Robinson** with the fourth falling 20 runs later to the bowling of **LCpl Ben Golds**. Then the game looked to be getting away from the tourists but a fine delivery from **Capt Daniel Wall** removed any hope of the home side winning with the side falling just short of the target getting 208 for 5 from their 40 overs.

Matchday 3 was only a day later against Delta Cricket Club in a 50 over contest, with a few changes made from the second game the Signals won the toss and chose to bat first. The innings never really got going and the tourists stumbled to a total of 104 all out from 38.4 overs, with a top score of 28 from **Sgt Bidan Gurung** in the face of a very good bowling attack on a very tough pitch, in reply the home side made short work of the signals bowling attack with only **LCpl Luke Robinson** taking any wickets, with the rest of the attack seemingly getting the dreaded claw, but the lads toiled hard and made the winners work to get their target from 22.4 overs.

The following two days were downtime with the first being a squad outing to a local children's charity and care home which was a thought provoking experience for all the lads. The Ethelbert Children's Home has around 75 children, varying in age that all need feeding, clothing and bathing everyday, with the entire work load falling on the aunties that look after a number of children each. When we arrived at the gates we had no idea just how many children were being cared for, we moved onto the playing field at the bottom of the complex and set up a number of cricket sets and began playing with the young children. We moved on from cricket to catching games and eventually carrying the children around on our shoulders and letting them play in the hire van. After packing up all the equipment we congregated in the chapel and took part in a small service from the Pastor Casper De Villiers after which we had dinner with the children and had a quick dip in the pool before saying goodbye to the amazing aunties and all the children.

The next day was a squad trip to the Tala Valley Game Reserve in the morning seeing some of the native wildlife to South Africa up close and in their natural environment. In the afternoon we travelled to Pietermaritzburg to play a different style of indoor cricket



TO SOUTH AFRICA

by LCpl Ben Golds

to the traditional style most of the team had played before, we received a training session from three local players in the rules and techniques in which to play this fast and furious game and played 4 fixtures against local teams. After a quick change we then moved into the bar area to celebrate **Capt Wall's** birthday, he is a proud South African from Pietermaritzburg and was joined by some of his family.

Matchday 4 was against the Dolphins Province Academy side in a 20 over contest, the game started with the hosts winning the toss and electing to bat first. A decision that wasn't easily vindicated after the early loss of their opener for 0 after being removed by **Maj Alex Senneck**, after the early tight bowling of **Maj Senneck** and **LCpl Robinson** the home side took the initiative amassing 160 for 5 from their 20 overs. The Signals innings got off to a similar start as the hosts but the touring party were blown away for 61 off 17 overs much to the dismay of the **Capt Sgt Houghton**, who top scored with 11 in a below par outing for the tourists, the day looked up though as the Squad took an outing to watch the Proteas, South Africa's national Cricket team against Australia in a T20 international at Kingsmead stadium in Durban. The Proteas running out winners in a tightly contested game which made up for our poor display earlier in the day.

There was no time to rest after the previous days excitement with matchday 5 on March 5th against Umzinto & Districts Cricket Union in a 40 over fixture. The hosts won the toss and elected to bat first with a good bowling performance on a flat deck the home side made 235 for 8 from their 40 overs. **Sig Mark Bibbing** and **LCpl Tom Pearse** were the pick of the bowlers both claiming three wickets a piece but the highlight of the innings was witnessing a group of monkeys running across the open field just off the pitch adding to the many animal encounters already had on the tour. The Signals reply started badly with **Cpl George Park** being bowled in the first over but **Sgt Houghton** took control of the mantle scoring 90 before being given out Leg before wicket. With useful contributions from **LCpl BZ** who made 34 and a few questionable umpiring decisions which halted the momentum of the innings, the only resistance lower down the order coming from **LCpl Tom Pearse** who hit a blistering 32 with a bat boasting some very tasteful Corps stickers and a Corps coloured Bat grip showing some brilliant character along the way as always from the Corps self-proclaimed best 12th man. We finished 20 runs short of the opponents score but put up a great fight. We moved from the game to Kings Park to watch the Natal Sharks play against the Los Jaguares in a super 15 rugby fixture, with the sharks running out victorious and everyone enjoying some more team bonding time.

Matchday 6 was our last fixture on March 7th against the South African Air Force in a 40 over fixture. Captain for the day **LCpl Jordan BZ** won the toss and chose to have a bat, his decision vindicated as he hit a captains knock of 112 not out. The knock was BZ's first hundred for the Corps and helped the Signals reach 261 for 3 from their 40 overs with notable knocks from **LCpl Cooper**, **Cpl Ramesh Gurung** scoring 31 and 36 respectively. The home side were then never at the races losing wickets at regular intervals with **Capt Wall** the pick of the bowlers taking 4 for 25 from his 6 over spell, with a special note to the opening pair of **Maj Senneck** and **LCpl Robinson** who toiled through the hottest part of the day to lay a bowling platform for the rest of the side to feed off, eventually bowling the Air Force side out for 134 in 33 overs. We were hosted magnificently by the Air Force with the obligatory brai and drinking games.



Royal Signals v South African Air Force, Durban

With the last of the games completed the touring party checked out of the hotel on the 9th March to make the 4 hour journey up country to the Royal Country Inn, Dundee in preparation for a battlefield tour to Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift. We stopped for lunch at the Rorkes drift hotel which turned out to be a nice break from rain that had descended over the course of the day. A very exuberant and knowledgeable guide walked us through the battle sites and regaled tails of extraordinary valour but also poor leadership and judgment, lessons which we can all learn from. On returning to the hotel we had our end of tour meal which was traditional Zulu fare with traditional Zulu dancing which a few of the lads were picked to partake in. To close the evening awards were then handed out for best batsmen and bowler which went to **LCpl Luke Robinson** and **LCpl Jordan BZ**. The day after we departed back to Durban for our flights back to the UK. A massive thank you must go to the organisers of the tour **Capt Wall** and **WO1 (Yofs(EW)) Fox** for all the hours put into organising a fantastic tour and an experience that will last a lifetime, also to **Sgt Houghton** and **SSgt Ford** for the guidance on and off the field and in the nets.



Visit to Rorke's Drift



The End of Tour meal at The Royal Country Inn





The Royal Signals Boxing Association (RSBA) was established in May 2012 with the intent of promoting boxing within the Corps, and as a forum for elite level boxers to continue their sport on their return from the Army level boxing. Today the RSBA promotes both elite and novice boxing within the Corps.

On the back of the Corps winning the Army Boxing Championship in June 2012, Bramcote became the home of Corps boxing, and a Corps' boxing gymnasium was established. Bramcote hosts both the Corps' bi-annual training camp (Exercise BRAMCOTE BOXER) and the Corps' boxing finals. The events are run under the direction of the RSBA president, **Col Taff Watts MBE (Lt Col Mike Fayers assumes this appointment in April 2016)**, and the Corps Coaches, **WO2 (RQMS) Nath Dorrian, Sgts Al Mousley and LCpl Nik Gittus.**

Ex BRAMCOTE BOXER consists of a two-week training camp, open to all level of boxers from newcomers wishing to sample the sport to Combined Services Boxers. The aim of Ex BRAMCOTE BOXER has been to develop both physically and mentally, all levels of boxing within the Corps in order to promote a competitive Royal Signals Boxing Championships and subsequently a stronger Corps Team.

In its preliminary years the exercise would achieve typically 20 – 25 boxers, but as our facilities progressed at a rapid rate, within 12 months we had over 90 boxers and coaches attending. The exercise has proved to be a massive success; Ex BRAMCOTE BOXER has taken new comers and has guided them to international honours, namely **LCpl 'Turbo' Turbitt (22SR)** and **Sig Shanice James (37SR)**. Royal Signals Boxing now has over 140 boxers and coaches.

During our most recent EX BRAMCOTE 9 (October 2015) we delivered the recently reconstructed ABA Assistant Caching qualification, where 23 boxers achieved their first qualification in Boxing Coaching. The course was delivered by **Mr Alan Keist (GB boxing)** and was the first of its kind in the UK.

The Signals Boxing Championships re-emerged in April 2012 after a sabbatical of over 90 years. Hosted by 30SR the event has grown year by year. Not only does it give boxers the opportunity of being crowned Corps Champions, but also the Inter Unit element gives both units and coaches the opportunity to battle it out. The Corps Championships also gives the opportunity for the Corps Coaches to talent spot and select a team for preparation and training to compete in the Army Championships.



The Corps' continuing and ever growing success is ultimately due to the facilities at Bramcote. The Corps Gym (previously a junior ranks kitchen) is an excellent resource, and has quickly become a Boxing Centre of Excellence. It is highly regarded at a national level. Professional boxers, namely **Martin Murray**, **Frankie Gavin** and **Tommy Langford** have all used the facility as base for the World Title Challenges, and still continue to do so. **Sgt Al Mousley** has been our link-man with the professional aspect of the sport, and is involved in World Championships Boxing. He was part of the coaching team for **Frankie Gavin** in his IBF World Title fight versus **Kell Brook**, which was shown on Sky Sports. The promotional training videos and interviews were also filmed at the venue in Bramcote.

Success breeds success and now the Royal Signals makes up a considerable element of Army Boxing's achievements. Our accolades in 2015 are:

National Representatives:

LCpl Turbitt (22SR)

National Champions:

Sgt Silvera (3SR)

Sig James (37SR)

Combined Services Champions:

Sgt Kavanagh (22SR)

Sgt Silvera (3SR)

Cpl Martin (11 EOD)

LCpl Turbitt (22SR)

Sig James (37SR)

Army Champions:

Cpl Martin (11 EOD)

LCpl Curwood (30SR)

Army Finalists:

LCpl Uraj Punn (18SR)

Sig Bayford (21SR)



LCpl Turbitt was crowned English Champion

We are off to a flying start in 2016 with **Sig James** (37SR) boxing in an English Title Eliminator contest on 6th February. She won a unanimous decision, and is now the 2nd seed within England and will contend for the English Title later in the year. Additionally, **LCpl Turbitt** (22SR) was crowned English Champion January 2016. The year is still young and the goal of having an R SIGNALS representative within the 2018 Commonwealth Games remains on track.

The future of Boxing within the Corps is extremely bright. In 2016 the Corps will continue to deliver EX BRAMCOTE BOXER twice yearly, Corps Champions in March, as well as taking a Corps Select Team to Cyprus for preparatory training in time for the Army Boxing Championships. Planning is also underway to attend the famous training locations in California in the near future. Those wishing to know more about the sport, or be a part of the it's growing success are to contact:

Secretary: 94777 5625 - **Capt Peter Watson** (2SR Trg Officer)

Manager: 95551 7405 - **WO2 (RQMS) Nathan Dorrian**
(16SR RQMS Tech)

Head Coach: 94423 2551 - **Sgt Al Mousley** (30SR)

Coach: 94777 2511 - **Sgt Dean Brice** (2SR)

[FB Page - Royal Signals Boxing](#)

"Winners are not those who never fail, they are those who never quit"



EXERCISE NO



Ex NORDIC TIGER was a 10 Sig Regt Nordic Touring expedition which took place on the Hardanggervidda, Southern Norway in March 2016.

