SSgt Kelly has been awarded an SOinC(A) commendation for his exemplary performance as the SNCO in the TA and Cadets Office, HQ DCCIS over the period covering December 2009 to September 2011.

SSgt Kelly’s work has particularly enhanced the position of Cadet Force Signals Training. He has set the framework in which the Cadet Signals Training Team can work effectively by giving them the necessary support and guidance. Cadet Signalling is flourishing as exemplified by the initiative to open an additional training centre at Bramcote to cope with demand.

As a result of his work with the annual recruit cadre of the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry they have decided to move their annual camp to Blandford.

Most of the people with whom he works, ranging from staff officers at HQ LF to ACF detachment commanders, are not R SIGNALS cap-badge. He projects exactly the right image of a SNCO in the Corps; professional, competent, positive, helpful but firm, and very able. His personality, bearing, and manner invariably impress and attract favourable comment. He is an outstanding ambassador for the Corps in the wider arena and has undoubtedly enhanced our reputation.

Cpl Rawlyk has been the lone female member of the Regt’s 3-person Welfare Team for more than 4 ½ years working for 3 Welfare Officers and over a period when the Regt had personnel continuously deployed in Iraq or Afghanistan as well as on many overseas exercises. Mature, articulate and composed under pressure, she has been responsible for the provision of Welfare Support for the Regt and its families but also for Tri-service personnel who occupy Service Accommodation across Colerne Station.

Of particular note is her responsibility as Facilities Manager for 2 contact houses which are heavily used by single-parent families. She planned their full refurbishment in 2010 and 2012 and both were completed very successfully with much of the work undertaken in her own time and without supervision. Additionally Cpl Rawlyk’s contribution has included the welfare preparation of soldiers deploying on the last 10 JHF(A) and JHF(I) Signal Troop deployments as well as the much greater task of support to the recent Campaign Signal Regiment’s deployment.

Cpl Rawlyk’s dedication and service to 21 Sig Regt (AS) over the last 4-plus years has been remarkable; much of her work goes unnoticed but it is clear that she has made a noteworthy contribution. For this excellent work she has received a SOinC(A) Commendation.

Cpl Sutton, a Reservist Territorial Army Soldier in 71st (City of London) Yeomanry Signal Regiment, is the epitome of the modern TA soldier. The contribution and commitment of Cpl Sutton during 2011 has been truly outstanding, however, it should be stressed that this, in many ways, is not unique for this soldier such is the calibre of the man.

During this year Cpl Sutton has principally worked as a Reebok Communications Operator, held at high readiness to deploy in support of UK Operations in support of the LONDIST Military Commander. He has also taken the opportunity to broaden his professional skills by embracing the arrival of a new military communications system to the Regiment, taking over his own Bowman Communications detachment, immediately proving his worth in not only improving the effectiveness of the detachment but continually developing and mentoring the junior soldiers under his command.

In addition to attending every single Regimental and Squadron exercise throughout the year, Cpl Sutton has also found time to play a key role in the training of new recruits into his Squadron. If this were not enough, as an Army Physical Training Instructor he has assisted in the training of and participated in the Regimental Lanyard Trophy Team in 2011, with the team taking a commendable first runner up position for TA units. He has also successfully passed the All Arms Skill at Arms Instructors Course, whilst holding down a very busy civilian job in the Civil Service.

Cpl Sutton’s commitment and contribution to the military aspects of being a Territorial Army JNCO are also displayed in his prowess as a sportsman; he is a member of the highly successful Regimental football team, and competed in the Regiment’s GOC LONDIST Trophy Competition team, helping to win both the overall Sports Prize and Tug of War competition.

In recognition of Cpl Sutton’s outstanding contribution to the Territorial Army in London he is rightly awarded the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association for Greater London Volunteer Reservist of the Year Award 2011.
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1st (UNITED KINGDOM) ARMoured DIVISION
HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL REGIMENT

THE CAMPAIGN SIGNAL REGIMENT- Op HERRICK 15

JFCIS(A) UK NOC Ops – by WO1 ‘Eng not Tech’ Avery

Comd JFCIS(A) Col G Fletcher
DComd JFCIS(A) Lt Col R Carter
RSM JFCIS(A) WO1(RSM) K East

The 1(UK) ADSR element of the UK NOC have continued the fast pace of life with the maintenance and development of all the CIS networks in Theatre. Our only respite was the yearly event called Christmas. We were allowed a down period of one single hour to enjoy a festive quiz hosted by the SO3 Ops, RYOFS ‘I can do that’ Tharby. The quiz was enjoyed with various Kerry Katona style treats kindly donated by thoughtful members of the public.

All communication assets are the responsibility of JFCIS(A) and WO2 (RFOFs(1S)) ‘Iron’ Cooper is seen regularly patrolling the internet cyber boundaries for any misuse or potential attacks. The New Year has seen plenty of crazy networks, as planned by Capt(TOT) ‘It’s not cold’ Leach, come into fruition to make all CIS more robust and resilient across Theatre. Cpl ‘Massive’ Hillis has only been severely troubled twice with all the monitoring systems flashing red in front of his eyes, but with the oversight of Maj (TFC) ‘Tragic’ Emsen everything was returned to normal working order in good time. There was a successful HOTO between 15SR(IS) seeing the arrival of YofS ‘Scatter’ Lester and GOSCC Fwd WO ‘I do not!’ Metcalf, both have settled into their relevant jobs and are deeply engaged with the current operational tempo.

We now enter the mid-tour point with a reduced team due to R&R but the workload remains high, with typical 1 ADSR attitude, the team carry on regardless with RYOFS ‘I can do that’ Tharby. The level of expertise within the team is good, and the monitoring systems flashing red in front of his eyes, but with the oversight of Maj (TFC) ‘Tragic’ Emsen everything was returned to normal working order in good time. There was a successful HOTO between 15SR(IS) seeing the arrival of YofS ‘Scatter’ Lester and GOSCC Fwd WO ‘I do not!’ Metcalf, both have settled into their relevant jobs and are deeply engaged with the current operational tempo.

We now enter the mid-tour point with a reduced team due to R&R but the workload remains high, with typical 1 ADSR attitude, the team carry on regardless with WO1 (RFOFs) ‘Eng not Tech’ Avery looking into the deep underlying problems in the network. All immediate incidents are being carefully monitored by WO2 ‘Pilkington’ Carter to ensure that there is no affect to the operational users around Theatre.

KABUL JOINT SUPPORT UNIT (CAMP SOUTER)

OC Maj P Brunton
GSM WO2 (GSM) C Moore

Now nearly a third of the way through our tour, the team in Souter is bedded in and still as busy as ever. The festive season arrived and most just tried to get along with the task at hand and not to think of home too much.

The Entertainment Committee organised various activities to keep everyone amused on Christmas day. Christmas Eve was a night of hilarity with Crap Factor Kabuls Got Talent heading the bill. On the judging panel was none other than our GSM, Chris Moore, and heading up the first act was the OC, Maj Pete Brunton, who was accompanied by the 2 Ops Foremen, SSGt (FOFs(1S)) Richie Wilson and Ssgt (FOFs) Glen Paterson. Let’s just say that they should just stick to their day job! For Christmas day itself, the SNCOs volunteered to cover duties for the junior ranks in order that they could get their Christmas meal in traditional fashion.

Winter arrived bringing fresh challenges as the temperatures plummet. Contractor provided power within Souter has been suffering from frequent outages. The ICS has been protected by a combination of automatic backup generators and UPS, but the accommodation has been hit by 2 or 3 power cuts a day, in turn affecting heating and the water supply.

There are new ICS projects on the horizon that will either deliver during H15, or we will shape and prepare so that 16 Sig Regt can deliver them during H16. A factor in all our planning is the inherent friction in moving kit and people around the more than 12 UK sites in the area of operations, against the backdrop of limited transport resources and the highest ever recorded threat level in Kabul.

On the plus side, 2012 has arrived and this is the year we go home. The R&R phase is in full swing, with happy faces heading down to Bastion for their flights back to friends and family, and slightly less happy faces returning 2 weeks later.

ICS TROOP KABUL

Tp OC Lt K Davies-Walters
Tp Ssgt Sgt M Wall

Cpl Rich ‘The Bullet’ Beasley has been in and out of the sangars more time than the SFTPC lads, laying phone lines to expand the communication infrastructure through the camp. Request for Changes (RFCs) have been coming in thick and fast for office moves and new terminals, equating to his work load steadily increasing. The ‘Reacher Creatures’ have been hit hard with power issues being a real pain in the neck; coupled with the locals digging new pits and ducts, the compound looks more like the western front at the moment.

Our daily routine consists of ensuring that all the services we provide are maintained, and any incidents resolved as soon as possible. The level of expertise within the team is good, and
everyone has shown commitment and dedication. Any spare time has been filled with cross-training to ensure that we can keep things running smoothly while key posts are on R&R.

As a result of the constant tweaking of services and adjustments being made there have been various key role changes to compensate. Sgt Liam Burgess has switched from ISAF to take control of the ICS Det, allowing Sgt ’Ginge’ Graham to be freed up to concentrate on TACCIS, which is gaining momentum and rapidly expanding across the AO.

Health week arrived in Camp Souter post Christmas with BMIs and Personal Fitness Assessments conducted throughout the week. Everyone in the det has been working hard to ensure that they put in a good performance (some more than others) with Cpl Rich ‘Computer Mong’ Beasley putting in a superb effort only to be disappointed by the fact that I, LCpl Farrar, beat him by 1 second on the run.

Everyone in the det has organised or taken part in charity events. Sig Chris ‘Evo’ Evans and I are organising a 24 hour football match in aid of the Sir Stanley Mathews Foundation and BLESMA. Cpl Terry ‘T-Dowg’ Mee organised a sprint Triathlon in aid of Combat Stress.

HQ ISAF

HQ ISAF ICS DET – by Sig C Eccles

HQ ISAF is one of the more demanding locations within the Kabul AO, and our core business of maintaining comms and providing a flawless service to our Staff Officers is steady and normally out of hours. A number of RFcs have trickled through, such as providing a complete communication suite for the new DCOM POLAD, resulting in some members working through the night to ensure that the new facilities were provided without any disruption to the existing staff. This has paid dividends, as the General and of course the POLAD herself were impressed with the minimum disruption.

Sig Janes has also been busy improving the MDOR Det. When we took over it was literally in a broom cupboard! This has now been cleared out of mops and cleaning products, and it now resembles a professional looking communication det.

Although we were told that the snow wasn’t coming, we were all secretly hoping for a white Christmas. Alas, it didn’t come until January which caused problems with our faultless performance on VTCs. The constant rapid snowfall led to members of the det having to clear the Sat dishes in freezing conditions every 20 minutes to ensure services were not lost.

The detachment was invited to the UK NCC to say farewell to our team at Camp Souter where I can guarantee they have provided a flawless service to our Staff Officers is steady and normal out of hours.

As part of that extra bit of service with a smile, the det planned a carol service for Christmas Eve. Decorations down the stairs complete with that feminine touch from Sig Janine Foster and the UK NSE was ready for the night’s events. The service went well; brazier burning in the middle which SSgt Mick Wall took great satisfaction from, as it was he who tasked the metal-smith to produce such a masterpiece. The music accompaniment was found by Sqn Ldr Bryn Kirby, who managed to have a quick practice back stage in the ICS Det prior to producing a note-perfect performance. There was no doubt that the efforts made were greatly appreciated, in particular by DCOM ISAF, Lt Gen Bradshaw, who paid tribute to all serving out on Operations over the festive period.

There have been various sporting activities. A football team consisting of Cpl Baz Laws RAF, LCpl Max Williams, Sig Carl Eccles and Sig Nick Janes managed to get to the semi-finals but were defeated by the Italians, who went on to win. The Dodge Ball team, led by Sgt Isaac Fong, produced similar sterling results, again missing the final by a whisker.

On New Years Eve our American allies had organised a party in the gym. With the show finished, the music came on and LCpl Max Williams got in the mood and taught Sig Foster the electric slide dance. Not only did this impress the crowd but they made the BBC World News headlines, celebrating New Year across the Globe, New York Time Square, Hong Kong, Adelaide, Sydney, London and then HQ ISAF! The Countdown came round fast and Happy New Year was bellowed throughout the gym.

KAIA(N)

ICS DET – by LCpl ‘Flash’ Gordon

First of all, a fond farewell to HQ ARRC supported by 7 Sig Regt who are currently in the process of leaving Theatre. They have done a great job and deserve some applause.

Day to day life is made up of resetting passwords for forgetful officers and fixing PROMINA faults from chairs rolling over fibre optic cables. The unreliable electricity supply has caused a number of teddies to be thrown, but let that be a lesson; save your work! HQ ARRC is leaving, so the ICS Det has been busy removing kit that will not be used by their successors. There is an ever changing landscape in KAIA with several new buildings being erected. The ICS Det has been tasked with moving the comms systems into the new builds as and when they are completed. Fortunately we have had the benefits of 7 Sig Regt’s line team that have installed most of the new cables for us. On one such occasion when we pulled our own cable, we had just snipped the cable to length and then we found out the customer had moved office since the initial recce. It’s amazing how much you can stretch a fibre optic cable when you need to! We are planning to move our office to the UK NSE so that there will be a central point of contact for all UK personnel. We also say goodbye to 2 members of our team, LCpl ‘Hamster’ Bolwell has left and joined the ICS team at Camp Souter where I can guarantee they have welcomed him with open arms and Sig ‘Thumper’ Ruffle has joined the JFCIS FRT team.

In December we had a visit from the Scottish legend that is Colin Montgomery. Although open to all nations the main attendees were Brits. It was battle for the front of the queue which I prevailed in because of my Scottish spirit and determination. Everyone got a photo with a famous golfing legend and the Ryder Cup, so were happy.

During the Christmas period we had a carol service, where LCpl ‘Social Skills’ James and Sig ‘Dolph’ Nicholson bellowed to their hearts content which lifted everyone’s spirit. On Christmas day we had an enjoyable fancy dress touch rugby
tournament which ended up with Sig Nicholson having 2 handprints across his back. This was followed by a delicious Christmas dinner served by the One Stars and above, which I have to say was a pleasure to watch. We also got Christmas boxes, full of excellent goodies that have come into good use in the past few weeks; Sgt ‘Apples’ Stares has brushed up nicely on his skipping skills. An auction took place after the meal where 2 Union flags, which have flown over KAIA for the last 12 months, were sold for a massive total of 750GBP.

LCpl James, Sgt Stares, LCpl Gordon, Sig Nicholson

New Years Eve was another enjoyable evening which we spent in the MWA welfare facility mixing mostly with our American counterparts, and as we all know there is never a dull moment with them. We also learned that LCpl James has invented a new dance called the sleeping bag shuffle. Then came the 10, 9, 8, 7, 6….......HAPPY NEW YEAR! which led to handshakes and a dart off to bed.

Our time in Afghanistan has flown by and we are hoping that the coming months will do the same because we have a lot of projects looming. We are already planning for our handover to 16 Sig Regt, which we hope is as smooth and professional as 21 Sig Regents handover to us.

QUARTERMASTERS DEPT

QM                Maj L Crossing
RQMS              WO2 S Miners

Two months in and things are looking calm, after the initial shock of capture feeling of taking over such busy and diverse accounts. The light can be seen, it may still be 4 months off but there is a glimmer none the less. The QM had to leave in a hurry, just before HOTO to his replacement, but the RQ stepped in to cover the gap. No sign of hair loss or advanced shock of capture feeling of taking over such busy and diverse accounts.

The New Years Eve entertainment was of a high standard, with the final of the Crap Factor competition that had started on Christmas eve, but this time with the Band of the Royal Regiment of Scotland providing the music. All in all a merry Christmas and a happy new year was had by all. At long last our team won the Thursday night quiz, after coming second about 6 times in the 2 months we have been here. It must have been down to having the GSM WO2 Chris Moore on our team and celebrating his birthday. Maybe it was the chocolate birthday cake that gave us the extra brain power needed to SMASH the competition!

SOUTER FORCE PROTECTION TRANSPORT COMPANY

OC SFPTC           Maj S Vernon
Ops OFFR           Capt A King
Ops SNCO           SSgt L Cote
MT                 SSgt M Mason

Two months have passed since the last submission and way too much has happened to be mentioned in one fell swoop.

The troops are now well and truly settled into the 6 day rotation. Christmas and New Year has been and gone, and in all honestly was as enjoyable as it could be. Christmas day involved an early start delivering Welfare presents to the duty personnel and then round the accommodation to deliver to the guys in the block. The Christmas evening event was Kabul’s version of the “Crap Factor”. LCpl ‘Tash’ Maxwell performed a cracking Solo Guitar and singing act, LCpl Kev McCran wowed the stage with nothing but a Santa hat on and a certain part of his anatomy, Maj Stu Vernon and SSgt Lee Cote performed the comedy act of the night and the Radio Det performed the worst one! If prizes were awarded for best dressed they would have won hands down. Sadly only 3 acts went through to the New Years Eve final.

New Years Eve was again another sell out night in the Opsrey Café, and we were treated to a evening with the Band of the Royal Regt of Scotland, followed by the final of the “Crap Factor”. Unfortunately LCpl Maxwell came a close second behind LCpl Kev McCran and his band of merry helpers and the crowd was treated to a live performance from WO2 Chris ‘Noel Gallagher’ Moore and SSgt Lee ‘Liam Gallagher’ Cote to end the show. In all was a cracking time had by all attended and the night went on alcohol free until the early hours.

SSgt Lee Cote out on Patrol with his own security force

Maj Stu ‘Kim Jong-Il, Ping Pong’ Vernon is still steering the Starship Souter and Ops Offr Capt Andy King has been busy working all hours God sends to stand in as the Adjt during R&R and also working hand in hand with Regional Command Capital personnel. OPS SNCO SSgt Lee ‘K40A’ Cote has been busy doing stuff; he can’t tell anyone what it is but from what is heard it is quite a substantial amount of graft. J2 Sgt Andy ‘Ops Supervisor IC J2’ Naylor is now settled into his role as the Souter version of MI6 and as such is now starting to build up a viable intelligence picture of our Area of Operations. J9 Sgt Rob ‘Bob the Builder’ Ross is still on a one man mission to save Kabul’s population from poverty and is doing a pretty good job thus far.

Maj Stu Vernon and WO2 Chris Moore handing out Christmas boxes to the Sangars on Christmas morning
RADIO DETACHMENT

The Radio Detachment is at Mach 5 constantly, not only with working with the multitude of call signs that are out on the ground at any one time, but also trying to close the gaps and holes in the various communications means we have. The Det Comd, Cpl Andy Madden, is working very hard, managing the guys during the R&R period, trying to get full TAC SAT communications with RCC and also attempting to rectify the communication black spots that are within the city. Rad Det 2 IC LCpl Terri Cartledge is learning the ropes in preparation for taking control when R&R kicks in and Sig ‘Mr Burns’ Smith has finally come of age and is smashing the Rad Det comms like there is no tomorrow. Sadly LCpl Kev ‘DFM’ Smith will be leaving us this month and Sig Oli Oliver is gracing us with his articulate reading and history from the 1980s (Joy).

MT

It has been a busy period for the MT section in the last couple of months after 21 Sig Regt handed over the reigns, and we have been putting our mark on things. Unfortunately we lost LCpl Danny Goodwin from the MT to fill in as the WISWO driver. Although this didn’t make much difference as he spent most of his time in the gym anyway, we were now 2 men less than our predecessors. This has meant long days trying to put things to bed with minimal man power and for 855gt Mase ‘Chuck Norris’ Mason it means long days in bed trying to regain power.

Nevertheless we should have the MT at an awesome standard ready for the upcoming LSI. Sgt ‘Geordie’ Cairns has apparently taken over the details desk, but no-one can verify this as he is always somewhere else. It has been rumoured that he actually shares a desk with the OC, although this can not be confirmed as he is always rallying the troops for meal timings. Cpl Roberts has taken on the Green fleet appointment under duress, as he seems to think chatting up women should be his main priority, and not completing any menial tasks like keeping vehicle availability up to the maximum strength. When Cpl Jimmy Somerville hasn’t been conducting perimeter and satellite patrols of the cookhouse ensuring no one steals any of his rations, he has been dealing with the BOWMAN and ECM(FP) for the Coy.

K10

Multiple Comd Cpl M Wright
Multiple 2 IC Cpl Jay ‘Badger’ Duffy
Multiple 2 Coy Cpl R Palmer

After a shockingly quick 2 months of the glorious MT, QRF and Guard rotation we have all settled into routine and the morale is still high in the Mighty K10 Multiple. Most have been appreciative after getting sent several parcels from various charities including one particular favourite “Adopt a (Saddo) Squaddie”. This is not to forget all the stuff sent over from friends and family to loved ones in Theatre. One particular individual, Cfn ‘Greggors’ Gregson, got sent out his very own personal armed forces bed cover with cartoons on, such as a tank, a plane and a ship - HE LOVES THEM! Sgt Niki ‘Mach 5’ Dearing however has been busy spending his Operational tour bonus already on several pairs of gloves and countless belts, trying to make himself look Alley.

After several patrols outside the wire, the relationship with the locals is a good one. The kids certainly enjoy seeing us, if only to practise their English. On patrol Sgt ‘Maverick’ Naylor was not paying particular attention to his footing, getting his foot wet in one of the local sewerage holes whilst narrowly avoiding another. The snow has started to fall and covers the sewerage holes up, it won’t be long until more multiples will be making the descent into a world of, quite literally, poo.

Sgt Niki Dearing and Sig Loveridge with OC SFPTC at the top of Qarghah

Finally we say farewell to LCpl Blakeley, who sadly left us due to an unknown Afghan illness, and welcome to the new boys Sig Frankie Ofori-Kerangtang and Sig Green. We’re sure you will be bedded in soon and enjoying life like the rest of us.

K20

Multiple Comd Sgt R Palmer
Multiple 2 IC Cpl J Nelson

We are now 2 months into the tour and it seems like that we haven’t been here that long. In fact at times you blink and a 6 day rotation has passed. Sgt Roy Palmer and Cpl Jay ‘Badger’ Duffy are still leading the team and keeping morale high, but little occurrences like Sig Chrissie ‘Areton Senna’ Smith crashing into a car in Kabul City keep the morale high from within the ranks. The routine itself seems to be coming around quicker and quicker: QRF, MT and the wonderful guard. On Christmas day Sig Lewis Healing and Sig ‘Damian’ Duffy got woken up by a phone from the Ops room at 0530 hours to go around the Sangars and change the batteries because we had a power cut. They both dragged themselves out of bed and got ready to go do the job, then the power came back on, typical. It was good to see that all the lads and lasses were in the Christmas spirit, and our turkey was served by all the Officers and Seniors, including Gen Hook who came from ISAF just to see us. After Christmas day it was back to normal routine going out on patrols and staggering on.

***

It’s been a busy period in the build up to the festive season. Being K30 ‘AKA the hardest working multiple’, we had the...
glorious task of stagging on in the sangars both over Christmas and New Year. **LCpl Toes** did not as he opted for the first lot of R&R, so was enjoying plenty of alcohol fuelled parties in the UK. Our illustrious leader **Sgt Danny Locking** has been informed he has to buy the first crate of non-alcoholic Becks as he has received the first shout-out for K30 on BFBS radio. Over the New Year period we were tasked as temporary roadies for the band of the Royal Regiment of Scotland, ferrying them all over the AO to bring some festive cheer to all UK troops to play their mix of music. **Cpl Matt ‘Mag on Matty’ Wright** was singing away all day, it is just a shame that he has the singing voice of a wounded Walrus. On another note **Ssgt Lee Cote** is planning on tabbing, the GSM has his doubts. If you would like to sponsor him go to his Just Giving page [www.bmycharity.com/lukadsrsoutemarathon2012](http://www.bmycharity.com/lukadsrsoutemarathon2012). He is aiming to raise at least a £1000 for Help4Heroes.

**HELMAND ICS SIGNAL SQUADRON**

**OC** Maj Hutton  
**SSM** WO2 (SSM) Cattle

**BASTION TROOP**  
**Tp Comd** 2Lt J French  
**Tp Ssgt** Ssgt T McBean

Two months into the tour and everyone has settled into a nice routine, the heifers are no longer the size of elephants and the beanpoles are bulking up nicely into lean fighting machines. So op-minimise and op-massive are in full effect and everyone is doing well. Operationally everyone knows their job, things are getting completed quickly and everyone is bonding as a tight-knit team.

The Mission Secret team is run in a well disciplined manner under the charge of **Sgt Rankin** who takes no rubbish off anyone. **Cpl ‘Mini Burley’ Limbu** is the driving force behind the team, he gives out and prioritises the jobs. The brains behind the team are from the RAF, **Cpl Hall** who has proven that the RAF do actually do work, and do it well.

The RLI team is run by **Cpl ‘The Nep’ Burley**, who is always busy doing nothing; despite the fact that the RLI team is currently in the middle of the Op ZITA uplift at the moment, installing a new server that will be coming into effect soon. And of course the Service Desk, leading from the front - deflecting every issue that comes HICSSS way.

The main faults that are received are normally the mysterious PEBKAC. These are often difficult to diagnose as during fault finding all equipment is found to be in good order and fully working. The user will often characterise these faults by claiming his/her UAD has developed an independent ability to self discriminate. ‘I have entered my username correctly, but it won’t let me in’. HICSSS currently have no system with artificial intelligence capability. There seems to be numerous of these ‘Problem Exists Between Keyboard and Chair’ issues. The perfect example of one of these mysterious PEBKACs was provided by are very own **Capt Tudhope**, who reported a broken printer. Obviously being in the Mighty Royal Corps, the first thing he did was check all connections to the printer, and all basic fault finding, or so he said. The fault was reported and in the background the service desk heard **LCpl Waryck** say ‘I have just put paper in the printer and it seems to be working now’. The perfect example of a PEBKAC.

**REQUEST FOR CHANGE (RFC) TEAM** - by LCpl Waryck

The RFC department consists of a 5 ‘wo/man’ team. It is headed up by **Capt Tudhope** and includes **Sgt Mark ‘Madman’ Davey**, **LCpl ‘1033’ Willacy**, **Sig ‘if it’s fibre, I’m your man’ Ackrill** and finally me, **LCpl Waryck**.

The primary role of the RFC team is to facilitate requests that users throughout Helmand ask of us; this can range from a
simple move of a laptop to a full refurbishment of an Ops room. Each day is never the same which my arms and shoulders can testify to as I have just come off a 2km cable pull on Camp Leatherneck. Sgt Davey gave me an honourree title for the day as a “Mech”, this was soon taken away however when the last pit-lid was closed.

Proven to be a busy couple of months, both work wise and socially. We had the run up to Christmas and New Year and some large jobs on such as the new RLI roll out in the form of Op ZITA. We have all found ourselves carefully prioritising work and leisure to ensure all work continues to be completed to the highest standard, but we still have time for a bit of relaxation so we don’t burn out.

Christmas saw an influx of mail and I think Cpl Kerry Stewart and Cpl Al Larman are clearly amongst the more popular members of the Tp resulting in them both being crated for the receipt of so many parcels in one day. Ensuring that there was always someone holding the Fort, Christmas day proved quite relaxing with a well earned late start for most and then games organised by LCpl ‘Simmo’ Simpson. I think the whole Tp is also in agreement that Christmas dinner was fantastic and exceeded all expectations. Lashkar Gah was not such a bad place to be over the Christmas period with all the efforts of the Tp, a MOB Carol service which was followed by a great band, hot chocolate for all and even a pantomime put on by members of CF LKG! It was certainly as good as it could have been.

On the note of celebrations, we have had numerous birthdays over the last couple of months. The Tp’s rendition of “happy birthday” was a source of embarrassment for most, but also provided some well needed entertainment. There were also some cakes occasionally improvised by members of the Tp, often containing all kinds of ingredients due to the Pakistani border closure. Well, it’s the thought that counts so they say!

December saw the first members of the Tp to go on their R&R, SSgt Smith and Cpl Andy Southwood were home to enjoy Christmas with their families but only just. The weather decided to take a turn for the worse the day after they safely left LKG causing aircraft to be grounded for days - a lucky escape.

The Tp have also been enjoying arranging and taking parts in some small charity events including a Royal Signals darts championship where only the elite are still in the running. Also, LCpl Beck took one for the team and grew his moustache for 2 months for it to meet its bitter end on 1 January in a charity “Tash Wax” which raised in excess of £600 for Help for Heroes and ABF - painful I’m sure but a fantastic effort!

Ops room taking their job way too serious!

This is my first tour of Afghanistan and I have enjoyed the chance to use the trade skills I learnt at Phase 2 and having been deployed out of Camp Bastion on several occasions I have put these skills to the test. As a team we build, configure, install and troubleshoot on a wide spectrum of different operating systems. Each request is different and we all have a vital part to play representing our different trade groups. From my own personal experiences I have learnt a lot so far and hope to continue to learn more in the future as I enter the second half of my tour.

LASHKAR GAH ICS TP, ‘CHRISTMAS WORK AND PLAY’
– by LCpl Allonby

Tp OC Lt S Thorpe
Tp SSgt SSgt P Smith

Well, 72 days into the Tour and with ‘only’ 123 remaining, all members of LKG ICS Tp are settled into all aspects of living and working in MOB LKG. Since the end of November it has been deployed out of Camp Bastion on several occasions I chance to use the trade skills I learnt at Phase 2 and having

20 ARMOURED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (200)

OC Maj Stu Whittley
RSM WO1 (RSM) Phil McLeish

CAMP BASTION RLD ECHELON AND POWER REPAIR
RESPONSE SECTION - by Cpl Simon Goddard

RLD have been very busy over the past month, with Op CHRISTMAS taking place. This involved sending a lot of Christmas Trees, Decorations and Boxes to Lashkar Gar, so that they could turn the Cook House into Santa’s Grotto.

We have also had a change of personnel with Sig Ingleby being sent to Lashkar Gar, and LCpl Stones taking over and joining the team at Bastion. We did not get to see much of Christmas here with SSgt Griffiths volunteering for guard duty over Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, Cpl Williams away on R&R, so LCpl Stones was holding the fort but did manage to get a bit of free time to enjoy his Christmas Dinner with Christmas hats and After Eights to finish. The sand storm before Christmas caused a lot of extra work for the RLD, who

were desperately trying to get everyone back to Bastion and away for their R&R over Christmas, with the weather finally giving up just in time.

After Christmas the Battle Rhythm continued at its fast pace, with R&R, new arrivals, Staff Officers leaving for their end of tour and a visit from Joint Force Support (JFSp) Commander. PRRS have been very busy over the past month, with WO2 Neillings being sent back to the UK and SSgt ‘Basher’ Bates taking control. This has had the knock on effect of having to go through the HOTO process again. So that’s 2 Engineers down and we are working on our third!!

With the majority of the guys having been on R&R its just Cpl Goddard and Sig Smith to go. Everyone’s looking forward to Cpl Goddard coming back from his, as that is the start of the end of tour. The RIP will be starting in Feb and the time will fly as RSOI training will be taking place every day and every night. Everyone is looking forward to the end of tour and it will soon be here.

THE WIRE, APRIL 2012
A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF A PMAG RLD/S6 MENTOR
- by LCpl Clark

It is hard to write about a week in the life of a PMAG RLD/S6 Mentor as every one is different with new challenges and experiences. We always start with a move to MOB Price, as we are based in a small compound within a police station we have to cook for ourselves, mostly out of 10 Man ration packs but this move enables us to have a small amount of fresh food. It is always good to get some supplies for our morale too, such as crates of coke and being able to check on what’s being going on in the world of Facebook.

We have really made a mark on our compound, it was really basic when we moved in but in less than 3 months we have totally changed it by setting up a gym and sorting out the Afghan plumbing so we have running water, occasional hot showers and power 24/7.

The nature of my job means that I look after the comms/ECM equipment we hold here both in manpack and vehicle roles, so I do the usual checks and maintenance on a regular basis. I have also been out on the ground to different AUP checkpoints checking their comms equipment and seeing if there is anyway of improving it, also giving the Afghans basic lessons on how to best use the equipment they have as well as teaching them basic fault finding lessons.

We try and visit all of the 12 checkpoints at least once a week and during the first month the main focus was to get to understand the AUP, their concerns and culture. Then a comms audit; trying to find out what kit they have and seeing if it is good enough to do the job. Now we are focusing on winterisation and for the rest of tour we will be looking at doing more partnered patrols and mentoring them on the ground. With them getting involved in patrol planning and letting them take the lead on where they go and what objectives they want to accomplish, we will then assess them on how they did and show them ways to improve.

QRH RLD - by Sgt J A Shone

The past couple of months since the last ROG update have continued to be exceptionally busy. The RSWO has departed on R&R, along with a number of J6 personnel in CF LKG Ops Room. This has pushed and tested the remainder of the guys. Personally I continue to work as the Day Watchkeeper within a very busy Ops Room, as well as stepping into the shoes of the RSWO dealing with all manner of J6 issues, liaising with the Interpreters and all the issues that they present.

A recent downpour in CF LKG presented us with some problems much like Capt Schetinno had to deal with, except we did not fall into a life boat! Water levels started to rise in the Ops Room, and it was all hands to deck to bail out with paper bowls and any vessel that we could lay our hands on.

Following that incident we raised the flooring by means of honeycomb, which should hopefully alleviate any future problems for incoming Battle groups.

ARMOURED INFANTRY COMPANY RLD - by LCpl Jamie Kerr

I have been deployed with the Al Coy from August 2011 until the end of February 12. This period has covered both Herrick 14 and 15, during this time the Coy has operated across the whole Area of Operations. I’m currently employed as the CO’s TAC signaller, both mounted in Warrior and dismounted as ground troops. Our Patrol Base has undergone considerable reconstruction during my tour which involved me and a few of the infantry signallers rebuilding the Ops Room and reconstructing a new Antenna field.

Whilst deployed on H15 I have faced many new challenges especially when operating for long periods of time from within the Warriors, such as establishing comms and a temporary Ops Room from the rear of a command variant Warrior in the middle of a barren desert. Considerable effort has gone towards improving the comms infrastructure within the PB, allowing for secondary and tertiary if comms should prove difficult. I have bonded well with the Company and enjoyed my experience; both the ups and the downs.

As the tour comes to an end for the Al Coy, we are now ensuring all the Warriors and the PB are ready for 12 Mech Bde to take over in good order. Also during this time we are still carrying out mounted and dismounted operations in the AO to ensure that the road to Lashkar Gah continues to remain as safe as possible for ISAF and the local population.

CF LKG HQ - A CS(E)’S PERSPECTIVE

LCpl Hamilton Aka “The Briefcase” has been busy within the CF as well as managing to get out and about on the ground on a couple of occasions since the last ROG update.
The month of January in CF LKG has been another steady month of work; I have been to Patrol Bases in both Attal and Nahidullah to carry out inspections on their Bowman kit and their vehicles to make sure they are up to standard before the ECI team get here. I have also been doing some work on the civilian Motorola radios, programming them and working with the Electronic Warfare Liaison Officer.

R&R is fast approaching, and I am certainly looking forward to the time off. On my return the Tour will be approaching its final stages and I will be preparing my Handover/Takeover for the incoming Battle Group.

Summary

I would finish off by saying that all of the guys within the QRH RLD have worked extremely hard during the H15 tour to date and with a couple of months left the goal is in sight. There have almost certainly been highs and lows on the Tour, and with a couple of months left the goal is in sight. There will be plenty of time to reflect on our return.

DANISH BATTLE GROUP RLD - by LCpl Parkhill

As 1 Princess of Wales Royal Regiment roll into PB Clifton to replace the Danish Company I cant help but reflect on my time with the Danes and what better way to do it than to put it into words and share my experiences with you all at home. My role with the Danish was to provide secure voice and data communications both in the patrol base and on patrol. It has really given me some memorable experiences.

Right from the start I was thrown straight into the deep end. It was 0430hrs when I touched down with my colleague Sig Wesley Wright. It was a humorous touch down in PB Clifton as I was soon to learn that Sig Wright had left his daysack and began on the helicopter, leaving him without any kit on his first day in his new home! But I was booted back down to earth by the Marine I was taking over from as he informed me that one of us would have to go straight out on patrol at 0430 in the morning. I looked into Sig Wright's teary, puppy dog eyes and it didn't take a mind reader to work out that he didn't want to go. So I stepped up and volunteered. My first patrol was a surreal experience; listening to morning prayers, I realised that I was finally out on the ground in a warzone, something I'd wanted ever since volunteering for it. The patrol was uneventful and I achieved a great deal in improving my listening skills and situational awareness both on the ground and in the Ops Room. All was going well until one morning in early November. I was on watch keeper and it was Wesley's turn to go out on patrol. He came over the net to inform me he was leaving a compound but his words where cut short by a large explosion. I tried to raise him to get details but his lack off a sitrep or contact report immediately put worry into my mind. That morning Sig Wright was casevac'd to Bastion with shrapnel wounds. As bad as his wounds were, he could have been much worse, he was definitely a lucky boy.

From that point on it stopped feeling like an exercise and the reality off my situation hit me. I later received his day sack containing the radio he had been using during the explosion. I wasn’t happy about this as the headset was damaged but I decided to compensate myself with the 200 cigarettes he had left in there.

It wasn’t too long until Wrighty’s replacement had been flown in; good old potato head, Sig Buckley. It wasn’t long till the next patrol after Wrighty was hit came around. For the first time in my Army career I felt scared to step off, so much so that I was close to volunteering Bucks to go out when it was my turn. After having a long think I decided that the only way of getting over this fear was to get out there, but unfortunately the next patrol was an eventful one. Sitting on the edge of a cornfield I could feel myself dozing off as the OC sitting next to me informed me that there was no ICOM chatter, a sign of routine activity. Everything was quiet until 2 minutes later when I was rudely awaken by Grenade Launcher fire and rounds whizzing passed my head. I don’t know how I’d managed it but between the point of thinking I was about to die to nearly having a heart attack due to the rapid acceleration in my heart rate, I had moved 5 metres back into the cornfield and got myself into a firing position. I couldn’t see the enemy so I decided to do the honourable thing and inspect the ground below me with my eyelids. After all went quiet and I’d sent the necessary reports to Bucks sat back in the Ops Room, I sat there shaken but excited and the OC next to me asked if I was ok. I can’t repeat what I replied but lets just say he burst into tears with laughter.

Sig Buckley and his multiple prepare for patrol

Bucks also had some entertaining patrols and I really don’t want to take anything away from the fact that Sig Buckley is a professional communicator. But all I would say is that some times his SALTA reports can be a bit exaggerated i.e. a shoot and scoot can turn into a full on fire fight which apparently involved RPGs, UGL, Mortars and UFOS.

All in all Sig Buckley and I achieved a great deal in improving situational awareness both on the ground and in the Ops Room. With Bowman Auto SA working it was easy to see the whereabouts of the Tps on the ground. It was also extremely helpful in the dark when switching on the light on your Garmin to see your current grid wasn’t a good idea.
Also a lot of the time we would get a worried Fire Controller approaching us and informing us that his TacSat fills where about to run out, but with the help of the crypto cell in Bastion we were always able to receive current fills. Also after the amount of fault finding we have both had to endure on Kestrel and Overtask we both can say we are self taught experts.

The hardest part of the tour from a trade perspective was the movement of all the comms kit from PB Bridzar to PB Clifton with a little help from Cpl ‘I need a brew making for me every 10 minutes’ Moore. This was a success and with the help of 1 PWRR signallers, PB Clifton has a fully working, efficient Ops Room. As sad as it was to see the Danes leave I am now looking forward to a new part off the tour working with 1 PWRR who have their own RLD signaller. So now the responsibility of the comms equipment isn’t all my bag anymore and, as the end off the tour approaches, my sloping shoulders shall get even heavier.

2 Rifles RLD Notes from Op Herrick - by Sgt Kieran Lee

Well we are now past the halfway point of Herrick 15 and the countdown has started. Cpl Ted Heath and myself successfully completed the Danish organised Bastion Marathon, it was amusing watching Cpl Heath’s John Wayne impression as he waddled around camp Tombstone for the 2 weeks after. I can safely say it was worthwhile and raised money for a good cause; however I won’t be volunteering for another one for the duration of our tour.

Things are getting busier as the tour goes on with the joint ANA / ISAF operations coming more frequently. My role in these Ops is to set up a forward ops room for a small contingent of Bde Advisory Group staff to run the operation from. On average we are out for 10 days at a time and if we are lucky we can co-locate with another ISAF call sign that already has some sort of infrastructure for us to utilise. On the last operation we managed to borrow Sig ‘Small Guns’ Eaton from Main Tp in Lashkar Gah to add to our RLD operator Sig Louis Bromage to give us the numbers required to run the ops room, as most of the 2 Rifles Signals Platoon have managed to sneak away on R&R at the right time.

The other members of the RLD are very busy in their day to day jobs and are getting out and about as much as possible. LCpl Andy Bradley has moved out to FOB Shawqaqt to advise the ANA on their communications systems and hopefully he can start earning the extra pay he gets as an interpreter as he is already starting to smell like one! Sig Matt Scrupps has been busy fitting out PB Harriet with their new ORAS comms system so they now have secure voice and email, however I have heard rumours that he has to walk the long way back to his room from the Ops room to avoid getting eyes on the gym. Cpl Stu Dalzell is run off his feet here and is always backwards and forwards from his PB at Camp Gereshk to the HQ in Tombstone sorting out faulty kit or just getting his checks done on the vehicles he has. There are rumours that he left his smile at home on R&R, however I know these to be false as he didn’t smile much in the first half of the tour. LCpl Mike O’Hara is so busy that nobody ever sees him apart from when the ops are on he is running around filling various vehicles with various fills. Last but not least is the newest member to the 2 Rifles RLD, LCpl Pete Ward, who we have on loan from 200 Sig Sqn and have sent straight out to sort communications in PB Jahen Zeb with our Engineer Advisors.

Well it’s not long now until we are all back on British soil and looking forward to all this leave we have earned and hopefully one of the hottest summers on record too!
HQ SOinc(A) presents the Blandford Garrison Rugby team with the new strip for the 2012/13 season. The R SIGNALS in partnership with it’s training provider, the Wiltshire and Somerset Colleges’ Partnership Ltd (W&SCPL), delivers Apprenticeships to all R SIGNALS and QGS Phase 2 soldiers. The soldiers enroll on their Apprenticeship whilst under Class 3 trade training at Blandford and complete the Apprenticeship in their Field Army unit. It is imperative for the soldier to complete the Apprenticeship that they are employed in trade. The partnership also offers the opportunity for progressive, Advanced and Higher Apprenticeships to it’s senior soldiers, in all 800 soldiers are enrolled onto Apprenticeships each year. The Apprenticeship is a consolidation of the military training the soldier receives to carry out their military role, along with the education requirement and the work based learning National Vocational Qualification this awards the soldier with a relevant and viable civilian accreditation. The Apprenticeship provides the soldier with a skill set that enhances their military career and encourages the individual to develop both their professional and educational careers. The R SIGNALS is rewarded with a soldier who is more adaptable and diverse in their capabilities, whilst also preparing them for their eventual return to civilian and a meaningful contribution to society.

Pictured receiving the new strip from Harry Griffin, the Executive Director W&SCPL, and Jane Freeman, the Contract Operations Manager W&SCPL, are SSgt Matthew Turner, 3 (Harrogate) Sqn, 11 (RSS) Sig Regt and members of the Blandford Garrison Rugby team.

SPONSORSHIP ADVERTISES THE SUCCESS OF THE R SIGNALS APPRENTICESHIPS SCHEME

BLANDFORD GARRISON GURKHA COMMUNITY

Gurkha Focus Lt Col M R Complin
SGO Capt Surje Gurung
SSM(G) WO2 Binod Gurung
Clerk Sgt Amrit Tamang
Block NCO Cpl Kumar Thapa

The Blandford Camp Gurkha Community continues to thrive, providing a Brigade of Gurkhas community and support for members and their families who work in, or are at least quartered in Blandford Camp (and increasingly the surrounding area as well). Numbers are being swelled not only by a high number of Gurkha personnel on courses but also by transferees to R SIGNALS who are based here and who still enjoy cultural links. The SGO and SSM(G) are away on resettlement which has allowed SSGt Deepak (11 (RSS) Sig Regt, 4 (Mil Trg) Sqn) to take on even more work and show his skills as acting SSM(G), helped as always by some excellent SNCOs. Our Clerk, Sgt Amrit Tamang, joined the ranks of the Gurkha SPS when it formed on 30 June 2011, and he now has a GSPS stable belt to help him show off his new allegiance.

We were very sad to lose our AWS Gurkha Support Worker, Mrs Anita Gurung (wife of Sg t Govinda Gurung) on posting to Stafford, but delighted that she received an exceptionally well deserved Garrison Commander’s Commendation for her hard work and dedication. Mrs Gurung became a key component of the Gurkha community and her willingness to help out families and arrange activities for them (and then run them) will be greatly missed.

The last of Intake 10 – Phase 2 QG SIGNALS soldiers recruited in Nepal in 2009 and trained as infantrymen at Catterick in 2010 – have now completed their trade training, had their first opportunity of leave in Nepal and have now left for their first posting, Intake 11 arrived at the beginning of January. The 30 new arrivals are shaping up to be a good bunch and early indications are that they like a good party and have some useful singers and dancers in their ranks. A good sign for the future and a good challenge for Cpl Kumar, the Block NCO, to develop them in the right direction.

The community continues to be in demand to support Gurkha Welfare Trust fundraising activities throughout Dorset and also to give talks on Nepal, typically to schools or youth groups. In November Cpls Suyoki Tamang and Jayaram Puri, both Class 1 course students, hosted a visit to the Temple by 20 St John Ambulance Badgers, keen to lean more about Nepal, its people and the Gurkhas. The Temple has naturally been in

Col G Hearn, Commander Blandford Garrison presents Mrs Anita Gurung with her very well deserved Garrison Commander’s Commendation

Sgt Amrit Tamang proudly receives his GSPS Stable belt from CO BGSU, Lt Col Boyle

THE WIRE, APRIL 2012
regular use, for example celebrating Nag Panchami in August and Saraswati Puja in January; these were 2 of the many occasions when the QG SIGNALS Religious Teacher, Mr Jagdish Paudel was able to visit Blandford and lead the service (he continues to be in regular demand to carry out naming ceremonies for Gurkha babies born here as well!).

The Blandford Camp Gurkha Community has naturally continued with its normal programme of social events. Although monthly basketball has suffered a bit recently, a very successful “Bhat by Haat” (Bhat by hand) self help messing event was held during Christmas, followed by a wonderful Bhela (gathering) in January. Both of these benefited from the fact that the boys have located somewhere able to provide a slaughtered pig, which they then prepare and cook over open fires. The Bhela also provided a stage for Intake 11 to show their musical and dancing skills, we look forward to more.

HEADQUARTERS SIGNAL OFFICER IN CHIEF (ARMY)

WO1 (CORPS YEOMAN OF SIGNALS (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)) M P DUCKERING

I was appointed Corps Yeoman of Signals (Electronic Warfare) on 1 August 2011 and arrived in HQ SOinC(A) following a UK Exchange Officer tour with 7 Signal Regiment, Australian Army.

I enlisted into the Royal Corps of Signals on 15 December 1992 as an Army Apprentice and commenced trade and military training at the Army Apprentices College Harrogate on the 4 January 1993. I have been fortunate that my career has been wide and varied, with the opportunity to deploy on Operations to Northern Ireland, the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan.

The next few years will see additional demands placed on the Corps and Defence. We should relish the challenges this will undoubtedly present to us and seek to exploit the opportunities that any period of change will provide. It is clear that the requirement for Electronic Warfare, Signals Intelligence and the development of Cyber Operations, not only within Defence but across Government, will continue to influence Corps Force Development. This will ensure that the Electronic Warfare Systems Operator remains in high demand.

I am keen to emphasise the significance of the Corps positions; the importance of having trade representation within HQ SOinC(A) should not be underestimated. The establishment of the posts within the Headquarters facilitates ready access to subject matter expertise for all the staff branches. It also provides a focal point for the trade “family”, ensuring trade issues are identified early and staffed correctly.

During my tenure as professional head of trade for the EW Systems Operator and Yeoman of Signals (EW), I will seek to ensure technical training continues to meet the requirements of the Front Line Commands and Other Government Departments. It is also vital that our soldiers and officers achieve civilian professional accreditation, and understand the benefits to be gained from membership of professional organisations.

It is a great honour and fantastic opportunity to represent the Electronic Warfare trade groups within the Headquarters. I also relish the opportunity as a training analyst to develop the Communication Logistic Specialist trade group and encourage the trade’s Subject Matter Experts to engage with me, to ensure this new trade continues to develop within the Corps.

CORPS YEOMAN OF SIGNALS HANDOVER

On 2 Feb 12 HQ SOinC(A) bid a fond farewell to the long serving Corps Yeoman of Signals, WO1(CYoFs) Kev Heaton who leaves to join FTG Warminster on commissioning.

This auspicious occasion was marked with a Training Group meal at the Stour Inn, Blandford Forum. The event also gave the Group a chance to say a fond farewell to SSgt Chris Cant who leaves the Corps after 17 years loyal service having taken Tranche 1 redundancy.

The evening was enjoyed by all those in attendance and many a war story was exchanged over a Badger brew (or two)! In true ‘Kev’ style he attempted humour by giving presents to his fellow Corps Supervisors; it backfired however when the Corps FofS pointed out that the roll of solder was in fact chicken wire – which has a higher melting point and was therefore useless for repairing PCBs!

Farewell speeches were delivered by SO2 TDT Maj John Greenwood and it was clear that the HQ had lost 2 extremely hardworking, conscientious and effective players. We wish them both and their families, all the very best in their future endeavours.

The evening was made that little bit more special since earlier that day the HQ received confirmation that both SSgts Lake and Law had been provisionally selected for promotion to WO2. Congratulations to them both.

WO1(CYoFs) Heaton is shown in the picture above handing over the reigns to the newly crowned head of tribe for the Operator CEG, WO1(CYoFs) Tom Anscomb.

THE WIRE, APRIL 2012
### Royal Signals Corps Week 14 - 18 May 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon 14 May</td>
<td>(PLOD) Meeting - Rutherford Conf Rm</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WO’s 1 RD Conference - London.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tue 15 May</td>
<td>Royal Signals Conference - Princess Mary Hall (PMH)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Morrison Cup (Day One) - Athletics Track</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 16 May</td>
<td>Royal Signals Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Morrison Cup (Day Two &amp; Presentations) - Athletics Track</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Games Club Meeting - HQ DCCS Conf Room</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thur 17 May</td>
<td>TA Committee Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rutherford Conference Rooms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri 18 May</td>
<td>ICS Professionals Seminar - Princess Mary Hall (PMH)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ICS Professionals Seminar</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Royal Signals Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sports Ground</td>
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<td>(KO 16:00hrs)</td>
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</table>

Instructions and joining proformas will be issued by individual event organisers. A centralised accommodation management service will be established.

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### Party in the Park

- **FREE LIVE MUSIC & FIREWORKS DISPLAY**
- Food Stalls
- Childrens play area
- Raffle with great prizes
- Grown up area
- Cash Bar

**1800 - 2300Hrs**

**Wed 16th May 2012**

**Blandford Camp - Athletics Track**
COMMUNICATIONS LOGISTIC SPECIALIST

On 1 Oct 11 a R SIGNALS Information Note was disseminated by People Group, HQ SOinC(A) explaining the name change from Driver Lineman Storeman to the new Communications Logistic Specialist and the consequent removal of line training from the syllabus. The new trade sees the full integration of the Technical Supply Specialist and the Driver Linemen into a trade that will make them more widely employable in their Combat Command Support role.

However, a number of questions have been raised across the Corps about the next steps for those who still require elements of training. A R SIGNALS information note is being produced for Corps wide dissemination giving full direction, but here are some highlights:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legacy Trade Name and Rank</th>
<th>Training to become Comm Log Spec</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WO2 and above</td>
<td>No further training required (Defence Transport Manager course* is available for MTWO roles – booked through SO3 Trg Sp, HQ SOinC(A))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSgt Tech Sup Spec</td>
<td>No further training required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSgt Dvr Lmn</td>
<td>No further training required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sgt Tech Sup Spec</td>
<td>No further training required (Defence Transport Operator course* is available for MT heavy roles – booked through SO3 Trg Sp, HQ SOinC(A))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sgt Dvr Lmn</td>
<td>R SIGNALS Stores Accountant Pre-Employment Training required – booked through the courses cell, DCCIS, Blandford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 1 Tech Sup Spec (Cpl/ LCpl)</td>
<td>No further training required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 1 Dvr Lmn (Cpl/ LCpl)</td>
<td>R SIGNALS Stores Accountant Pre-Employment Training required – booked through the courses cell, DCCIS, Blandford.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 3/2 Tech Sup Spec (LCpl/ Sig)</td>
<td>Class 1 Comm Log Spec course booked through R SIGNALS Wing Glasgow (See PD 4, Annex D for eligibility info). (Defence Junior Transport Management and Accounting Course* is available on a ratio of 3 per major unit – booked through SO3 Trg Sp, HQ SOinC(A))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 3/2 Dvr Lmn (LCpl/ Sig)</td>
<td>R SIGNALS Stores Accountant Pre-Employment Training required – booked through the courses cell, DCCIS, Blandford. (Defence Junior Transport Management and Accounting Course* is available at a ratio of 3 per major unit – booking through SO3 Trg Sp, HQ SOinC(A))</td>
</tr>
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*This training is available but not a prerequisite of becoming a Comm Log Spec.

The removal of UNICOM and its replacement with MJDI between 2012 and 2014 will add complications to this process; until further information is available, the above table will remain extant.

21ST CENTURY BASIC SIGNALLING SKILLS

There are probably still a few members of the serving Corps who remember the process of separating the copper conductors from the galvanised steel inside a piece of D10 in order to perform an effective reef knot joint; just one of the many jobs which was wrapped up in the generic Basic Signalling Skills training, delivered to all R SIGNALS soldiers in the 1980s and 90s. Surprisingly, the advent of digitisation and subsequent move from specialists to a more generalist structure in our core trades saw the demise of this package, though recent lessons identify that the requirement never went away – even though D10 has! Operational feedback...
indicates that a core understanding of ‘the new basics’ is even more relevant now as we streamline the Corps and work to leaner manning tables. R SIGNALS soldiers are routinely being asked to step in and cover new ground and there are many examples of Electricians manning the Helpdesk and of Comm Log Specs assisting the Staff with Applications or CIS issues. I am pleased to report that this issue has been under rigorous scrutiny by R SIGNALS Training Group over the past 8 months and, in collaboration with DCCIS, we have produced a new ‘21st Century Basic Signalling Skills’ package which will be rolled out to all Phase 2 trainees – including Troop Commanders – during 2012. The addition of 4 SSgt Analysts within the Training Development Team has been instrumental in turning this task around quickly and making sure that customer requirements have been fully captured.

The reinvigorated package covers a very broad range of skills, including: Antennas & Propagation; Communication Principles, and an introduction to Service Management amongst others. It is anticipated that the end result will be a better trained Corps that continues to inspire confidence throughout defence.

**CHANGES IN R SIGNALS OFFICER EDUCATION**

R SIGNALS Officer Training is being reviewed in conjunction with the development of the R SIGNALS Officer Professionalisation Agenda. This will produce a more technically competent R SIGNALS officer capable of managing and leading on the increasingly complex technological capabilities that deliver information communications services on the modern battlefield. The Officer Training Review started with the Troop Commanders course; a new version of this course will be delivered from Oct 12 onwards. New Junior Captain and Senior Captain short training modules will be introduced by the DCCIS within the next 18 months in order to develop and maintain technical currency at a higher level. In parallel, People Group, HQ SOinC(A) are working on a number of initiatives to enable suitably qualified and experienced R SIGNALS personnel to achieve chartered status through streamlined schemes with the Institution of Engineering and Technology and the British Computer Society.

**11th (ROYAL SCHOOL OF SIGNALS) SIGNAL REGIMENT BLANDFORD**

**EXERCISE MERCURY GLACIER - by Sig Oliver McLeod**

I recently took part in Ex MERCURY GLACIER, the Corps annual ski camp. Being my first time at a Corps event and more importantly first time on skis, I had to get accustomed to being on the snow with 2 great planks on my feet. Luckily it didn’t take me long and I was soon gliding around the snow, looking like a pro! A few others who attended the trip also progressed quite quickly, which served as great competition when it came to race week as we were in the same tier and were more or less at the same level. After a few nasty but funny falls in the practice race I was ready, securing myself a very close.

Following my success on MERCURY GLACIER, I went on to Ex SPARTAN HIKE, the Divisional Ski Championships, where I represented the Regt. This was a completely new kettle of fish. The courses were longer than I had encountered as well as new disciplines. I had previously only experienced slalom and giant slalom, I now had to learn super giant slalom and downhill. These proved to be the most challenging for me as they were speed events and I felt I was more comfortable on the slower technical races. The scariest part was waiting in the start gate before turning onto the downhill course, partly because I knew there were big jumps; I had never done anything like it before.

This was my first season competing for the Corps’ Ski Team and my first season in the Army Championships (Ex LIONS CHALLENGE). I found that I had a high standard to aim for as the other members in the team skied at such a high level. The competition throughout was great; it gave me something to aim for if nothing else and put more pressure on the other guys competing at my skill level. It was an amazing experience hitting poles on the long slalom courses and flying down the “Luc Alphand” on the downhill course at unbelievable speeds… achieving “air” at some stages. I am glad I was given the opportunity to take part and would definitely recommend skiing to anyone who maybe thinking about giving it a try.
A/Sgt Holmes, A/Sgt Egan, Cpl Dipendra all leave the team for pastures new. WO1 Taylor is wished the best of luck as he takes up the appointment as RSM at 14 Sig Reg (EW). Three members of the Sqn will have left the Army by the time of publication and we wish Ssgt Whitelock, SSgt (SQMS) Billy Blackmore and SSgt Jamie Slade all the best in their futures.

We had great success on the SSgt – WO2 promotions board and would like to publicly congratulate SSgt (YofS) Thurston and SSgt (Fofs) Hurst on their much deserved selection.

We have included articles on the syndicate training weekends, as well as specialist trade related courses the Sqn run. We hope you are entertained!

**BOWMAN OPERATOR TROOP** - by Sgt Andy Ward

It’s all change in BOT with arrival of Sgt Lloyd Edwards from 102 Log Bde and Cpl Shagar Gurung from 2 Sig Regt. The sad farewells go to Sgt ‘WO3’ Ross Doullery who has moved all the way to 15 Sig Regt (IS), the legendary ‘Team Tweed’ as Sgt Helen Tweed departs for 643 Sig Tp and our final goodbye is to Sgt Si Hogg who after a year developing his impressive ‘Mil Quals’ portfolio leaves us to go to Andover.

The Tp would like to congratulate Ssgt Whitelock and his wife Kate on the birth of their daughter Molly.

Sgt Kenny Georges’ usual busy schedule of golf, hockey and uber face time was rudely interrupted by the FoS entrance exam, but somehow has managed to get a place on the Regt’s Snowboarding Ex MERCURY SNOWRIDER. We all hope that he does not knock down the CO or the future Corps RSM!!!!

We have had some sporting triumphs within the Tp: Sgt Dave Williams became the Badminton Singles Champion at the 4 Div, Corps and Army competitions and Cpl Dax Rai also had success in the sport becoming a member of the Inter Unit Badminton Doubles Champions.

**BEAUFIGHTER TP**

**EXERCISE CATTERICK RANGES**

Beaufighter Tp deployed at the weekend 10 – 11 Feb on a range package for the first time during syndicate training and we were hugely excited. Having excelled in the delivery of the BCCS exercise package we were given the opportunity to try our hand at something new. Slightly concerned at the thought of Phase 2s with live rounds (some are a little hard of hearing!) we wanted a safe weekend where everyone developed and came back unscathed. The weekend was a roaring success in terms of the progress made by the Phase 2s and permanent staff on the ranges (Tp Comd (name withheld) finally managed to zero his rifle on the 3rd attempt) but the weather took a turn for the worse!

As always the training areas have their own eco-system – SNOW everywhere!! However the Tp Comd (name withheld), despite his background, had gone soft as he felt the need to personally clear the snow off the 24 firing points in case the young soldiers got cold! After laughing at the Tp Comd (name withheld) clearing snow as fast as it fell, firing started and I am pleased to report that from the first round to the last everybody enjoyed themselves. Sadly the Tp Comd (name withheld) started to go ‘man down’ with exposure on the Sunday, he started shouting unconventional words of command such as “with a magazine unload”. Thankfully the Phase 2’s were so highly trained they completed the correct drill even if “GASKET” was muttered from the firing points!

As this is my last task before leaving the mighty Beaufighter Tp for sunnier (and hopefully less hectic) pastures I would like to thank everyone for their support. I have loved every minute of my posting and would recommend it to others. I just hope the Tp’s productivity does not dip as I leave!!

Finally we welcome Cpl ‘Jazz’ Jaruszek to the Tp family, good luck mate! I also want to wish our outstanding Tp Comd (name withheld) the best of luck at 18 SR when he takes up the post of RSM.

**EXERCISE CATTERICK CULMINATION**

– by Sig Smith CSBR 11/013

Ex CATTERICK CULMINATION is a military skills exercise which is the test-piece for syndicate training. The pre-training is run over 5 Thursday evening periods prior to deployment on a Friday night. The exercise began by drawing rifles and shaking out into our ORBAT before heading to the training area at the rear of Blandford Garrison. Once on the area SSgt Guy Buxton, Rhino Tp SSgt, gave a detailed safety brief and pyro demonstration to all exercising troops. Shortly after this we headed off for a tab which was about 3 Km with full kit.

My section spent most of the first night on FOB Defence which involved staging on the sangars and the entry control point of FOB THORPE. It was bitterly cold and all of us began to wonder if we would see the night through. Our section comd, Cpl Cook (an upgrader on CEUR 11/008) regularly visited us and kept us topped up with hot brews and morale. We all had to take extra care to keep an eye on each other for the signs and symptoms of hypothermia setting in, a vital task in the conditions.

There was a great deal of activity during the following day including the FOB almost being overrun by insurgents. This was quite a harsh serial and it seemed like everywhere you turned there were enemy trying to shoot you or blow you up. It was quite alarming at stages but we routed them in the end and regained control of the perimeter with only minor casualties to the Tp. Later in the evening we mounted a strike op on the nearby hamlet, this involved breaking into a
compound and arresting a suspected insurgent leader. Intelligence had suggested that there would be 3 of them but it turned out that the others were taken down by 2 Section when they refused to surrender and fired on them.

Throughout the night we rotated through various tasks from QRF to Patrols to Defence. It wasn’t as cold as the first night but we were kept busy by locals walking in with UXO and IEDs. There were even some incidents of locals trying to break in and steal fuel. The Sgt, Sgt Dan Egan, was all over this and ensured that the sections were on their guard and fully briefed at all times.

Early on Sunday there was another break-in by insurgents however this was quickly beaten back. Shortly afterwards we were informed by the Tp Comd, 2Lt MacDonald, that we would be prosecuting the fleeing elements by launching 2 Tps out to either capture or kill the insurgents that had fled. Shortly after 1000hrs we handed the FOB over to the Local National Forces and left to hunt down the insurgents. It wasn’t long before we had “contact” and had to mount a Tp attack up Monk Down Hill. It was extremely hard work and I found myself running ammo up and down the hill to keep the attack at full tilt. We finally took the last of the positions just after 115hrs and were rewarded by walking back down the hill, collecting our spent rounds and pyro as we went. Before we knew it we were back at the FOB preparing to head back to camp and complete turn round.

On return to camp the Tp Comd debriefed us on the exercise and reflected on the importance of the lessons we had all learned throughout the course of the weekend, then turned to presenting the award for Top Field Soldier; well you could have knocked me down with a bit of cam string when he called out my name! I was presented with a trophy (which I have apparently sapped his strength). The Pink Beret’d (soon to be name withheld) Tp Comd of Iron Tp has managed to keep his Unit’s integrity intact! His DIY skills have been commented upon most favourably by the Museum Curator “(name withheld) idea of painting the cabinet black, blacking out the glass and blinding the dummies with black & nasty was inspirational; he has managed to keep his Unit’s integrity intact!” The use of the word “Gasket” is one that is firmly associated with (name withheld) and has now spread its Pegasus Wings to the other Tp Comds.

The Pink Beret’d (soon to be name withheld) Tp Comd of Iron Tp has a fierce relationship with the other “special” Troopies. He has presented the fact that the others already have the Beret that he covets and he is a little too tired to try for his at the moment because of his new “welfare” dog (named after a Disney character) and whinges about a non-sleeping baby have apparently sapped his strength. “Weak” are the others cry….. and (soon to be name withheld) reacts by shouting “Gasket” whilst inspecting a Phase 2 and only calms down when comforted by his Tp SSGt saying “there, there son it will be your time soon”.  