Pre - Deployment; Deficiencies

The planning and organisation of NORDIC TIGER seemed to go remarkably smoothly until the final hurdle. Instructors were found, finances secured and accommodation booked without too much of an issue. It all went really rather well until one fateful morning just a month or so before the expedition began. "You've got deficiencies" said **Dave** the civilian storekeeper as he wandered into the office. 'Deficiencies?' I thought, "Well it's a bit early in the morning for feedback **Dave**, but what have I done now?"

"No, deficiencies... from Bicester".

Dave mumbled as he unceremoniously dumped a pile of poorly photocopied lists on my desk. "They've just sent you a fax, here are the vouchers..."

"A fax? Vouchers?" I mused aloud. "Why are Bicester sending me vouchers **Dave**? It's not my birthday for another month". "And who uses a fax machine?"

"Bicester use faxes" **Dave** clarified, not in the mood for banter "and you've got no skis".

"No skis?!"

"None". And so it was that I spent the last few weeks prior to deployment frantically exhausting both service and commercial sources of cross country skis, boots and clothing.

The Expedition Aim

Fast forward to 5 weeks later and I'm sitting in Costa Coffee at London Gatwick surrounded by a small group of 10 Sig Regt Soldiers awaiting the arrival of **Sgt 'Spread' Allen**, our RAF Regt ski instructor. By now of course, I have skis (it was a close run thing), and shovels, probes and a plethora of other equipment **Spread** has told me will prove essential. The exped participants have been sourced from 243 and 251 Sig Sqn and vary in age from 33 years old to 21. Unfortunately for the 33 year old in question (me) the 21 year old in question, **LCpl Dan 'feed me' Atkins** looks in pretty good shape and has just conducted a season of competitive Nordic ski training. 'I may have to live with not being the first to the top of the hill this time round' I muse to myself.

In due course '**Spread**' would arrive and together we travelled via Bergen airport and the highest mainline railway in Northern Europe to Finse. Sitting at 1222 metres above sea level, Finse is a centre for Nordic, downhill and kite-skiing just to the north of the Hardanggervidda ice cap; a vast wintry wilderness. Our intent was to spend 3 days here at Finse, honing our new found cross country skills before heading off on a 5 day exped across the frozen lakes and mountain passes of the Hardangger. It was hoped that along the way we would earn ourselves the Nordic Foundation 1 qualification and learn a few winter survival skills.



NORDIC TIGER

by Capt JG Thomas, 10 Sig Regt

The Instructor

Our instructor, Sgt 'Spread' Allan proved to be a diminutive Northerner with a penchant for the total mispronunciation of Norwegian place names. What made his inability to say anything remotely Norwegian all the more remarkable was the fact that he had visited the country literally dozens of times. For Spread was an experienced Winter Warfare instructor who had wintered in Norway most years of his military career. If I was feeling misgivings about the age gap within the group, he most certainly was too, but as he said. "What I lack in fitness, I'll make up for with technique"; a good mantra for life in general I think you'll agree.

The Training

Our first few days in Finse were dominated by training, as a group of relatively experienced skiers we were all quietly confident of our ability to control even the unwieldy cross country skis which I had sourced from Scotland. For those who haven't conducted cross country skiing before, going uphill takes the wind out of you whilst going downhill knocks everything else out of you. LCpl 'The Flying Fox' Stewart adapted most quickly to one's utter inability to turn or control oneself on the downhill sections. Instead he embraced the sensation and made a beeline for the bottom of any significant slope. In taking on one of the most minor slopes, a meagre 10 metres from the hut door, I was the first to come a cropper, launching myself face first over the tips of my skis and hyperextending my big toe as a result. I was to spend the next couple of days up on blocks before the main expedition phase kicked off.

The Expedition

And so after a few days of training and survival skills, we took to the trails of the Hardangger for an arduous 5 day expedition using the system of manned and unmanned huts dotted across the national park. Going was good, despite an increasing number of injuries, and we ate up the ground in front of us. Particularly when LCpl Ross Cheung was at the front of the column and food was on his mind; this combination of factors would inevitably lead to 6km sprint finish to the next hut. We pushed out some big distances over the course of the expedition, with a total of over 120km covered in 5 days; we also hit heights of over 1500m and experienced temperatures ranging from -21 to 7C. We travelled over vast frozen lakes as well as through Lord of the Rings style mountain passes such as the 'Church Doors'; a genuinely outstanding sight which takes its name from the huge rock buttresses either side of the pass. We skied through whiteout conditions during which we simply put our hoods up and followed the skis in front as well as experiencing bluebird skies during which we skied in short sleeves and base layers. A truly remarkable trip for all involved.

The Accommodation

Throughout the expedition we made use of the DNT system of huts, owned by the Norwegian Tourist Board, these cosy little huts (cosy when they weren't overrun by Norwegian school children) provide a bed, warm fire and 3 course dinner for the hungry skier. This meal would inevitably start with a cream based soup, often mushroom, much to the chagrin of the lactose intolerant, mushroom hater, Cpl Gaz Pritchard. Dinner could be rounded off with a £8 beer for those with money to burn, but after a long day's skiing, the priority was admin and then bed.

Reflections

Ex NORDIC TIGER was everything it promised to be. The terrain was truly spectacular and well worth a return visit. In many respects, Nordic Touring is a wonderful form of Adventurous Training; it can be arduous, requires good physical fitness, administration, teamwork and navigation. I'm definitely a convert and I'd wholly recommend the experience to others. Many thanks to those at 10 Sig Regt who made the exercise possible and the wider Corps for its support.



exercise tiger PLANINA



Capt Rowe's group of intrepid skiers is joined by D Info, Gen Semple and Gen Simovic and his staff. From Left: Col Stojkovic, Col Maconochie, Gen Semple, Gen Simovic, Capt Rowe, Col Sharkey, Maj McCullough, Maj Peers, Maj Palmer, Maj Barr



Maj Simon Gray leads his group in some pre-ski warm-up



Anyone for waterskiing???



An SF1 group in formation on the Kopaonik

"Who wants to go skiing?"

In a world of pressured timelines and bulging inboxes there have been more difficult questions to answer. The offer was for five days skiing in Serbia aimed at all levels of competency to gain a Skiing Foundation qualification. Such opportunities are rare when based in a busy HQ. The 30-strong Army group which deployed was made up of soldiers and officers mostly working in the Ministry of Defence and Army HQ.

After some meticulous planning and briefs we were set for success and an afternoon rendezvous in Andover. Most of the party made the subsequent RV at Luton airport, though one exercise member ended up having a rather more eventful trip to Belgrade than the rest of us (no names, no pack drills!).

Arriving late into Belgrade we were met by the DA and ADA from the British Embassy before being whisked off to our hotel for the night on the edge of the city, passing the

bombed out shells of buildings, left as a reminder to NATO of its 'illegal' war in the 1990s.

The next morning we continued our journey to the mountains, heading south from Belgrade for about 4 hours toward Kopaonik, a ski resort within a national park in southern Serbia, on the administrative line with Kosovo.

In parallel with the adventurous training aims of the trip we were also to use the expedition as a vehicle for some UK-Serbian defence engagement and so accompanying us was the British Assistant Defence Attaché, **Mirko Pohulek**, usually based in Belgrade. We were also joined all week by **Col Daniel Stojkovic** and **Lt Mladen Stamenkovic** from the Serbian Army Command who were with us to observe this crazy British Army concept called 'Adventurous Training.' So curious were the Serbs that they even sent military and civilian camera teams out to film us towards the end of the week! After taking over accommodation and the mandatory kit issue





the slopes of

The SF2 group spotted from the air in the back country of Kopaonik

fun-and-games we all went to experience authentic Serbian cuisine at the Salas restaurant, complete with musical accompaniment. **Col Nick Ilic**, our tame Serb, couldn't help but join in with some of the folk songs!

The aim of the expedition was to award everyone a Ski Foundation qualification, either SF1 or SF2. However, some people were in the middle in terms of ability so completed SF1 continuation training with a view to getting the SF2 qualification next time. We were fortunate to have 5 instructors on the trip. **Maj Mark Howard-Harwood** took the SF2 group who spent the week getting limited value from their lift passes, electing instead to walk up the hills before then skiing down them. The remainder were split into ability groups, benefitting from excellent levels of tuition from **Lt Col Mike Servaes, Maj Si Gray, Capt Toby Rowe** and **WO2 Stu Henderson**. With only a few absolute beginners, and after the inevitable initial wobbles, tumbles and misunderstandings with ski lifts, most people quickly found their ski legs and as

confidence grew it became apparent that there were a number of people whose enthusiasm outmatched their skill, in some cases by a considerable margin! These valiant few were soon wearing their battle scars proudly. By the end of our first day there were sore legs, pulled muscles but a sense of real accomplishment and satisfaction. No matter what the level of experience we had all learned something, if only how to fall at speed!

Despite good snowfalls in January and early February things were not looking so white when we arrived; the sun was shining and the snow was melting. On days one and two some of the groups were even able to work on their water-skiing as well as alpine skiing in the afternoons!

But the ski weather gods were smiling on us and we were blessed with a flurry of the white stuff on Wednesday which went some way towards covering the brown patches which had emerged on some of the pistes by Tuesday afternoon.

We were joined on the slopes on Thursday and Friday from the UK by **Gen Richard Semple**, Director Information, Army and some more officers from the Serbian Army, including **Brig Gen Zeljko Petrovic**, 1st Brigade Army Commander and **Lt Gen Milosav Simovic**, Chief of Land Forces and **Brig Gen Ilija Todorov**, Chief of Intelligence and Reconnaissance Operations Department of the General Staff.

Our final day of skiing in Serbia was the answer to all of our prayers. We woke up to a covering of fresh snow and it continued to snow all day. And so with aching limbs and glad hearts we threw ourselves once more down the freshly replenished slopes of Kopaonik.

On Friday evening, as part of the exercise's defence engagement Programme we took part in a joint Anglo-Serbian military history seminar. We were fortunate to receive a presentation from **Slobodan Djukic** of the Serbian Defence Academy on the battle of Kolubara, a key battle for the Serbian Army against the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1914. For some of the Army Staff who attended the Staff Ride to Gallipoli last year, it was fascinating to understand the connections between this Serbian battle and the decisions taken in London to launch an offensive against the Ottoman Empire in Turkey, rather than reinforcing the Serbs against the Austro-Hungarians.

Once our brains were full we focused on our stomachs, being invited to the most enormous dinner of traditional Serbian food hosted by the Defence Attache and in the company of **General Simovic**, Commander Serbian Land Forces and some of his staff.

After some hard skiing it was sadly time for us to head to the airport and back to the reality of the day-jobs and the inevitable backlog of emails and answer phone messages. The flight back to London provided a couple of hours of reflection. Over the course of a week we had all learned a huge amount; how to ski properly, how to take a fall, we'd all had a lot of fun and we had all been challenged. Adventurous training provides a great vehicle for team-building and challenge and is as different from our desk jobs as can be. This trip also gave us the opportunity to engage, live and work alongside the Serbian Army. Despite our historical differences of the last century it turns out that we're very similar, albeit probably not quite as good skiers!





Exercise TIGER PISTE

by LCpl M Clifford

243 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC Maj E Ballard
SSM WO2 P Brown

Ex TIGER PISTE was a Regimental Level 3 skiing trip to Val d'Isere, France. Our Gatwick departure was slightly delayed due to ice on the runway, but ground staff swung into action and we were soon on our way.

We landed at Grenoble and continued our journey by coach up through the mountains to the resort. It snowed heavily all the way and as we got closer to the resort it seemed to glow like a winter wonderland. After checking into the ski lodge the hot food and comfortable bunk beds were a welcome break from the Haribo sweets and cramped seating of our transport.

The first day of our skiing adventure began with safety briefs, the issue of ski wear and then most importantly our ski passes. With the admin' completed we were soon on our way to the slopes for the first of many lessons. It was immediately apparent that not everyone was steady on their skis and by the close of the day there were some sore body parts. Notwithstanding the frustrations appreciated when learning a new skill, everyone kept their sense of humour.

Before the second full day had gained any momentum Cpl James Pye clearly had enough of wearing his own ski boots and thought that SSgt 'Fordy' Ford's boots to his dismay were obviously a better fit. We witnessed the birth of a character which would stay with us for the rest of the trip. Sig Daniel 'Wrecking Ball' Evans was a regular source of amusement to our instructor and us the group. He was like a heat seeking missile, always managing to wipe out someone nearby, then apologising whilst using them as a brake to slow himself down. The first of the basic skills, snow plough and plough turns were mastered to varying degrees in preparation for more difficult disciplines.

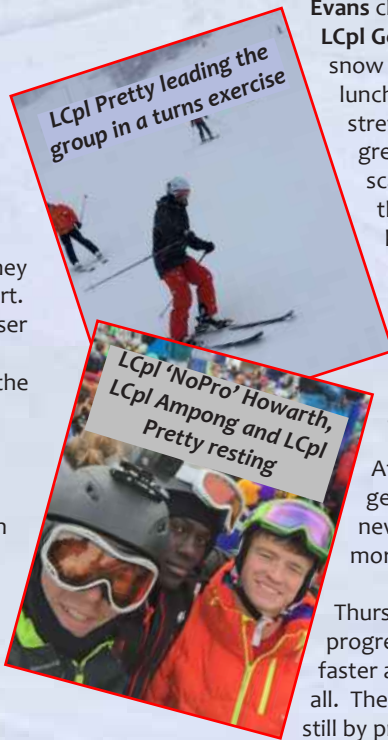
It wasn't long and we had the chance to employ our new abilities moving from the nursery slopes to attempt the

'green' runs higher up the mountains of Val d'Isere. This didn't prove too much of a challenge for most, but Sig Evans clearly found it to be an uphill struggle and LCpl George Horsham got a taste of France's finest snow on numerous occasions. After a well earned lunch at one of Val d'Isere's finest ski lodges we stretched our new skills, tackling most of the green slopes. The scenery of which appeared in scale to us novices like Mount Everest rather than the French Alps. After several falls to be known as 'cream ins' and an impromptu visit off piste by myself, the days skiing came to a successful close. The evening's après ski was a welcome rest from the slopes; the UCPA hostel laid on an evening of entertainment with a live band and party games, including tug of war using string.

At this point in the trip, as a group, we were getting pretty competent and began to hone new skills as we moved onto the bigger and more technical of the green slopes available.

Thursday came and the rest of the group had progressed onto the blue and red runs; bigger, faster and steeper which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. The advanced group had upped the anti further still by progressing to the black slopes where Sgt John 'Tomba la Bomba' Connor showed a clean set of heels to all his peers. The last day culminated with testing and a final free ski; LCpl Roscoe and Cpl Pye rejoined the group in order to gain their Ski Foundation 1 (SF1) qualification, which our star novice LCpl Jake Morris had deftly completed the previous day. The more advanced of the novice disciplines, traversing slopes and plough parallel turns to reciprocate were assessed to confirm our competence.

The majority of the group came away SF1 qualified; even the 'Wrecking Ball' did us proud. From there it was back to the UCPA for debrief with Bibi, who had been our instructor for the week. He supplied some local fruit wine and congratulated us all on a successful week. From there it was a quick tidy up and heads down ready for the long trip back. Overall, the expedition proved to be an excellent challenge and a great experience; which was thoroughly enjoyed by all the participants.



LCpl Pretty leading the group in a turns exercise

LCpl 'NoPro' Howarth, LCpl Ampong and LCpl Pretty resting



EXERCISE DRAGON SNOW SWORD

by 2Lt Austin Miller

Ex DRAGON SNOW SWORD was the 16th Sig Regt management ski trip, comprising of 14 officers and warrant officers, as well as two, other ranks, ski instructors. The aim was to conduct a week's skiing in the Alpine resort of Val Thorens, allowing several members to achieve their SF 1 and SF 2 qualifications, as well as an opportunity for some much needed R + R during a busy, committed year. The expedition ran from the 6-12 Mar 16 and was led by **Capt Dom Noone**.

The expedition departed at a prompt 0800 hrs on Sunday 6 March, under cloudy Staffordshire skies taking the coach to Birmingham airport. From here the party flew to Geneva Airport, landing to clear blue skies and enjoying the further coach journey past Lake Geneva to the French Alps. Arriving around 1830 hrs in heavy snowfall in Val Thorens, we quickly got settled, once they had found rooms with no current occupants. Many settled in for the night after enjoying some of the local cuisine, whilst others eventually retired having resolved incumbent bedding issues.

The first morning of skiing heralded more clear blue skies and a welcome fresh layer of powder. Having enjoyed a continental breakfast, the group assembled at 0845 hrs to begin the day's skiing. While the novice group under the guidance of **Capt Johnny Dale** moved to find gentle slopes to begin their basic training, the remainder and majority of the group headed off for a 'ski-off,' to determine ability ranges and how to conduct the remainder of the trip. Enjoying a series of red and black slopes, there were some heroic performances, such as a fast run by **WO1 Ian Wells** and some full contact by **Lt James 'Red Baron' Allen-Mclean**. Meeting for lunch, the group swapped stories, then departed to carry out the remainder of the afternoons skiing. Having had a productive day and separate dinners, several members of the group opted to head out to enjoy all the resort had to offer.

Tuesday morning saw the party wake up to heavy snow and fog, a very different experience. Whilst for the novices this meant a nerve-wracking day of navigating green and eventually blue slopes with extremely limited visibility, the -10 degrees' temperatures did not deter the rest of the group from their ambitious planned day. Using the Three Valleys passes, the party spent the morning skiing across the 3 valleys from Val Thorens to Meribel. Having reached their destination, and with many people beginning to suffer, they bravely headed back, navigating red and black slopes, as well as some token off-piste lines, to reach Val Thorens by late afternoon, ultimately covering a staggering 40km in the day.

The next morning saw the skies clear and another clear day of fresh snow that the whole group was determined to make the most of. With the novices attempting to master the blue slopes, resulting in a particularly spectacular runaway incident by **WO2 (YofS) Cath Pagan**, the rest of the group indulged themselves by deciding that the best way to navigate a particularly tricky black diamond slope was to attempt it off-piste. Though requiring much greater discipline, thankfully the off-piste approach did mean much softer powder, which was fortunate for many members of the team. That evening saw the introduction of 16th Sig Regt 'Come Dine with Me' as organized by 'Her Adjusty', **Capt Donna Gavin**. Loosely based on the television show, this involved 4 members, each from a different room, having to cook a starter, main and pudding for each other, followed by scoring afterwards. This highly successful evening allowed good opportunity for members of the Regt who rarely met to get to know each other in a relaxed and enjoyable environment, as well as introducing such delicacies as **Capt Donna Gavin's** well received (and in no way pre-empted) chocolate melt, and **WO2 (YofS) Cath Pagan's** herb soup. This was followed by enthusiastic scoring afterwards and an enlightening evening's entertainment.



A Stu Stew

Thursday heralded another clear day, so the expedition was able to progress smoothly. As a combined group, with the novices by now confidently navigating blue slopes, the morning had the instructors taking the group through avalanche safety drills, including checking layers of ice and finding survivors using transceivers and avalanche poles. An interesting and insightful lesson for all, it also showed that you can indeed fit three **Stu's** into a snow hole, creating the not seen before '**Stu Stew**.' Having received these lessons, this allowed the SF 2 learners to carry out an afternoon of Ski Touring, using different skis, crucial to gaining their qualification. Whilst they progressed, the rest of the group split down further, with some of the novices joining the main group to try some more challenging blue and red slopes in the other valleys, while the more advanced members enjoyed the challenges of some more off-piste skiing.



Instructors demonstrated a perfect dismount from atop the snow profiling

The final day of skiing saw the traditional fancy dress followed by an element of free ski. After a limited effort by some members of the party, the group spent the morning challenging themselves in the ski park, with varied levels of success on the jumps presented, although always amusing. Having attempted these several times, as well as some red slopes, the group split down into smaller parties to allow people to explore on their own for the last day. For some this meant enjoying the leisurely experience of several blue slopes, culminating at the 360 restaurant. For the majority a last go at the blacks and reds above the resort, ending up at the famous *La Folie Douce*. The evening was rounded off by a final dinner, with many eating their bodyweight in fondue and raclette and enjoying the classic French service.

The trip ended with the expedition departing the resort at 0800 on the Saturday, landing at Birmingham to grey skies but just in time to catch the rugby, but sadly not the transport back to MOD Stafford. After arriving back to camp, the group was just in time to witness a very satisfying victory for England over Wales.

Overall, the trip was a resounding success, with three member achieving their SF1 qualifications and several gaining their SF2. There were interesting and challenging opportunities for all abilities and everyone found themselves stretched, but satisfied, by the end.



Sixteen set out to deliver the Ski Foundation Level 1 and continuation training to the managerial elements of 1st Sig Regt. Despite some difficulty getting the trip off the ground due to instructors pulling out, the trip was on; 1 week in the Oberstdorf region of Germany. The journey out for the advanced party did not exactly start smoothly; as we attempted to check in we found that our booking had not been processed correctly meaning no hold luggage or winter ski equipment had been added. This was despite double, then triple checking prior to departure with those of another Corps who shall not be named. A quick flash for the £127 on the credit card and we were through to departures ready for a smooth onward journey.

After collecting hire vehicles we made our way to our accommodation for the week, the Hotel Pfeiffermuhle situated just outside of Wertach. Arriving late on we settled into our rooms for the busy day to come. In the morning after a hearty continental breakfast we made our way to the ski hire shop to be used for the duration of the trip, Ski Stadl. We collected kit and set off to recce the conditions and areas we'd be skiing in for the week. **WO2 (YofS) Rob 'Chair lift' Brown** was telling the group how he'd not skied since being at school, "about 15 years ago." When the instructor, **LCpl Ben Fidrmuc** probed a bit further Rob's 15 years turned out to be more like 23! Nevertheless we arrived at the Nebelhorn and made our way up the mountain. Conditions were beautiful with blue sky and a nice dusting of snow. The forecast was for more snow later in the week so we were pleased all round. That night we had to make the second of what would be a number of trips to Munich airport to collect our second instructor.

Day 2 began with an early start as we headed to Oberjoch where we planned to conduct the first day of training once the main body arrived. The weather was extremely mild which meant the snow conditions weren't great. The decision was made that unless we had a good amount of snow overnight, the first day of skiing would be done at the Nebelhorn. That night the main body arrived which treated the advance party to another round trip to Munich airport.