ROYAL SIGNALS INFANTRY SUPPORT TEAMS
- by SSgt (YofS) Thurston

A Royal Signals Infantry Support Team (RSIST) is exactly what it says it is: Royal Signals personnel supporting the Infantry with highly skilled professional communicators (that’s you!). There has been a steady intake of very motivated SNCOs, JNCOs and ORs ready for service with RSISTs. 2 (Catterick) Sqn is the lead for the delivery of the RSIST course; a jam-packed 5 weeks where volunteers are instructed and refreshed in marksmanship skills, SATCOM, ground to air communications, Infantry CIS, Infantry BG SOPs and Op HERRICK specific applications.

RSIST training is the same no matter what trade you are and we need quality CS Op, CS Eng and Electricians. Having successfully completed the training you will be posted to and deploy with a Bn. As a direct result of the RSIST, the Royal Signals are held in the highest regard due to our outstanding skill sets and support is being increasingly requested.

Anyone who is looking for a new challenge should read SoinC PD 13 and make an application through the chain of command. There are only 5 courses run per year so make sure your application counts.

ODE TO THE TROOP COMMANDERS - by Capt Kate Bilney

For those of you not in nor had the ‘good fortune’ to serve in the Regt, 2 (Catterick) Sqn is the 2nd biggest Sqn within a very large Regt! Home of the Operators, we have 3 Tps each with around 120 soldiers, looked after by 5 Tp Cpls, 1 SSGt and an OC. Do not doubt the strange events that happen around Phase 2! This is classed as ‘the elite’ assignment for Tp Comds and only the best are selected, usually for their penchant for the wearing of non-standard headdress. Combine this with an ability to blag their way out of any situation, all while gaining material to enhance their autobiographies worthy of challenging such noteworthy publications as “Picking up the Brass”, Bravo Two Zero and “Janet and John play toy soldiers”. As the 3 mighty warriors prepare to depart for new posts it falls to us to thank them for their efforts, rather than the traditional hard work.
The other (name no longer needs to be withheld) Tp Comd, WO1 Mick Taylor, has been forced to hand in his “special” beret as he has been “cleansed” and returned back to the ‘Hats’ as RSM of 14 Sig Regt (EW), having signed a wad of paper relating to the Official Secrets Act. Having handed over all responsibilities to the Tp SSgt (some months ago if truth be known), he has regularly participated in the 3 or 4 day week, proving his prowess for his selection as RSM. WO1 Taylor has also been known to take extensive periods of leave, pre and post expeditions, hanging his head in shame due to missing yet another key event. WO1 Taylor, it’s okay – we forgive you and just remember you will soon be calling the shots as RSM and can claim it is an RSM’s conference!

All joking aside the role of a Tp Comd in 11 (RSS) Sig Regt is not an easy one and it is great credit that we can joke so easily with 2 big RSM’s (height not a consideration) within the Corps. Name soon to be withheld will undoubtedly and we wish him and his very new family the best of luck. It is with sadness we say good riddance to them all and wish him and his very new family the best of luck. Good luck to you all and don’t forget those who have carried you for the past year!

3 (HARROGATE) SQN

OC Maj M Solomons MBE
SSM WO2 (SSM) I Wells

A welcome to new members of the staff: Capt Barrett, Sgt Mulligan, Sgt Wilson and Cpl Shell all posted into Deployable Systems Tp, SSgt Newbury posted into Digitisation Tp and Sgt Sunbahadur posted into TTT. Cpl Chadwick has also joined Lightning Tp as a Tp Cpl. A fond farewell and congratulations to SSgt Piper who has moved back to 2 Sqn on promotion. Farewell also goes to Sgt Claridge, LCpl Tolok and Sgt Prithi. Finally the Sqn would like to congratulate SSgt Matt Turner for being successful on the recent SSgt-WO2 board.

DEPLOYABLE SYSTEMS TP

OC Capt N Barrett
Tp SSgt SSgt D Thomson

EXERCISE WINTER WARRIOR – by Cpl Shell

With a very welcomed slow start to the new year the Tp were able to take advantage of the spare time by catching up on missing MTTs and attending those last minute AT courses we all enjoy so much, before the busy period ahead. LCpl Taylor among the fortunate few, managed to secure a last minute place on EX WINTER WARRIOR in Bavaria. The pace was soon to step up in DST with the start of the “In Barracks Data Preparation” for the upcoming FALCON Operator’s course. As well as teaching, DST have a number of personnel attending the course, including new arrivals Cpl ‘Shelly’ Shell and Sgt ‘Wildman’ Wilson, both with BOWMAN backgrounds look forward to the steep learning curve FALCON has to offer. The New Year also heralds the arrival of a new OC, in the form of Capt Barratt, the caveat to this being the departure of the current OC, Capt ‘Jock’ Reid who assumes duties of 3 SQN 2IC. DST would also like to bid farewell to Sgt ‘Damo’ Claridge and LCpl ‘T’ Tolok, good luck to both in your new posts.

4 (MILITARY TRAINING) SQUADRON

OC Maj D Ashton
SSM WO2 (SSM) N Butler

MILITARY SKILLS TRAINING TROOP

After a well deserved Christmas leave, MSTT and PNCO training teams returned to work with another busy schedule with all courses taking place imminently. There has been a mass turn around in the team with numerous comings and goings. The new look team is now headed up by SSgt Jon Watson, who is currently running all 3 teams. Firstly we say farewell to Sgt Matt King who returns to 3 Sqn, thank you for all your hard work. Next up is Cpl ‘Rodders’ Rodway who, after a lifetime on the BCCS team, is finally off to SFSG in St Athen, all the best and thanks for your hard work. Replacing Rodders is Cpl Steve Rorks, down from 611 Tp and has been thrown straight in at the deep end. We also say goodbye to Cpl Anand Limbu who has also been in MSTT for what seems like a lifetime, all the best on new adventures at 30 Sig Regt. Replacing Anand is Cpl Machin who has arrived into the training team from 216 (Para) Sig Sqn and brought fresh ideas. Cpl ‘Sai’ Saindra joins the team from 22 Sig Regt and fills the gap to help ease the busy schedule. To all who have moved on to new pastures we wish you all the best in the future.

BASIC CLOSE COMBAT SKILLS (BCCS) COURSE

– by Sig Shenton

Before leaving 11 (RSS) Sig Regt Phase 2 soldiers have to complete the BCCS course. It runs as a refresher to our basic skills. It also helps us to develop these skills further for when we move on to our new units and provides a basic knowledge of soldiering skills that are required on current operations.

The Monday was purely theory so we could learn the basic fundamentals of the drills we would be doing over the rest of the week. It also prepared us for the theory test at the end of the week. Tuesday, we took what we had been taught in the classroom, and conducted battle lessons covering the 6 section battle drills, the break contact drill, patrol formations and how to deal with captured persons. We then carried this through into Wednesday, during which we went on a 3 hour patrol race as a section. During this patrol we came under several testing scenarios, forcing us to carry out flanking section attacks and the break contact drill. We were then shown more demonstrations on Captured Personnel Handling and Care Under Fire. As a course we exercised and confirmed everything we had learnt during the week on Ex BLANDFORD WARRIOR. FOB THORPE was our new home for the day. Each of the sections was given an initial role, rotating between Patrols, QRF and FOB security. The various skills we had been taught were then incorporated into each of these roles, ranging from section attacks, clearance patrols, casualty evacuation and captured persons. The week was then capped off on the Friday morning with the final theory test.

As a section I think we performed very well. Over the short period of a week we bonded well and learned each others strengths and weaknesses. The course was very rewarding as it served as a learning exercise and a refresher for the skills we already knew.

5 (MARESFIELD) SQN

OC Maj T Wood

FRENCH EXCHANGE: 23-27 JANUARY 2012 - by 2Lt Elizabeth Eldridge

Tp Comds Course 81 visited the ‘Ecole des Transmissions’ in Rennes for a week as part of an interoperability program with our French counterparts. It began with a 12 hour coach ride and the British Tp Comds groggily disembounted the coach to have supper and sort themselves out. The French lieutenants instead invited us to a meeting room for drinks and introductions. The spirit was one of bonhomie and everyone shook each others hands. The visit was off to a good start.

The following morning we had a lecture on the structure of the French Army with Capt Tressaïc which was informative.
and gave us a few talking points to share with our French counterparts. Lunch was good and we began to mingle with the French Officers. On Tuesday we gave a presentation about the Royal Signals and on the careers of officers and soldiers. There is to be a Bde established in 2016 which will be a joint venture between the French and the British, and it is therefore essential that we have personal relationships in order to facilitate professional working. This was certainly the perspective of the aptly-named Lt Col France, the British Liaison Officer, who told us that we should leave the week with a couple of email addresses more than anything else.

Over the course of the rest of the week TC81 had a busy schedule including: a lecture on leadership (delivered in French!); a 20km night march at a very relaxed pace that began at 1930, finished at 0230 and was rounded off with celebratory beers with the French Colonel; a visit to their SEMSIC simulator - used for trunk network planning and battle training; an introduction to the French satellite communications system - ‘Syracuse’; a lecture in English with our French counterparts on interoperability; and an introduction to Rita, the French trunk system.

The exchange was partly about understanding and getting to know our French counterparts so that we could have greater interoperability; part of this was achieved by understanding the similarities and differences in our respective ways of working. The week ended as it had began with drinks and bonhomie but this time we took our hosts out for supper at a local restaurant. We were very well entertained by our hosts over what was a highly informative and enjoyable visit.

SPORT

SIGNALLERS ABROAD ON THE ARMY FAR-EAST HOCKEY TOUR - by Capt Jon Hooker

Following another successful year for the Corps Hockey team, 4 of its members were lucky enough to get away on the long-awaited Army tour of the Far-East. Capt Jon Hooker (11 (RSS) Sig Regt) and LCplls Gareth Hughes (30 Sig Regt), Paul Tough (14 Sig Regt (EW)) and Shane Vincent (11 EOD) took part in the 2 week tour of Hong Kong and Malaysia in December 2011 as part of an 18-man touring party.

The Hong Kong leg of the tour was played and hosted at the prestigious Hong Kong Football Club (HKFC). The Army team played 3 matches during the 5 days there, managing a 3-3 draw against the HKFC, a 4-2 win in a hastily rearranged fixture against HKFC and local players, and a narrow loss in a thrilling 4-3 match against the HK Barbarians – a selection of HK’s best players.

The Malaysia leg was played in very unfamiliar conditions and for this reason provided a unique challenge. At over 30°C and 80% humidity, the matches were uncomfortably hot and extremely fatigue. Despite this, the Army rallied magnificently and won a 3 match series against the Malaysian Armed Forces 2-1. The games were extremely tight; a 3-2 win for the Army in the old Malaysian National Stadium at Kuala Lumpur was matched by a 3-2 win to MAF at the Naval base in Lumut, but a 2-1 win for the Army at the USM in Penang sealed the series. The only downside was losing LCpl Vincent to a broken finger after a bad challenge by a Malaysian player in KL. Until that point he was the tour’s top-scorer and was extremely threatening from our set-pieces.

The tour was clearly very enjoyable and a great experience, but the real value will have been in improving as a team and as a group of players. We learned to play in very different conditions and also how to adapt our game to suit the situation – something that will come in handy for the remainder of the season. The Asian style of playing is very different from ours, and we overcame their pace and skill by deliberately playing a more physical game and by moving the ball simply and effectively.

The Corps players will be busy again in 2012; the priority is to try to regain the inter-Corps title and then retain our indoor inter-Corps title from October last year. The next priority will be to retain the inter-Corps league title from 2011. In between all of that is the small matter of another tour; this time a Corps tour to the Banks tournament in Barbados. It’s a great time to be a Corps hockey player!

PROPOSAL FOR A NEW CORPS SPORT – by Capt Kate Bilney

To all members of the Corps who own a horse or like me wish they did this is a plea for help. Although horse riding is seen as an ‘officer sport’ I would like to squash that stereotype, and appeal to everyone to consider this as an option as something new or a way to continue your passion. Horse riding is not going to become a typical Wednesday afternoon sport but I think there should be the option to learn.

I want to propose to the next Corps Sports Board that we should start a Royal Signals Equestrian Club. Such a club would allow us to meet other like minded people within the Corps as well as developing our skill set. Other major Corps such as RAMC, RLC and AGC have an equestrian team, involved in Polo, tent pegging as well as the more traditional show jumping. Maybe one day we could get the mighty ‘Jimmy’ Cap badge into the Army Equestrian Team!!

I am only in the initial stages of writing the proposal but it would be wonderful to know if the idea is supported. There is a host of military courses already available to us (DIN 2011DIN10-008: Military Equestrian Courses 2011, DIN 2010DIN10-013: Tidworth (Combined Services) Polo Club) but they are not as widely publicised as more main stream sports.

As for our Corps team, I have spoken to a couple of Military Saddle Clubs and they would be willing to run courses (some residential) for people who can already ride, teach beginners and allow us to hold competitions. Using the Saddle Clubs’ grounds provides the opportunity for those new to the equestrian scene to participate.

I would like to state to the next Corps Sports Board that there is a desire for such a club within the Corps, so should you be interested please contact me (through your CoC) so I can prove the support is there.

To the Chain of Command – a consolidated submission would be much appreciated to prevent email traffic becoming un-manageable. I only require generic information at this early stage so please could I get the following for interested personnel:

Unit: Rank: Horse riding experience:

Thank you in advance for this information and I hope to find supporters out there. I will let you know what happens.
NEWS FROM REGIMENTS

1st (UNITED KINGDOM) ARMOURED DIVISION
HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL REGIMENT
HERFORD

THE REAR PARTY
Station Commander Maj G Stoker MBE
Station RSM WO1(RSM) T Woodall

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON
OC Maj J Duncan
SSM WO2(SSM) P Munslow

OP SUPPORT TROOP
Tp Oc Lt L Yaxley
Tp SSgt Sgt W Watt

The New Year for Op Sp Tp has started with engines revving and tyres squalling, with RSIT knocking the cobwebs lingering from Christmas leave loose. The preparation saw all Det Comds and their crew working late into the night for 2 hectic weeks to ensure all the dets were ready for inspection. But Op Sp Tp is the troop that gets things done and the hard work paid dividends as each Det passed with flying colours.

In reward and for the chance to chill out after a mile a minute fortnight, LCpl Keith organised an evening out Go-Karting at Kartbahn Werther in Biefeld, sending out invitations to the 2IC, OC, SSM and Provo Sgt. And so Wednesday evening saw everyone gripping their steering wheels, gunning their engines and anxiously waiting the green light. The evenings race was won by Sig Graham, her gold trophy now sits on the desk at Op Sp Tp, snatched from her by Sgt Watt as he blamed Sig ‘Sunday Driver’ Jones for getting in his way. After Go-Karting the LAD bar was opened and staffed kindly by CFN Mackay until 11pm where Sig Graham’s victory was toasted.

The Tp would also like to say goodbye to Lt Yaxley who has now moved to RHQ as acting adjutant or ‘YaxAdjt’ as the role is now known. We wish her luck in her new job and look forward to welcoming her back in a few months time.

HERFORD STATION ANGLO-GERMAN CAROL SERVICE
- by SSgt Douglas

When I was told by the OC that I was running with the event I thought to myself “It’s only a carol service” but when I started to look into what it involves and asking advice from the RSM, as he organised the event last year, I started to realise this was a massive event on the Station calendar.

The service is held at the Marienkirche in Herford and has an open invite to anyone from the local community. Getting access to the church was hard enough but the Station Liaison Office (SLO) managed to get us in for a recce on 2 Dec.

The SLO dealt with all the German dignitaries who would be attending such as the Herford Mayor, Chief of Police, Chief of Fire Service and they also dealt with the local German school as they religiously send their choir year on year.

Once the Admin Instruction went out I was able to put together from a cast of thousands my admin team with Sgt Nat Whelan and Sgt Billy Watt heading it up. Tasks ranged from booking the band from the Kings Division, ordering the mince pies and gluhwein for the church hall, requesting security clearance for the event and, one of the worst, trying to get confirmed numbers of VIPs from the Div HQ – the list felt like it would never end!

On the day, the admin team were at the church for 1300 hrs starting to get the event set up – the start of a long day! The Regt were to be on parade at 1615hrs where the RSM would march all WOs and below down to the church with a RMP and GCP escort ensuring no-one got run over.

From 1630 hrs people were starting to arrive and soon the church was getting close to it’s capacity. The service was conducted by Padre Anderson and during the service there were 2 readings from the British military community, first from the Deputy Station Commander and the second from 1(UK) Armd Div Chief Of Staff Col Woodham. Lister School choir were fantastic and put their German counterparts to shame, especially with the ‘Hosanna Rock’, which Padre Anderson enjoyed so much that he made them sing it again.

Once the service had finished all VIPs and a selected number of soldiers from the Regt were able to mingle and chat over a mince pie and glass of gluhwein in the church hall.

The event turned out to be a total success and from the collection during the service over €600 was raised for ‘The Children’s Society’. I would also like to say a massive thanks to everyone involved in making the event a huge success.

OFFICERS’ TO SENIORS CHRISTMAS GAMES NIGHT
- by WO2 Munslow

You can’t beat singing 5 Christmas Carols in the rain, outside the front door of the WOs’ and Sgts’ Mess, or at least that’s what the PMC and PEC thought! However, embarrassing and getting the Brigadier soaked to the skin is not necessarily a good start to an evening. Lucky for the Officers the RSM, Tommy Woodall, was on hand to put a stop to the enjoyment and ushered the more Senior Officers inside for warmth and a glass of sherry. Of course it goes without saying that there was a “tradesman’s entrance” for the Lieutenants. 2Lt ‘Raging Roy’ Cooper, Lt Laura ‘YakAdjt’ Yaxley and finally the well spoken Lt Erica Roberts made their way to the Mess garden to perform a quick change parade into a “onesy” sleep suit. They jumped on their bright orange space hoppers and insisted on eating Weetabix, crackers and swilling it down with beer and port; they are a strange bunch Junior Officers!

Once they had their fill, the Lieutenants moved inside, where they were punished for their insolence in the garden and sent to their play pens for 30 minutes. They were obviously upset at this point, so by means of comfort we let them taste the odd mouthful of beer.

Finally let out of their pens they all lived happily ever after for the rest of the evening but not without the odd individual making a fool of themselves. I believe that Lt Erica Roberts described her dancing on the Wii dance mat as ‘enthusiastic’, however ‘her description’ did not match the style on display and should not be attempted under any circumstances
without supervision! Yet again another Officer (Capt Graham Ashman) kindly volunteered (under no duress at all!) to take the place of OC HQ Sqn in the formidable “chilli, garlic trifle” boat race. Not to be sniffed at Capt Ashman led from the front, downed the booze, ate the trifle, then gagged a few times and disappeared for a few moments before soldiering on to the end of the night.

Yet another successful night of joviality and entertainment hosted by the Sgts Mess and all in the name of Christmas. Thanks to the PMC, WO2 (RQMS) Baz Anderson and we should not forget the hard work from the PEC SSgt ‘Ken’ Dodd, who is in the REME but still capable of putting on entertainment to the high standard we set in the Royal Corps of Signals – thanks Ken! Finally thank you to the Officers, especially the Lieutenants, for being such good sports.

REGIMENTAL MT ROAD SAFETY WEEK – by SSgt Jay Davis

As the unit moved closer to the Christmas period and our soldiers and families start planning their journeys back to the UK, the Regt MT took the opportunity to give advice and promote Road Safety issues as part of the MoD Road Safety Week. With WO2 (TCWO) Kev Phillips and SSgt Jay Davis fresh in their chairs at the MT, they co-ordinated the Campaign with the aim of capturing a large audience. With the use of Divisional assets and outside agencies, SMEs were used to present briefings and training throughout the week.

The week started with a presentation from the local RMP on Impaired Driving and members of the Regt MT donning their high visibility vests and distributing leaflets and information from the Unit’s Road Safety Trailer. The speed indicator device (SID) was deployed around speed black spots within the barracks to inform drivers of the speeds they were reaching whilst on camp and any drivers caught exceeding the limits were educated on the implications of their actions.

The second half of the week was split into 2, with skid cradle training being carried out by Sgt Chris ‘The Stig’ Eckett and a representative from ADAC briefing on the importance of roadside assistance. ADAC also provided a crash simulation vehicle as a concurrent activity. This allowed the CO’s driver Sig Frank Ofori-Koranteng to have his world literally turned upside down!

211 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC  Maj B Walker
SSM  WO2 S Middleton

MAIN TROOP

Tp Comd  Lt D Wallis
Tp SSgt  SSgt R Savage

Life is made up of greetings and partings and the last few months have been no exception. We have welcomed Sigs Roberts, Rusling, Morley and Nye from Blandford. The Tp has also sent 2 individuals out to Op HERRICK, stay safe fellas. What is more Sigs Poulter, Waterfall and Lakin have all been posted, we wish you the best of luck in your next job.

TAC TROOP

Tp Comd  Lt R Cooper
Tp SSgt  SSgt Brady

As always 211 Sig Sqn has been kept busy over the past few months and the newly formed Tac Tp has been no different. In the main the Tp has been kept busy reconstituting and conducting in-house training to ensure that it can achieve its mission statement of providing a tactical HQ for the GOC using Armd Bulldog vehicles.

Following an initial period of flux the Tp is now moving smoothly and is ready for the challenges that lie ahead. The garage space and equipment has been checked and signed over and the Tp is currently preparing to conduct a PACEX on the SWE tents and HQ build for a Tac HQ with a tac-brief to be delivered to the GOC. L CPL Fathers has been given the opportunity to deploy on Op HERRICK 15, with more of the Tp potentially following on over the coming month. Members of the Tp have also been skiing on the Corps’ alpine ski and snowboarding camps and Ex SNOW WARRIOR, an alpine and cross-country skiing exercise. Sig Duffy particularly stood out for her determination in learning how to ski. In a sporting capacity soldiers from the Tp have contributed to both the Sqn rugby and football sides and done plenty more besides.

The Tp welcomes SSgt Brady from 26 Arty Regt to the Tp as well as Sigs Bebb, Berry, Cassidy, McAuley and Foster who join us from Blandford. The Tp bids a fond farewell to L CPL Chris Swan to 11EOD Regt and Sig Smith 943 who is posting to 20 Armd Bde.

SPEC TASKS TROOP – by Sig Colajhoun

Tp Comd  Lt E Roberts
Tp SSgt  Sgt R Jones

November was a busy month for Spec Tasks Tp, particularly Sgt Rob Jones and Cpl Bri Bell who were largely involved in delivering the Cormorant Operator Course. This successfully qualified some 15 additional personnel to work on the trunk communications system, and will significantly increase the Sqn’s future flexibility.

Silly season in December ensured a good time was had by all at the Sqn Christmas Function, with L CPL Gary ‘Scouse’ Wilkes offering a typically caustic style of compéring the event and responding quickly to some well-timed heckles from Pte Ryan Saunders (there’s always one…) Sig Kim Taylor was the lucky winner of the ‘OC for a day’ raffle prize and enjoyed some of the perks of being a Field Officer on Regt! Christmas Day. The festive fun involved an inter-Sqn rugby match where Sig Dan Holdcroft and Sig Aiden Roberts put in impressive performances despite miserable conditions.

January has seen a further RSIT inspection take up most of the Tps daily efforts, but there was enough free time to enjoy skiing on Ex SNOW WARRIOR and Ex GLACIAL HALBERD, both in Austria.

The Spec Tasks Tp extended family has been growing and we offer congratulations to Sgt Rob Jones on the arrival of a second son Rhys, to Cpl Gaz Richards on the arrival of a daughter (en route at the time of writing, yet to be named!) and to Sig Lee Buckley on the arrival of his daughter, Kia.
EXERCISE ROTO 3 – by Cpl Sim

Sometimes in the Army you just get lucky. I and the rest of the elite Real Life Support team thought this was one of those occasions as we reclined in our British Airways seats making the most of the in-flight movies as we jetted our way to San Diego. The Army had sent a team of 7, under the helm of Lt ‘the dolphin whisperer’ Wallis, to provide support to 68 staff officers from across the British Armed Forces as they exercised with the US Marine Corps - 1st Marine Expeditionary Force in preparation for deployment to Afghanistan.

We arrived in San Diego International Airport, picked up our hire cars and headed up to Camp Pendleton, where the exercise would be based. Camp Pendleton sits half way between San Diego and LA. All I can say about the place is that it is massive, the whole British Army and all our training areas (except Suffield Canada) could fit inside Camp Pendleton. Home to over 80,000 marines it has 38,000 acres of live firing ranges, 17 miles of coast line for amphibious assault training, an air base, a hospital, its own TV channel and a dual carriageway linking the whole thing together.

Our job was twofold. Firstly we had to drive the staff officers to and from San Diego and LA airports at the start and end of the exercise. Secondly we were responsible for driving them around during the ex or to hospital should one accidentally knock himself out surfing. We also picked up other little RLS jobs such as sorting problems with accommodation. Bearing in mind the size of Camp Pendleton you can understand this was a full time task.

The job did not take up all our time. Cpl ‘Black Jack’ Sim and Cpl ‘Roulette Wheel’ White had the time to hire their own car and smashed the 5 hour drive to Las Vegas. Meanwhile Cpl ‘Surfer Dude’ Bennett discovered his hidden talent for surfing on Mission Beach, while Lt ‘the dolphin whisperer’ Wallis spent so much time not on his surf board he discovered how to talk to dolphins. Sgt ‘Karaoke’ Wynter and Sig ‘Donut’ Barron had their adventures too but unfortunately there are not enough pages in The Wire to describe all of our antics.

After an alarmingly quick 2 months we had driven over 1736 miles of driving details as well as sampling everything that Southern California and American culture had to offer. From Sea World to Racks of BBQ Ribs we had done it all. We could not thank the USMC enough for their kind hospitality, especially Lt Col Killion USMC who invited us all over for Thanksgiving dinner with his family. Tanned and loaded with American goodies we boarded another British Airways plane and enjoyed some more in flight movies on our way back for Christmas leave.

THE SQUADRON CHRISTMAS FUNCTION – by Sig Haslam

After a hard year of exercises and supporting the Regt in their pre deployment training the Sqn was looking forward to their Christmas function at the Schutzenhoff Hotel, excellently organised by Lcpl ‘Scouse’ Wilkes and Cpl ‘Bri’ Bell.

Everybody arrived at the hotel with all the lads in their best suits, although some looked like they were going to court, and all the girls in their finest gowns looking forward to the entertainment, food and drink; to be fair I think most people were there for the drink. The food was provided by the hotel and it was excellent, everyone enjoyed it. The entertainment consisted of a disco, a roulette table and a bucking Rudolph. Plus there was a raffle which had some great prizes; the best one being a net book which was won by Lcpl Stu Hingley and a cuddly toy which was won by Cpl Emma Gullan. After the raffle there was a couple of surprise prizes, one of which was won by Sig Kim Taylor which won her the right to be OC Sqn for the day. Apparently tea and toast in the Officers Mess was rather spiffing. Sig ‘Smudge’ Smith won SSM for the day.

Overall everybody had an excellent time with most people being happy it was held off camp for a change. The Sqn would once again like to thank Lcpl ‘Scouse’ Wilkes and Cpl ‘Bri’ Bell for organising a most enjoyable evening.

REGIMENTAL FOOTBALL TEAM, THE SEASON SO FAR! - by Sig Poulter

1(UK) ADSR welcomed a new host of players to the team due to the absence of many of last season’s regular players currently deployed on Op HERRICK 15. The first match of the season saw us compete against 8 Regt RLC in the league. After twice taking the lead through, firstly a spectacular bicycle kick from Sig Ben Simpson and secondly from a long range pile-driver from Sgt Craig Frankle. The class of the opponents eventually told and they ran out 5-2 winners. Sgt Frankle was awarded Man of the Match and despite the defeat there were a lot of positives to take out of the game.

We were drawn against 207 Sig Sqn in the first Round of the Signallers Cup away at Hohne Garrison and in spite of the torrential weather conditions and a waterlogged pitch, the match went ahead. The early part of the match was very scrappy whilst both teams adapted to the conditions but it was us who took the lead through a poachers goal from Sgt Rob McEwan. Against the run of play 207 Sig Sqn soon equalised but our ferocious pressure saw us run out eventual winners 4 - 1, with debutant Sig Luke Noble scoring 2 goals and Sgt McEwan adding another poachers effort to give him a brace. Sig Noble was deservedly awarded Man of the Match for his all-action display but credit must also go to Cpl Bob Zimmerman and Sig Kieran Roberts who slotted
effortlessly into the defence. Sgt McEwan was given ‘Donkey of the Match’ for the absurdity of his second goal. After a shot on goal had gone past the goalkeeper and towards the back of the net, everyone stopped and turned around assuming the ball had gone in. However Sgt McEwan reacted first when he realised the ball had stopped in a puddle in the goal mouth and like a true poacher tapped the ball into an empty net, much to Sig Noble’s frustration, who was already celebrating with his shirt over his head.

Next up was a home league fixture against 6 Regt RLC, played on an artificial 3G pitch. The match was easily won by 1(UK)ADSR and we triumphed 5 - 1. With the help of Sgt Frankle and Cfn Liam Baldwin, the man who some describe as ‘a truly inspirational leader’ Sig James Poulter ran the show in the middle of the field whilst adorning the captain’s armband which had become a regular fixture on his arm. His touch, vision and all-round technical superiority meant he was rightly awarded Man of the Match in his penultimate game for the Regt following 3 year’s exemplary service. The goals were scored by Cpl Scott Pardoe, Sig Simpson, a brace from Sig Noble and a cameo goal from Sig Oliver. Sig ‘Kent’ Lakin must also be recognised for coming off the bench to play his final match for the Regt and he will be sorely missed, but we can’t say the same for his throw-ins!

The latest match was another home fixture against 26 Regt RA. 1(UK)ADSR emerged victorious but the 2 - 1 scoreline didn’t do us justice, as we should have easily won by double figures. Cfn Baldwin gave us an early lead with a header before the opposition equalised. After missing chance after chance, mainly courtesy of Sgt McEwan, Cpl Stuart Clarke finally grabbed the winner midway through the second half. Man of the Match was awarded to Cfn Baldwin despite missing a hatful of chances. Condolences must go out to LCpl Steve Burgoyne, who after waiting in the wings for 3 matches finally got named on the subs bench, much to his delight. However when another player turned up late he had his shirt taken off him and had to watch as a spectator for the fourth game running. Chin up Stevie, I’m sure you’ll get a chance!

EXERCISE NORD-RHINE WESTPHALIA THREE PEAKS CHALLENGE – by LCpl Pitts

On Friday 13 January 2012, Sig Kent Lakin of Main Tp achieved a small place in history as the creator, and first person to complete, the Nord-Rhine Westphalia 3 Peaks Challenge; a local equivalent of the Three Peaks Challenge held in the UK annually. The aim of the exercise was to hike the 3 nearest and steepest ridges with 40kg, the equivalent weight that an average infanteer must carry daily, within 6 hours.

Sig Lakin was not doing this for fun but to raise awareness and donations for the Herford branch of The Royal British Legion. By the beginning of January the exercise had increased from a one-man sojourn to include Sig ‘Preacher’ Waterfall (photographer/navigator/driver) and myself, LCpl Pitts (Morale/Sqn Emblem carrier).

The day began early and auspiciously with a lengthy interview from BFBS followed by a warm farewell from the Tp and Sqn seniors, who saw the group leave barracks in the Regt MTs’ most spacious and nippiest car. Despite the Manden bound traffic being unusually light, the world class satnav led the group astray twice before Sig Waterfall spotted the markings for Minden ridge and dropped us at the furthest point from the base of the ridge he could have possibly chosen. With a steady pace, and the odd curious look from the locals, the walkers hiked the slippery and winding track towards the famous monument commemorating Kaiser-Wilhelm the First, reaching the top in a healthy 45 minutes!

After some quick posing, we continued onwards towards the town of Bielefield and must have come to terms with the satnav considering there was only the one wrong turn! Again Sig Waterfall derived great joy at dropping us off at the furthest point from the ridge he could justify, and cheerfully waved us off as we headed towards Sparrenburg castle. This hike was by far the longest of the 3 and forced Sig Lakin to show true determination and commitment to the cause he championed. I, of course, was absolutely fine and held the Sqn lance directly behind him as motivation.

Reaching the summit, and the square of the castle, in a respectable 50 minutes the exercise was placed in temporary hiatus as the group caught their collective breath and enjoyed the frankly amazing view.

The afternoon quietly crept past at one pm a friend of the group, Sig Mathew Cayton came by to show his support and roused the group onwards towards the last, and most formidable goal; the Bismarcksturm monument atop of the Bismark ridge in Herford. Having had enough of the satnav, Sig Waterfall gave it back to me and proceeded to make short work of the drive back to Herford, disputing all the way as to how far the drop off point should be from the ridge.

Happy to be disembarking within sight of the ridge and with the time quickly slipping away from the unofficial target of 5 hours, Sig Lakin showed absolute grit by carrying on despite some cramping and the 2 walkers raced up the steepest of the 3 ridges, even beating Sig Waterfall, who couldn’t find a parking space close enough to the monument!