The next 5 days consisted of skiing at both the Nebelhorn and the Fellhorn. The group was split into 3 with varying levels of ability. The absolute beginner group, led by **Ben Fidrmuc** started the course with enthusiasm, diving quite literally head first into the snow. Notably **Lt Dave 'Kev' Keegan** picked up one of the first fines of the trip for a spectacular full de-kit whilst heading down the last run of the day. The feat was only equalled by the most advanced group's instructor **Cpl Dan Sutcliffe** who decided to show his group the most effective way of damaging yourself, crashing with quite a bump. Clearly this was all part of a bad practice demonstration and not something that would be repeated by any member of that group!

Unfortunately conditions on day 1 of the course were less than ideal with an almost total white out on the top pistes. The plus side to this was that the heavy snow would continue to fall throughout the day and night making the snow conditions much better for the rest of the trip. The conditions didn't to anything to deter the Adjt **Capt Liam 'Mach 10' Crane** who spent the whole day racing the rest of his group down the mountain. This didn't sit well with the mixed group who had limited experience so he was promptly evicted from the group to go and really test his metal with the advanced group.

Day 2 of the training took place on the Nebelhorn again. Conditions were against us again with the 2 more advanced groups having to wait to begin skiing. Not to be put off the beginners group put the rest of us to shame, skiing through some difficult, almost total white out conditions early on in the day. The instructor assured the exercise organiser, and person responsible for signing off the daily risk assessments, **Capt Stu Keenan** that all was fine. This must have been weighing heavy on his mind as poetic justice was delivered in perfect timing. After celebrating with aplomb witnessing **Maj Ed Swift** take a fall, **Capt Stu Keenan** followed the instructor on a small off piste adventure. Crashing in spectacular style, in full view of **Maj Swift's** group he then had to spend 15 mins digging around in the snow to find the ski that had ejected itself. Each group met up towards the end of the day to share the final run down to the bottom, after the first day's excitement something entertaining was almost certain to happen and those at the bottom were duly rewarded. **Maj Danny 'The Snow Plough King' Fielding** decided that he'd not quite had enough of a workout during the day, demonstrating to the rest of the group how he could straight line snow plough down the last run. A real quad burner that ended with him laid out at the bottom, 'catching his breath.' From here the group headed for some much needed apres ski at one of the local bars. Quite randomly in the seemingly quiet town, as you walked through the doors you were greeted by pounding euro pop. Un-deterred all members of the group got into the spirit of things with some interesting dance moves coming on display. One other notable performance stood out and that was of **WO2 (RQMS) David 'RSM Des' Corcoran** who had the unfortunate claim of having skied every piste of the mountain on his belly!





EXERCISE DRAGON MANSKI

The next few days were spent skiing on the Fellhorn. This offered much more skiing with 36km of piste to be had. A fresh dump of snow also meant that there was some good potential for some off piste skiing. This wasn't necessarily what all group members wanted to hear but in the spirit of adventurous training provided the opportunity to really push people out of their comfort zone. By this stage each group had been progressing well ably assisted by the quality instruction they were receiving. Some may have got a little too confident as they tried to out do the instructors. **Maj Paul Andrews** managed to smash a £150 pair of goggles on his face as face connected with piste at full pelt. This was much to the amusement of the group, clearly after checking that all the blood coming from his face was just from a 'little' scratch. Other antics were coming thick and fast by this point with **WO2 (YofS) Rob 'Chair lift' Brown** really earning his nickname managing to cause at least 15 minutes of delays over the day whilst crashing on or off the lifts. On the last count we concluded that he'd managed to stop most of the lifts he'd attempted to get on/off, some more spectacularly than others. Not to be out done **Maj Cath Tye** managed to clean out 3 people at the bottom of a T-bar causing a good few minutes of delays. This was much to our amusement but not to the local racing snake behind her who was clearly late for his lunch! The group finished with the obligatory fancy dress photo which was well received by all, including the other people on the slopes who saw us taking our photo as a worthwhile spectacle to take a few cheeky snaps themselves. Special mention must go to the Adjt for his commitment to the 1 Sig Regt Rhino after donning his own rhino costume and to **Capt Matt 'Throw in' Hollingsworth** for his superb DIY 19th Century officers outfit complete with pith helmet.

Away from the slopes **Maj Jack 'Ents' Dempsey** ran a tight ship for the duration of the exercise. Suitably levels of gasketry were rewarded by a suitable fine. Wednesday night saw a quiz night take place which provided much entertainment and kept spirits high throughout.

Unfortunately, the return journey seemed as cursed as the outbound one with a number of delays and a flight cancellation. Thankfully after the week of adventure training that the group had completed nothing could dampen spirits. The exercise resulted in all those requiring SF1 gaining the qualification and served as a brilliant opportunity for the managerial elements of 1 Sig Regt to get away from the stressors of the office environment and build and develop relationships. These will be even more crucial as the Regt looks forward to its readiness year in 2017.



EXERCISE MAU SLOPE - ALPINE



And the Award for best fancy dress goes to Elsa from Frozen

The evening of 22 Jan 16 saw 18 members of 15 Sig Regt (IS) embark on Ex MAU SLOPE, a skiing expedition to Val Thorens, France. The exercise was to allow members of 15 Sig Regt (IS), new to skiing, an opportunity to qualify up to Ski Foundation 1 (SF1) and develop individual courage and leadership skills in a challenging outdoor environment...it would also provide a great opportunity to develop unit cohesion in an extreme après-ski environment!

The outward journey comprised of two parties; 14 'lucky ones' would fly out, leaving 4 'short straws' to endure the 17-hour drive to Val Thorens with all baggage and ski kit. Once the lucky ones had landed, the very fortunate **Cpl 'Chris' Humphreys** (a short straw) then made his way back from Val Thorens to Grenoble airport – funding was tight and didn't stretch to everybody's airport transfer. Just when **Chris's** day couldn't get any longer the group embarked on an epic food shop (as this would ensure the CILOR funds stretched further than shopping in resort.) This task was led by **Sgt 'Oz' Osmond** who, to his credit, had a plan and stuck to it; even if his plan involved restless soldiers on the brink of mutiny. Once everybody had arrived the remainder of the day was spent getting settled into the accommodation and getting fitted with rented skis and boots.

On the first day of skiing we awoke to a glorious sunny day, ideal for what was briefed to be 'a gentle start to get your ski-legs back in.' However, no plan ever survives first contact...and this was no different. Unfamiliar with how everybody looked in helmet, goggles and ski gear, added to what seemed like every man and his dog deciding to go skiing that day soon meant we became a little 'displaced.' A few referrals of the piste map, several phone calls and 45 minutes later we were all back on track. It was evident however that the words 'gentle start' held absolutely no meaning to **Cpl 'Dangerous Mike' Bailey** after wiping out **SSgt 'Mike' Atherton** within the first half hour. This was to become a statement of intent for the week for young **Bailey**.

There was also a new experience for **WO2 (FofS(IS)) 'Des' Hill** who managed to fall on thin air resulting in a suspected ruptured ACL. Thanks to the efficiency of those around him he was swiftly (and expensively) stretchered away on the back of a skidoo trailer to the medical centre for some expensive treatment! An injury like this on the first day was a massive disappointment for **Des** but the morphine he was given seemed to mask it for several hours!

The second day saw an improvement on the previous day in terms of ability and a lot more off-piste skiing resulting in terrified novices but with confidence on the skis rising none the less. Karma struck after some light-hearted encouragement from



SKIING

by Cpl Harry Pankhurst



SSgt 'Neil' Beedon as he passed **Cpl 'Dangerous Mike' Bailey**, the only RAF member, which went something like: "You'd have bigger balls if you'd have joined the Army" – he then proceeded to wipe out in a spectacular fashion.

The crash of the week came from **SSgt 'Cam' Cameron** and **Cpl 'Chris' Humphreys** after following **SSgt 'Mike' Atherton** up a 4-foot bank. The rookie mistake they made was failing to lean back and so they ploughed face first into it. They had incorrectly assessed that if they skied towards the obstacle really fast, the more likely they would climb over it. Unfortunately for them it just meant they crashed that much harder, adding to the hilarity on the daily wash up was the fact that it was all caught on GoPro.

Another sunny day, combined with an early start on a wide and empty red piste by the name of 'Mauriennaise' presented a small window of opportunity to attempt some speed records (with the use of the Ski Tracks App.) The top speed of 73 mph was clocked by **Cpl 'Chris' Humphreys**, much to the annoyance of **LCpl 'Andy' Bryant** who held the previous record at 68 mph. Meanwhile in the other group humour was never in short supply as **Capt 'Mac' McGuicken** and **SSgt 'Reg' Gutterdige (aka The Chuckle Brothers)** went about their day.

Each day a perfect tag-team routine kept the instructors **SSgt 'Phil' Eaves** and **Sgt 'Oz' Osmond** on their toes. Without fail they disrupted every re-group, assembly point and head count with excuses ranging from "my boots don't fit", "you all skied off without me" and "I had to go back for my sandwiches." The term "herding kittens" came to mind. The day ended with **Oz's** take on a 'not-too-hot' turkey curry which was more akin to a vindaloo. Needless to say the large tub of yogurt on hand to neutralise the heat was empty by the end of the meal.

The next few days were spent completing the SF1 qualification. Students perfected the skill of linked parallel turns, enjoyed a practical lesson on the actions in the event of an emergency and an insight to avalanche drills, where they worked in pairs to locate a hidden avalanche transceiver in a buried daysack using a transceiver, metal probe and snow shovel. Everybody soon became aware how laborious it was and were relieved it was just a drill.

In the meantime, **SSgt 'Neil' Beedon** was having 'one of those days' embarrassing himself spectacularly falling over while trying to board a ski lift and the travelator in the same day, the funniest being the ski lift which came round and hit him in the head. He was fine though, maybe just his pride that had suffered a little.

The penultimate day of the exercise was essentially a free ski in fancy dress, which saw **Maj 'Jock' Reid** dressed as a Yeti leading the way down the slope closely followed by various super heroes, a penguin, tiger, teddy bear and **Cpl 'Chris' Humphreys** as a 6 ft 5" Elsa from Frozen (a sight that will forever haunt the local population) bringing up the rear. Attracting a lot of attention was **SSgt 'Phil' Eaves** with his teddy bear piggy back costume which had the group in stitches and countless requests to pose for a photo from other skiers throughout the day.

The final day was used to explore any areas of the resort that hadn't yet been skied. This was then followed by returning rented equipment and the realisation of the long trip back the following day, especially for those who took over the dreaded 'short straw' task and the 17-hour drive back.

Without doubt Ex MAU SLOPE 16 was a great success with 8 personnel from the regt gaining SF1 and a good refresher and consolidation of ski skills for those hoping to advance to SF2. A lot of fun was had by all with only a very small number of injuries to nurse in the following days.

A big thank you from the group goes to **SSgt 'Phil' Eaves** for organising and instructing on such a successful exercise and also to **Sgt 'Oz' Osmond** for instruction and keeping the group fed in the evenings after a hard days skiing.



SSgt Phil Eaves watches on as SSgt Mike Atherton screams in



Capt Mac McGuckien in his preferred position



EXERCISE

Finally the day had arrived. A grey Saturday morning in Aldershot saw the Ice Maidens Assemble ready to deploy on Ex Ice BAMBI, the next stage in the training and selection for Ex ICE MAIDEN. 22 women selected from across the British Army were heading to Norway to train in preparation for an all female British Army team which will cross the Antarctic landmass in 2017. Further details of the expedition can be found at www.exicemaiden.com

The Royal Signals contingent on these slightly mad women consisted of **SSgt Susie Rotherforth** of 2 MI Bn and **Capt Sandy Hennis** of 37 Sig Regt. Individual bios had been going on the Facebook page for weeks and the excitement was clear as we sat drinking coffee and discussing what essential bit of kit we had forgotten. **SSgt Susie Rotherforth** took the G4 reigns and the remainder of the day was a whirlwind of kit issues and packing. Three flights, a slight delay and one lost bag later we arrived at the Allied training Centre in Lackselv and collapsed into very comfortable beds courtesy of the Norwegian Army.

Awaking to stunning scenes of snow covered mountains we could not wait to get the skis on but a day of acclimatisation in camp was needed, after all it was -15 C! Time was used wisely learning how to work the stoves and receiving essential lectures on cold weather injury prevention. The following morning with pulks and bergans packed we set off onto the training area in snow shoes. This was a first for most of us but the **John Wayne** walking technique was mastered quickly. After crossing a frozen lake we set up the large bell tents which would be our home for the next few days. Learning on the job we dug out snow, built up walls and fought frozen guy lines in big mitts. By the end of the week we were much faster but were still pleased with our first attempt as we sheltered inside and defrosted with a warm drink.

Once defrosted it was time to learn how to Nordic ski. With skiing ability ranging from ex GB biathletes to never setting foot on skis with everything in between it was an interesting afternoon! With some expert tuition, a couple of races and a laughter inducing game of stick in the mud we had all mastered the basics and headed back to the shelter of the tents. The final surprise of the day was a two hour night ski after dinner. Leaving the warmth of the tents behind we headed into the frosty clear night. Proving that ICE BAMBI was an apt name for the exercise we slid, slipped and tumbled around the dark countryside gathering bruises en route but always getting up to give it another go.



Capt Sandy Hennis and Sgt Sara Canning, AAC get settled for the night in a quincy (snow shelter)

After a surprisingly toasty nights sleep lying on snow we were off skiing again. Getting into a routine which we will follow in Antarctica, we skied for 50 mins then stopped for ten mins. Sticking to the timings is essential and all admin has to be completed in the ten minutes so we could move off before anyone got too cold. Water from flasks was mixed with snow to double the amount we had available to drink. Constant food intake is also important to keep our bodies fuelled and warm so we all had snack bags with a mix of ration chocolate, nuts, dried fruit and biscuits. This tasted ok while out in the snow and when needing the energy; not quite so gourmet when



SSgt Susie Rotherforth getting the right angle to dig a snow shelter



Capt Sandy Hennis keeping warm whilst taking turns digging



SSgt Susie Rotherforth enjoying the early morning sunshine



Capt Sandy Hennis pulls herself out of freezing water during Ice Breaking drills



ICE BAMBI

by Capt Sandy Hennis, 37 Sig Regt



The Ice Maiden team were given top tips by ladies from the Norwegian Army



Setting up camp for some lunch time shelter
(Photo Credit - Vibeke Sefland, Norwegian Army)



Capt Sandy Hennis and SSgt Susie Rotherforth

sampled back in camp! It's fair to say that we were all glad of our snow beds that night.

With blisters forming from a long days skiing, it was a relief to take off the skis the following morning for a day learning how to build a quincy (snow shelter/igloo). Great care was taken building the shelters as we were also sleeping in them and nobody wanted to wake up buried in snow from a collapsed roof! Once built, carbon monoxide warning candles were lit before we started the never ending snow melting task to make dinner. Expecting to have a very cold night, it was a bit of a surprise to find how warm the quincy was once built. (Warm being relative to the temperature outside!) Once in sleeping bags they were actually quite cosy considering we were sleeping on snow!

For the next phase of the exped we split into three man tents and focused on speeding up the tent routine. Top tips were imparted to us by **Capt Vibeke Sefland**, our Norwegian Army mentor and all round superwoman. In between

long ski marches she taught us everything from using skis and poles as tent pegs to how to dry socks on water bottles and that would be essential to completing a crossing of Antarctica. We were joined for the skiing by **Lt Linn Nordhagen** and her two dogs which kept us amused during the 50 minute marching stints. Im not sure who was the most excited, the dogs or us when we saw a herd of reindeer. The reindeer must have been confused by our long ski line and came quite close to check us out!

The final part of the exercise was to complete the ice breaking drills, voluntarily stepping into a hole cut in the frozen lake and pulling yourself out with ski poles. This had been in the back of everyone's mind all week. Unsure of how cold the water would be and how our bodies would react, we were all a bit worried. It turned out that dressed in only a base layer, standing beside the hole waiting for your turn was actually worse than the water. We all completed the drill, rolling in the snow after to soak up the water and running to a nice warm hut to change into dry clothes and nurse the feeling back into extremities. Some of the girls even managed to sing whilst in the water!

Skiing back into camp was a much more professional affair than when we went out. We had all learnt a huge amount from **Vibeke** and **Linn** despite their shock at our untidy pulks! Our two leaders, **Maj Nat Taylor** and **Capt Nics Wetherill** then had the difficult decision of selecting those who will go onto Ex ICE READY in Nov 2016. It was an amazing experience, a really testing exercise which I was fortunate to share with some very inspirational women. The perfect finish to the exercise, we were treated to our first display of the northern lights as we left the lecture theatre on the final evening.



The ICE MAIDEN team skiing across a frozen lake well inside the Arctic Circle. Photo Credit – Line Hårklau, Norwegian Army

EXERCISE DIAMOND



The opportunity was taken in February this year for 16 lucky individuals from HQ 20th Armd Inf Bde to enjoy 6 days skiing on Ex DIAMOND ALPINE GAUNTLET 16. The ex was a Level 3 Adventurous Training Alpine Skiing expedition and took place on the Saalbach-Hinterglemm Glacier, Austria over the period 20 – 27 Feb 16. The ex comprised of skiing training, completing the Ski Foundation 1 syllabus with a consolidation day at the end. All eligible personnel passed the SF1 course. The aim was to develop individual leadership skills and collective team building in order to enhance the combat effectiveness of HQ 20th Armd Inf Bde. Additionally it aimed to reinforce the adventurous training ethos within the HQ by delivering a Joint Services Adventure Training Ski Foundation Level 1 (SF1) to those participants who had not achieved this qualification. The two advanced skiers within the group conducted continuation training toward SL1. All ex aims and objectives were met and the majority of SF1 personnel expressed an interest in completing the SF2 in due course.

The adventure began with a long 12 hour minibuss drive down to Saalbach-Hinterglemm in Austria which was made considerably longer with the not unexpected traffic jams around Munich. The journey was not without incident with **WO1 (FSWO) Jay Wheeler (RLC)** deciding on blind acceptance and obedience of SAT NAV resulting on a departure from a perfectly free flowing autobahn to what can only be described as a cross country route through quiet country villages, 8 U turns later and the autobahn was thankfully rejoined. On arrival in Austria, **Capt (SO3 G7) Piers Davies (RE)** decided that in the middle of a snow storm, a valiant run up to the hotel car park minus snow chains was the order of the day and was modestly and professionally achieved. The base for the ex was Hotel Adler; a wonderful hotel whose friendly staff, excellent food and top drawer facilities was outstanding and made for a very enjoyable and pleasant stay.

The first day began with an early start after breakfast and due to the hotel's location being only a short distance away the slopes, the first gondola of the day was taken up to the top for a quick assessment of skiing ability and the forming of groups. From there the groups carried out introduction to skiing utilising nursery slopes and limited blue runs within the Saalbach-Hinterglemm resort ski area. Saalbach-Hinterglemm is the largest ski resort in Austria and offers excellent pistes for beginners and intermediate skiers alike with a variety of runs providing challenging diversity over 280 km of amazing mountain scenery.

Skiing fundamentals were covered on day two with skiing limited to blue runs during the day. The more advanced of the two groups progressed to red runs during the afternoon. Unfortunately in the beginner group, one of the students suffered an injury which limited her participation for the rest of the week.

The third day focused on ski progression and the groups headed direct to the heart of the Saalbach-Hinterglemm resort to make use of longer blue runs building on controlled turning and piste awareness. One instructor was ill during this day so the exped skied as one large group. The sole SL1 instructor was supported by two SF3s' within the group that were conducting continuation training towards their SL1; this provided an excellent training opportunity for them and meant that ski training could continue.

Day four provided an opportunity for more ski training with the return of the sick instructor. The groups travelled further around the Saalbach-Hinterglemm resort for an introduction to different slopes. Instruction focused on ski fundamentals and parallel turning. The fifth



ALPINE GAUNTLET



day was spent utilising the whole Saalbach-Hinterglemm ski area to improve skills and confidence in order to vary experience gained. SF1 assessment was conducted in the afternoon with all personnel gaining the qualification.

The final day's skiing concentrated on ski consolidation and small group skiing. Groups of 3 or more qualified SF1 skiers conducted the day under the indirect supervision of the two SL1 Instructors within the Saalbach-Hinterglemm ski area. This gave the groups ample opportunity to practice the skills and techniques delivered on the course.

The weather was generally very good throughout the week allowing for great skiing conditions however by early afternoon the snow did become quite wet which tested skiers' technique and fitness levels in getting through some heavy slush. At the end of the week the instructors conducted a formal assessment resulting in everyone being qualified in (SF1) including **Cpl Kirsty Hudson** (AGC SPS) who only began skiing at the start of the week and put in an amazing effort.

The week would not be complete without some anecdotes which include **WO1 (IMWO) 'Bomber' Bamford** (AGC SPS) taking out a number of fellow skiers from behind including **Maj (SO2 G6) John Harrington** (R Sigs) who ended up careering down the mountain for what seemed like a kilometre before stopping in a big heap, for **Capt (SO3 G7) Pier Davies** (RE) for getting somewhat frustrated and very tired at his glacial speed of improvement resulting in the jettisoning of poles and rapid exit off the piste (on foot).

The ex was a resounding success and enjoyed by everyone attending, with all students and instructors improving their ski ability and instruction respectively. The high standard of hotel facilities was matched with the exceptional weather. The resort was equally impressive, with pistes catering for all ski abilities, and the sheer scale of the area meant that the group could explore a different part of the resort each day. There was a lot of positive feedback from the participants who enjoyed the week and expressed an interest in continuing ski training.

A big thanks goes to OIC Exped **Maj (SO2 G6) John Harrington** (R Sigs) who co-ordinated and organised the ex. The instructors **SSgt (QMSI) Paul Hanna** (APTC), 5 RIFLES and **SSgt (FSA) Leah Coxon**, (AGC SPS) 1 Irish Guards for providing quality instruction and to Grant and Green Tax Free motors for kindly helping to support the event.