Although the third peak was completed within 30 minutes, and despite being thoroughly exhausted, Sig Lakin decided to make up for the earlier hiatus by forcing the walkers to leave the monument at the earliest opportunity and tab the rest of the route as quickly as possible; taking advantage of the icy wind to cool us down along the way.

Passing the finishing line in a respectable 5hrs 14 mins, the delighted group downed packs and went straight into The
Royal British Legion to take the fullest advantage of their kind offer of free soup and a couple of pints each!

After regaining some composure a quick assembly was held to allow the RBL to officially award the 3 participants with an appreciation award, and for the Sqn OC to commend and applaud Sig Lakin’s sterling effort. The night didn’t end there however, as 21s’ resident indie band, ‘Still Got Beans’ played an impromptu and fantastic gig to commemorate the event, much to the delight of the crowd and Sig Eric Bailey, LCpl Dan Tirrell and LCpl Steven Burgoyne were visibly enthused to try out some of their newest songs!

Happy to have achieved his goals, and a sizeable sum of £600, Sig Lakin, if not his feet and back, was happy to call this exercise a complete success!

2nd SIGNAL REGIMENT
YORK

The pace of life within the Regt has increased noticeably since the return from Christmas leave. The first week back saw us complete the ARB and this focussed all personnel on our deployment on Op HERRICK 17 later in the year. STA training has meant more nights out of bed prior to moving into MST 2 and Ops teams have been particularly busy ensuring all the extra training support commitments have been fully resourced. The Regt is now looking forward to the challenges of the next few months as the training gathers momentum.

PRE TROOP COMMANDERS COURSE ATTACHMENT

– by 2Lt K Hetherington

After a brief induction course down at the School of Signals in Blandford I was sent off for a 2 month attachment with 2 Sig Regt in York. Still very much wet behind the ears from Sandhurst this would be an excellent opportunity to learn more about not only the Regt and the role it plays but more importantly the soldiers themselves.

My first exposure to the soldiers was with 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn. With my only previous experience of Gurkhas having been firing blanks and assaulting their positions across Sennybridge, Galloway forest and other such training areas, it would be interesting to meet them whilst not soaked to the core, chin strapped and having had no sleep. They did not disappoint, with their own cultural differences, unparalleled hospitality and friendliness only surpassed by their ability to soldier and get the job done in barracks and Ops, it is easy to see why they are an integral part of our Armed Forces.

Next it was over to 219 Sig Sqn and a leadership development exercise in Otterburn for LCps and Signallers. The emphasis clearly put on learning and developing skills and potential rather than a Sandhurst-esque thrashing. Two main highlights stand out, on the military skills side, the final attack where everything that was learnt and revised during the week came to fruition with a slick and aggressive final assault on the positions. Also hearing every single person deliver a set of orders for the first time, which contained the details needed to achieve the aim. Great effort from everyone involved.

Its not just exercises and work down the garages, another key aspect for a young officer is social occasions and the hosting that goes hand in hand with this. During the visit of the CO and some of the crew from HMS York, I was given the role of guide to Impahl Barracks and to show a little bit of Regtl history. Luckily with the aid of Mr Cook and the staff at the Kohima museum an interesting and informative visit was provided that was appreciated by the everyone on the day.

After walking up the steps at Sandhurst I was looking forward to a life without drill and nights spent polishing shoes into mirror like objects, but rather fittingly with it being this time of year the Rabbie Burns’ quote “The best laid schemes o’ mice an’ men gang aft agley.” This went “aft agley” when the need for a YO for the Royal Salute taking place to mark the Queens Diamond Jubilee was given to me. It was with real pride that I found myself standing in front of the invited guests and crowds in the museum gardens whilst the 105mm light guns of 39 Regt RA fired the 21 gun salute.

At the time of writing there are still 2 weeks left of an attachment that has not only been a great learning tool but tremendous fun.

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC Maj AJ Barry
SSM WO2 (SSM) M Whitfield MBE

Firstly, congratulations to WO2 (SSM) Matt Whitfield who was awarded an MBE in the New Years Honours list for the work he did in his previous appointment. He was, however, a bit concerned when the CO turned up at his house on Christmas eve to inform him of the good news as it’s not normally good news if the CO knocks on the door.

All departments within Sp Sqn continue to provide support to the Regt and Garrison and the QM’s dept have been particularly busy with the handover of the OTES kit prior to our STA training. We have also seen the formation of the Souter Force Protection and Transport Company in preparation for Op HERRICK 17.

219 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC Maj M Davis
SSM WO2 (SSM) C Stansfield

FALCON TROOP GO-KARTING AFTERNOON

– by LCpl Boggon

On 1 February members from Falcon Tp, 219 Sig Sqn attended an afternoon of go-karting on the outskirts of York. The aims of the afternoon were twofold. Firstly, the competitive nature of the activity would serve as a Tp bonding session, and secondly it would provide a social platform to say goodbye to Sig Perkins who was due to be posted to 22SR.

The afternoon began with a 15 minute warm-up and qualifying session, allowing competitors to be ranked on their driving ability, and subsequently for the team lists to be drawn up. This was then followed by the main event of the day; a 45 minute ‘Le Mans’ style race, where teams had to complete as many laps as possible in the given time. Each team consisted of 3 members, and driving time had to be divided equally to prevent more able drivers from hogging the race-track! After the 45 minute cut-off the race had been won by team ‘Melonhead’ (teams were allowed to choose their own names), which consisted of LCpl Boggon, Sig Stokes and Sig Peck, with a lead of 3 laps. Fastest lap of the day went to Cpl ‘Bruce’ Forsyth with a time of 49 seconds.

The afternoon was considered a great success, with a big thank you to Sig Longlands who organised the event.
JUNIOR NCO DEVELOPMENT  – by Lt Owen

On 8 Dec 11, 219 Sig Sqn conducted a low level development day, designed to enhance their junior NCOs understanding of written English. The day was led by Lt Geraint Owen and SSgt (FoFS(ISO)) Lindsey Derbyshire. The day started with all soldiers present giving a 2 minute talk about themselves, containing where they grew up and what they enjoyed doing. This allowed the staff to assess students’ self-confidence and ability to speak to an audience. Some soldiers were shocked that they were unable to fill this whole 2 minutes up, while others could have continued far longer.

With the short talks complete, the topic changed to that of essays, with argumentative essays playing centre stage. SSgt Derbyshire had put a great deal of effort in preparing a presentation, which was easy to follow and full of useful information. Numerous questions were put to the soldiers, with most of them requiring a written response. This was to gauge their basic understanding of the English language and test them under time pressure. It was encouraging to see what the soldiers were producing during this period and it benefitted them greatly before the afternoons essay writing.

With the presentation complete and lunch finished, the soldiers were set a number of short essays, from which they had to choose one. With a time limit of 45 minutes they were tasked to write a short argumentative essay, highlighting all that they had learned in the previous presentation. While a number found it hard to stay within the time restraints, most were ok and produced some good pieces of work.

No hard days work is worth doing, unless you are set homework. To the joy of the students they were given an essay on, ‘The Failings of the London Ambulance Service’ to cover both posts resulting in him running around RHQ even faster than in one of his cross country races!

Vicky Maddison,

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THE WIRE, APRIL 2012

leadership ability of the Signallers and LCpl s in order to prepare them for being a JNCO. There were 26 students and 8 instructors altogether who helped to run the exercise smoothly throughout the week. The whole ex was carried out in 2 phases: the Teaching Phase and the Examining Phase.

Day One was spent in Imphal Barracks with lessons on leadership by SSgt Suresh which highlighted the types and qualities of a leader. Another important lesson that was run later on the day was 7 Questions and Mission Command by Lt Greene, OC Sekkong Tp. This knowledge is vital to all soldiers so that they understand its importance to every level in the Army where sometimes the soldier is required to make his own decision by understanding the decentralised command, using initiatives within certain constraints. The last lesson of the day was Order Process delivered by Cpl Rabin from Training Wing. The bottom-line of this lesson was “Clear, concise and simple order helps to win the war.” The students were then given an example of the orders process so that they could deliver a set of orders the next day.

On day 2 the students were tested on current affairs briefings, order process and essay writing. The current affairs brief was conducted as a group discussion on different topics. Each student was also required to deliver a set of orders to test their knowledge of the orders process and this resulted in some very energetic orders given to their sections. On essay writing, the students were given 3 topics and had to choose one to write about.

On day 3 started with presentations where students had to give a presentation on a topic relevant to the Corps but away from communication equipment. Besides building students confidence on delivering presentations, it also helped share fresh ideas and facts about different topic related to Corps. The students were also tested on decision making where they had to produce number of courses of actions to solve a scenario based problem.

On day 4 Lt Col Watts, CO 30 Sig Regt and QMd QGS, visited the exercise to see the command task and patrolling skills performed by the students.

In conclusion, this type of exercise not only helps develop skills and abilities but also helps individuals to share their ideas and knowledge on different subject matters. Whatever trade you are, wherever you go the Army expects a basic form of leadership from you. Leadership qualities are vital when you have to command a team to achieve a mission. This type of exercise helps to build those basic qualities.

The exercise had an award for the top student which was received by Sig Tshering Tamang.
against the rest of the Regt on 13 March. The boxers have yet to be selected, however we have 10 hopeful contenders, LCpl Allen, Bethell-Hancock, Burton and Towler-Wilson, and Sigs Davies, Howard, Jones, King, Redwood and Smith.

Cross country events are being held weekly. There was strong representation from 202 Sig Sqn in the Regt’s Cross Country team which took 2nd place in the major unit race. LCpl Bethel-Hancock, Lamkin, Creber and Dand all had successful races.

LKG Tp has been focusing on their communications skills, with lessons given by Sgt Bird and Sig Harland in antennas and propagation. The lessons covered the differences in the Bowman and Cormorant masts used and the various types of associated antennas. Propagation was also taught and how to operate effectively over the net.

TRAINING HARD

As part of the Sqn’s 5.4 Uplift training SSGt Cox and LCpl Ferguson provided an in depth refresher on how to use Bowman ComBAT system, as well as operate and maintain HF and UHF radios. Whilst Cpl ‘Taff’ Smith was dispatched to the Defence Academy Shrivenham to instruct the ISCS(L) Course on how to use the 7 questions on ComBAT. All involved gained a great deal from this instruction and will certainly find it useful when they deploy on the CT2 Ex BUFFALO VALIDATE.

RANGE PACKAGE

In the first week of February, FOB Tp organised and ran a range package for the Sqn to prepare for their ACMT. It was a chilly start as the Sqn tabbed to the range under the careful eye of WO2 (QMSI) Crompton. Monday was taken up with grouping and zeroing before we moved on to Live Firing 9.

SSgt Lane’s patience was tested on a number of occasions including the time when a small snowman found his way on top of a figure 12 target! Tuesday was a bit more testing; firing from different positions on the Moving Target range. Towards the end of the day there was some good shooting from the likes of Sig Pettit. The shooting was great for the Sqn on a number of levels, firstly it was good to shake off the cob webs and secondly provided a bit of variety and time away from the garages.

The Moving Target Range Day

206 SIGNAL SQUADRON
OC Maj Coleman
SSM WO2 (SSM) A Bedward
REGIMENTAL CROSS COUNTRY – by Cpl Parr

Since the middle of October 2011 a small group of regular cross-country runners alongside the constant flow of new members (35 Males and 10 Females from the Div HQ and Regt have so far competed for our team) have been taking part in the numerous races within the SP Comd (UK South) area, bringing some good individual and team performances.

Cpl Parr close to the end of a particularly tough race

These include a Male team victory at the Blandford Tower 10, a 3rd placed finish for the Male team at the Army Cross-Country Relays at Tweseldon Racecourse in Aldershot and a 2nd placed Male team finish at the last 4 Div Cross Country Championships hosted by the Regt in Bulford. With these fine results the team set their sights on performing equally as well at the Corps Championships in January 2012 at Blandford. For the Female team 2 performances stood out with LCpl Lamkin finishing 3rd, followed closely by LCpl Dand in 6th place, these were aided by LCpl Bethel-Hancock 24th and Sig Jones 36th, who helped the team finish as 3rd placed Major Unit. The Male team lacked some of its usual runners so had some mixed individual results which resulted in missing out on our usual placing as a top 3 Unit, but we’ll be back up there soon!

MONS TP - by Sig Tom Smith

ROYAL SIGNALS VS ROYAL ARTILLERY MEN’S HOCKEY LEAGUE GAME

The Royal Signals Men’s Hockey Team competed against the Royal Artillery at Larkhill on 13 Dec 11. The weather was dim and wet, just like the Artillery’s banter (!), providing a good playing environment for what was going to be a hard game.
TheCorpsWomen’sTeamwereplayingbeforethemens’s
game;wewatchedwhatlookedlikeaveryhightempo
competitivegame,withtheRoyalSignalsdominatingwitha
scorelineof3-0.Oncetheirgamehadfinished,bothmense’s
teamsputtokitwithapitchwithahightempowarmupanda
verycompetitivefeelintheair.Werewerereallyupfortheitas
bothteamsarecompetitivewithintheleaguefor‘ topp spot’.

Thegamebeganwithafastpace,withbothteams’sthe
pressingothetomakefirstmistake.Thetotal
RoyalSignalsdominatedthepitch,keepingtheArtilleryhidden
awayintheirownhalf,withregularpenetrationintotho
oppositions‘D’andmanygoalscoringopportunities.
TheRoyalSignalsscored2goalsinquicksucceSSIONwhichraised
level ofourengameandputadowneronwhatwasalready
adullperformancefromtheArtillery.Beforehalftime,awell
drilledgoalfromtheoppositionbroughtthescoreto2-1.

Thesecondhalfwasuneventful,withbothteamspressing
withhighintensityforthewinuntilthe10minuteswhenthe
Artillery’sdefencefellapart,creatinggapswhichmeant
wecouldpressandcreategoalscoringopportunities.
The
gamefinishedscorelineof4-1,withanothergoalfor
Sig Tom Smith.

ThemoralewashighafterthegamewiththeRoyalSignals
gaininganother3points,looking‘ pretty’atthetopofthe
league.BothteamscompetedagainintheInterCorps
competition,wherebothteamsandtheREMEwillfightfor
thetitleof‘ArmyChampions’!

EXERCISE MERCURY GLACIER XV – by Lt Brown

On19November2011the3DSRARpixlesprintingmetin
the Belford hub for an early morning coffee ready to make the
epic road trip to Zell-am-See to start 3 weeks of ski training as
part of the annual Corps ski training, Ex MERCURY GLACIER.

After some initial concerns, our ferry company had been sunk
by the financial crisis and so a replacement had to be found,
we made our way down remarkably clear roads Zell am See.
On arrival we settled into the Jugendherberge Kitzsteinhorn
and started to prepare our equipment for the next day’s training.

Hitting the slopes, the sun was shining and we had great
conditions to get back into the swing of things and skied as a
team for the first morning. After the ability assessment we
were split and the more serious race training began which for
LCpl Ian Duggins mainly involved eating snow and crashing
into poles - not necessarily in that order.

After a chance meeting between Lt Benji Brown and the
Mayor of Zell am See which undoubtedly brought the team
luck, the weekend arrived and it was time to enjoy resting our
tired legs in the local spa. LCpl Matty Manning ventured into
the naked area to test the water and liked what he saw.

The third and final week of the camp was race week and 3 Div
Sig Regt had started to feel as though we had a chance
of bringing home some silverware. Sig Josh Finch and LCpl Neil
Harper were the 2 star performers, both finishing high up the
leader board across all competitions and this placed the Regt
third overall at the close of play; a fantastic achievement built
on some hard work in the 2 weeks of training. All in all,
another great Corps Ski Champs, for 3DSR which was really
enjoyable. Next year with the arrival of Capt Gray (twice
Corps Champs winner) and Sgt Howe (current Corps Champ)
to the Regt we hope to take the title.

258 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC Maj Alex Senneck
SSM WO2 (SSM) Rob Smith

Following a busy period of CT1 and CT2 exercises in Oct-Nov
11, the Sqn got stuck into ‘silly season’ activities, most
importantly the annual ‘25-Great Day’ comprising of a cooking
competition, Officers and SNCOs v ORs football match and
the end of year function. Thanks go to Cpl Randall, Cpl
Lawson and their team for organising a great event.
The New Year has seen the start of training for the Sqn
Boxing Team who are now under a strict coaching regime set
out by WO2 (SSM) Smith and Cpl Brice. With the initial
mission brief complete, the Sqn is now looking forward to
preparing for the next tour over the coming months.

EXERCISE PENNINE BEAR – by Sig Searle

On Monday 7 November, members of Radio Tp set off to
complete the 400km trek up the Pennine Way. The aim was
to complete it in 72 hours and expectations were high; “allow
an extra hour or so for night time legs” was the general
consensus when planning - how wrong we were! The
challenge was run as a relay, with 9 teams of 2 covering legs
of the route from Edale, Derbyshire to the finish in Kirk
Yetholm, just inside the Scottish Borders.

The first few legs started well, with all being completed in
respectable times despite the conditions. Then trouble with
navigation started when the sun disappeared and fog drew in.
Although the route was all along National Trust footpaths,
navigation was hindered by visibility often being less than 5
metres. The hours passed with either complaints or absolute
silence. With feet becoming wet and blistered the morale
started to slide. If we weren’t sleeping, we were thinking
about sleeping and if we weren’t thinking about sleeping, we
were eating, tabbing or nursing our feet. A few cheeky legs of
the route included Pen Y Gwent, which was conquered in
an impressive time by Sgt Jimmy Bond and LCpl Loftus.

The final leg was a collective effort. Lt Wall decided that the
Tp finishing together would crown the achievement, so on
Thursday night the rest of the Tp met with Cpl Carver and
LCpl Frost to complete the remaining few miles. Somehow
on a sprint finish LCpl Fremantle made it across the line first;
he was obviously looking forward to the 5 hour bus journey

The 3 DSR team mid way through the training

Members of Radio Troop at the end of the Pennine Way on Ex PENNINE BEAR
SSgt (YofS) Webster, Sgt Dunn and their wives enjoying the end of year function

The day started off with the traditional Christmas ‘cook off’, judged by OC Maj Senneck, 2IC Capt Lifton and SQMS SSgt Watson, who took full advantage of the wine that was served with each meal. Several teams were formed from each Tp and were armed with pots, pans and a budget of £10 with which to provide a meal from a selected country. The organiser, Cpl ‘Gordon Ramsay’ Simpson was the previous year’s winner. Although trying to cling onto his title by producing a delightful meal, the title was soon to be stripped from him by Sig Moores and Sig Jacques who knocked up a superb and tasty Russian dish.

The afternoon saw a traditional Juniors v Seniors football match that proved to be, as always, excellent entertainment. The game started badly for the Juniors as Cpl Brice took it upon himself to come up for a corner in the first 5 minutes, despite being our goalkeeper! The seniors cleared their lines and the ball found Sgt Bond who then slotted the ball home from just inside the half way line for the Seniors to take an early lead. This lead was soon to be cancelled out by a super 40 yard strike from Cpl Davies. After a performance that could be compared to Brazil, the Juniors finished off a 106 pass move that resulted in Pte Kuranchie getting on the score sheet and the juniors taking a half time 2-1 lead. The second half saw yet more world class football skills from the Juniors and a simple tap in from Cpl Eland sealed the game 3-1. We are still not sure if it was in fact world class football from the Juniors or whether the Seniors just made us look good!

In the evening the Sqns end of year function was held at the Barceló Hinckley Island Hotel which was organised by Cpl Lawson and I. This turned out to be a delightful evening of good food and entertainment and the perfect opportunity for the Sqns to reflect on events of the past year. As tradition should go the raffle and money tree went down well, until the OC, Maj Senneck, walked away with the top prize from the money tree and WO2 (SSM) Smith managed to get his grubby hands on a top of the range Android tablet in the raffle – only the third time in a row he’s won top prize at a Sqn event – fix! All in all, it was a great day in 25-Great Sig Sqn.
crowd. On the ground Sgt Tony Watzmuff kept the engine running and made sure the activities ran smoothly.

The Bonfire was surrounded by guys made by the Bruggen and Andrew Humphrey schools. It certainly went up a treat and the fireworks that ensued kept everybody entertained. Inside the Hangar the CO's wife, Fiona Long, judged the schools poster competition. The competition was fierce but eventually 1st and 2nd places were awarded to each of the 2 schools. Members of NES Tp had built a crazy golf stall, entitled “Any Hole's a Goal” and the LAD built a popular buzzer bar stall. Along with the Gluhwein, numerous food stalls and a plethora of other stands the event was immensely successful and a great night was had by all.

**229 (BERLIN) SIGNAL SQUADRON**

OC Maj ER Warren
SSM WO2 (SSM) S Gibbs

**EXERCISE MERCURY GLACIER XV** – by Lt Barry Rowson

In late Nov 7SR departed Elmpt Station for the blue skies and white slopes of Zell Am See to test their speed in the Ex MERCURY GLACIER XV Championships. We took 2 teams of 4, headed up by Lt ‘Baz’ Rowson and Sgt ‘Kez’ Hopkinson. Unlike many other Regts we went for 2 weeks instead of a possible 4. We knew this would disadvantage us but we felt that armed with some unknowns like the speed of Ssgt (Yofs) Krikorian and the guile of Sig Ricky Robinson we were in with a shout. This was coupled with the experience and youth of our mentor and only female, God help her, Sgt Hopkinson!

After the usual 8-hour drive that comes with any military event we settled into the same accommodation that’s hosted every annual Corps Championships for the last 250 years. The young bucks in the team were taken back all of 6 months to their youths when they were thrown into a 4 man room with….bunk beds! After a few hours and plenty of pillow fights they emerged ready to concentrate on racing.

As late arrivals to the Championships the majority of the team were given the final week of practise under the tutelage of Sgt Hopkinson. A wonderful job she did but as they say, you can only bring a horse to water and many of us were not born to ski at speed! In the faster groups Ssgt (Yofs) Krikorian and Cpl Lord got into the practise gates early and worked on their techniques.

**The team to be seen with!**

Late nights were left until the weekends and the less said about that the better. However, all returned safely and with smiles on their hung over faces so I think missions were successful. In the second and final week, the racing began. Unfortunately we had already lost Sig Ricky Robinson due to injury sustained on the indoor football courts against our arch rivals, 3 Div! The racing was hard work and often in terrible conditions but all made it down the slopes. Our top performers were Ssgt (Yofs) Krikorian and Cpl Lord who made the top 20 and the rest of us scattered inside the top 50. As the competition progressed so did our confidence with everyone climbing up the seedings for the next day’s racing. After racing was complete there was a final night out before the long drive back to Germany and work. The other members of the 7SR team that maybe didn’t add much to the skiing but plenty to the atmosphere were Sig ‘Hans Gruber’ Skelding, Sig Dean Hewitt and Sig Aidan Walker.

**EXERCISE ARCADE FALCON** – by Lcpl Payne

A select few SMEs were sent from 7 Sig Regt to Stafford to assist 22 Sig Regt on Ex ARCADE FALCON. Oh and a few bods from the QM Dept to sign over the kit but we can hardly call them SMEs!

After an exhaustingly tedious drive from Javelin Barracks to what can only be described as the vortex of civilisation, Folkestone, we few brave souls thought it best to acquaint ourselves with the small town that some thought to be an open air museum from the dark ages.

We arrived at Stafford raring to go and after briefing the 22 Sig Regt guys it was our job, as SMEs, to guide them through the building of Richeliu nodes and ARRC INFRA Dets.

222 Sig Sqn didn’t have any problems and some natural talent shone through in the likes of Cpl Rabi who was cool under pressure and Lcpl Mark Thompson who thought Christmas had come early when he un-wrapped the VTC. Lcpl Robbie “Blobby” Ellison led the charge with the Reachet Det for a seamless E1 link. The cheeky scouse man-child even had time to come round and mock what we were doing.

All the kit was up and working and it was time to relax for the weekend and look forward to the move to RAF St Mawgan. Once we got there, everything seemed to go smoothly setting up the kit. Problems were encountered and overcome with some ingenuity and style. A scaled down version of an ARRC Ops room was almost breastfed into life by 7 Sig Regt’s very own Cpl lain “Gaddafi” Gadsdon overseeing the planning and construction.

After a successful exercise the only thing left was for us to have our transport back switched from a drive to a flight, producing many dramas with our baggage limits!

**232 SIGNAL (SINGAPORE) SQUADRON**

OC Maj JN Mayne
SSM WO2 (SSM) D Mears

The New Year has seen the Sqn return from a successful operational tour in Kabul, and a busy period preparing for a Royal visit. As the last Sqn ever to deploy on operations from 7 Sig Regt we have returned to a Regt that has already changed notably and following our medals parade, the focus has been on preparing soldiers for their future assignments. It is certainly a time for reflection on the achievements of the last few years, as well as the highlights of the Sqn from previous years as we prepare to disband.

**A REFLECTION ON OP EAGLE JULY 2011 – JANUARY 2012** – by Maj Jon Mayne

Excitement, nerves, anxiety, worry, all of the usual feelings, members of 232 (Singapore) Sig Sqn went through before deployment. For most it was their first operational tour of duty and many of them didn’t know what to expect. In between arriving in the searing Kabul heat and departing in the blistering cold, the soldiers of 232 have had an exhilarating but demanding 6 month tour as part of a multinational force. The Sqn has supported HQ ISAF Joint Command with a number of functions. Not only did we take the lead for the
Signal Support Group, but also provided manpower for specialist movement roles, the NSE and expertise in several of the staff branches. After 6 months of tiresome shift work and dodgy food we are now happy to be back home with family and friends. The CSE show in November was the perfect relaxation moment for personnel to let their ‘hair down’ and ‘chill out’ with the other nations, taking them away from the routine but critical tasks.

Cpl Joe Navoka led a team of 3 working predominantly with US troops for the Force Re-Integration Cell. SSGt Woosnam maintained stern discipline of the Afghan Mission Network Operation Centre throughout the tour. Sgt Smith organised an excellent charity event raising £5,500 for Hounds for Heroes and helping people kick start their fitness regimes. Sig Rhea Tye was a part of the MOVCON team and a key point to take from her tour was how ‘Powerful’ she felt showing other ranks, especially the Officers, how to drive around Kabul. A small contingent had a busy time installing fibre optic cables throughout the IJC compound, KAIA North and other ISAF camps based in Kabul. Sig Edwards achieved the ‘golden blanket’ during this period with his amazing effort of staying in bed throughout most of the day, every day. Comms Tp based in HQ ISAF provided rapid, deployable Satellite Comms throughout Afghanistan. This was an exciting, life changing experience for the majority who served in this Tp.

Lt ‘He-man’ Adams was the Tp Comd and had a very easy tour due to the awesomeness, professionalism and hard work of his soldiers, freeing up his time to perfect his ‘Call of Duty’ skills. Often working alone or in small teams, these Soldiers deployed to all operational areas of Afghanistan, taking experiences with them which will remain for some time.

In summary the deployment of 232 (Singapore) Sig Sqn, on Op EAGLE, to Kabul was a success, everyone is very happy to be back home with friends, family and loved ones.

232 SIGNAL SQUADRON MEDALS PARADE – by Maj Jon Mayne

The Eurocorps were the lucky people fortunate enough to assume the roles that the Sqn vacated in Kabul, but unfortunately they did not play ball when it came to replacing people in the timeframes requested. It therefore transpired that the Sqn were to have two medal parades, as we awaited the return of Main Body 3.

For the first parade we were privileged to have a visit from our Corps Colonel in Chief who presented medals to 40 of the personnel. Preparations for the event dominated our time following the Normalisation Packages, and everyone relished the challenges and opportunity to get back into a good bit of drill practice, particularly WO2 (SSM) Mears.

Special mention has to go to those personnel who received commendations from either COMUC or COMISAF during their tour; Capt Thomas, Sgt Beasley, Cpl Kelly, Cpl Navoka, LCpl Brady-Lavis, Sig Hazel and Sig Foster. Cpl Kelly received his commendation from the Princess Royal, but unfortunately the remainder of the personnel were all part of the group returning on the final flight.

Following the parade a reception was held in the WOs’ & Sgts Mess for all the families, giving an opportunity for family members to also meet Her Royal Highness, and a chance for the junior soldiers to sample a few pints in the Mess.

Having arrived 7 hours too late to be greeted by the Princess Royal, the 17 personnel on Main Body 3 paraded with the remainder of the Sqn for Brig Jim Richardson MBE who recently assumed command of Rhine Garrison, and as a former CO of the Regt we were honoured to have the opportunity to parade for him. He presented 8 medals and spoke with all personnel in the Sqn in what was a memorable parade for all involved.
Since the last iteration of The Wire the Regt has continued to prepare to move one of the sub-units to its new location. 243 Sig Sqn, having conducted a meticulous amount of planning and preparation are in the process of ensuring that the 643 Tp move to Andover goes as smoothly as possible. The pace of ECM (FP) Operations continue unabated with a constant and steady stream of professionally trained soldiers from 225 Sig Sqn rolling through Afghanistan. The ‘Mechs’ from 241 Sig Sqn are equally busy and no less geographically dispersed on deployments. 251 Sig Sqn continue to parade through another season of public duties in London and with the 2012 London Olympics looming on the horizon, their ‘busy’ season has arrived early. RHQ have successfully completed a temporary move into open-plan offices and despite the luxuries of individual storage lockers being a distant memory, all have coped admirably well with the upheaval. Although we are still in the early stages of the year, 2012 is already proving to be exceptionally busy. The following articles give a flavour of what some of our soldiers and officers have been up to over the past few months.

225 (ECM(FP)) SIGNAL SQUADRON

**LOOKING AHEAD - 2012** - by Cpl C McKechnie

With the Christmas festivities behind us and leave quickly forgotten 225 Sig Sqn (ECM (FP)) has leapt into 2012 at the same work tempo as 2011 ended. From the very first day back the Sqn conducted a reorganisation to establish itself for a formalised Operational Readiness Model (ORM). Changes to deployment now see larger Operational Support Teams (OST) deploying for 6 month operational tours - a change from the previous 4 month deployments. 251 Sig Sqn are equally busy and no less geographically dispersed on deployments, 225 Sig Sqn are equally busy and no less geographically dispersed on deployments. 251 Sig Sqn continue to parade through another season of public duties in London and with the 2012 London Olympics looming on the horizon, their ‘busy’ season has arrived early. RHQ have successfully completed a temporary move into open-plan offices and despite the luxuries of individual storage lockers being a distant memory, all have coped admirably well with the upheaval. Although we are still in the early stages of the year, 2012 is already proving to be exceptionally busy. The following articles give a flavour of what some of our soldiers and officers have been up to over the past few months.

241 SIGNAL SQUADRON

**“WHO ARE WE?”**

241 Sig Sqn was created in 01 Apr 2006 in order to deliver the following mission:

“To provide ICS cabling, installation and specialist expertise to UK and Expeditionary Operations in order to enable the supported Commander’s ICS”.

To fulfil this role, we have deployed Installation Technicians all over the world, to places such as Afghanistan, Diego Garcia, Brunei, Bosnia, Falkland Islands, and Iraq. We have strong links with the Communications Planning Office (CPO) based at Corsham, and are often tasked by them. We support UK ops and exercises and have done so since our creation. Due to our unique role, a permanent presence in HQ Army and Northern Ireland is essential to our good running. So, inst techs who are assigned to the Sqn can find themselves based at Andover or Northern Ireland for some or all of their tour.

**OPERATION HERRICK**

The Sqn supports Op HERRICK in three significant ways:

**Inst Tech Support to CSR’s:** This is the detachment of Inst Techs to CSR’s (when requested) prior to deployment. These Inst Techs augment the CSR’s directly providing extra trade capacity throughout the tour. In Theatre, work ranges from new installs and maintenance/fault rectification through to provision of passive ICS to forward locations. These Inst Techs can expect to join the CSR prior to deployment and conduct pre-deployment training with the CSR, helping to integrate with the team.

**Surge Teams:** Generally 2 months in duration (but up to 3), these tours are for specific tasks in Theatre, and the team works directly for JFCIS (under the CPO(LO) below). An excellent opportunity to practice and improve trade, as the tasks can range from basic and quick tented fits to complex, bespoke building infrastructure, all in one surge.

**Communications Planning Office (Liaison Officer):** Generally a SSgt role, this is the Theatre SME for all ICS passive...
infrastructure and is an exceptionally busy role. This Inst Tech is responsible for the in-Theatre management of surge teams (when deployed), the ordering, receipt and onwards movement of passive ICS stores, and provision of preparatory advice prior to any civil works beginning. Attached to this role is the responsibility to maintain Camp Bastion’s pits and ducts and improve fibre optics infrastructure (passive infrastructure) wherever possible.

**UK Operations:** The Sqn is often tasked with assisting other units in the UK with specialist inst tech support in order to meet a variety of objectives. Recent tasks include the testing and commissioning of passive infrastructure of the GoC London district office and Ops Room builds and maintenance across the UK and Germany.

**MST Support:** The Sqn is required to support Mission Readiness Exercises (amongst others), conducting builds and subsequently first response teams locally throughout the exercises. This allows Inst Techs an opportunity to practice trade as well as directly assist in the preparation and execution of Bde level exercises.

**The Future:** Looking to the future of 241 Sig Sqn, in barracks training is due to receive an excellent boost through the delivery of the trade training suite within the Sqn lines. This will give Inst Techs of all experiences and classes a chance to practice trade in a controlled, realistic environment. The long-term aim is to open this facility out to the wider Corps in the near future in order to enhance Inst Tech capabilities across the Corps. Any unit interested in using these facilities should get in touch with Sqn Ops on 93508 4099. Outside of operations, surge teams will shortly be deploying to the Falkland Islands and Brunei. Sqn Adventure Training is due to take place in late May, including Sea Kayaking, Surfing and walking some of the South West Coastal Path.

**Summary:** 241 Sig Sqn is versatile and active, regularly providing the opportunity of short and long deployments across the world. It provides extensive support to the wider army and is fast becoming a centre of excellence for this trade group. The introduction of the trade training suite will boost this reputation and, ultimately, improve the quality of Inst Techs across the wider Corps.

**251 SIGNAL SQUADRON**

**OC** Maj JTD Wright  
**SSM** WO2 (SSM) Watts

**EXERCISE SPARTAN HIKE AND LIONS CHALLENGE 2012**

With memories of the Royal Signals Corps Ski Championships still in the front of our minds, but this time each carrying a little holiday weight, the 10 Sig Regt Alpine Ski Team of Capt Tom Collins, Cpl Chris McKechnie and Lcpl George Daws, augmented with Lcpl Neil Harper from 1DSR, set about the long journey to Serre Chevalier Valley, France for Ex SPARTAN HIKE 2012, the UK Div Ski Championships, ever optimistic of qualification for Ex LIONS CHALLENGE, the Army Alpine Ski Championships. The Journey ahead of us was already long, but made even longer by the insistence of Capt Collins to only allow the complete works of Ricky Gervais to be played on the stereo, and despite a few minor detours, in the small hours of Sunday 8 Jan 2012 we arrived in Villeneuve.

Following a brief lie-in and team registration, it was time to get back out on our skis and shake out those weary, Christmas television hampered legs. It was not long before we were all back into our stride and tearing our way round the piste; albeit with a few spills from all in the team. That evening, there was no time for relaxing as it was straight into the routine of ski maintenance, with Cpl McKechnie breaking out a maintenance kit that Herman Mayer would be proud of and supplying all manner of tips and tricks to anyone who would listen… and even those who wouldn’t.

The first race, Seeding GS, was upon us, a chance to move up the seed list and grab that all important low number race bib; allowing you to go down the course earlier. The ESF (French Ski School) set a great course, filled with twists and turns, a real challenge for both the seasoned veterans and those participating at this level for the first time. The tone for the racing was set and the ESF kept supplying us with great courses, Giant Slalom, Super Giant Slalom, Downhill and last of all Slalom. Following the last race came confirmation… we had qualified for the Army Champs, both as individuals but most importantly as a Team.

That evening we had prize giving followed by a rather expensive and intoxicating night out, however this did not stop the early morning that ensued, with Capt Collins going...
to register the Team while the remainder under the expert packing guidance, that only a Dad possesses, of Cpl McKechnie; the Van was packed for our move over to Chantemerle for Ex LIONS CHALLENGE, the Army Alpine Ski Champs

These were a whole other level, with the courses becoming harder, more technical and longer, the stakes also rose as now we were not just racing for the Regt, some of us were racing for the Corps. And so, kitted out in the brand new Royal Signals race suits, shorts and jackets, we started again with the GS, Slalom, Super-G and then the last event, the infamous Army Downhill, on the former World Cup and Female Olympic Downhill Run, the Luc Alfand. The course was fast and had some far more serious turns than in previous years, but still gave the opportunity to fly off the 2 jumps on the course, Pylon and Brigadiers Leap. Everyone agreed that it was an exhilarating experience and one which we will fight to feel again next year. Congratulations to everyone from the 10 Sig Regt Alpine Ski Team and let’s smash up the course again next year.

243 SIGNAL SQUADRON
OC Maj D Hughes
SSM WO2 (SSM) Thirwell

LCPL MUDD – WILTSHIRE SERV BLOODBIKER

LCpl Mudd is a member of the 243 Sig Sqn Line Section in HQ Army (Andover). By day, he is an Installation Technician, delivering critical CIS infrastructure support HQ Army, yet by night when off duty, he is a committed ‘Blood Biker’, delivering critical life saving support to the NHS! Below is an account of what this vital service entails.

The Service by Emergency Rider Volunteers (SERV) provides our hourly medical emergency courier service to Wilshire’s NHS for transportation of blood, organs, pathological samples and surgical equipment. Motorcycles are used for their ability to manoeuvre more easily through traffic and make progress through urban areas swifter than a car. Each rider has a Honda ST1300 Pan-European motorcycle which is marked clearly with “Blood” and is fitted with blue lights and a siren. They are trained up to Institute Of Advance Motoring standard and are Blue-Lights qualified. In addition the rider is given NHS Courier procedure training to ensure a fully accounted transfer of products gets to the right location at the right time. First Aid, triage and incident scene management training are also given so the riders are able to control an accident until the relevant authorities arrive.

I have been a SERV rider for 8 months and am On-Call from 1900 – 0700hrs. When the call from the controller comes we are told what we are collecting, from where and its destination. From then on, we are on our own and confirm via mobile phone, pickup of the item, the delivery and getting home. All routes to/from the pickup and destination are pre-planned to ensure riders do not get lost and that any incidents causing a delay of the delivery are easily found. In the short time I have been a SERV Rider I have experienced call outs ranging from 2100 – 0530hrs. The call out usually involves riding from my home in Wilton to Southampton Blood Bank and transporting to Salisbury, Swindon, Westbury or Warminster. However, packages can be transported further afield by setting up rendezvous locations with other SERV riders outside Wilshire.

Being a “Blood Biker” makes a difference on various levels. As all riders carry out this work for free it saves a considerable amount of money for hospitals to utilise on vital equipment. Over a year the amount saved can pay for an extra incubator for a Special Care Baby Unit. The blood being transported could be urgently required for a life-saving transfusion or emergency surgery where time is a significant factor. My proudest moment in SERV was when a mother of a young girl who had leukaemia thanked me for delivering platelets to Salisbury Hospital which helped treat her daughter.

15th SIGNAL REGIMENT (INFORMATION SUPPORT) BLANDFORD

CO Lt Col IAJ Condie
RSM WO1 (RSM) R McNab

Life in RHQ ticks along at a very steady pace, Capt Mark ‘get me out here’ Holden remains fully engaged with all departments across the Unit ensuring all Operational and support tasks are taken care of.

The Adjt, Capt Ted Lowe has finally admitted that an LE Officer can do a better job than him and has temporarily handed over control to Capt ‘Hutch’ Hutchinson whilst he undertakes some rehab activities.

GLOBAL INFORMATION SERVICES SQUADRON
OC Maj A Williams RA
SSM WO2 (SSM) E McKinney RE

Following a much needed Unit re-org, in January 2012 Tactical Services Troop (responsible for providing support to BCIP, BISAs and Tactical CIS) was moved in to Global Information Services Sqn and after a few changes to the existing structures, the Sqn is now better structured with an OC, SSM and Tp Comds. Capt Daz Evans has taken on the additional responsibilities of the CIED IM/IX team and Capt ‘Hutch’
TACTICAL SERVICES TROOP

OC Capt S Hutchinson
FofS WO2 (FofS) A Gray
YofS SSgt (YofS) C Powell

Tactical Services Tp is responsible for the provision of Level 3 System Support in the deployed environment. Over recent months the Tp have been heavily involved with the Fleet BCIP 5.4 uplift, with numerous visits to the spiritual home of the Senior Service, Portsmouth.

Recently the Tp deployed a small team onboard HMS Illustrious, the Fleet Flagship. HMS Illustrious has just finished a major refit period which saw a multitude of her systems upgraded in order to fulfil her new role as Amphibious Support and Landing Platform Helicopter (LPH). With full support from the ships company, General Dynamics (UK), BATCIS and COBHAM Antenna Systems, the Team embarked onboard in order to locate and rectify a number of defects within the Local Area Subsystem (LAS), prior to the ship sailing to the Arctic Circle for an 8 week exercise.

Although normally conducted within UK waters, there have been a number of opportunities to conduct the BCIP uplift further afield. Of note was the recent deployment of CPO (CIS) ‘Busta’ Brown (the sole RN sailor at 15 SR) and Sgtn Jone Fataki to Bahrain to uplift RFA Lyme Bay. After a very long journey the guys arrived onboard and were shown to their very comfortable accommodation for a much needed sleep. The first task onboard was to conduct a full inventory of their Bowman holdings and then test the BCIP 5.2 equipment, known as a “baseline”. After the baseline was established the BCIP 5.2 equipment was removed and BCIP 5.4.2 kit installed. However, due to problems with the onboard equipment, it prevented the new equipment from being fully tested. The subsequent Set To Work (STW) and Harbour Acceptance Trial (HAT) had to be postponed until the ship returned to the UK. Following this 15 SR personnel ensured that they made good use of their “spare time” by enjoying the sunshine and attractions that Bahrain had to offer.

Future plans will see the Tp deploy to the Falkland Islands in order to provide System Support to HMS Protector, the new Antarctic survey ship. The “icebreaker” has been leased from the Norwegian Government and the bespoke BCIP fit has been challenging to say the least. Despite this, there has been no shortage of volunteers for the deployment.

Over the last few months there has been considerable recognition for the efforts of Tac SvcTs Tp. One of our longest serving members, Mr Stewart Little (former WO1 YofS) has been awarded the Commander Land Forces Certificate for Meritorious Service in the New Year’s Honours List. As Bowman Service Manager he has been the lynchpin between the contractor and Service User. Additionally, WO2 (FofS) ‘Barney’ Gray has been awarded a CinCs Certificate for Meritorious Service for his work in Special Communications. Continuing the positive note, the Tp has been strengthened by the recent addition of 2 General Dynamics engineers, Mr Allan McMillan (former Royal Signals) and Mr Ted Madams (former Royal Artillery). Finally, new arrival SSgt (YofS) Chris Powell will be moving on to pastures new following his promotion to WO2.

BISA SUPPORT – by SSgt ‘Del’ May RA

Fire Control Battlefield Information System Application (FCBISA) is a comprehensive suite of software applications to manipulate data and information in support of specific battlefield functions within the Royal Regiment of Artillery in the close support role and provides the following:

- Primary means of Fire Control for the Artillery’s indirect fire systems in close support roles.
- Command and Control system running on the Bowman Network.
- Latest NATO Armaments Ballistic Kernel (NABK)

Since September 2011, I was involved in providing Level 3 support to assist 26 Regt RA with the implementation of FCBISA into Afghanistan to support the Operational commitment on Op HERRICK 15. This included PDT on various exercises conducted by 15 Sig Regt (IS), followed by a week in Lydd to complete the mandatory briefs prior to deployment.

During my tour in Afghanistan from October to December 2011 I was heavily involved with assisting the WOCIS/SMS of 26 Regt RA to ensure that FCBISA was all up and running prior to the Regt going live as from the beginning of December. The deadline was achieved with very few problems and 26 Regt RA are now using FCBISA in Theatre as the primary means of computation in order for 3 of the 4 Gun batteries to support the Battle Groups in their area of operation.

DII-D SYSTEM SUPPORT TEAM – by SSgt (FofS) Mallison

OC Capt Evans
FofS IS WO2 (FofS(IS)) D Cooper
FofS SSgt (FofS) S Mallison

The Christmas period may have been rather quiet for some teams within the Regt but not for DII. SSgt Tony Tye, Sgt Bri Milne and Cpl Ian Corner had the joy of a Christmas dinner courtesy of the Bastion cookhouse whilst deployed as SST Forward. I was assured that the postcard from Barbados that landed on their desk just after Christmas was received fairly well. As well as the normal commitments to Op HERRICK, Op ZITA has also been in full swing since October 2011.

Op ZITA has been the main focus for the whole of our team as it is a full uplift of all of the J14 IOS equipment to the new HOUSEKEEPER system. Twenty nine out of a total of 35 PoPs we support are dotted around the whole of Afghanistan from larger locations such as Camp Bastion, all the way down to FOBs and PBs giving a grand total of 1200 UADs. To tackle the challenging migration a team of 10 were sent out to Theatre, a mixed bag of ATLAS, CONDO, BATOps and the token military CS Engineers. The SST PoP in Bastion was the first to be uplifted and then deciding to take the bull by the horns, Kandahar was the first major site to be completed. Having seen first hand the size (4 PoPs) and setup this is no easy feat. Also being the first site to be tackled the obligatory teething issues flared up in good form.

On completion of Kandahar the team would now focus on the uplift of Helmand Province, leaving the delights of Bastion to the end. The Bald-Finch team, SSgt Martin Baldwin and SSgt Ian
Fincham, morphed into something resembling soldiers and deployed out to the FOBs. I think they were both a little bit gutted that Osprey body armour does not come with an iPad pouch, (their ideas for a CS Engineer Osprey variant are unlikely to be introduced). At the same time the CONDO and ATLAS engineers moved around the larger sites. Unfortunate timing has also required the Bald-Finch team to deploy up to Kabul in the depth of its winter months with temperatures dropping to -16. Even though the equipment will have no complaints working at those temperatures, the same can’t be said for a certain Scotsman, who loves the cold so much he is emigrating to Italy at the earliest opportunity.

Outside of Op HERRICK, Cpl Jase Allard and Mr Tristan Glass also known as the ‘Dream Team’ are focusing on the upgrade of the Rest of The World (RoTW) legacy PoPs, and accompanied by Ssgt (FoS) Steve Mallison will be heading to warmer climates for an uplift of our PoPs in BATUK.

INFORMATION SUPPORT TEAM (GERMANY)

– Cpl ‘I want to be the 2IC’ Woodley

OC FoS

Mr Shenton

WO1 (FoS) C Ferguson

January has again been a busy period for the Germany team, firstly we would like to wish farewell to Sgt ‘Mac’ McNicoll who is leaving to complete his resettlement prior to 22 years service. The team continues to support our enduring commitments in Afghanistan and Kenya.

December 2011 saw the welcome return of Ssgt Dave Milner and Ssgt John Paterson RLC from Op HERRICK 15. The handover to Ssgt Tony Yye who is supporting Housekeeper RLI and Sgt Jim Halliday 1 SCOTS, representing the Tactical System Support Team (Tac SST) was seamless. The support of 20 Armd Bde on Op HERRICK 15 continues. Cpl Karly Bond RLC has deployed on Ex ASKARI THUNDER to Kenya. Coupled with these tasks we have also been providing system support to Unit Exercises and participating in adventure training.

A visit from the 2IC Regt Maj Woodley, OC Maj Williams and the RSM WO1 (RSM) McNab from Blandford, included a brief on the future of the Regt, brought some rays of sunshine to the team. On the evening of day 2 the Tp enjoyed a night of bowling with consequences, where many an impending beer was forfeit was cheered, and some handled the pressure better than others! The visit was enjoyed by all and the UK members of the Regt departed for the Mother Ship next morning with, we hope, a better idea of 1ST(G) life in the Fatherland.

GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS SQUADRON

OC

Maj Ratna Pun QG Signals

With the recent Unit re-org, in January 2012 Global Communications Networks Sqn now consists of only 2 Tps; Networks Tp led by WO1 (FoS) Paul Wright, the Tp Comd post being gapped, a direct result of the Tranche 1 redundancy and 600 Sig Tp led by Capt (TTO) Bob Pace. The Sqn as a whole is heavily involved on OHNBU activities providing Network and Hub support along side with its enduring support to Op HERRICK for Cortez, Reacher and Promina and not forgetting the ongoing support to TNG and Cormorant on various Exercises and MST activities.

NETWORKS TROOP - by Cpl Si Kidd

OC WO1 (FoS) P Wright

Ops FoS WO2 (FoS) I Howard

After returning from Afghanistan in September 2011 where I was the Level 3 maintainer for Cortez, the knowledge I had gained in Theatre was to be put to good use immediately; supporting Ex PASHTUN PANTHER in deepest darkest Norfolk. After loading up the vehicle with all the necessary kit, myself and Cpl Ronnie ‘you don’t know me’ De-Bigue set off on the monotonous journey to STANTA. Five hours of driving later we eventually entered Norfolk and the fun really started. For some reason the SatNav system thought it would be a great idea to test out the Coroa’s rallying potential but with a bit of quality driving we made it safely back to the tarmac and eventually found the entrance to Rodney Camp, where we would be accommodated for the next few days. Having never been to STANTA before I did not know what to expect; STANTA did not disappoint offering 5* accommodation and 3 square meals a day.

We arrived for the build phase of the exercise and offered any help we could to the TNG and Cortez elements. After some fault finding on the fibre patch cables, the Cortez detachment was ready for the upcoming exercise. We had done all that could be done and the exercise was about to commence; it was time for the long drive back to Blandford where we would offer back support to the exercising troops. The exercise continued all the way up to Christmas with 15 Sig Regt (IS) deploying most weekends to offer third line support to TNG and Cortez while the exercising troops handed over to the next lucky guys coming through.

With Christmas out of the way, the bank account emptied and a little bit more weight carried around the midriff; leave was over. The support to Ex PASHTUN PANTHER had passed on to Sgt Andy McNally, which left me free to continue with another task that I had started before Christmas. This was to organise a trip to London to present a cheque to the Royal Star and Garter charity for the monies raised by a go-karting endurance race. The race was organised by Ssgt (FoS) Mark ‘the old Man’ Partington and took place in the summer of 2012. It consisted of 4 teams continuously racing for 8 hours around the track on Blandford Camp and raised nearly £3500 for the charity. The Royal Star and Garter charity is set up to help the ex service community and their dependants in their hour of need offering accommodation and medical care that is second to none. The charity has 2 homes, one in Richmond in London and the other in Solihull in the Midlands. In conjunction with the charity visit I thought we should make a day of it and organised a tour of the Houses of Parliament.

It was an early start, 0530 to be precise, to get to London in time for the tour at 0910. To say we underestimated the traffic in the city would be an understatement! We finally arrived at Westminster for 0950 and managed to get in to the Houses of Parliament for the 1000 tour. It was very informative and it was good to see where our government makes its decisions. After the tour we were waddled into central lobby for the speaker’s procession. I had managed to get us some tickets for Prime Ministers Questions so after the speakers procession we made our way up to the viewing area to watch the right honourable gentlemen have a shunting match to see who was the loudest, although I am sure if the RSM was allowed in there, there would have been no contest. When PMQ's had finished, we thought it was time for some grown up behaviour so we made our way to Richmond to present the cheque to the Royal Star and Garter Charity. We arrived at the home and were greeted warmly by the fundraising manager who offered us some lunch and a brew before a presentation to show us exactly what the charity does for ex serving personnel and their dependants. We were then given a tour of the homes and met some of the residents on a physio-therapy session. Then it was out into the grounds for the cheque presentation and photos. It was good to see what the charity does first hand, as it was a humbling experience and I’m sure you will agree a deserving cause which is close to all our hearts.
600 SIGNAL TROOP CORSHAM

OC
Capt (TOT) R Pace

Tp Ssgt
Ssgt M Parkinson

600 Sig Tp has gone through a period of change over recent months. The Tp has changed it’s structure so that it no longer relies on changing personnel every 6 months, and with this the obvious large training burden this brought. It has evolved from CSR manning in the Hub to permanent 600 Sig Tp manning. On top of this we have also had a change of OC. Capt Adey Fletcher is leaving the Army after many, many decades has finally taken the plunge into the reality of civvy street and has been replaced by Capt Bob Pace.

The start of 2012 has picked up where 2011 left off, with the activities ramped right back up again. We have had a very welcome visit of Comd 11 Sig Bde, Brig JJ Cole OBE. The installation of the Cormorant Hub is back on track, along with the continued FALCON hub work in support of 11 Sig Bde. 16 Sig Regt have also had the opportunity to bring their OTEP system is growing after every single shift, as you recognise that it has got used to the idea that FALCON is here to stay, and our knowledge is progressing very well. Although it’s been a very steep learning curve for everyone involved and not quite plain sailing, a lot has been achieved in the last few months and the next build up exercise to look forward to is just around the corner, with deployment to Theatre not far behind!

CHANGING MANNING FROM CSR TO PERMANENT IN THE HUB – by LCpl ‘Walky’ Walker and Sig ‘Reidy’ Reid

During our 6 month tour at 600 Sig Tp Hub as part of a CSR we were supporting our own Regts out in Theatre, so as they knew us they used to annoy us constantly!! At the start of the 6 months people were at a basic knowledge of the complex systems within the Hub and by the end of the 6 months we all knew the systems very well. 600 Sig Tp became a fully self sustaining Hub at the start of December 2011. Initially this was a fast learning curve for personnel that had never operated there before but fortunately superstars like Sig ‘Reidy’ Reid have brought along the new guys who have been posted in. Now it has changed to a permanent posting and having the knowledge from the 6 month tours it is has been a lot easier to get into the swing of the shifts (even better as we are able to have leave go on courses etc!). As it is now a posting it is a lot better as the knowledge of the system is growing after every single shift, as you recognise common faults. The knowledge of the people down at the Hub is only going to get stronger.

After the initial settling into the shift routine work, everybody got to grips with their jobs and on a regular basis would scan the Tp planner and work out their off days. In the case of the awesome shift ‘D’ they had worked out theirs up to the end of 2013! It is a very good place to be as you are doing your trade day in day out and constantly learning new things and not stuck sweeping garages and putting up tents! All in all, 600 Sig Tp being self sustained works and is beneficial for all involved as we have become a less fragmented department and a more close knit community.

FALCON UPDATE – by Cpl Davies

2011 saw the arrival of the new FALCON system at 600 Tp, and with it came the inevitable time spent away on courses for many as they learnt the skills required to operate and maintain the new system. With the training done, it was now time to put the kit to the test, and in November the first of the Op HERRICK Network Build Up exercises began, which involved several locations around the UK simulating Ops in Theatre. An enthusiastic team consisting of, amongst others, Sgt Andy Barnard, Cpl Gav Davies, Cpl Adam Sawyier, and LCpl Jade Walker, put their new skills to use and soon got stuck in to the exercise. After 3 weeks, LCpl Walker, now known as ‘The Falcon Lady’ amongst the FALCON community, and her fellow team members had become competent operators and maintainers, and with a little help from their newly adopted BAE Systems parents they had completed a very successful exercise. Although the training at Blandford gave us the basics there was a lot of on the job training as the hubs are unique within the system.

With the second build up exercise now also completed, the Tp has got used to the idea that FALCON is here to stay, and our knowledge is progressing very well. Although it’s been a very steep learning curve for everyone involved and not quite plain sailing, a lot has been achieved in the last few months and the next build up exercise to look forward to is just around the corner, with deployment to Theatre not far behind!

DO YOU WANT A POSTING TO 15 SIG REGT (IS)?

If you have recently returned from an Operational tour with a Bde Sig Sqn or Campaign Signal Regiment, or if you wish to enhance your existing technical skills to become a Level 3 engineer, then 15 Sig Regt (IS) is the place for you. The Unit has a great need for people with recent Operational experience on the systems used across Afghanistan and can offer some excellent opportunities to become experts on BCIP, TNG, Cortez, Housekeeper, Cormorant, Promina, Reacher and FALCON to name a few systems. The Unit caters for all R SIGNALS trades; we are not purely CS Eng focused. Should you wish to serve with 15 Sig Regt (IS) then either speak with your RCMO or contact the Unit Adjt on 93471 8104.

The annual Corps Cross Country championships took place at Blandford on 25 Jan 12. Despite a very busy period in the build up to Op HERRICK 16 and the BA(G) Cross Country league race 6 also running the same day, Lt Prady, the team captain, had the challenge of picking 2 strong teams to represent the Regt. Arriving at ‘sunny’ Blandford we gathered at the sports pavilion for the race brief and found the turnout to be the biggest the Corps has seen for some years with over 200 runners. The ladies’ race kicked off first with LCpl ‘PTT’ Mason the only female available to represent the Regt as an individual. The men’s race followed shortly: 6 ½ miles with some mud and a few cheeky hills thrown in along the way.

Leading the way was Sgt ‘Mens Health’ Callaghan who spends the majority of his time in the gym broasting himself; he did not disappoint finishing an impressive 9th which qualified him to compete in the Army finals at Sandhurst and to represent the Corps. Cpl ‘Skilly’ Skill our non-Royal Signals runner also impressed with a top 20 finish. I followed closely behind chasing a top 20 place but only managing 34th. The rest of the team ran well with Cpl ‘ Airborne’ Rone bringing up the rear with a placing of 99th, not too bad considering he picked up a nasty knee injury en-route.
The presentations came after a well deserved lasagne which was a nice touch from the chefs. Quietly confident we awaited the results. In the end we achieved a Major Units place of 3rd narrowly missing out on the runners up spot which was awarded to 11 (RSS) Sig Regt with the 1st place trophy going to 30 Sig Regt. However the Regt didn’t go back to Germany empty handed with Sig ‘Jamie’ McCarthy taking home the juniors runners up medal. Overall it was a good performance from the Regtl Cross Country Team.

The team in Germany put in a sound performance in the BA(G) league also achieving 3rd place, leaving us tied for 1st place in the overall standings with all to play for in the final 2 races of the season.

SUPPORT SQUADRON 16 SIGNAL REGIMENT
OC
Maj A Higgins
SSM
WO2 (SSM) C Watts

EXERCISE PASHTUN PANTHER – 12 MECH BDE CFX
- by Cpl Rone

Take the stress and headaches out of the daily grind: SFP&TTC is renowned for its ability to provide the very best luxury coach trips. Destinations include the award winning Bodney Camp in the tranquil setting of the Norfolk broads. Bodney offers all potential and existing guests an authentic feel of the far away city of Kabul which sits in the war torn country of Afghanistan. Perfect! The elite members of 16 Sig Regt, who were chosen from a cast of hundreds to provide Force Protection to this far away city were on their way. After only 10 hours we arrived at Bodney Camp. As the last man took the step off the coach, the eerie feel of exercise loomed in.

The exercise opened with an inspirational speech from Capt Read, hammering the point home that attitude is a little thing that makes the big difference, and there is no shortfall of that in the hardened, well trained, professional soldiers of Souter Force Protection and Transport Company.

Before we got into the thick of the exercise we spent 2 days going over our TTPs and some other vital life saving skills, including ground sign awareness headed up by Sgt Hitchen. In life there are many things right under our noses just staring us back in our faces that can only be seen by the trained eye.

Two days in and the meat of the exercise was under way with the 3 multiples K10, K20 and saving the best till last K30 were in a rotation of MT, QRF and Guard. As K30 were out on MT detail news came in of a downed helicopter carrying Afghan and British nationals so we were re-routed to the scene along with the QRF, led by Sgt Callaghan. On arrival we were greeted by an angry mob of Afghans and worse, media! Sig Hitchen, with his finger on the pulse soon made sure a cordon was in place and the casualties were swiftly dealt with by our well trained team medics Sig Haigh and Cfn McMaster. They were then whisked away by the QRF to the hospital and the incident was smoothly handed over by the incident commander SSgt Lee from sure kidnap by a very irate gang of locals during a crowd control exercise.

As the elegant winter sun rose and shone its first Friday rays, the words we all keep close to our heart were closing in fast, ENDEX. However we had to get that out of our minds, because the final hurdle stared us right in the eyes when news came in from the ‘GREY OPS’ team (Capt Read, Lt Crane, SSgt Shubert, SSgt Necrews and SSgt Lee) of a job in the City Centre of Kabul which could only be completed by a highly tuned well trained body of men like ourselves.

With the Ridgbacks lined up and the crews assembled ready to crash out of the gate Sgt Sinclair with his wary thousand yard stare gave the final orders phase of our preparation for battle. With inspirational goose pimples and a sure sense of urgency the vehicle crews mounted and readied themselves for the perils of battle. Upon arrival at the job in hand we were met by more angry Afghans, more small arms fire, more casualties, and even more IEDs. However, when you’ve got a trained eye for ground sign and are masters of first aid, reaction to effective enemy fire and crowd control it’s just another day in the office for K10, K20 and K30.

END EX

230 (MALAYA) SIGNAL SQUADRON
OC
Maj C L Jardine
SSM
WO2 (SSM) S Wedge

EXERCISE PASHTUN DAWN – 12 MECH BDE FTX
- by Cpl Mears

As Op HERRICK >16 fast approaches, 230 Sig Sqn is currently divided between training support tasks for 12 Mech Bde; the CFX on Stanford Training Area and the FTX on Salisbury Plain. We are supporting The Bde’s Mission Specific Training by providing robust CIS to the BGCs who are being rigorously tested before deployment to Afghanistan in 3 months time.

The advance party arrived at Westdown Camp in mid January and immediately got to work on the OTES (Servers) so that by the time the RADWIN crew and select others had arrived a week later pretty much most of the ground work had been done. For the Comms Sys Engs it was a case of just configuring the VOIP phones and UADs (User Access Devices) in a nice warm, carpeted, brews-and-biscuits-on-tap CP, yet bizarrely even these conditions weren’t acceptable for some.

The RADWIN team was greeted by the always smiling Sgt Kent who revealed our mission and gargantuan task for the next fortnight. He explained that first we had to visit all sites (of which there are approximately 15 with an average of 3 links at each) to prove that all the dishes could see one another before tearing down the masts again to guard against the possibility of theft by a local group known as ‘Pikeys’ who have a penchant for elevating their Sky dishes. You may think that sounds like a relatively simple task, but these masts are not like the normal PU12/RACAL variety which can be erected with one arm and blindfolded in 20 minutes.
These cumbersome things need to be transported in a MAN SV and when there’s only one available to you this can be time consuming.

Unfortunately it wasn’t just the CS Operators waiting on the FOBs being built; the Power Section and Inst Techs needed to install lighting, cables, power etc. Listening in on the net when they arrived at an empty expanse of real estate where a FOB should be has been one of the highlights so far.

With the intensity of the build phase over, I have now implemented one of my unfailingly well received PT plans. Strangely the Sqn Ops team always seems to be ‘very busy.’

EXERCISE MALAYA TEARS – 9-11 JAN 2012 - by Cpl M Kinson

Ex MALAYA TEARS was a Sqn level exercise designed to test the command, leadership and management abilities of the Cpls in 230 Sig Sqn, prior to the all important Cpls’ grading board. There was no escape; all the available Cpls in the Sqn were on it and the SNCOs didn’t get off lightly as they were all involved as DS of the various activities.

The exercise began in the hangar with a 100% kit check carried out by the SSM, where it emerged that there was a distinct shortage of Tactical Aide Memoires (TAMs), and we were split into 7-8 man sections. From there it was straight to the gym and into PT kit for the first event, a command task style PT lesson. The PTIs set the scene, briefing us on the spy that had been trapped behind enemy lines with critical information who needed to be rescued. The section members took blindfolded and had to be guided. The section members took

The presentations also produced a nomination for “top geek” when an IT glitch meant that Cpl Bourne had to do his presentation on the geography of Afghanistan from memory alone! The exercise finished with a log run starting at the exercise location, winding along the tracks in the woods and the fence line, past the gym (just to test our resolve) and finishing at the Wall and Willow bar, where a hearty breakfast served up by the DS went some way to relieving the pain.

ENDEX was a welcome call for everyone, and some even admitted enjoying themselves.

EXERCISE MALAYA WARRIOR - by Cpl Fogg

In a good approximation of a Helmand summer, it was -8°C when the participants of Ex MALAYA WARRIOR gathered at JBs’s restaurant at 0700 on 30 Jan. The exercising troops were Cpl Matt Weston, Cpl ‘Foggy’ Fogg, LCpl Michael Beasley-Wood, LCpl Chris Meredith, Sig Tom Harrison, Cpl Sam Worthington, Sig Wayne Harris and LCpl Ashley Warken.

After a hearty breakfast we collected our weapons and made our way across the bleak airfield and arrived at our starting exercise location. The section then proceeded to don all the warm kit we could get our hands on before receiving battle lesson refreshers. Taking notes proved to be a challenge with fingers like claws of ice, and we found ourselves looking forward to practising pairs fire and manoeuvre in 2 inches of snow because at least that meant that we would be moving forward to practising pairs fire and manoeuvre in 2 inches of snow because at least that meant that we would be moving.