EXERCISE FELIX PISTE 3

by LCpl Duker

One of the R SIGNALS lesser known roles, the Corps provides some fifty to sixty R SIGNALS Electronic Warfare Systems Operators and Communications Systems Operators to serve as ECM specialists within 11 EOD Regt, Royal Logistic Corps, in sqns nationwide from Northern Ireland, to Edinburgh, and as far south as London. Each year member's of the regt's 621 EOD Sqn embark upon Ex FELIX PISTE, a ski expedition for young (and old) hopefuls wishing to learn a new skill, or for those wishing to get a refreshment of existing ability. Taking on the burden of arranging the 2016 iteration of adventurous training for the personnel of 621 EOD Sqn, RAF Northolt, was **LCpl Lawson** (R SIGNALS), who began in earnest well in advance of Christmas to ensure everything was properly planned. And so it was, that on the 22nd February 2016, members of 621 EOD Sqn boarded a coach and headed for the serene white valleys of the Austrian Alps to begin Ex FELIX PISTE 3.

Designed to challenge, push personal boundaries, and force people a little out of their comfort zones, it was with much trepidation that members of the sqn endured the nigh-on twenty hour journey by land to their final destination of Kirchdorf-in-Tirol. Situated some thirty minutes from the world famous ski racing town of Kitzbühel, Kirchdorf allowed unprecedented access to the surrounding resorts on one lift pass. For the 621 contingent, this meant for a week of exceptionally varied skiing across two separate mountains.

After acquiring the necessary equipment from the ski hire, the somewhat coach-lagged group was shepherded back to the hotel for a brief by the OC 621 EOD Sqn and ski instructor on the trip, **Maj T Bennett** RLC, with the itinerary for the week's activities. Divided into two groups by ability, it was decided that **SSgt (YofS(EW)) Hamilton** would take the more experienced of the expedition's members, whilst **Maj Bennett** toiled with the shaky-legged baby mountain goats who'd seldom, if ever, bound feet to skis.

On day two, the groups hit the glistening white slopes of the St Johann ski resort equipped with unparalleled enthusiasm, and set about showing the ski-school toddlers how absolutely not to ski. This aim for the day was achieved in short order, with a couple of members giving a solid display of imitating what would happen should a fighter jet crash into the side of a mountain. Under the direction of **Yeoman Hamilton**, the more experienced group made their way up the lifts and to the devastating incline of a blue slope, mostly for some members to remember how to ski. Utilising a very much trial-and-error methodology, after a good couple of hours most

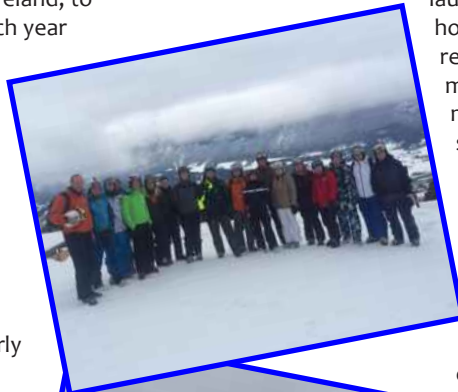
participants could remember how to turn – and most importantly – stop (relatively) safely. Day three, the Tuesday, saw **Maj Bennett's** group begin to come to terms with strapping themselves to two pieces of fibreglass and

launching themselves down a mountain, however slight the slope at that stage. Those readers with skiing experiencing may very much remember the resultant jubilation at managing to arrive at the bottom of a blue slope with all limbs and ski equipment still attached – this was very much the feeling across the board. Further up the slope, with the 'advanced' group, things were getting slightly quicker, with the team traversing the cliff-faced reds in various states of disrepair. Later on in the day, the two groups rendezvoused at the top of the mountain and skied down into Germany for a spot of lunch, an opportunity afforded by the border-straddling mountain at St Johann, before returning to Austria for the afternoon ski.

On day four the groups boarded a local bus and departed for Steinplatte, a resort further afield, and as it turned out, a lot higher. The peak of Steinplatte offered a myriad of slopes of differing difficulties to challenge and reward all ability levels, up above the cloud line, and with it some stunning views of the surrounding Alps. The two groups once again split up and enjoyed the new and varied slopes. Being at a higher altitude, the snow was significantly nicer under ski, and novice skiers in the expedition gained a new found confidence navigating the wider and longer blue runs.

Day five saw the advanced group continuing the string of red runs from the previous couple of days, now significantly longer at the Steinplatte resort. More daring (or just more competent) members turned their attention to one of the many black runs that linked the red routes criss-crossing the mountain, with disappointingly few falls to amuse and entertain. **Maj Bennett's** group attempted a gentler of the reds to put the more improved members of the beginner group to the test, in which many succeeded, some after a few hours of snow-ploughing.

On the final day, the group returned for a final ski at Steinplatte, though only for the morning. With the cloud layer high up and greatly reducing visibility, the groups had a final hoorah around the blues, reds and blacks at the very peak of Steinplatte before descending to the resort to hand back ski equipment and return to the hotel. A heartfelt debrief from the instructors at dinner rounded off the day – and expedition – very nicely. The personnel of 621 EOD Sqn, looking forlorn, packed their kit for the return leg by coach to RAF Northolt on the Saturday through to Sunday morning.



Ever wondered what's in other people's mail?

Not a bill but a cheque for £5,000

Nowadays letters are few and far between – indeed virtually non-existent if you exclude bills and marketing bumph - so imagine my delight on opening one and finding a crisp cheque for £5000. The cheque wasn't for me – it was made out to The RSBF - but it still felt like a win on the lottery. Our joy here at HQ was tinged with sadness as the cheque represented a Legacy donation to The Royal Signals Benevolent Fund following the passing of a fellow Signaller. We are exceptionally grateful to the donor and his family for thinking of The RSBF and will ensure the money is put to good use.

Some days it really does feel like Christmas

The same day, landing in my inbox was a wonderful email from a former Signaller who, alive, well, and 'up on his luck', wanted to make a monthly contribution to The RSBF. We sent him the paperwork as well as a 'Thank-you' email. Such generosity is not only heart-warming but it makes a real difference too.

Earlier that day the first few emails opened (excluding the ones from friends in Nigeria!) all contained requests for help and support from the RSBF – mainly from Signallers with personal and pressing needs. Most do not write these emails lightly, it takes courage to seek help and ask for support. We have the help of SSAFA, ABF and RBL for much of our casework, they check out situations for us, but once approved we issue funds to those in need. Grant giving in the past five years stands at almost £2million so having money coming in is key and crucial.

Going to the ends of the earth to help...

Fortunately at any one time there are a number of RSBF fundraising activities taking place. Earlier this year retired Signaller James Redden trekked to The North Pole for us (and for two other charities). He hasn't yet reached his fundraising target but he has helped raise awareness of the work we do. In the same vein The Corps Yeoman set about walking The Pennine Way... Sadly the elements didn't heed his efforts and he has been forced to abandon mid-trek but he is resolute about continuing in the near future.

Luckily most fundraising efforts go off without a hitch. The Gurkha Community recently held a series of curry lunches and subsequently presented us with a most welcome cheque. The situation in Nepal is still very difficult and we would have understood if they had taken 'The Charity begins at home' message to heart, but as a group they recognised the help and support we give to those in The Gurkha Community who are cap badged Royal Signals and wanted to show their appreciation.

It's great to see more and more units getting behind us too – and in return we often help them, as well as individuals. This includes adventure training grants, (for those who contribute via the One Day's Pay Giving Scheme), sports grants - snowboarding just one sport that received a chunk of money - as well as a whole assortment of other ways. Sometimes events receive money but promise more in return, we take each on its merits before making a decision.

The same week as the generous cheque arrived a thank-you letter was shared from a signaller helped many years previously. For personal reasons he hadn't been able to write the letter at the time, so it was even more touching that he had finally plucked up the courage to do so. In turn, we pass on our grateful thanks to all those of you who help and support The RSBF, whether through a donation for a wristband or something more substantial.

For those keen to help we've listed a few ways below:

To sponsor one of our fundraisers via Just Giving:

James www.justgiving.com/NorthPoleLastTwoDegreesRSBF

Steven <https://www.justgiving.com/Steven-Binks>

If you'd like to make a one-off donation

Text 70070 and enter "RSBF11 £xx" where xx is the sum you would like to donate

And of course we're always happy to guide you through other ways to help and support including monthly donations and Legacy giving.

Importantly it's not just money we need but your support more generally – follow us on Facebook or Twitter - @RSIGNALSRSBF, include us in your fundraising conversations, lend-a-hand at events...

Sandra Hutchinson

Communication Director

Royal Signals Trustee Limited

RSBFCommunication@royalsignals.org

For fundraising material including collection buckets contact: Carly events@royalsignals.org

If you are in need of welfare assistance or support contact: rsbfgrantscoord@royalsignals.org



ROYAL SIGNALS ASSOCIATION



Col (Retd) Terry Canham
Tel: 01258 482081



Maj (Retd) Mark Tivey
Tel: 01258 482082



Association Office
RHQ Royal Signals
Blandford Camp
Blandford Forum
Dorset
DT11 8RH
<http://royalsignals.org>

Patron: HRH The Princess Royal
President: The Master of Signals
Chairman: Brig DA Hargreaves

RSBF Grant Co-ordinator
Tel (mil) (9)4371 2089
Tel (civ) 01258 48 2089
Email: rsbfgrantscoord@royalsignals.org

Membership Secretary
Tel (mil) (9)4371 2090
Tel (civ) 01258 482090
Email: rsa@royalsignals.org



Mrs Linda Sizeland
Tel: 01258 482089



Mrs Caroline Addison
Tel: 01258 482090

General Secretary and Treasurer: Col (Retd) TW Canham
Assistant General Secretary: Maj (Retd) MS Tivey
Grant Co-ordinator: Mrs L Sizeland
Membership Secretary: Mrs CA Addison

These WIRE notes start with an apology, in April a paragraph about branch visits was inadvertently repeated from last year; my apologies for the confusion. The branch visits I have undertaken since the last notes are actually to 260 (SAM) Sig Sqn Assn on 23 April and Sheffield Branch on 7 May. I was warmly welcomed in both places by everyone I met and record my thanks to the members of both Assn and Branch for their invitations to my husband and me. I am now looking forward to visiting Swindon Branch later in May.

The 2016 Reunion admin is continuing behind the scenes as I write. We are hoping for kind weather and look forward to welcoming everyone to Blandford for this annual family gathering. This year the Princess Royal Day parade on Saturday morning will again see the contingent of retired members join 11 (RSS) Sig Regt on parade and march off with the Regiment. There will also be a Standard Bearer's Competition, Unit Displays, Vintage Vehicles, Defence Close Combat Trainer, Corps Museum and shop, and Blandford Officers' Lunch. Following lunch, which will be available in the Marquee or at other outlets on camp, there will be displays on Hawke Square featuring Corps Bands, Queens Gurkha Signals, Standard Bearers Competition Final, White Helmet Display Team and finishing with the Sunset Ceremony. During the evening there will be an evening curry function in the WOs' and Sgts' Mess or Party in the Park in the Marquee. On Sunday there will be a Church Service in the Corps Chapel followed by a reception in the Glass House.

We hope to see many of you this year and there will be a report and photographs in the next issue.