The second day consisted of more pairs fire and manoeuvre, breaking contact drills, fighting withdrawals and other patrolling skills. It was a little surreal doing skills refresher training for a summer tour on Op HERRICK in a landscape that looked more like Narnia. Day 3 was a bit more ‘chilled’ and not just because the temperature was still dropping. An ECM demonstration and some Op BARMA training followed by some poking round in a sand pit looking for buried shovels completed the refresher training intended to set us up for the final confirmation on day 4.

Starting with a perfect demonstration of orders delivery from 2Lt Parkinson, the section shook out for a 90min clearance...
patrol, kitted out with ECM, Vallon metal detectors and what we thought was plenty of ammunition. What followed was a good indication of the difficulties of clearance patrols; 90mins stretched into 3 ½ hours, Op BARMA drills on ‘suspicious objects’ ate up time and reduced alertness as the rest of the section knelt shivering in the snow and contacts with the enemy produced confusion and casualties. In total we came under contact 5 times, I personally used 250 rounds, 3 practise grenades and 2 smoke grenades and at one point I was in my full CEFO with ECM on my back and carrying LCpl Meredith.

After this patrol we had a hot debrief and moved into normal FOB routine, though if we thought this was going to be a rest period we were thoroughly mistaken. The afternoon brought numerous shooting incidents, a SBIED, IDF and a full on assault against the front gate. Following the trend of the week, the temperature dropped even further to -12°C but we were so busy that I don’t think any of us felt the cold much.

It was a useful exercise which helped us refresh our skills and drills ready for our upcoming operational tour. We would like to thank SSGt Jackson, Sgt Cowell, Sgt Wressel, Cpl Turner, Cpl John and Cpl Raloka for the time and effort the put in in organising and running the exercise (and I hope they get their credits in for their names appearing in The Wire!).

EXERCISE MALAYA JUDGMENT BANDAGE – 23-25 Jan 12
- by Sig Hutchinson and LCpl Dyke

As the name suggests, Ex MALAYA JUDGEMENT BANDAGE was a hybrid exercise that encompassed refresher training on First Aid, battlefield casualty scenarios and judgemental training on the Dismounted Close Combat Trainer (DCCT).

With many personnel deployed on Special to Arm courses and training support tasks, it was a much depleted Sqn that paraded on the Monday, but the enthusiasm was certainly not lacking. Leading the way in the ‘realistic training’ stakes was Sgt Hart whose first aid lesson began with the treatment of a real casualty after he fell off his bike. Such dedication brings a portrayal of a shock victim is unlikely to win him any Oscars. Cpl John’s judgemental shoots on the DCCT were given added realism by the excellent simulation system, a real asset to the station and a convenient way to provide invaluable pre-tour training. Several scenarios followed an opening brief on Card Alpha and Rules of Engagement, and some thorough debriefs really brought the lessons home. The importance of this training really cannot be overstated when everyone will be taking their turn in the Sangar on tour.

Taking the training up a notch was Cpl Bantha, whose lesson combined patrolling skills with cordon operations, triage and incident control. Reacting to a mortar attack on the training wing, the students secured the area and dealt with the casualties superbly, no thanks to LCpl Woodward whose portrayal of a shock victim is unlikely to win him any Oscars. This wrapped up the exercise, with all participants taking away some valuable lessons at this crucial stage in pre-deployment training.

255 (BAHRAIN) SIGNAL SQUADRON
OC Maj A J Lawson
SSM SSGt L Rickard

EXERCISE BAHRAIN LEADERSHIP - by Cpl D Horton

Monday 23 Jan saw the majority of the Sqn embark on Ex BAHRAIN LEADERSHIP, a Sqn level exercise designed to practice, revise and in some cases teach the basics of leadership to 255 Sig Sqn.

For the first 2 days the syndicates rotated through command tasks, lessons on the AFCOP approach to problem solving, appreciations and essay writing, accompanied and tested by their syndicate DS along the way. The culmination of this cerebral testing phase was the orders. Having received a lesson on the format followed by a full set of orders, the troops were given the task of extracting and then delivering their own. The concept was generally well received but there were a few blank faces among the more junior soldiers. One who did not full grasp the gravity of the situation was LCpl ‘Groovy’ Hancock, who inadvertently slipped into Austin Powers mode whilst delivering in front of the CO.

The final day began with a dust off of the Sqn’s old “Cold War” cascade list and a “the Russians are coming” call out. Amazingly the DS found the exercising troops in the correct place at the correct time in the correct kit! The training plan indicated a special treat was about to begin and there was no disappointment when the PLD started at the gym, however there was some elation when it finished. Next it was back to the training wing where an environmentally altered classroom had been made available. Inside this furnace a subtitled film was started and the lights dimmed; the DS watched like hawks to make sure no one fell asleep. The mood changed however when the DS came to extract individuals to deliver their appreciations. SSGt Greenlee certainly managed to maintain the ‘shock of capture’ as his syndicate delivered, but this was all part of the bigger plan to introduce an element of self-induced pressure whilst delivering the appreciations.

The Sqn paraded for a debrief in the crew room followed by some light refreshments. The consensus was that it had been a good 3 days with some quality leadership training which will be well practised on the Regiment’s upcoming deployment.

EXERCISE MERCURY GLACIER - by LCpl Bishop and LCpl Casserley

After the obligatory 7½ hour drive we arrived in Zell am See in Austria for the Corps Alpine Ski Championships. The largely inexperienced team was Sig Pelan, LCpl Bishop and Casserley and Capt Lea at the helm.
successes and cheering each other on kept us warm. The sun re-emerged for the last 2 days for some spectacular skiing and it was clear that every competitor was giving it his or her best. There were a couple who pushed too hard, but some broken fingers were the worst to befall any competitor.

We all felt that we had give a good account of ourselves and the results reflected our efforts; Sig Pelan came 19th overall, LCpl Casserley came in 26th and LCpl Bishop a respectable 46th, but the real heroine was Capt Lea who took second overall in the female event. It was a fantastic experience for all of us, and a month of skiing must have done some good for our fitness.

EXERCISE SNOW WARRIOR - by Sig Gibson

I was lucky enough to be one of the Regt who deployed on Ex SNOW WARRIOR between 9 and 18 Jan 12. Accompanying me on this skiing exercise near Wertach, Bavaria were Sig Simpson, Sig Eagleson and Cfn Long, and Sgt Smiejkowski provided a guiding hand from the Regt. We stayed in the Drei Muhlen Lodge and skied predominantly on Oberjoch.

As a complete skiing virgin I was immediately placed in the Ski Foundation 1 group. The groups ranged from SF1 to SF3. We learned the grading of the slopes early on, so that we knew to steer clear of red or black markers for the time being at least. Progressing quickly once we had learned the basics of snow-ploughing, turning and parallel turning, we soon found ourselves becoming adventurous and enjoying a bit of off-piste action. This was my favourite part because it was challenging and tested your ability, and if you fell over it didn’t hurt. It was difficult to get back up again, though, in the waist deep powder.

I would certainly recommend Ex SNOW WARRIOR to anyone. I thoroughly enjoyed learning the sport, meeting new people and putting in the hard physical work.

The nerves were helped by the glorious sunshine that greeted us on day one, but unfortunately it meant that there was little snow except right at the top of the glacier. In our ability groups we skied and trained on artificial snow, which was satisfactory for training but hard work. Working with the limited snow, we did a lot of technique work and LCpl Casserley commented that learning to race was very different from learning to ski. The weather continued for the first 3 weeks and doubtless fuelled the weekend socialising, including hearing a traditional Austrian band playing at a beautiful castle, but had us all praying for snow by race week.

Our prayers were answered, but we got more than we bargained for; snow was good, -12°C and driving blizzards were less good. Despite long periods waiting for races on a freezing mountainside, morale was buoyed by individual successes and cheering each other on kept us warm.

DELTA TROOP RIOT TRAINING

Delta Tp all congregated at the Guardroom at 0700 on 9 December, feeling only slightly fragile from the previous night’s Sqn Christmas Function, where it became clear everyone was eager to get on with the day ahead. The Tp were anxious to get started during the long drive to Copehill Down, but thanks to our long acclimatisation periods on minibuses we all coped very well.

We arrived at 0930 where we received the obligatory safety brief from the Avon and Somerset Constabulary Directing Staff, in which we were told rubber projectiles were the only items that we were allowed to throw (ruling out house bricks, horse excrement, Signallers etc). Once briefed, we were split down into 2 separate groups, EDL (English Defence League) and the SWI (South West Infidels). These groups were to be opposing and protesting against one another.

The riot commenced at 1400, with the SWI having a peaceful meeting outside the local pub. It didn’t take long for the police to form a blockade around the SWI consisting of, 40 police officers, 8 horses all in full riot gear (much to Sig ‘Yarp’ Laidler’s excitement) and 4 riot vans. This lasted for about 2 hours, during which time the SWI tried to break through the police line by pushing and shoving. This was to no avail as we soon found out you can’t easily push a horse out of the way.

The SWI were slowly allowed to disperse away in pairs. At this point a few pairs re-org’d and decided to make their way around the training area, with the aim to cause as much disruption as possible. This was mainly achieved by the hurling of rubber bullets. Also amongst the rioters were police officers in full riot gear, whose aim was to aggravate the main police force, by throwing petrol bombs and attacking with baseball bats. This continued for an hour or so,
until the light started to fade. At this time we were told by
the DS to take control of a building and use one of them as a
hostage. We barricaded all the doors in the building and very
vocally told the police to “go away” whilst still hurling rubber
bullets at them. Meanwhile the police were formulating their
plan to assault the building to rescue the hostage.

Twenty minutes or so passed, then an almighty bang was
heard when the police managed to breach the building. Cpl
'Caveman Head' Andrews was the first rioter to greet the
oncoming assault and suffice to say, did not go quietly, much
to the amusement of the rest of the rioters. The police made
their way through the building, clearing room by room. They
eventually made their way upstairs where 4 rioters decided to
make a last stand. This proved to be a bad idea as they found
out just how durable a riot shield can be.

Endex was finally called, debriefs took place, more food was
provided and we said our goodbyes to the Avon and
Somerset Constabulary and boarded the minibus. A
thoroughly enjoyable day was had by all and I’m sure if the
opportunity arose again, all those who took part, would jump
at the chance.

BATH HALF MARATHON - by Sig Wood

Before deploying on tour Cpl Worthington was trying to
organise the Tp to enter the Bath Half Marathon, but sadly
due to our deployment we couldn’t. Upturned it was then
decided that a Bastion Half Marathon would be organised
when we deployed to make sure nobody missed out!

The first decision was to choose a charity, the Wiltshire Air
Ambulance Trust, as one of the Regt charities. Then it was on
to the 13.1km route and this would take 3 members of the Tp;
Lt Ravenscraft and Cpl Worthington along with myself would
do the recce, not once but 3 times. Altogether the event took
4 weeks to organise due to shift patterns in the Ops Room
and the date was set for 15 Dec 11. Once everything was in
place we collated the number of runners, a total of 80. The
aim was to raise £2000 for our chosen charity. This figure was
chosen as it costs this amount for the Wiltshire Air Ambulance
to keep a helicopter running for one day!

The race was started by CO JHF(A), Lt Col Anderson, at
0830hrs, the route was a full lap around Camp Bastion and
part of the airfield. We were expecting the first runner to
come across the finish line in around 1hr 35mins, however 2
runners came across the line at the same time with a
respectable time of 1hr 21mins. The last runner to come in
was a PTI who was carrying a 25kg Bergen in a time of 3hr
25mins from 200 Sig Sqn. All runners got a t-shirt reminding
them of the event.

After a couple of days all the collection boxes from the shops
around camp and along with the entry fees we took were
counted. The total amount we collected was £2232 and was
sent to Wiltshire Air Ambulance straight away.

Overall, a great success and a huge thank you must go out to
all those who sponsored us and took part in the event!

ROYAL SIGNALS CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS
BLANDFORD 25 JAN 12 - by Cpl Bloyce

On a rather wet and windy Wednesday morning the male and
female teams from 21 Sig Regt (AS) travelled down to
Blandford for the Corps cross country championships. Our
training for this competition had been delivered by WO2
(YofS) Jim Richards in the weeks running up to the event.
Upon arrival we made our way to the cricket pavilion for
registration, which allowed both teams a chance to walk the
route. The recent weather conditions made the hills
(including Chalk Hill) all the more challenging with the ever
present danger of slipping over or possibly losing a shoe. The
loop of the area was concluded with passing through the
Pond Bottom crash gate and running along the road for a final
lap of the field by the cricket pitch and into the funnel that
marked the finish line. The male team had to face the same
tricky loop twice, so their race was a 6 mile long event. With
the routes firmly set in mind and a team photo taken there
was just enough time for a pre-race brew and to catch up with
old friends from other units.

At 1315 the members of the female teams took to the starting
line and were set off all vying for positions as the racers found
their strides. The males were set off at 1330 to face the wet
slippery terrain. As the female team made their way around
the cricket field in the final leg of the race Sig Pierce took 2nd
place with Sig Wheetman coming in 7th. All of the female
team were in by the 25th position. This gave us enough time
to cheer in the male team on their final stretch with the first
21 Sig Regt (AS) male being WO2 (YofS) Richards.

Once all of the competitors were in and dressed in slightly
warmer clothes it was off to the Semaphore Arms for a well
deserved drink and a little food before the results were read
out. Everyone was excited to see who this year’s winners
would be. The female team were the defending champions of
the Major Unit female event and had won it for this year as
well. The whole team marched up to collect the cup and the
smaller trophies. The male team had placed a respectable 4th
from 10 teams amongst the Major Unit males.

With the day done it was time to bid farewell to Blandford for
this year and head back to Colerne for a celebratory nap on
the mini bus.

CHARLIE TROOP PISTOLEERS - by LCpl Pittam

I was asked by Lt Ravenscroft if I could help run a pistol range
for the Tp, so that they can be familiarised with the new Sig
Sauer 9mm pistol and to break the tedium of life in the JOC. I
thought it would be a break from the norm in the Ops Room
and a chance to practice my weapons instructor skills.

The night before the range, I took the Tp for some pistol
training in order to remind and refresh everyone on their
weapon handling. For some it was the first time they had
touched the new weapon so there was plenty of child-like
‘pichow pichow’ noises as well as the obligatory famous one-
liners from the Dirty Harry, Robocop and Die Hard films. Once
they had got all of that out of their system the guys settled
down into some serious training on the weapon and became
highly proficient in the drills required to be a skilled shooter.

On the day of the shoot, I was met by Sgt Clark (our former
Tp Sgt) and we drove to the range to set up for the day’s
activities. Sgt Clark had managed to secure a lot of
ammunition for the day and this enabled the Tp to get plenty
of practice firing the pistols. Throughout the day the guys’
marksmanship improved to a point that a competition was
declared. The challenge was to see who could get the
smallest grouping, in which Sigs Cale and McVeigh proved to be crack shots. It was Sig McVeigh that emerged victorious and claimed the top prize (a can of coke).

Sgt Clark has gained a lot of experience in different tactics, in the use of the pistol. He was more than happy to demonstrate them and to allow the guys to practice them under strict supervision.

At the end of the range day, we had manage to fire over 3,000 rounds, and learned that you can indeed put 2 rounds through the same hole. This was something different from normal day to day work and the guys thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

PEDRO FULL MOON 5Km – by ‘Pieface’ Ireland

Whist on another busy shift in the JHF(A) Ops Room the Chief of Staff asked if we knew if there was anyone who was interested in running a 5km charity run. This event would cost $10 for charity and once completed we would receive a T-Shirt. This event was being held by our American counterparts at the PEDRO flight line. PEDRO is the American medical team, consisting of 2 Blackhawk helicopters and supports medical missions for both British and American service personnel in any situations.

The PEDRO 5Km run was no ordinary run, it is a Full Moon 5Km run. On 10 November 11 members of JHF(A), PEDRO and other units from around Camp Bastion went for a midnight run. Altogether there were around 100 people taking part in the event. The route for the event was 13 laps around the PEDRO flight line.

We arrived at around 2300hrs for a quick brief on the route, and then we all went to the start line to get ready. When the race started there was a Formula 1 style rush to see who could get to the front. People quickly realised that this was a big mistake, dropping back and leaving members of JHF(A), such as myself and the tight legging wearing freak that is LCpl Sol Tanuku, who decided he would take a short cut on the first corner and headed back in the way he had just come from.

Even though 5Km may seem a short distance, it came to the our attention that counting to 13 was very difficult for some people, as there were runners asking after every lap how many they had left to complete. This caused an M25 style pile up with people colliding like a group of children losing control in their bumper cars.

The race finished and the Tp got together to compare timings. We all got brilliant times, coming in between 18 – 25 minutes.

CSE SHOW – by LCpl Karl Pittam

On the 22 Nov 2011 JHF(A) was lucky enough to have a CSE show put on for us. Being a last minute thing there was not much notice to sort out a venue, but being JHF(A) we are not short of huge air craft hangers and we had no problem converting one of them into The O2 Arena with a load of glow sticks, a stage made of crates, and 2 halogen lights; the RSM even got the engineers to knock up a pole for the dancers in time for the show.

After a big applause the dancers stepped off and the first comedian came on. He was a slightly chubby bloke and was quite funny; the women in the audience certainly enjoyed his strip tease and pole dancing skills.

After another “morale boost” from the dancers the second comedian of the night came on. His opening line was “as you can probably tell by now, I have absolutely NO charisma”, which straight away had everyone in stitches. This humour continued throughout his performance, he also entertained us with his guitar playing and singing funny songs. The show ended with another dance from the 2 girls, and all in all it was a good night. It definitely made a refreshing change to the daily routine of life in Camp Bastion.

After the show had finished the dancers came into the Ops Room to see the personnel that were unable to see the show. The performance started at 2000hrs with a pretty good turn out of around 150 people. It kicked off with 2 dancers wearing t-shirts with “morale boost” written in big letters across the front, and judging from the reaction from the crowd, it worked!

Sig Cale and I arrived at the hangar 45 minutes early in order to ensure we secured the front row seats for a better view of the dancers. The performance started at 2000hrs with a pretty good turn out of around 150 people. It kicked off with 2 dancers wearing t-shirts with “morale boost” written in big letters across the front, and judging from the reaction from the crowd, it worked!

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After the show had finished the dancers came into the Ops Room to see the personnel that were unable to see the show due to work, and Cpl ‘Face-time’ Worthington was not shy in seeing to their needs.

MOVEMBER – by SSgt Lee Nicol

The aim of Movember is to raise vital funds and awareness for men’s health, specifically prostate cancer and other cancers that affect men.

For the more junior members of the Tp, this was their first venture into growing facial hair; however we were assured by the MET department that no strong winds were forecast for the month, thus reducing the risk of them blowing off.

It became clear very early on that the majority of the Tp did not necessarily suit the quilted top lip and this was compounded by the constant rubbing to get rid of the itch – not a good look.

Unfortunately there were a couple of individuals who couldn’t
take part due to being away on R&R (or being female). However Sig Jamie McVeigh took the initiative and brought back a “Deluxe” set of fake moustaches from his R&R so that they didn’t feel left out.

For all but one member of the Tp (Lt Ravenscroft), the first of December could not come quick enough. After the obligatory Tp photograph, many whipped out their electric razors to rid themselves of the hairy lip straight away – Sig Gale was aided by a big gust of wind. Unfortunately the boss is of the belief that his new found facial hair makes him look more ‘distinguished’.

On the first day we were taught the basics, like how to put on the kit and manoeuvres such as the “snow plough” to stop ourselves. We were then split into advanced, intermediate and beginner ability groups. We were both in the beginner group as I was told I was a “speed maniac” who couldn’t control himself. We tackled the Green slopes until the instructor had enough confidence in our ability to let us loose on the Blue slopes. The Blue slopes took a lot more time to get used to for most of the group, but the hot chocolates with cream at “elevensies” kept the morale up. Sig Wren and LCpl Mabaso never looked trustworthy on their skis and spent most of the time face first in the snow.

Throughout the week, after a long day of skiing, we would all meet up at night and replenish our lost fluid with some good old fashioned “French Beer”. We would all go to the Flying Dutchman and have a good old boogie! Overall, the week was very enjoyable and we would recommend it to anyone in the Regt for next year!

On 9 February the CO’s competition was a March and Shoot. There were 5 teams entered into the competition from the Regt, one team of 8 people per Sqn. The original route that we were meant to use had to be changed on the morning due to freezing weather conditions. All the teams were called to the gym for a brief on the event, on the brief we were told how the March and Shoot would work.

SSgt Marshall explained the new route to everyone, the burdens on the route and the shoot after the march. LCpl Mabaso kept trying to make the same excuse throughout the week; that “This is Not a Black Man’s Sport”, whilst Cpl Wright kept trying to show off by pulling off the worst stunts in skiing history and failing miserably.

For the shoot we would have 20 rounds each, spread across 2 magazines. We were to fire 10 in the standing unsupported position and 10 in kneeling unsupported position. A points system was applied to a figure 11 target meaning each team could score up to 1000 points. The team with the most points
would win the shoot. In the event of a draw the highest score on the range would be taken into consideration and the teams placed accordingly.

The start time was 0930. We set off and picked up the stretcher to take it for the first mile. The route was challenging as the ground was hard to run on due to the heavy snow in the previous few days, especially as a large portion of it was uphill.

Once the stretcher was dropped we set off again for 3 ½ miles to our next burden. The next burden we got to was the Ammo tins. There were 2 small ones and a big one. The last mile was challenging as we were nearly finished and ran to the end with the burdens. The time stopped once the whole team was in the marked area outside the range. After the time stopped we commenced our shoot. After we finished the competition the next parade for us was the results.

After a lengthy wait until the afternoon and with many realising that it was going to be a close result the Regt gathered for the announcement of the results. This was particularly important as Sp Sqn had performed well in many of the preceding events, whilst 222 needed a big boost in the overall points scheme. A point of note was for Cpl Challis (252 Sig Sqn) who was the only female to take part in the event. The Regtl 2IC announced that 222 Sqn were the winning team, followed by 248, 217, Support then 252.

Getting the changeovers right was all important

Fastest km:
- Run: 2.45 mins - SSgt Marshall
- Bike: 1.28 mins - Sgt McDonald
- Rower: 3.36 mins - LCpl Pickup
- X-Trainer: 5.60 mins - SSgt Marshall

Furthest distance in 30 mins:
- Run: 7.93 km - SSgt Hallam
- Bike: 19.00 km - Sig Hunston
- Rower: 8.41 km - Cfn Elvestad
- X-Trainer: 6.06 km - SSgt Marshall

Ultimately the event wouldn’t have been a success without the hard work and effort of all who took part. The team achieved a time of just 4hrs 7mins. A massive thanks to all and a note to Capt Morris, what took you so long?

Capt Morris completed the race to the South Pole finishing in 2nd place to the Norwegian team, which is very respectable given the Norwegians’ had skis instead of feet! FACT.

In December 2011, Capt Morris set off to compete in the centenary of the Scott – Amundsen expedition to the South Pole. After much preparation he and his team set off on their long awaited extreme race.

Back in Stafford, Sp Sqn decided to keep the event in people’s thoughts and to help raise money for the chosen charities. It was decided we should replicate the distance, albeit from the comfort of the fitness suite rather than the frozen wastes of the Antarctic. It was decided we would complete the 704km by adding the combined totals from the running machine, X-trainer, bike and rower.

On 1 Feb 12 Sp Sqn descended on the gym in their masses to take part, with some notable achievements by some of the Sqns gladiators;

Capt Morris

EXERCISE BEACON KHUKURI - by Sig Omprakash Gurung

Ex BEACON KHUKURI is a Tp level exercise conducted on Swynnerton Training Area in order to maintain and inspect the CIS equipments for its operational capabilities and provide refresher training to detachment commanders and crews.

Our convoy left the camp in the early hours of Monday morning and as soon as we arrived a quick area site plan was carried out by the exercise co-ordinators with all assets quickly deployed on their respective sites. The main effort of
this day was to set up the HQ area and get the Bowman link up and running. Sigs Baikuntha and Manoj provided us with the power which made our job easier and quicker. By the end of day one the HQ layout was finished and the Bowman det was up and running, providing initial entry voice service. Sig Narayan and I were working on the ARRC Infra, while LCpl Pawan and Sig Rabikiran were busy trying to get the AIRMUX link engineered. Since we were dealing with the crypto, we had to man the exercise location overnight so a stag system was applied. Our main aim of day 2 was to establish a communication link between the 2 ARRC Infra Nodes with Airmux as the primary link and fibre being secondary which was achieved by midday. Staff Officers would now have the service facilities of Data and Voice. In addition, lessons on how to set up a cam net for the Bowman detachment was also carried out, reminding us of the good old days when we used to struggle with them back in our basic training in Blandford.

Day 3 was focused on carrying out cross-training to all the Tp personnel. There were several stands: ARRC Infra, Richelieu, AIRMUX, Bowman, 2KW LFG and FEPS generators. There was a lot of enthusiasm from every individual, which resulted in everyone getting their hands on the equipment and gaining some experience on unfamiliar equipment. On the final day of the exercise, everyone was busy again tearing down the HQ and other detachments and packing all the assets in order to safely return back to the camp.

This was a very successful exercise, co-ordinated by Cpl Arbind and led by SSgt Bharat Kumar Rai. This kind of exercise creates an ideal learning environment and proved to be very beneficial for every individual, especially those who are new in the Tp and have not used the equipment before.

MOUNTAIN BIKE INSTRUCTOR AWARD SCHEME (MIAS)
- by Lt A Cave

On 2 Feb 12, 13 members of 248 GSS took part in a 2 day mountain bike instructor scheme (MIAS), organised by Cpl Khem from ‘L’ Tp. Under the direction of Mr Paul Massey from ‘Mountain Bike Adventures’, the training began with an introduction to the internationally recognized qualification and what it can be used for. This was followed by guidance in the planning of routes, navigation and management of groups on the trail. It was not until late morning before we even laid eyes on a bike, and this was used as a familiarization exercise: as ‘wannabe’ instructors, we had to be familiar with the parts of a mountain bike from hydraulic disc brakes and gears to suspension systems, including how to fix common faults when they inevitably occurred. Unfortunately, this was not just about how to fix a puncture but also included fixing snapped chains, emergency single-speed conversions and general maintenance. Of course, safety plays a large part in any adventure training and this was no exception with training delivered in conducting risk assessments and dealing with common injuries.

In spite of the freezing weather (so cold, in fact, that water from a stream crossing started to freeze on the bikes) the second day started bright and early on Cannock Chase with a skills session. Previously most riders had described themselves as ‘average’. However, the instructor’s tutelage ensured everyone made huge improvements in bike handling, including how to climb, descend, and overcome objects or drops on the trail. These skills were put to the test soon after as all participants had to lead and instruct the group over a section of trail. Naturally, new skills employed on testing terrain inevitably means getting it wrong and Sig Hom was the first to go ‘man down’ as he lost control on a descent and crashed in spectacular fashion. As the temperature increased, riding conditions became perfect and the group progressed to riding the Chase’s red graded trails, conducting impromptu risk assessments and tutoring sessions as practice. As daylight faded, the day’s riding came to an end with the great news that we had all achieved a Level 2 pass, permitting us to lead and instruct groups on red grade trails. This was a great course: challenging, enjoyable and, no doubt, it will prove very useful to us all in the future.
5 DIVISION BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS
- by Sig Lokendra Thapa

On 1 February 2012, the 5 Div Basketball Championship was held in Grantham, in which 7 male teams and 3 female teams participated from major units. The aim of this event was to select 2 teams for the forthcoming Army Championship which is to be held from 5 - 9 March 2012 in Aldershot.

Among the 7 teams were 30 Sig Regt, 39 Engr Regt, 16 Regt RA, 22 Sig Regt, 33 Engr Regt, 3 Regt AAC and 13 Air Assault. The event started at 0930hrs with 2 games going along 2 courts simultaneously. Each game was played for 20 minutes with 10 minutes each half.

After all the exhausting games, 13 Air Assault once again claimed the title of 5 Div Basketball Champions, winning every game. The Regt secured second place. Among female teams, we thrashed the other 2 teams and claimed the winners spot while 22 Sig Regt finishing runners up. The winners and runners up qualify for the Army Basketball Championship.

The whole event was well organised. After the presentation of PTIs who hosted the event thanked everyone involved in the tournament and wished the winners and runners up every success in the forthcoming Army Basketball Championship. We were generally satisfied with the result and headed back home with the intention to do well in the Army Championship.

– by SSgt (FoS) Beattie

Despite heavy Exercise commitments, 30 Sig Regt turned up to the 5 Div Basketball Competition with an 11 strong female team. The first match was against Digby and despite several members of the team never having played basketball they won the game convincingly 34-3 after a late 3 pointer from one of the Digby players. As there were only 3 teams entered in the competition this left the second game being the decider as to whether the team qualified for the Army Championships as winners or runners up. This second match was against 22 Sig Regt and again the 30 Sig team put in a very strong showing winning the 20 minute match by 20-7. The victories were helped by very good fast breaking from Cpl Williams, inside play by Maj Aylward and a fantastic debut to basketball by Cfn Jeffers.

Due to results from earlier in the competition 30 Sig Regt qualified for the Army Championships with 22 Sig Regt qualifying in second place.

EXERCISE DRAGON TONGBA TIGER – EVEREST BASE CAMP
- by Sgt Gopal Saru

A 14 strong team from 2 and 30 Sig Regts deployed on a Level 3 Exped known as “Ex DRAGON TONGBA TIGER” to Everest Base Camp in the Himalayan region of Nepal during the period 19 November –13 December 2011. The team comprising of officers and soldiers from QG Signals, Royal Signals and the REME innovatively reached the summit of Everest Base Camp (5364m) but, unfortunately a few expedition members, as a result of high altitude illness and an unexpected encounter of unavoidable mountain illness, were unable to ascend Kalaphathar (5550m) and Gokyi Ri (5360m).

A well planned and coordinated expedition, which would not have been possible without the contribution of all team members, was led to a great success by the Exped Leader, Sgt Gopal and OIC expedition, Maj Narayan Bhandari MVO. The JSAT definition, “Challenging outdoor training for Service Personnel in specified adventurous activities, involving controlled exposure to risk, developing leadership, teamwork, physical fitness, moral and physical courage, among other personal attributes and skills vital to operational capability” reflects the overall ethos of this expedition. Taking into consideration the above Tri Service AT quotation the group remained vigilant, they motivated each and other and implemented Corps Values.

The expedition package was designed to build team cohesion, leadership and motivate its members on an extremely
challenging, gruelling route to the world’s highest peak Mt Everest. The Ex was conducted in mainly 2 phases; phase 1 was a 17 day arduous trekking expedition to Everest Base. Phase 2 was a cultural visit to Chitawan National Safari Park, a white water rafting day in Trisuli River and a 45min mountain flight in and around the worlds’ 13 highest peaks followed by a half day sightseeing to traditional temples and a short education visit to Nepal Signal Tp, the Bde of Gurkhas Nepal.

Flying from London (23m) altitude to Kathmandu (1300m) was an inspirational travelling experience although no one seemed to be having any altitude problems. But when we left Kathmandu for Lukla (2860m), the trekking start point, everybody started to be more cautious, although nobody had any immediate symptoms of AMS. Highly regarded as the world’s most dangerous airport “Lukla” or Tenzing-Hillary Airport, located 9,000ft above sea level, usually transports around 500 people per day to and from the capital, mostly trekkers heading for Everest Base Camp. It was built in the 1950s by the late Sir Edmund Hillary, who with Sherpa Tenzing Norgay was the first mountaineers to reach the summit of Everest in a British expedition in 1953.

Having trekked successfully from Lukla, via an overnight stay in Phakding, we spent an extra day upon arrival at Namche Bazzar (3444m) before ascending to Tengboche. Just before reaching Gorek Shep, which is the main junction for Everest Base Camp and Kalapathar, the team also spent another extra day at Pheriche (4240m). Unbelievably, all 15 team members put their footstep at Everest Base Camp where members were absolutely thrilled to have their photos taken with the Regtl flag, banners and sponsors’ logos.

On the morning of 30 November 2011, members prepared to climb the highest peak of our trek to Kalapathar (5550m) which was a challenging steep onerous route. In the end, the majority of members vigorously reached the top of the summit and posed for a photo sessions despite the terrifying weather conditions, but only a few members suffered from mild AMS. It was not long before we headed to the summit of Gokyo Ri (5360m) through a very challenging route via Chola pass (5368m) and Chola pass glacier. Gokyo Ri is located on the west side of the Ngozumpa Glacier, which is the largest glacier in Nepal and reputed to be the largest in the Himalayan region. Gokyo (4750m) at the base of Gokyo Ri, is a small hamlet of a few stone houses. From Gokyo Ri, it is possible to see five 8,000 meter peaks - Mount Everest, Lhotse, Makaly, Kanchenjunga and Cho Oyo. It was not easy to climb, but Maj Griffiths made everyone’s life easy by controlling a gentle pace during the ascent. Spectacular views of the Himalayas from the top of Gokyo Ri (5360m) through a very challenging route via Chola pass (5368m) and Chola pass glacier. Gokyo Ri is located on the west side of the Ngozumpa Glacier.

Financially it was a very expensive expedition; however we are very privileged to have been offered financial grants by a number of grant providers to whom we are extremely grateful for their kind generosity. Planning an overseas expedition that involves delivering a High Risk and Remote presentation to the 5 Div technical board panel can be a nightmare, but celebrations after achieving all of our aims to the summit base camp were an unforgettable and once in a life time experience to take away.

Despite the Regt’s constant tempo of hectic training and operational commitments, the team had the pleasure of accomplishing a series of pre deployment training packages which involved a High Altitude Mountaineering First Aid Course and hill walking along the arduous routes in North Wales and Scotland. All expeditions to Nepal have to register for a trekking permit through the Trekking Agency and we were well supported by Adventure Zambuling Treks (P) Ltd. The only logistical task to be completed in the UK was the securing of AT kit from Bicester.

Exped members being welcome by Trekking Agency

Exped leader giving target indication of Mt Everest

Exped members and Sherpas posing photos at Everest Base Camp

Glacier, which is the largest glacier in Nepal and reputed to be the largest in the Himalayan region. Gokyo (4750m) at the base of Gokyo Ri, is a small hamlet of a few stone houses. From Gokyo Ri, it is possible to see five 8,000 meter peaks - Mount Everest, Lhotse, Makaly, Kanchenjunga and Cho Oyo. It was not easy to climb, but Maj Griffiths made everyone’s life easy by controlling a gentle pace during the ascent. Spectacular views of the Himalayas from the top of Gokyo Ri took our breath away, you can not express how happy you are just to be there, what breathtaking amazing views!

From Gokyo Ri, our trekking route was almost steady down hill except a steep slope prior to reaching Namche Bazzar. From herer it was almost 8 hours more down hill trekking to Lukla where we had the final farewell dinner with our Porters and Sherpa before flying off to Kathmandu on 5 December.
After being on mountains for 17 days it was necessary for the group to have a combination of R&R and phase 2 of exciting activities (a cultural visit to Chitawan, white water rafting and mountain flights). Overall, although it was a long process to coordinate, plan and execute the trekking was undoubtedly a success, with the Exped members having to enhance their performance on leadership skills, determination, physical stamina, team cohesion, confidence, courage and selfless commitment.

This expedition was the first ever to Mt Everest Base Camp organised by 30 Sig Regt. Without doubt, this expedition has opened the door to all serving members of the Regt by giving motivation, encouragement and general awareness as to how and why we need to conduct overseas expeditions and what benefit soldiers can get out it. As Exped leader, I would like to personally say a sincere thank you to Maj Narayan MVO for his immeasurable guidance and constructive advice as well as standing for top cover for me. On the same note, I would also like to express my massive thanks to Capt Nicholls and all team members for their enormous support and instrumental input in making this expedition the success that it was.

BRAMCOTE STATION WELFARE & COMMUNITY DEPARTMENT

UWO – by Capt Dougie Icke

The Welfare Dept has enjoyed a busy period of late, with all members of the team working hard to provide the best welfare and community services to our soldiers and families. Whilst the primary role of each member is to provide welfare support, team members also have their own specific areas of expertise as well as individual tasks and responsibilities that allow them to explore new ideas and projects.

SSgt Somras Tamung is both Welfare Dept 2IC and Office Manager, and has enjoyed working with the UWO to identify new and better ways of doing business in the most effective way. The introduction of MOSS has been well received in the office, despite some amusing mutterings from Sgt Stacy Fayers when given more on-line training to add to her ever-growing list of ‘things-to-do’. With Information Management and Assurance being important to how we all operate, and the excellent forward-thinking of all team members, we are all now ‘all over’ MOSS which keeps our Office Manager happy!

Sgt Fayers has been working exceptionally hard to ensure that the community is kept well informed of all events and activities within station over the Christmas period, as well as organising some first class events such as the Station Families Christmas Party, trips to Birmingham Christmas Market and Bicester village for families and soldiers, as well as pushing coffee mornings, charity events and lending support to numerous other events.

Cpl Neil Dickinson has ensured that our Deployed personnel and families are well looked after, and is constantly ‘fighting for information’ to ensure that he is fully aware of personnel nominated for deployment or high-readiness, and strives also to keep in contact with the families of our deployed personnel with a friendly phone-call, letter or invite to social gatherings and functions.

LCpl Margaret Dzikiti has continued to manage the Regt PRI shop with plenty of new initiatives that would make Alan Sugar proud! The PRI is also fondly known as FOB Welfare, as it allows soldiers to take advantage of LCpl Dzikiti’s primary welfare role in the form of seeking advice, asking questions etc and has proved to be a good place to call in for a chat or some friendly advice.

Our Gurkha Support Worker – Shova Gurung continues her excellent work providing support to the Gurkha community with lots of classes and events for wives and children. The Nepalese language classes have been enjoyed by those lucky enough to attend, with star pupils being Maddie Kennedy, Caroline Tosh and the UWO.

Lastly, Capt Dougie Icke continues to enjoy all things welfare, with the delights of OC PRI to keep him out of trouble too. As he prepares to deploy on Op HERRICK 16 as LSU Ops Offr he has briefed the team (more than once) on a sound plan to ensure that the dept is kept in good order during his absence. It is without doubt that the team has enjoyed a productive 6 months and continues to look for best practice and new initiatives to keep the momentum going. With Sgt Fayers due posting in April and LCpl Dzikiti getting closer to her Class 1 course, it will be sad to see such a friendly and effective team come to an end and a big thank-you goes to them both! New personalities however will be encouraged to bring new ideas and enthusiasm to the team and they can be guaranteed that the welfare arena in Bramcote Station is both challenging and rewarding to the right personalities of the right calibre.

250 GURKHA SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC Maj P C Wettenhall
SSMWOz (SSM) T Rai

EXPERIENCE OF A YOUNG GURKHA SOLDIER
– by Sig Kishan Gurung

The journey of a young soldier who wants to join The Brigade of Gurkhas starts at British Gurkha Camp in Pokhara, Nepal. It is the focal point for all Gurkha recruiting activities, with potential recruits from all over the country fighting for limited places in the British Army and the Singapore Police.

After going through a series of challenging educational, medical and physical tests like the famous “Doko Race”, only those with the strongest assessment statistics are selected. After the attestation parade in Pokhara, we are sent to Kathmandu for a couple of days and then to the Infantry
Training Centre (ITC) in Catterick which will be our new home for the next 9 months. The Combat Infantryman’s course includes various physically and mentally demanding field exercises, cultural training and career management courses. It also includes a 9 week English language package. Based on the level of education, trainees are divided into 2 groups, which are Standard Language Profile (SLP) Levels 2 and 3. Only those who are at Level 3 will get the chance to choose Corps units while the rest have to choose the infantry during the cap badge ceremony at the end of the training.

After passing out from Catterick, those who are selected for QG Signals are taken to 30 Sig Regt where we do our trade selection course for the next 3 months. Depending upon our skills, knowledge and preference we are divided into 3 trades: CS Engineers (CSE), CS Operators (CSOP) and Royal Signals Electricians (RSE). After taking the oath to serve in QG Signals during the attestation parade held in Bramcote, we are sent to the Royal School of Signals (RSS), Blandford for our respective courses as Phase 2 soldiers. We also get the chance to work with British counterparts in Blandford which is completely a new experience for us.

After completing our respective courses, we are then called a Phase 3 soldiers. I was given a posting preference to choose between 2, 22 or 30 Sig Regts. I chose 30 because I believe I will get more opportunities to learn new things in this Regt. Those who are CS Operators and RSE by trade will then go to the Defence School of Transport (DST), Leconfield for the driving course. To start working in a new unit as a CS Operator, we work on Communication Detachments as detachment crew and we will be upgraded to Class 2 after 6 months of work experience.

Lastly, joining the Army is my family tradition and I am enjoying the army life. I understand it is going to be difficult to get settled in the UK because of the vast differences in culture, tradition, climate and lifestyle compared to Nepal.

The cold weather is a bit of a challenge for most of the Gurkha soldiers but the biggest challenges are to stay away from my family, friends and relatives in Nepal and to complete the Infantry Course in Catterick. Having said that, this is a fact of the life we lead and we should take it as a challenge.

Famous DOKO (Basket) Race carrying 25kg testing fitness and determination to extreme level

Learning Field Craft in Catterick

INTER SQUADRON BASKETBALL COMPETITION 2012

Despite the busy Sqn commitments, 30 Sig Regt conducted the Inter Sqn Basketball Competition on Friday 20 January 2012. The aim of the event was to select the Regt team for the forthcoming 5 Div Basketball Championship and to determine the overall league position, which goes towards the CO’s Challenge Cup 2012. The format of the competition was a league system between the 4Sqns in the Regt.

The event kicked off at 1300 hrs with 250 Gurkha Sig Sqn (GSS) getting the better of 256 Sig Sqn in gym 1 and the Regt Sp Sqn edging out 258 Sig Sqn in gym 2. 250 GSS then went on to beat Sp Sqn and 256 Sig Sqn in subsequent matches. 256 Sig Sqn were runners up, outplaying 258 and Sp Sqn, who later got the consolation of a win against 258.

The final result was announced and as expected, 250 GSS were victorious and grabbed 3 precious points for the CO’s Challenge Cup 2012. The CO, Lt Col Watts MBE, presented the prizes to the winning team. He thanked everyone involved in the tournament and wished the Regt team the best of luck for the forthcoming Div Championship. The OC 250 GSS, Maj Wettenhall, also congratulated the winning team and wished them good luck for the forthcoming competitions.

OP HERRICK NETWORK BUILD UP Ex 4B1 and 4B2

FALCON - Although this term has started to sound familiar in the last few years amongst the signallers, it is still an alien name for the rest of the world. (Here, of course I am not talking about the huge bird of prey.)

So, what exactly is FALCON? It is an IP-based communication architecture designed to be deployed at an ARRC level HQ to support the UK Armed Forces. With its new and highly complicated network enabled capabilities, FALCON...
modernises the whole information infrastructure of the UK Armed Forces to a completely new era matching head to head with the rest of the world in terms of technologies. But also FALCON is resilient enough to accommodate all existing legacy systems without having the need to put them down.

FALCON comprises of various modules such as Command Post (CP) 1, CP2, CP3, CP4 and Wide Area Switching Point (WASP) each of which can independently provide its own subscriber facilities. Each module is also capable of connecting into the wider networks using its own bearer systems (except CP1) or other available bearers of opportunities. It also consists of 2 more modules, Command Support Vehicle (CSV) and FALCON Management Installation (FMI), for the maintenance and the central management of the system.

Yet to be brought in to service, it has come under the responsibility of 30 Sig Regt since November 2011, 250 GSS in particular, to put the FALCON system into test and trials to prove it’s worthiness as the best comms system for the Army as per the standards and requirements. As such, FALCON has already been deployed on 2 different progressive exercises, Ex OHNBU 4B1 and 4B2, and will be deployed on one more building it up to the final System Field Test which will determine the faith of FALCON within the UK Armed Forces for years to come.

**EXERCISE OHNBU 4B1**

On completion of handover/takeover from 22 Sig Regt, Ex OHNBU 4B1 took place in Gamecock Barracks, Bramcote between 21 Nov and 9 Dec 2011. A handful of only qualified operators and engineers from Victor and Whiskey Tps were spread across 9 FALCON detachments during the period of exercise. With mere understanding of the sequential progress, the exercise initially slugged its way into the In Barracks Data Preparation (IBDP) phase for a week. The IBDP phase is the most important part of the exercise which eventually determines the standards of execution at the later part of the exercise. All the assets required for the period of exercise are prepared and tested during this phase. This phase assures a number of requisites for the exercise;

- The equipments required are functioning correctly.
- The Local Area System (LAS) and Wide Area System (WAS) plans function correctly.
- The detachment commander and crews are content on operating the system as planned.

The following week all the detachments involved were deployed to various locations within Bramcote using buildings of opportunities. We were joined by few from 16 Sig Regt with their own information systems intended to connect via FALCON. Once in location, all the radio links and the whole system were brought up for the first time within 250 GSS’s responsibilities. It took a wise amount of time at each step due to the ongoing uplift and trials of the newly upgraded equipments and software but also due to the lack of experience on the system itself. At times, the level of frustration across the board was immense, but it was the sheer patience, hard work and determination of those involved to get the system working along with the third line (15 Sig Regt) and the fourth line (BAE Engineers) support that eventually succeeded.

Prevailing third week was mainly about testing other various systems such as OTES, Sandpiper, FMV and VTC across FALCON. By the end of the exercise there were still few services which couldn’t be achieved. Despite the fact that not all of the objectives were achieved, the exercise as a whole was still a huge success much beyond the expectations. The period of the exercise also oversaw a number of visitors ranging from the manufacturers of FALCON, FALCON training teams, Col Brigade of Gurkhas and key members from various elements of Royal Signals including Comd 11 Signal Brigade.

**EXERCISE OHNBU 4B2**

Lessons learned from 4B1 were yet to be put into practise. Newly qualified personnel back from their course just before the Christmas were still keen to work on the system for the first time. As such, once again with higher hopes and expectations, Ex OHNBU 4B2 was run in Gamecock Barracks, Bramcote from 9 – 27 Jan 2012. This exercise followed a very similar pattern to that of 4B1. Eleven detachments were involved on 4B2. The first week was entirely for the IBDP phase. However, it only took over a day to complete the phase which resembled the significant achievements of 4B1. Confidence amongst the users had risen over the time. As it trailed into the second week of the exercise, all the detachments were deployed into their respective locations which simulated the FOBs (Forward Operating Bases) and MOBs (Main Operating Bases) in Helmand, Afghanistan. Towards the end of the second week, all the detachments were rolled out to their respective locations which once again simulated the UK AORs across Afghanistan. Meanwhile we were also joined by few small elements from 16 Sig Regt, 2 Sig Regt and the RAF with various non-FALCON systems such as Skylark, Housekeeper, OTAS, FMV, J1/J4 and Avaya. Once all the FALCON side of local and wide area connectivity were in and working, the tempo of the exercise picked up dramatically during the second week, determined to connect the external services available successfully via FALCON. There were also numerous VIP visitors during this week from across the Royal Signals including Comds and 11 Sig Bdes.

The third week mainly comprised of regular tests on FALCON voice and continuity on configuring the external systems with FALCON. After over a week of progressive outcomes from day after day, the link stability turned out to be a little too heavier for the system at times. On one incident, a wide area link between WASP and a CP3 collapsed. On investigation, the radio unit was found to be faulty. However, even after replacing the unit it was unable to bring the link up. Eventually the whole detachment needed to be shut down and repowered to bring the link up again. Such incidents when looked at from the operational prospective, it doesn’t seem to be very reliable unless a way around is worked out.

However, when compared to the outcomes of the first Ex OHNBU, 4B2 was hugely a success with just minor fallbacks. Lessons learned from both exercises will be taken in consideration for improvements in upcoming Ex OHNBU 4C and the SFT. Taking in considerations on the improvements made from the first day till now, it is less in doubt that the build up to the SFT and the SFT itself will be a great success.

Hope in years to come, when we look at FALCON, we could say that we were a part of giving the future to the FALCON amongst us. Yes! We did it.
Members of 250 SQMS Dept recently organised a street collection in the market town of Nuneaton. Accompanied by a piper and 7 members of the SQMS Dept, we managed to collect an amazing £1410 including selling various merchandise provided by Help for Heroes for their very worthwhile charity.

From all walks of life the donations came flooding in, so we set up our collection stall and began rattling the change buckets. The plan came out of a conversation between LCpl Singh and Sig Woosey during morning NAAFI break that they wanted to try and raise funds for the charity. It was from that point on that frantic phone calls to the Borough of Nuneaton Council and Help for Heroes charity offices that all made a marvellous contribution to the organising of this first time event.

So during a freezing Wednesday morning on the busiest day of the week, SSgt Suresh, Cpl Sujan, LCpl Singh, LCpl Nanda, Sig Woosey, Sig Kailash, Sig Ram and Mr Paul Nicholl set up our collection stall and began rattling the change buckets.

From all walks of life the donations came flooding in, so we would like to sincerely thank the people of Nuneaton for their donations and the Borough Council for their support and assistance.
Between races we would fit in some extra skiing practice to try and bring our technique back up to standard. We also used this time to practise our range skills in the lead up to the much more interesting biathlon competitions. Preparing our skis for the next day's race was also an important aspect, particularly with classic skiing. If your skis don't grip correctly on a 10Km+ race then you are going to have a complete nightmare. So we often spent a lot of time making sure we had the correct wax and grip on our skis.

The second race was similar to the first. It was another classic race but with an added part to the route making it 12.5Km. Again, we all finished competitively considering we were competing with teams that had done at least a season before.

The next 2 races were biathlon races, incorporating both skate skiing and shooting. Despite mixed results with the shooting among the team, we all got respectable times considering our lack of experience. We all came to an agreement that the biathlon races were probably one of the hardest things we had done. There is something wrong about skiing up hills for stupidly long distances when you're absolutely knackered, yet it's also a buzz that you get in few competitive pursuits.

The final race was a military patrol race. This consisted of a 20Km route race with tasks scattered along the way. The team also had to carry a weighted day sack each. It was a good race, with some decent tasks, some requiring a lot more thought than others, but it did help break the pace up every now and then. The tasks consisted mainly of remembering objects, reading things out using binoculars, grabbing something from up a hill and suchlike. There were also 2 shoots on the range to test our marksmanship skills. We didn't get off to the best of starts. We got to the range for the first stand and our rifles hadn't arrived, which is a slight problem when it comes to shooting! But they did come eventually and the rest of the race went without a hitch. Overall after all the races, 30 Sig Regt came 13th out of approximately 30 teams which we were pleased with considering our apparent lack of experience! We were also awarded the combined skiing 5 Div 2012 champions along with our alpine skiing team.

**ARMY INDIVIDUAL SQUASH COMPETITION**

– by WO2 (YoFs) Samuel

The Army Individual Squash Championships took place over the 27 – 29 Jan in Aldershot Garrison Sports Centre. With the 30 Sig Regt Squash team riding high on their recent crowning as the Royal Signals Corps Squash Champions in addition to a collection of individual titles, 6 men competed to test their skills against the rest of the Army. The turnout was good with 50+ personnel competing in various competitions. Personnel from the 30 Sig Regt Team entered in all but the female competition and fared well, with the best result coming from Sig Riche Jones who, for the first time in the history of the competition, won both the Under 25 and the Mens’ Open competition! The following is a breakdown of the results:

**WO2 (YoFs) Jimmy Samuel** - Semi Final Novice Open and Quarter Final Mens’ Open.

**LCpl Bert Godfrey** - 1st Round Mens’ Open, Quarter Final Open Plate and Semi Final Under 25.

**LCpl ‘AD’ Afari Darko** - Quarter Final Novice Open and Second round Novice Open.

**Sig Riche Jones** - Under 25 and Mens’ Open Champion.

**Cfn ‘Johno’ Johnson** - Second Round Open, Novice Plate and Quarter Final Under 25.

**Cfn ‘Tomo’ Thomas** - Quarter Final Under 25, 1st round Mens’ Open and 2nd round Novice Open.

The team will now begin training for the upcoming Major Unit Championship which will again take place in Aldershot from 27 – 28 Mar 12.
Change goes on with the faces in RHQ. Lt Col Phil ‘298’ Dohomegan handed over the Regt1 reigns in January to Lt Col Paul Rennie-Smith, following a busy and successful tenure which included Regt amalgamation and reorganisation, deploying soldiers onto to Op HERRICK and running a hugely successful Annual Camp to Europe, a first for the Regt. We wish Colonel Phil all the best for the future and are sure we will see more of him soon. The Ops Major, Maj Rhid Jones, was also heard to comment that now he wouldn’t have to drink quite so much whisky!

Col Paul arrives from the BATSIS Delivery Team at MOD Abbey Wood. We welcome him, his wife Lynne and his family to the Regt, and are sure he will have a great tour with us.

Within the RHQ Ops team, WO2 (YofS) John Inglis has finally hung up his Regular service boots, but after a short period of catching up on DIY at home we now welcome him back to the Regt as the TA YofS for 51 Sig Sqn in Edinburgh!

The RSM, WO1(RSM) Brett Newton is also steadily packing his bags ready for retirement and moving to Civvy Street. After a group of the Regt’s soldiers skiing in January the tumbleweed is now blowing around his office as he goes off to start his resettlement. He will shortly be followed by our Ops Maj, Maj Rhid Jones, who delights in reminding the Adjutant on a daily basis of how many days he has remaining!

EXERCISE NORTH GEO-ADVENTURE 2, 14-21 JAN 12

Transfer day of Ex NORTH GEO-ADVENTURE 2 (the Regt’s ski camp) saw members of the Regt meeting and greeting at various points throughout Europe, with the aim to make the end destination the El Dandy Residences in Meribel Mottaret.

Day 1 - Sunday:

The first days’ skiing began in fine style with blue skies and fresh snow and the division of the groups with the RSM taking the advanced group, instructor SSgt Rob Marshall taking the movers group, and SSgt Jacqui Smith taking up the middle skiers. Sgt Kez Hopkinson took Cpl Tate out for some 1-1 tuition to bring him up to the standard of the main body.

SSgt Dave ‘the Navigator’ Griffiths took charge of the advanced group. He led them, taking the members through their paces in preparation for the ‘Three Valleys Challenge’, which would be attempted the following day. The aim was to complete the challenge in a single day. The day’s skiing involved the group getting their ski legs in. Dave was a hard task master, as the group skied a total of 52 miles that day, skiing the valleys’ Meribel and Val Thorens. After the days skiing, the group attended the nightly exp de-brief and the division of the groups with the RSM. The group with a homemade curry. He definitely had the last opportunity at the end of the evening to entertain half of the entire group to get through a number of red and black runs that only 2 days prior we would have baulked at. After joining them in Val Thoren, Rob was taken out in under 10 minutes (by accident as we where led to believe) by Cpl Chris ‘Slow Skis’ Woolerton. Chris, for his efforts, was awarded the Cow Bell during the evening’s de-brief. Once the group skied back to Meribel, each member was eager to get their challenge medals and certificates. A total of 48 miles were skied and this is a considerable total mileage when you add the distances from the previous days.

Day 3 Tuesday:

The advanced group battled on to complete their Valley’s Challenge, and on completion by early afternoon then began to be instructed for the remainder of the week. SSgt Rob Marshall was the first of 3 instructors that the group would entertain. After joining them in Val Thoren, Rob was taken out in under 10 minutes (by accident as we where led to believe) by Cpl Chris ‘Slow Skis’ Woolerton. Chris, for his efforts, was awarded the Cow Bell during the evening’s de-brief. Once the group skied back to Meribel, each member was eager to get their challenge medals and certificates. A total of 48 miles were skied and this is a considerable total mileage when you add the distances from the previous days.

Day 3 and the Movers groups headed to the next valley of Courcheval. This ski area really allowed every member to work on their techniques, as the runs were challenging and surprisingly free of traffic. This allowed plenty of time for the entire group to get through a number of red and black runs that only 2 days prior we would have baulked at. Cpl Paul Smith took the challenges to the next level and ‘eagled’ out over a massive ski jump. Après Ski saw the group relocate to a downtown bar for a more reasonably priced pint. Capt Affleck was awarded the “Richard of the Day” award for a second day running for failure to adhere to his own rules of wearing the bib at all times. Cpl Mac Wahid took the opportunity at the end of the evening to entertain half of the group with a homemade curry. He definitely had the last laugh as 14 people crowded in to one tiny apartment block and then added to the amassed body heat with a spicy feast that any take-away chef would have been proud of.

Day 4 Wednesday:

Cpl Kevin Jones led the Advance group (SSgt Griffiths told him he was only allowed to have the piste map for one day), and picked out the days runs. The group also received a brand new instructor, SSgt Jackie Smith. Jackie quickly put the group through their paces, coaching them down a cheeky Red within a mogul field. She quickly learnt that the advanced groups were good and quick skiers with 48 miles completed under her instruction - strangely the group never saw Jackie the next day (another broken instructor?). The final act of the day was to enter the Snow Park. There was fun on the rollers with Cpl Jones and WO1 Newton.
task of getting complete novices up to standard for racing part this year, I was assisted by my newly found friend and weeks of ski training and racing. With more beginners taking this year!) we were soon en-route to Zell-am-See for another 4
Following an uneventful drive to Innsworth to meet up with the Advance Party transport (and remembering my passport
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It was soon that time of year again where I head off to Austria and old folks alike as he slowly slid over the rollers. Once back at the accommodation the groups began to pack and load all the equipment on to the 50/50. Two SNCO’s where tasked to fit the snow chains to the vehicle: only on
iky preferred to follow an individual group member and then would give her tips at the end of the piste. Kerry also demonstrated short turn radius, which allows a skier to keep a constant quick pace whilst on a steep slope, giving more control of speed. The pace of the day was considerably slow when you compared to the first 4 days, but this was no surprise as all members of the group were feeling the effects of the packed days so far. The conditions were ideal for Rob to take the Movers group through the techniques of the ‘bend and drive’ that later in the day would allow some extremely smooth carving from some of the group.
Once we arrived, settled in and had met the beginners the group soon split down into those with a fair bit of natural ability (and some with previous experience) and the true beginners…. My patience being almost tested beyond belief by Sig Alan Milne, a fellow jock who’s belief in his own ability to snow plough was playing hide and seek for the first 2 days! All credit to him and the rest of the group as they all did really well during race week.
For myself during race week, having been promoted from my usual spot as Chief of Gates to the Start Judge, I was assisted by Capt Lyndon Box who’s pronunciation of bib numbers proved to have a clearer ring to it than mine and I was left with responsibility for fluffing up all the lycra clad racers thighs! It’s a tough job – but considering how cold it was, someone really HAD to do it!!
Thanks again go to Capt Jo Dawson, WO2 Andy Dawson and Sgt Richie Harris for running an excellent Corps Ski Camp this season - be sure to pass on my number to Sgt Chris Day when he takes over next year!

The weather conditions took a turn for the worse, as the group skied in overcast clouds with occasional snow falling at higher altitudes. New instructor Sgt Kerry Hopkins joined the group and even survived the remaining 2 days with them. Kerry preferred to follow an individual group member and then would give her tips at the end of the piste. Kerry also demonstrated short turn radius, which allows a skier to keep a constant quick pace whilst on a steep slope, giving more control of speed. The pace of the day was considerably slow when you compared to the first 4 days, but this was no surprise as all members of the group were feeling the effects of the packed days so far. The conditions were ideal for Rob to take the Movers group through the techniques of the ‘bend and drive’ that later in the day would allow some extremely smooth carving from some of the group.

The final day of the expedition brought all the skiers together but weather conditions took a dramatic turn for the worse, as the snow really started to fall and visibility was down to less than 10-meters. The poor visibility removed the chance for speed so instead the snow parks beckoned. Even here the pace of the day was considerably slow when you compared to the first 4 days, but this was no surprise as all members of the group were feeling the effects of the packed days so far. The conditions were ideal for Rob to take the Movers group through the techniques of the ‘bend and drive’ that later in the day would allow some extremely smooth carving from some of the group.

The day was a mixture of PowerPoint lessons, briefs, games, driving, as always, is an important theme around Christmas and New Year and the need for us to fully support recruiting. He finished with a look forward to 2012-13 mentioning especially the ongoing support to HERRICK, the Olympic Games and the need for us to fully support recruiting.

EXERCISE MERCURY GLACIER XV – by SSgt Jacqui Smith
It was soon that time of year again where I head off to Austria to ski at the Corp Championships. This year I had agreed to instruct the beginners on Ex MERCURY GLACIER XV.

Following an uneventful drive to Innsworth to meet up with the Advance Party transport (and remembering my passport this year!) we were soon en-route to Zell-am-See for another 4 weeks of ski training and racing. With more beginners taking part this year, I was assisted by my newly found friend and co-driver Cpl ‘50 Euro fine’ Jeaps to tackle the not always easy task of getting complete novices up to standard for racing after only 15 days on snow!!

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40 SIGNAL SQUADRON
OC Maj S Burgess
SSM WO2 (SSM) G Campbell

SQN CHRISTMAS LUNCH
The Sqn held their annual Christmas lunch on Sun 11 Dec and adopted a changed format this year so all ranks could sit down and enjoy a meal together. Outside caterers were arranged so no one had to roll their selves up and pan bash! The day was a mixture of PowerPoint lessons, briefs, games, carol service and Sqn Christmas dinner. The OC presented the opening brief with a glance back over 2011 and a recap on the various activities which the Sqn had undertaken – quite a lengthy list ranging from shooting events, military skills competitions, Belfast marathon and charitable work, Nijmegen, AC11 and many Exs. The OC singled out several people who contributed far beyond that expected and thanked them sincerely on behalf of the Sqn for their efforts. He finished with a look forward to 2012-13 mentioning especially the ongoing support to HERRICK, the Olympic Games and the need for us to fully support recruiting.

Driving, as always, is an important theme around Christmas and Sgt Wendy Cush gave the Sqn a presentation on 32 Sig Regt MT procedures.
Padre Ian Gamble MBE took our annual carol service in his usual jovial manner with readings delivered by Capt Derek Irvine (2IC), Cpl Jonny Booth and LCpl Nick Graham. The reading delivered by the 2IC brought a few smiles, just as he was speaking about a Christmas message being delivered a mobile phone sounded in the audience. The 2IC was quick to associate the mobile phone alert with his biblical reading, suggesting a higher command was at work in our presence!

After the Christmas lunch SSgt ’Pastie’ Palmer put together a host of Crazy Christmas Games including Wii Boxing (in a made up Boxing ring) and tank zap. It was hilarious to watch Army participants wrench with their tank controls as they got shocked each time their opponent scored a direct tank shot! The day finished in the Sqn JRC bar and a merry ending to an extremely busy year.

WO2 (SSM) Glenn Campbell co-ordinated the day and our deepest thanks to him and all those who worked behind the scenes to make the day enjoyable.

PRE CLM - WEEKEND 1

Over the period 27-29 Jan the Sqn ascended on Magilligan (MTC) to undertake pre-CLM training. Having identified a need to get our soldiers skilled up for their respective CLM courses and develop people for deployments Capt Derek Irvine and Sgt Ricky Dennison put together a creditable training package.

On arrival at MTC on the Friday evening it was straight into the weekend brief delivered by Sgt Ricky Dennison and sorting people split into their respective sections. Once the sections were formed friendship went straight out the window to be replaced by good competitive rivalry. After the Ex brief everyone was informed that housing for the weekend would be in the salubrious FOB accommodation, this triggered some grunts and moans. However, by the end of the weekend the grumbling had gone and most people were rating the FOB on par with the Hilton Hotel! The ablutions were highly scored… “You can actually change the heat in the showers” people were heard to say!

Saturday was a teaching phase with troops receiving a walk-through talk-through for what was planned next day. For those who attended AC11 and took part in the military skills event this weekend was just a friendly refresher. In total there were 6 stands to get around with a mixture of excellent lessons prepared by Sgt Dennison and Cpl Artie Holland.

With both individuals having served in the Royal Irish under Op BANNER the educational standard was high.

Each stand was prepared so that relevant training was achieved and delivered in manner for everyone to understand. The ‘Ambush’ stand was delivered by Cpl Alan Simms, the ‘Pair’s Fire Manoeuvre’ stand was run by SSgt Palmer and LCpl Ian Frame did a good job with the ‘Reece’ stand. The day ended well with an enjoyable PT session delivered by our friendly PTI, Cpl Holland – carrying weight around MTC with the normal pouring rain on order to keep people cool.

Sunday was the action day and a chance to put the skills to practice. The stands were taken in a spirited manner and everybody got fully involved with each section giving 100%. Well done to the winning section of Sgt Patty Patterson, Sgt Colin Gordon, Cpl Alan Murray, LCpl Richard Clarke, LCpl Alan Dawson, LCpl Serena Murray and Sig Kyle Carse.

With the continued support to operations and getting soldiers onto CLM courses these military skills weekends are important events for the Sqn and something we will focus on going forward. Full acknowledgement to Sgt Dennison; his contribution and management made this a worthwhile weekend and a great learning opportunity for all personnel.

RECRUITMENT DAY

On Sat 11 Feb the Sqn held a recruiting day at Clonaver Park TAC. It was an early start for the Tp in Caw Camp Londonderry as they embarked on the journey to join the rest of the Sqn at the first recruitment day of 2012. The event was organised by SSgt ’Pastie’ Palmer and ably assisted by several other ranks across the Sqn including other branches of the Reserve family from the Army and Navy Cadets.

The Clonaver drill hall was well laid out with various displays of Signals equipment, including: radios, mast kits, antennas and a fully operational CST. This was complemented by displays from MT, Physical Training, REME and Military Skills. There was also a good piece on Adventure Training to let potential soldiers know that Royal Signals personnel do more than communicate! One of the Sqn chefs, LCpl Florence Conlane, was also on hand to provide tasty homemade soup for guests and soldiers.

Doors opened at 1100 and within 10 minutes we had our first customer signed up! A well planned advertising campaign had been carried out in the local area over the preceding week which ensured that a steady stream of possible recruits arrived throughout the day. At the end of the event several names of potential recruits had been obtained for our recruiting team (SSgt Ian Palmer and Sig Rory Mortimer) to follow up and work their magic on.
By the time you read this a couple of the Corps' major symbols, its 'totems', will have passed into history.

First, we shall have had the drawdown event for 7th Signal Regiment in Elmpt prior to its final disbandment on 31st July this year. The Mighty 7th that many of us remember, based in Maresfield Barracks Herford from 1952 to 1994, was famed in its heyday as the largest field regiment in the Army, with 6 communications squadrons and over 1000 on its strength.

Second, the post of Signal Officer in Chief (Army) will have ceased to exist on 30th March. There has been a starred officer with the title Signal Officer in Chief since 1955, but the responsibility can be traced back to Lieutenant Colonel Llewelyn Evans CMG DSO who was in the chair as the Corps formed on 28th June 1920.

So what happens now? Well, along with the Armoured Corps, Infantry, Royal Engineers, Royal Artillery, REME and RLC, the ‘Arms and Services’ Directors posts dissolve and their jobs are reallocated.

Looking after Command Support, EW and Intelligence related functions will be a new Capability Director who will be based in the Army Headquarters in Andover. The first will be Brigadier Andy Bristow Late Royal Signals. From me and Director Intelligence Corps he will take on from me for our respective Corps:

- **Structures**: what units look like, their role, location, equipment allocation, composition, ranks and trades (including designing Army 2020 for us).
- **Training**: directing what training takes place at DCCIS and DISC, and some in-unit training, and keeping the requirement up to date, as well as influencing and directing other training across the Army.
- **Concepts and Doctrine**: from lessons from operations and training, from technology, and from central Defence concepts - how will we deliver command support and EW in the future.
- **Future Requirements and Integration**: what equipment capability do we need in the future, and how we get that equipment into service with the right training, support, infrastructure etc.

Looking after our Corps specifically will be a new Corps Colonel, also known as Colonel Royal Signals. Colonel Graham Norton Late Royal Signals is already in post and is supported by the new Corps RSM, WO1 (CRSM) Mark McMullan and a small staff. The Corps Colonel is responsible for our own capbadge and family matters, so his role will include:

- Support to soldier and officer recruiting, and officer selection (DE and LE),
- ‘People’ and career development policy,
- Supporting the Army Personnel Centre on Corps matters,
- Supporting the Royal Signals Association and Institution, the Corps Council and Trustees, the Museum, Music and the White Helmets.

Importantly he will develop and reinforce our Corps Ethos, not least through events such as Corps Week, Lanyard Trophy, Race The Sun, sports and social events. He will also ensure, on behalf of the Master, that the Corps is being looked after and developed within a new, smaller Army, representing our Corps at the highest level.

For at least the next two years, aside from a small team of about 8 working for Brigadier Bristow, our current staff will stay in Blandford, albeit with different email addresses.

On, briefly to some specifics. The Army 2020 study, led by Lieutenant General Carter has been designing the new Army of 82,000 regulars and 30,000 trained reservists. This represents a cut of more than 20% to the regular force. Different parts of the Army will be affected in different ways – we know this because we have been working closely with the 2020 Team - but all of it will have fewer regulars in it. I can’t say how this will affect the Corps specifically, mainly because the initial work is not yet complete, but also because announcements about these very sensitive issues will be made by the Government in the next few months. What I can say is that senior officers really do understand what we do and our importance, and our case has been well constructed and represented.
Regardless of the final outcome, more than ever, we’ll need to be a Corps that really values and makes the most of its diversity - regulars, TA, reservists, civil servants and contractors; UK service personnel and Gurkhas; soldiers, NCOs, warrant officers and Late and Direct Entry officers – we need everyone, and to break down barriers that get in the way.

On a related subject, as Tranche 2 redundancy approaches, and for the following Tranches, we shall be doing all we can to help soldiers and officers to get in touch with employers who are keen to take on people with our skills and experience. The employment situation is hard overall, but the telecommunications and IT areas are relatively healthy. We’ll be releasing details of the scheme in the next month or so.

Finally, for me it has been perhaps the greatest privilege of all to have served the Royal Corps of Signals and the Queen’s Gurkha Signals as Signal Officer in Chief over the past 18 months. As Mark Twain said, ‘History doesn’t repeat itself but it does rhyme’, so, whether or not there is actually a Signal Officer in Chief or a 7th Signal Regiment (or indeed a 209 Signal Squadron), the Corps lives on and the things that make it successful are still there, just arranged differently. I wrote quite a long piece in The Wire and The Journal last year setting out our Development Agenda. Little has changed in that, and we are getting on with it.

Claire and I wish you, the Corps family, all the very best.

Certa Cito

Tim
50 (NORTHERN) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)

OC  Maj B Hogg
SSM  WO2 (SSM) Standing

2 SIGNAL BRIGADE POTENTIAL NON COMMISSIONED OFFICERS COURSE

Sounds like the start of a soldier’s nightmare, however the sun was beating down upon Warcop Training Camp in November when the advance party, Sgt ‘Stevieboy’ Williams arrived to set up the reception for the 2 Sig Bde PNCO Cse. He set off from 32 Sig Regts RHQ in Glasgow with what seemed like the years statutory budget in a van, or at the very least the freshly ram-raided spoils from Staples, however the van was damage free so we decided to believe in the first option! By the time the other Directing Staff had turned up the arrival system was in place ready to receive our students who were coming from the length and breadth of the UK, although the guessometer was way out when we tried to estimate the time of the final arrival: The last student rolled through the door in the early hours of the morning and was promptly sent to bed within seconds of booking in, ready for an early start.

It was clear that the crisp but warm previous day had certainly come to an end, making way for a true Cumbrian welcome to Warcop; driving rain giving way to relentless drizzle. Cpl Tate tried to cheer everyone up with PT to blow out any cobwebs and to put them in a jovial mood to meet WO2 (SSM) Standing on the square, neither of which seemed to work. Once the ‘boot polish is not optional’ speech was reinforced it was down to the learning bit of the course.

Spirits seemed to be lifted by the time the students entered their first lesson, Fighting Power, however there was a lot of yawning going on due to some of the late arrival times or at least that’s what was blamed, rather that the subject matter. The DS made the classroom phase as light hearted as possible while still maintaining the structure of the lessons. Group discussions were lively and opinions were stated in an adult manner interspersed with humour. Breaks were well deserved and the tea and coffee welcome, assisting everybody to remain focussed. Ssgt ‘Nice man’ Ross relished the opportunity to delve into his encyclopaedic knowledge of military quotes in his Leadership lesson, only digressing for a short time to British and German field guns of 1944! The Leadership lessons seemed to last a long while and Sgt Riches attracted one or two “tick counters” for his over enthusiastic use of the word ‘leadership’!

At the end of Day One there was the course ice breaker: the students had 2 minutes to speak about themselves: there was a truck driving pole dancer, someone who could speak ‘cat’ and a Signaller who researched frequency ranges for military comms systems to name but a few. It definitely proved the fact that the TA is made up of a diverse crowd from all walks of life.

Day 2 brought to life some of the paperwork tasks which will be encountered by the students in the future, including reports and returns, AGAI and Unit Procedures, all of which opened up group discussions and demonstrated a good level of knowledge already in the room. Ssgt Mulvaney was to bring Phase 1 of the cadre to an end with a range of command tasks. One or 2 of the solutions were a little outlandish and doomed to fail, but the command and control demonstrated by all the course members was really effective. With a chance then for those who were led to try their solution, a quick assessment of the task and appreciation of individuals’ skills led to a comprehensive brief to the whole team which in turn delivered a timely execution of the mission. All the course members were suitably mentally and physically taxed in time for the SSM’s ‘look forward’ to Phase 2 in the field.

Phase 2 of the Cadre was held between 18 – 20 November at Rossmede Training Area. A lesson from Phase 1 was the need for designated drivers to deliver the students to and from their destination due to the arduous nature of the weekend. So in a scene that resembled children being dropped off on the school run by doting parents there was a relatively constant stream of minibuses depositing their cargo over the weekend. Day One saw 2 major lessons, Combat Estimate and Orders, being conducted. Again there seemed to be a good spread of knowledge amongst the students which was proved in some of the answers to confirmatory questions. After a self-cooked lunch the students hit the training area and ran through some revision before being thrown into low level command appointments. The SSM, accompanied by WO1 (RSM) Newton, walked the route of the confirmatory exercise to ensure it was ‘double’. Once the walk through was complete and by the time the DS map was marked the students had finished their field activities. It was dark when they got back to their patrol base for some well earned admin time in preparation for the exercise. They then carried out 2 night patrol tasks (a recce and an ambush) accompanied by the DS and OC 50 Sig Sqn, Maj Hogg.

Everyone was up and about early o’clock on Day 2. WO2 (RQMS) Rutherford of 32 Sig Regt (V) receives the Early Bird Award by starting the day with some bullet counting to ensure that everyone had enough rounds to complete all the planned serials. All of the students were busying themselves in prep for the exercise and expressed both excitement and apprehension in equal measure. When they were all together and the first command appointments nominated, a definite change was visible amongst them as they all became very focussed on supporting their section commanders and 2ICs, with every instruction carried quickly and without question.

Just as the Tps were getting ready to go to the O Group a senior guest arrived; Lt Col Black of 2 Sig Bde. Sgt Allinson then delivered the orders and individual tasks to the cadets, who were then formed up ready to cross the start line. Their enthusiasm for this kind of exercise clearly underpinned their sense of urgency, however their inter-section banter ensured all round morale was maintained. The serials ran as expected: POW’s, multiple in-depth positions, obstacle crossing, casualty evacuation under fire, IED strikes, and all that good stuff. The final multiple position assault took place in bright sunshine, the nominated Platoon Commander drove the sections hard to reach their final position, where they enjoyed a short respite before the move back to their patrol base. The PTI’s made sure that everyone was hydrated and in good condition to TAB back. The SSM led from the front on the 2 ½ mile tab where upon arrival they went straight to the spot for the course photograph. Course validation sheets were completed and handed in, weapons cleaned and with a few inspirational words from the DS the exercise came to an end.

Overall, everyone had a good course (DS included). The enthusiasm, effort, focus and determination that the students put in was excellent to see. These signallers are the SME Instructors, DS, Officers and SNCO’s of the future and to quote one of the DS (add inspirational music) ‘You are the masters of your own destiny, the only person standing in your way of achieving your ultimate aim is….you!’

51 (SCOTTISH) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)

OC  Maj H Jephcote
SSM  WO2 (SSM) Tochel

On 10 Feb 12, Sig Mathewson, Sig Huey and Sig Gray-Gardner from 51 Sig Sqn (V), 852 Tp, successfully passed their Phase 1 training at Pirbright Army Training Centre. Maj Jephcote and
Capt Gandhi along with Sig Mathewson’s family - who braved the trip from East Kilbride in the snowy weather, were present at Pitbright to proudly see the boys at the passing out parade. Sig Gray-Gardner was nominated as the best soldier on the TA course, a great honour for him and testament to his diligence in training. When asked if they had enjoyed the course, there were many snippets which came forward but one most notable that we could print was that during CBRN trg Sig Huey remarked ‘don’t breathe in when asked your Name, Rank and No’ in the chamber’. Our congratulations go to them and wish them success on their phase 2 training.

As well as goodbyes, a warm welcome was shown by all to the incoming OC, Maj Jim McNaught, who has already informed us that there will be a demanding and exciting training year planned ahead. The first 52 Sp Sqn weekend of 2012 started with build up CFT training; consisting of a fantastic 7 mile tab from scenic Loch Carron over the rolling Campsie hills to Fintry. Later that evening 57 Sqn personnel and friends sat down to our annual Burns Supper Night. This was said to be one of the best Burns Supper Nights ever held within the Sqn. Thanks goes out to all the main speakers; MC WO2 Karen Swan, SPSI SSgt Kenny Macpherson who toasted the lassies with his sarcastic repertoire which was enjoyed by all, then a cynical reply from the lassies (Mrs Tam O’Shanter) done by the Doc, Maj Louise Pettigrew, was a sight to be seen and had everyone in fits of laughter.

The Sqn is now looking forward to the Skiing and Walking adventure training in Aveimore, as well as shooting and driving cadres in Elgin, and much more!

Capt “Jeff” Jephcote, a devoted and dedicated Sqn member. We will miss your IT skills, your stat skills, your Airwave experience and your rotten jokes!!! We wish you all well and be sure that you will always receive a warm welcome, whenever you return.

52 (LOWLAND) SUPPORT SQUADRON (V)
OC Maj T McVey
SSM WO2 (SSM) Swan

The New Year started by saying farewell to the Sqn OC Maj Terry McVey to take over the post as QM (V). Many thanks to him for his hard work and dedication to the Sqn over the years. Maj McVey instigated the original Battlefield Tour, the yearly Shooting/Driving Cadre and linked us to our close Italian friends through Ex Veneto: Good Luck in the new post. Another farewell is to our resident doctor, Maj Louise Pettigrew. Louise is moving on to pastures new with 205 Field Hospital (Volunteers). A last but not least farewell is to the Sqn 2IC, Capt Gandhi

53rd SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)
REDDITCH

CO Lt Col Cairns
RSM WO1 (RSM) Maguire

It’s been another busy 2 months for 375R with a new CO, Lt Col Cairns, taking over the reins. Thirteen soldiers successfully mobilised at the beginning of January and are now continuing their Pre Deployment Training with 16 Sig Regt in Elmpt.

The Regt has continued to train for its UK Ops role as well as participating in the National Olympic CPX in December. Preparation and training for the Olympics is ongoing, with everyone keen to be involved in this once in a lifetime event. Ex HORSESHOE HARNESS, the 2 Sig Bde BCP 5.4 uplift training is also being conducted at Swynnerton Camp and key personnel from the Sqns are attending in order to cascade this knowledge down. It’s not all work and no play - 7 lucky individuals will soon be deploying on Ex SNOW WARRIOR in Bavaria to improve their uphill and downhill skiing techniques.

GLOBAL CANTER 2 IN THE LAD 14/15 JANUARY 2012

LAD trade training this year followed on from where we left off in 2011. Last year’s Global Infra, practiced the removal of a gearbox in a Land Rover 110 without the use of a ramp by extracting it from the inside of the cab after taking out the floor to simulate field conditions where specialist equipment
isn’t available. The main effort of our first trade training this year was to re-fit the gearbox with the same constraints.

The first job was to remove the clutch and inspect it for wear. The Tiffy, SSGt Taylor, gave a detailed explanation of how a clutch works and what problems can occur and how to identify them. Once the clutch was re-fitted the gearbox was replaced by man handling it back into position. This involved the use of a tow strop and brute force which took a lot of patience and adjustment whilst jacking the engine up to align the gearbox to the back of the engine. The LAD’s next challenge is 143 (WM) Bde’s REME Special To Arms training weekend in March

GLOBAL CANTER 2 AT 36 SIGNAL SQUADRON - by Cpl Kelly

It was a back-to-basics style weekend for the Sqn’s Colchester and Cambridge Tps as they mustered on one of the coldest mornings this winter so far. A thick frost lay on the ground as an assortment of tents and masts were laid out in preparation for the morning’s main events. First up was Cpl McRae demonstrating, with the help of a couple of others, how to effectively assemble 12x12 and 9x9 tents. As a newcomer to the Regt, it was interesting to see the range of skills and experience that varied from seasoned Corporals to brand new members such as Sig Chris Griffin who had only been attested a few days earlier. To keep things interesting a little competition was encouraged between the 854 Cambridge Tp members and the Colchester crew. After a dash to the rear fence and back, the race was on to see which team would assemble their tent in the quickest time possible. The result was a close call with the Colchester team taking the victory. After everyone had thawed out a little, Cpl Crampton-Taylor and LCpl Wright talked through siting considerations before demonstrating how to put up 5, 8 and 12 metre masts. Once again a competition theme began to emerge as the lesson developed resulting in a great effort from both teams when it was their turn to put the theory into practice and show how closely they had observed their instructors.

These outdoor activities had taken up the morning and it was time to hit the classroom in the afternoon for some A&P theory with SSGt (FofS) Webb. Facial expressions ranged from utter bewilderment to subtle nods of understanding as the memories came flooding or perhaps trickling back in some cases. With only one way to find out if anything had sunk in, it was back out to the masts for a scenario-based task that required a decent understanding of the previous lesson to select and put up the correct antenna.

As the sun started to go down during the debrief phase, the rubbing of hands, shuffling of feet, and chattering of teeth increased; there was only one solution. After a rapid change into PT kit, Cpls McRae and CT took everyone for a run around Abbey fields with some circuit style exercises thrown in for good measure. Core body temperatures were once again restored thanks to some sprints, press-ups, sit-ups and weaving in and out amongst the trees. After a good cool down and stretch off, the first day of Ex GLOBAL CANTER had come to a close.

GLOBAL WARRIOR - by Cpl Wilkins

On 3 February we deployed on the last GLOBAL WARRIOR weekend of the Training Year. On arrival at Swynnerton we received a briefing from the RSM on the weekend’s training; the aims were to qualify for the annual bounty by passing the AFT, train for the Olympics and have fun! With us during the weekend was Karen Lumley, MP for Redditch, who was attending as part of the Parliamentary Army.
Saturday morning began with BCDT training - going through basic life support. The next event was the AFT which everyone passed. The PTI in charge, SSgt Reynolds, tells us that this was due to his excellent briefing, route selection and pacing, however we think that it also had something to do with good personal preparation and determination!

After lunch we went through an Op OLYMPIC scenario covering BCDT, crowd control and patrolling skills. Later in the afternoon we had an RMP presentation and practical training on individual and vehicle search. Due to a good dollop of snow the night navigation exercise was cancelled and we had a relaxed social evening in the bar.

Sunday morning’s orienteering was changed to ‘RSM’s pleasure’ due to the continued adverse weather conditions. Rumours spread as to what that may mean and there were some very concerned people however, they needn’t have worried as the mystery activity was a Sqn snowman building competition! This was good fun and helped with team building and inter Sqn rivalry. Col Black judged the snowmen with 48 Sqn winning. We then had a briefing from the MTWO (V), WO2 Mansell, on road safety and made our way to our respective TACs feeling satisfied that we had had a challenging, productive and fun weekend.

EXERCISE HORSESHOE HARNESS WATCHKEEPER COURSE  
- by Lt Cawston

The Bowman Watchkeeper course took place at Swynnerton Camp. Due to the presence of the Royal Engineers on site, the students ranging from Sgt to Major fitted into the 10 man rooms in the main block.

The course itself was excellent. The topic ComBAT, (Common Battlefield Application Tool) was introduced by first-rate instructors. These were WO1 Franks and WO2 Ogg. Both were very knowledgeable on the subject. Potentially a dry topic but this was sidestepped by delivery with an air of humour to the training. This created an environment in which the best was taken from the material.

Having an understanding and exposure to the latest software put some students ahead of others. The software was modelled on the Microsoft interface with tabs and information expanding below. As the instructors were keen to point out, not everything was where it should be and in some cases appeared to be listed randomly. There were very helpful guides that the students could use during the training and getting hold of these is a must for anyone planning on using ComBAT in the future.

The multi-functional use that ComBAT provided was amazing. During the training each student took a role of an armoured vehicle which would indicate its location. The software uses OS maps and very useful tools. Each student depicted by a symbol was visible on the map at a pre-set location. We were able to do map marking and other tasks on the software. The ability to use additional overlays was lost on no one. The possibilities to use this during the orders process or during the planning stages of exercises were limitless. Map marking symbols were very detailed and standardised, making map marking easy to use. The ability to send marked maps across a network is also a useful feature, potentially allowing Ops Offers up to date information to be able to feed down to sub units in real time.

From a signals point of view one of the most useful tools was plotting a feature on the map and doing visibility studies for certain locations. Whilst this exercise can be carried out the old fashioned way, for tired eyes during long exercises the clear red for not visible and clear for visible was instantly recognised as a must have function.

All those that complete the course successfully have the Watchkeeper competency added to their JPA account. In closing this course provided real benefits to the students and the usefulness was clear to see. The easy to follow guide which the Bde Yeoman now has is a necessity to get hold for this young officer at least.

EXERCISE GLOBAL JUNIOR LEADER – MASTER POULTER’S VISIT TO 36 SIGNAL SQUADRON

As part of the continuing development of the soldiers and JNCOs, 36 (E) Sig Sqn were tasked with the provision of Ex GLOBAL JUNIOR LEADER for all elements of 37 Sig Regt in Colchester TA Centre. The exercise planning carried out by the Sqn SPSIs, SSgt’s Kev Bickford and Lee Fraser culminated in members of the Regt being given an insight on Saturday morning to leadership at the junior level on recent Ops.

As part of the Regt’s association with the Worshipful Company of Poulters of London, the Master Poulter, Mr Brendan Tobin visited the Ex GLOBAL JUNIOR LEADER and was provided with a presentation about the Regt by the incoming CO, Lt Col Dominique Cairns. The Master Poulter presented the Poulters Plate, for the best junior soldier in the Regt, this years recipient was LCpl Johnson, from 54 Sqn based in Redditch.

Following the presentation and a buffet lunch provided by Sgt Morley, training moved from the warmth of Colchester TA Centre to the much cooler Friday Woods, where personnel from 216 Sig Sqn provided a demonstration of a deployed TAC HQ including the comms, both HF and SATCOM and other equipment which would be deployed. This included several members of the Regt trying on for size the equipment which members of 216 Sig Sqn would deploy with. LCpl Wong, 53 Sig Sqn tried on a parachute harness for size, unfortunately a gust of wind meant he almost took off in Friday Woods.

The finale before returning from Friday Woods was the log run which was started by the Master Poulter and consisted of 4 teams covering a 1.5 mile circuit with the log. A valiant effort by all those taking part prior to further presentations in the warmth of the TA Centre before a combined social event
on Saturday evening. 36 (E) Sig Sqn would like to thank OC 216 Sig Sqn and those who provided the training for an excellent insight into leadership at the junior level.

VISIT BY THE DUKE OF WESTMINSTER

On 8 Feb 2012 the Duke of Westminster, who is Deputy Commander Land Forces and the head of the Territorial Army, visited RHQ 37 Sig Regt (V). He received a presentation from the CO on the role of the Regt and its contribution to Operations. He then presented the Operational Service Medal Afghanistan to SSgt Nick Caswell who had completed a tour of duty from November 2010 to April 2011 in Kandahar.

SSgt Caswell receives his OSM Afghanistan from DCLF

The Duke spoke to members of the Regt about the future of the TA and the growth and development that will be required between now and 2020. His message was positive but uncompromising and he exhorted all members of the Territorial Army to get on side with the upcoming changes.

The CO with DCLF

OFFICERS AND SNCOs CHRISTMAS BALL

- by Sgt Eileen Monaghan

Planning started for the Sgts’ Mess Christmas function at the Summer Party in July. 48 Sqn had organised the previous years Christmas function and it was rumoured that 48 were in the frame for doing it again. The rumours were confirmed when WO1 (RSM) Maguire gave the task to the Sqn. So began the preparation and the planning. We got the ball rolling immediately and within 2 days a band, a DJ and the marquee were booked.

It was all hands on deck from September as we only had 8 weeks to put in action all the planning and preparation. It finally started to come together when the marquee arrived on the 30 November and then the real hard work began. Three days of building, decorating and titivating finally paid off on the Saturday when the members and guests arrived and we were thrilled to hear comments such as “this is brilliant”, “wow” and “you wouldn’t think this was a drill hall.”

Two top tables were needed to seat the Hon Col, the CO, the RSM, the Sqn OC’s, FOS, YOS and the Chief Clerk and their respective guests. SVWO Proffitt then got the evening off to a strong start with the usual preliminaries and announcements before the band came on. The meal got off to a fantastic start, the wine was flowing, the waiters were rushed off their feet, people were dancing and the Master Chef, WO1 Paul Holland, and his team as usual produced a spectacular buffet. Now fed and well watered, SVWO Proffitt laid on his special bit of entertainment! As SVWO Proffitt works for the Royal Mail he donned his outfit as a postman and with his Elvis facemask he did his rendition of his favourite Elvis song of “Return to Sender” (don’t quit the day job!). Encores ensued and not to disappoint his public he then got all the WOs onto the stage to do The Village People’s YMCA much to the amusement of the CO and Hon Col. All in all everyone that night partied and enjoyed themselves in to the wee early hours.

RIDGE WALK – by SSgt Ali Nash

On 14 August 2011 5 members of 53 (Wales and Western) Sqn helped in a 14 mile charity walk in Aid of “Papyrus - Prevention of Young Suicide in England and Wales.”

It all started a few months prior to the walk after a drill night in the bar. Sig Liz Iles came up with the idea of helping a local charity and to raise the profile of the TA. So after many weeks of talking to the event organiser and taking out the group leaders on walks to ensure they could complete the route and they had some idea what they were taking on.
All walkers got to the half way point in good time for a well earned brew and a blister check by Cpl Carter then headed back off into the hills – and I did not have the heart to tell them the hardest part of the route was still in front of them.

All day long I was running between groups checking on them and giving out brews and words of encouragement like “come on you furry neck civvies!” and “my Grandmother can walk quicker than you” which they replied that’s the “Mad Welshman Again” or words to that effect!!!!

At 1800hrs all the groups had finished the walk and were handed their certificates and talked about what they had archived by completing the Ridge Walk. If you would like to donate to this charity please go to www.justgiving.com/Anne-Owen-Taylor
The total raised by this event was just short of £8000.

38th (STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS) SHEFFIELD

CO Lt Col S A Smith
RSM WO1 (RSM) S Hook

UPDATE FROM RHQ

After returning from a well earned Christmas and New Year’s break the Regt has kick started 2012 with real energy. The main effort has been the uplift of the Bowman fleet to BCIP S.4.2 but there have also been several Regt Exercises, which have provided an ideal opportunity to dust off the cob webs and, for those that needed it, burn away all the festive fare. Since the last edition of The Wire there have been a couple of movements. Maj Andy Powell has handed over as Regt 2IC to Maj Scottie Rankin and will now assume command of a company at the Yorkshire Officer Training Regiment. The Regt has also welcomed Maj Thelma Ward who has taken over as OC Sp Sqn from Maj Jeff Hattersley, who has now assumed the role of Traffic Officer (V) in Regt HQ.

1 SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

OC Maj MC Fisher
SSM WO2 (SSM) Gott

SQUADRON CHRISTMAS DINNER - by Cpl John Melling

‘Twas the night before the (Sqn) Christmas, when all through the TAC, nothing was stirring.

What a start it was on the Saturday morning – After a brief search of the “Mark 1 Tardis” (loft) by the fearless Sig ‘Indiana’ Simmons, the Sqn hit the bar armed with tinsel, baubles and banners, set to turning our beloved bar into our very own Christmas grotto. All was going well until the tree was brought in. Most members of the Sqn were unaware that the “Krypton Factor” had entered the retail market with a seasonal tree and those who could assemble in less than 28 minutes were invited to apply.

After a scrumptious (but late) lunch, thanks to the catering skills of LCpl Clark and Pte Walker, WO2 (SSM) Gott got the Sqn on parade. The OC, Maj Mo Fisher, (yep still in the Corps) briefed the troops on what a busy year the Sqn had had and reminded everyone of how next year would be even busier. The parade was concluded with the promotion of Cpl Melling.

After the parade, the Sqn retired to the bar for the pre-Xmas matinee that the PSAO Capt Kev Taylor had arranged, but which was jettisoned in favour of the more appropriate “Hangover”. Whilst the juniors were busy digesting this documentary, the SNCOS set about transforming the hall into a formal dining area for the Christmas dinner with real cutlery, place mats, Sqn silver and even napkins. Most of us juniors weren’t even aware that people ate off china plates and used metal cutlery, but grudging let go of the paper plates, plastic diggers and polystyrene cups.

Before dinner there was the mass assault on the local area and of course the local Pound shops to source gifts for the Secret Santa. Gifts were wrapped, troops scrubbed and everyone dressed up in Black Tie (with rather snazzy zebra shoes in one case). “To the bar” was the cry (the SSM - not sure when he got posh, called it pre-dinner drinks) and off we sauntered. A newly promoted Cpl was glad to see the entire Sqn lined up to the left of the bell waiting patiently. I did my duty and rang the bell, and watched 2 days’ wages disappear whilst dinner was delayed by another 1/2 hour. We continued to sip responsibly and compliment the seniors on their Mess Dress – very dapper indeed (maybe, just maybe, one day!!!!).

Dinner was eventually called and I have to say that the delay was immediately forgiven, as the food was well worth waiting all day for – Luke and Sean, thank you very much. For the benefit of those involved I won’t write any more about the bar that evening.

At 0800 the following morning, there were some very fragile people roaming around barracks trying to sort themselves out. Sunday morning was taken up by the clean-up, mostly
completed by the seniors while the juniors enjoyed a half hour lay in. Det admin was the order for the rest of the day and seeing how many jobs a fresh faced newly promoted Cpl of the Corp could manage and before we knew it the SSM was dismissing the troops and wishing everyone all the best and season’s greetings.

2 (CITY OF DUNDEE & HIGHLAND) SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

OC         Maj Jim Stillie
SSM        WO2 (SSM) Smith

EXERCISE CELTIC ADVENTURE RM CONDOR 3 - 4 DEC 11

The festive season was approaching and the Sqn personnel were putting the equipment to bed for the New Year and with a Bde Comd visit imminent some though getting up the slope on the ski lift proved to be a challenge in itself as demonstrated by SSgt Kev MacLean. If you succeeded getting up the ski lift, that is if you succeeded getting up the ski lift. Stopping was a problem however for LCpl Davy Carmichael who was last seen flying over the stop bump and disappearing into the grassed area beyond the ski slope. For those up the slope on there slalom course and see what we could do… "Who put that there?" was one of the many comments heard by the speeding skiers on there downhill route.

As our group was mainly experienced skiers less LCpl Carmichael who had recovered from the field and was now taking on the ski lift, WO2 Medley decided to put cones down and make a slalom course and see what we could do… "Who put that there?" was one of the many comments heard by the speeding skiers on there downhill route.

The SPSI had planned the weekend to have 2 groups so as we were taking on the ski lift and crumpling the other group were demonstrating under the competent direction of Capt Heather Lawrie and Sgt Joe Wiggins the art of disco knee. This was fully embraced by all taking part. Potential Officers Stephen and Macdonald demonstrated the delay stance and the correct way to wear the harness; fun was had by all even the SQMS SSgt Davy Shand was showing up the youngsters by ascending the green route in record time.

Day 2 was handed over to the Sqn MLTs, SSgt Ian Stewart and Sgt Lesley Bayne who steered us around Loch Brandy at a height of 840m in the area around Glenclova forest.

EXERCISE STEEL CANTER 27 – 29 JAN 12 RM CONDOR

After the Christmas stand down it was time to get the Sqn out of adventure training mode and into trade training with the first ICS exercise of 2012, Ex STEEL CANTER. The communications were headed up by Yeoman WO2 (YofS) Matt Page with the LFFB headed up by SSgt (SPSI) George Cowan. The main effort (ME) was the LFFB with the Bowman being deployed in support of the Regt as the distant link. The Sqn began to RV in Condor on Friday evening from as far north as Elgin and the surrounding area of Dundee to begin the build first thing on Saturday morning. The LFFB site was underway at first light with the Bowman comms under Cpl Kieran Sweeney being in and working by 0800hrs to await traffic from the Regt that had deployments as far south as London with 41 Sig Sqn.

The build and comms went well and all training objectives were met to a high standard.

BURNS NIGHT 3 FEBRUARY 12 (DUNDEE)

Burns night for the Sqn, like all other Scottish Units, is a regular date in the Scottish social