The calendar of events for 2016 can be found on the RSA website. An extract is here for those who are unable to access the internet:

22 May	Eden Camp Parade	Malton N Yorks
18-19 Jun	RSA Reunion Weekend	
26 Jul	Corps Memorial Rededication Service	NMA Alrewas
29 Aug	Gathering of the Clans	Horden
10 Nov	Opening of the Field of Remembrance	Westminster Abbey
13 Nov	Remembrance Day	
18-21 Nov	Project Noel VII	Liverpool

My report on the AGM 2016 follows:

REPORT ON 71ST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - by the Admin Officer

The 71ST AGM took place on 19 March 2016 in the Victory Services Club. The Colonel Royal Signals, **Colonel Simon Hutchinson** and the Comd SM, **WO1 Rob Luke** were also present. The Master of Signals, **Lieutenant General Nick Pope**, Colonel Reserves, **Colonel A Lamb**, RSM 11 (RSS) Sig Regt and **WO1 Richie Savage** sent their apologies.



This meeting was chaired by **Brigadier David Hargreaves**, who opened the meeting at 1030 hrs. Following a minutes silence the minutes of the 70th AGM were agreed as an accurate record. The Chairman thanked past welfare chairmen and branches for their hospitality. He told the meeting about the RBL review taking place prior to the Opening of the Field of Remembrance which he said he hoped would address Corps concerns about the size and location of our plot. He then briefed about the conclusion of legal matters with the ratification of the uniting direction. A vote of thanks was unanimously agreed to the Gen Sec, **Col (Retd) Terry Canham**, and Corps Accountant, **Mr Michael Fisher**, for all their hard work through the process.

Also discussed were Eden Camp Parade, Reunion 2016, Branch Standards, and the Corps centenary. Discussion followed about his report. The Gen Sec presented his report following which members of the Central Committee were confirmed as **Keith Bates** (until Mar 19) **Trevor Holyoake** (until Mar 17) and **Steve Bland** (until Mar 17), The Admin Offr, **Caroline Addison**, presented her report discussing password protection for personal information, procurement of branch standards, and reminding members of future events in the calendar, including the Memorial Service at the NMA on 26 Jul; Project Noel VII (Area 2 Carol Service) in Liverpool on 19 Nov; the Opening of the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey on 10 Nov, and the Cenotaph Parade on 13 Nov. For further information contact her on 01258 482090, or via email rsa@royalsignals.org

The Assist Gen Sec, **Maj (Retd) Mark Tivey**, presented the RSBF Welfare/Benevolence Report and the Chairman then presented the first award of the RSBF Pennant of Merit for Fundraising to the Birmingham Branch, **George Hedge** accepted the award for the branch.

Other items covered by the meeting were: Branch 75 year certificates, calendar of future events, the Last Post page (RSA website) branch advertising posters and finally, a vote of thanks to Comd SM, **WO1 Rob Luke**, for his support to the association during his time in post. The Chairman closed the meeting at 1245 hrs and those present left after a social and enjoyable buffet lunch.

The meeting in 2017 will be on Saturday 18 Mar in the same location, the Carisbrooke Hall, Victory Services Club, London.

A copy of the AGM Minutes can be obtained by sending an A4 SAE with Large postage to Admin Officer, RSA, HQ R SIGNALS, Griffin House, Blandford Camp, DT11 8RH.

New Life Members. A warm welcome to the following members, enrolled since the last issue of The Wire:

Sgt Matthew Adams	2002/16	Sgt Baron Glossop	1992/05	Sig John O'Neill	1979/83
Cpl Stephen John Bailey	1970/77	LCpl Stuart Gordon	1983/90	LCpl Paul Peacock	1978/88
LCpl John Bell	1969/92	Sig Jeremy Hardwick	1943/54	Sig Robert Roan	1976/82
Sgt Ronald Berry	1943/54	SSgt Simon Harris	1992/16	SSgt Jonathan Roseveare	1986/06
Lt Col Eric Blyth	1986/06	Sig Kevin Harrison	1997/01	Sig Alexander Ross	1982/88
Sgt Gary Bond	1955/57	LCpl Geraint Horton	1974/84	Cpl Glenn Russell	1992/05
Cpl Jon Boyd	1982/88	Sgt Frank Hulin	1967/92	SSgt Michael Schnable	1973/82
LCpl Patricia		Cpl John Kehoe	1956/58	Sgt Wilfred Schofield	1954/67
Brice-Laughton	2002/16	Cpl Nigel Kendall	1978/88	Sig Francis Shorney	1954/56
Lt Christopher Buckley	1976/82	Maj Frank Kirkham	1973/10	Sgt James Smith	1997/01
Sig Andrew Burrows	1977/82	Sig John Lee	1955/57	Cpl Jonathan Smith	1956/58
Col Robin Clapp	2008/10	Sgt Robert Lingwood	1979/83	Cpl Norman Smith	1955/57
Cpl Terence Coffey	1983/89	Sig Robert Lomas	1954/67	Sig Patrick Smyth	1974/78
LCpl Philip George Cook	1977/82	LCpl John Lynch	1957/59	Sig John Summers	1947/49
Sgt David Alan Critchlow	1955/57	WO1 David Marrs	1983/89	LCpl Olive Theis	1967/69
Sig Walter Dale	1954/56	LCpl Christine Maxwell	1974/78	LCpl David Weston	1973/82
LCpl Stephen Evans	1981/91	Lt Jamie McGregor	1957/59	Cpl Craig Wilkinson	1967/92
WO1 Paul Farrington	1991/16	Sig Michael McMahon	1970/77	Sig Gareth William-Philips	1967/69
Sig Eric Fearon	1991/16	Sig Ernest Middleton	1983/90	Sig Alexander Williams	1974/84
Cpl Frank Ferrett	1954/56	Sig George Moules	1959/61	Maj Christine Woodrow	1973/10
Pte Joan Fogg	1954/56	Cpl Michelle Murphy	1987/11	LCpl Paul Youll	2008/10
SSgt Ronald Gilliland	1969/92	WO2 Alan Nuttall	1981/91		

ALDRSHOT BRANCH

Chairman **Noel Moss**
Secretary **Mary Pagan**

In February, our programme for 2016 got off to a good start at the Fleet Parish Hall with a fascinating talk entitled "Under the Veil in Iran." To emphasise the point, the speaker **Sandra Simmonds**, surprised us all by appearing from a side-room hidden under her niqab and chanting a call to prayer. Once she removed that and started to speak in English she completely

held our attention with a revealing story about life in a Muslim country – a topical subject in view of current events in the Middle East.

It all started in the 1970's when **Sandra** was serving as a WREN at Plymouth. This was an era when the UK enjoyed good relations with Iran under the Shah and so there were Iranian sailors undergoing training with the Royal Navy. She met a very good looking one and they decided to marry which they eventually did under English law and, once in Iran, under Muslim law. None of the research she did prepared her for the way she was expected to live as a woman in Iran. Her husband's father dominated the close-knit family from his accommodation upstairs from which he rarely emerged. Arrangements for food



and washing were utterly different to those we are used to in the UK. Added to this her husband took a second wife while, in the background, there was increasing unrest in Iran which led to the overthrow of the Shah by the Ayatollah. It all became too much and, for her own safety, her husband decided to smuggle her out of the country. This they achieved in a dangerous overland journey and, although, the couple later split up, **Sandra** remains grateful to her former husband for getting her back to the UK, and to her mother-in-law who helped make her life in Iran more bearable. We were most impressed by the way our speaker had overcome these enormous challenges and were left wondering how she managed to get her life back onto a more normal track. That, she told us, is the subject of another talk.



Sandra delivering her talk "Under the Veil in Iran"

Fine weather helped us on our way to another excellent Spring Lunch and AGM on 17th April, held at our favourite venue, the Camberley Heath Golf Club. We had a good turn-out of members and guests, with our Area representative, **Steve Bland** and his wife, **Liz**, as guests of honour. Our AGM was a rather special occasion in that our new Branch Rules, studiously formulated by the committee over the past year, were granted unanimous approval! Also, as one of the oldest branches in the Association, proposals were put forward to celebrate our own centenary in 2020. **Mary Pagan** provided her usual beautiful floral displays for each table and conducted a successful raffle, enabling another donation to the Benevolent Fund.



Chairman Noel Moss with the new Branch rules

evening were provided by the Victory Club in Cheltenham. Our thanks to George Blackwood for his funny "MONOLOGUES" between the courses and over coffee at the end – very well done **George**. We had an excellent raffle which is a great help towards our Branch funds for future events. All in all a good evening was had by everyone.

AGM – 2nd March 2016

The members have enjoyed a varied programme of events over the past year. Members also enjoyed two lunchtime events, one in Broadwas which enabled two long standing members, who unfortunately cannot travel far these days, to attend and one in Cheltenham. Currently our membership stands at 20 members and 14 associate members and we are striving to encourage more to attend.

The AGM was rounded off with the raffle, won by **Faith Gaunt** and then with a very enjoyable quiz, run by **Don Gaunt**. The winner was a very worthy **George Blackwood**.

Last Post

It is with deep regret we have to inform you that **Peter Bryant**, one of our life members passed away on 15th March. His funeral will be held at noon on Friday 8th April at Cheltenham Crematorium.

254 OLD BOYS ASSOCIATION

254 OBA SOUTHERN CHAPTER



Members of the Catterick Old Boys Association living in the London and South of England area started to gather at the Botleigh Grange Hotel, Hedge End, on Friday, March 11th. Others arrived on Saturday for our reunion dinner that evening. Long distance travellers included our President, **Col**

Toby Seymour, from Derbyshire and **John Walke** from Cornwall.

Pat Soward welcomed members to the reunion dinner mentioning particularly **Lisa Harding**, attending for the first time with her father, **Hugh Saunders** and he also particularly welcomed **Mandy Hawkins**, **Mike Severs**, **Alan Leech** and **Jackie Fern** who had accompanied their mothers and made it possible for them to be with us. As always the food was good and served promptly by two very attentive and efficient young men. The Old Boys dipped their hands into their wallets and a generous tip was presented to the waiters amid a spontaneous round of applause.

After dinner **Toby Seymour** spoke about the future of the Catterick Old Boys Association. By definition members of the Association are all between 83 and 89 years old so membership numbers are falling rapidly and the numbers able to attend the national reunion are also falling off. The Association Committee has therefore decided that this year's national reunion at Derby will be the last *in the established format* although it could well continue under less formal arrangements for some years yet. The Northern and Southern Chapter meetings will also continue whilst there is a demand.

Next year's Southern Chapter reunion will again be held at the Botleigh Grange Hotel over the weekend Friday, March 31st, to Sunday, April 2nd.

COTSWOLD BRANCH

Chairman & Treasurer	Mike WALKER
Vice-Chair	Stuart JAMES
Secretary	Liz FRIEND
Social	Michelle WELCH-FULLER
Wire Notes	Mark PAVELEY

ANNUAL DINNER – 29th January 2016

21 members, including our RSA Area Rep (**Ray Williams**) and his wife, attended our Annual Dinner. An excellent meal and



LAST POST

LCpl MC Abbott	1954/56	01-Jan-14	Sgt KD Hancock	1956/80	16-Apr-16
Cpl R Ackroyd	1971/77	22-Feb-16	Capt J Humble	1939/46	05-Jun-15
Sig W Allen	1952/54	24-Apr-16	SSgt T Hyde	1955/77	?? -May-16
U/K A Ball	1956/58	14-Mar-16	Sig RS Johnson	1952/54	U/K
Cpl JWG Ball	1958/60	07-Apr-16	LCpl CH Lees	1942/47	U/K
WO2 M Barker	1969/67	25-Sep-15	WO1 DH Leggott	1955/77	28-Mar-16
U/K D Baron	1961/67	08-Apr-15	Sig EWC Marlow	1938/45	04-Apr-16
LCpl RVE Beazley	1960/62	U/K	Sig DJ Marshall	2003/14	20-Apr-16
Sig R Bellamy	1966/78	U/K	Sig PA McGonagle	1972/93	12-Apr-16
Sig AJ Bigmore	1952/54	28-Feb-16	Sig CJ Meynell	1949/51	27-Apr-15
Sig E A Blake	1943/46	01-Mar-16	U/K O Moran	1957/63	16-Apr-16
Maj RH Blizzard	1943/66	01-Jan-16	Sgt DS Moss	1940/45	25-Mar-16
WO2 RT Brooks	1938/46	28-Dec-15	Sig BL Muir	1963/72	20-Mar-16
Sig PR Bryant	1948/50	15-Mar-16	Capt WJ Mundy	1943/46	11-Jan-15
SSgt K Carr	1936/47	20-Aug-15	SSgt J Murphy	1962/84	09-May-16
WO2 AF Cashen	1966/91	23-Feb-16	U/K AT Pacitti	1940/46	20-Feb-16
LCpl P Cattermole	1952/59	25-Mar-16	WO2 W Potter	1945/49	15-Apr-16
WO2 M Chomicz	1969/97	18-Mar-16	Sig A Powell	1955/57	02-Apr-16
Sig AW Clarke	1936/46	25-Apr-16	Sig CF Power	1964/73	01-Oct-11
Capt GL Cooke TD	1961/80	24-Aug-14	SSgt A Rae	1949/83	22-Apr-16
WO1 H Craig	1939/65	30-Mar-15	Sig GW Scott	1944/47	01-Mar-15
Sig BC Deere	1942/46	15-Mar-16	Sig DE Spencer	1960/63	24-Apr-16
Lt Col MC Deverill	1948/95	09-Apr-16	Capt PG Stock B SC	1980/86	30-Mar-16
Cpl ITA Doidge	1949/72	15-Apr-16	Maj JF Stokes TD	1938/67	15-Mar-16
Sig EE Dowse	1939/46	01-Apr-15	Sig P Terry	1955/57	21-Apr-16
LCpl JE Drake	1948/50	01-Aug-14	Sig G S Thomas	1940/46	17-Jan-16
Cpl RA Elliott	1953/65	03-Mar-16	U/K C Thompson	1976/91	24-Feb-16
LCpl BR Faulkner	1942/45	U/K	Sgt K J Tillman	1969/93	02-Apr-16
Sig K Foster	1968/78	29-Apr-16	U/K GC Tucker	1953/54	09-Mar-14
Lt H Gamon MC	1944/47	16 -Apr-16	SSgt KW Turner	1951/53	09-Mar-16
Maj MC Gilyeat	1977/94	29-Apr-16	WO1 JPC Winning	1950/75	12 -May-16
Cpl B Goode	1952/55	14-Oct-15			

OBITUARIES

BARKER - Dvr Malcolm died 25 September 2015.

Malcolm 'Mal' Barker passed away on the 25 September 2015 in St Helen's, Cheshire. He had been suffering from a long illness and was surrounded by his family, **Mary** his wife of 44 years, his son **Kenneth** and daughter **Amanda**.

Mal joined the Royal Signals on the 13 Oct 1969 after enlisting at Liverpool. He was posted to Catterick where he underwent basic and driver training prior to be graded as Driver R Signals.

He served in Northern Ireland 40 Sig Regt and whilst there



met and married his wife **Mary** who was a telephonist. **Mal** knew he had met his match and **Mary** being a LCpl and **Mal** a Signalmen decided that it would be a good move to get married. They were married at Barrhead Glasgow in Jan 1972. They were posted to Berlin during the height of the Cold War and he was posted to 38 Sig Regt on promotion and as a COs Driver, this was followed by tours in Maastricht in 1976, 30 Sig Regt at Blandford in 1979 where he was the C/O's Driver at the rank of Corporal.

The early 1980s saw him posted to Germany with tours at Osnabruch, Celle, Lippstadt on promotion to SSgt and then on promotion to WO2 to Krefeld. His last tour was at 22 Sig Regt in Lippstadt Germany, and he retired from the Army in 1992.

Through out his career he was an active sportsman excelling at Football, golf, shooting and especially Squash. He was a senior member in the RAOB where he carried out countless fund raising events for charity and others such as the Diabetic charity.

Mal was a family man first and he will be sadly missed by **Mary** his wife, **Kenneth** and **Amanda**, a truly great man and soldier.



The Life of a Signaller in Combat Conditions in 1952/53 - by Roy Painter

My name is **Roy Painter** and around late January 1953 I was seconded to a unit of the American 2nd Division. I was a wireless operator with K Troop, 28 Brigade Signals, three of us were seconded to the Royal Fusiliers, being the link back to Troop HQ (28 Commonwealth Brigade) who were being pulled out of the line to go into Corps Reserve at Camp Casey.

The Fusiliers pulled out on schedule but their relief, the aforementioned American Unit did not arrive for some time, so, all that stood between the Chinese and the Free World were just our three Signallers, well, the Chinese didn't attack, so they must have feared our reputation!

As the Americans started to arrive some of them were just sitting around, not very comfortable in a Korean winter, so we invited them into our hoochie for a brew up. In conversation we found that most of them were either recalled men or draftees, mostly from Texas, although one of them had been driving a cab in San Francisco just six weeks previously. As the conversation started to flow both sides agreed our high command hadn't got a clue and couldn't organise a booze up in a brewery.

That night, I was duty operator along with a GI who would be taking over and come morning our practice was that the night duty man went to fetch breakfast, so off I went with my American counterpart for "Chow" and much to my amazement during the night a dance hall sized mess tent had been erected complete with stainless steel kitchen.

I lined up, dixie in hand and arriving at the counter the cook asked what I would like, bacon, sausages, hash browns and "how do you like your eggs buddy? Scrambled, over easy? Help yourself to toast." Well I just piled it on and when I eventually reached the counters end I was asked "Maple syrup or honey on my pancakes, milk or cream in my coffee?" All this with the Chinese a thousand yards away! Topping this all off, the Cook Sergeant asked if we Brits would like some candy, by which he meant Hershey bars, chewing gum and sweets. Had Christmas come early?

If you thought breakfast was good, lunch was something else, steak, French fries, topped up with gallons of ice cream and yet more goodies, chocolate, cigarettes (I didn't smoke), and best of all, real toilet paper! Considering the UK was still on rationing when I'd left, this was heaven indeed, I felt like Oliver Twist when I enquired is it ok to take so much? "Take what you like, buddy," came the reply, "Uncle Sam's picking up the tab!" Just when I thought things couldn't get any better, up went a shower unit with loads of hot water, what luxury, great food, real heaters; had I been shot and gone to heaven?

Until the Americans arrived personal hygiene was the biggest problem due to lack of water. The three of us washed in a bowl of water on rotation each morning, i.e., we took it in turns to be first, second and finally third then, wonderful, first again, also our winter clothing was torn and not fit for use. I had gone some three months without a shower, ugh. Add to that we fought a constant battle with rats crawling all over us, it sounds disgusting and it was.

The Americans really seemed to look after their men and our Signals hoochie had become a social centre with our new GI friends dropping in for a chinwag and, would you believe it, a cup of tea!

Unfortunately, all good things come to an end, and after a week we received a call to return to Brigade and Troop HQ, and despite our plea's that we were really needed up here, we were told in no uncertain terms to "get ourselves back to Troop NOW!" With that we bade farewell to our American buddies and departed laden down with goodies and being told by their Transport Officer, in a deep southern drawl "Make sure you go to the fuel depot and fill up with gas."

Back at Troop, mealtimes were never going to be the same, it wasn't as though our cooks could not produce good meals, it was just that they didn't have the equipment or ingredients to start with. In fact, considering the conditions they did a brilliant job. Well done lads!

Anyway, here's the punch line, many of the Americans we had made friends with came back down the line see us, and we took them to eat with us; stew, dumplings, spuds and so on and what did they say to us "Hey, what great chow you guys get!"

The irony of all this is that they meant it!

There are also sad memories and good men were lost. I recall my mate, **Sig Brian Clackett**, whose name is recalled on a brass plaque in the Blandford Garrison church and at the national Arboretum, who's grave, courtesy of the Korean Government I had the privilege to visit in November 2014.

Brian, was a slim handsome young man who had the knack of always managing to look smart no matter how scruffy the rest of us looked. He also had a very thin stylish moustache which I was most envious of as I only shaved once a week then. Anyway, on the morning of his death I woke around 6am to see a fully dressed Brian and on asking why he had not woken me he pointed to a bar of chocolate on the sandbag, inches from my head and informed me that it had been swarming with rats and so he did not wake me in case they leapt on me.

Tragically, six hours later **Brian** was with us no more. He was just twenty years old, an orphan, looked after by his grandmother all his life and to compound all this, he was engaged to be married. Life just aint fair sometimes.

This is, of course, the reality of that far off war, a young conscripted man just twenty years old, twelve thousand miles away, now buried in Pusan cemetery. He, like many others, paid the ultimate price.



Corporate
Covenant



Training on your doorstep, where we put our students first

"BV Associates Limited is more than a training provider and you get far more than you would expect. They understand your needs and help you every step of the way, even after the training course has long finished". A Peters

We are proud to serve members of the Armed Forces wherever they find themselves and our aim is to help you maximise your available funding whilst minimising your personal contribution.

No Hidden Costs

Unlike other providers, we don't have hidden costs - our course prices include VAT and all exam fees.

Pass Power Promise

We go further than anyone else – fail an exam and you can re-sit the course and exam for free within a year.

Course Bundles (ELCAS approved): We can provide single courses or bundles of the following courses to suit your own future career aspirations or to support existing continuous professional development.

- NEBOSH National General Certificate in Occupational Health & Safety plus (11-days)
- NEBOSH National Certificate in Fire Safety and Risk Management (5-days)
- NEBOSH National Certificate in Environmental Management (6-days)
- NEBOSH Intl. Technical Certificate in Oil and Gas Operational Safety (5-days)
- NEBOSH Certificate in Construction Health and Safety (10-days)
- First Aid at Work (3-days)
- Risk Assessment (2-days)
- Teacher Training (5-days)

We also provide the following courses:

- Site Management Safety Training Scheme (SMSTS) (5-days)
- First Aid Refresher (3 hours) or Requalification (2-days)
- IOSH Managing Safely (5-days)
- CPR Defibrillator Training (1-day)
- Emergency First Aid (1-day)
- IOSH Directing Safety (1-day)



Our Venues

We have 12 venues with easy access from the whole of the UK allowing you to choose the venue that best suits your own training needs, split the course dates around your own schedule or train at multiple venues:

Aldershot (Hampshire)
Chatham (Kent)
Paderborn (Germany)
High Wycombe (Buckinghamshire)

Tidworth (Wiltshire)
Maidstone (Kent)
Catterick (Yorkshire)
Kinloss (Scotland)

Bovington Camp (Dorset)
Woolwich (London)
Cleethorpes (Lincolnshire)
Chester (Cheshire)

Find out about all of our courses, costs and future dates at www.bvassociates.co.uk, email us at info@bvassociates.co.uk or call us direct on 01494 864100

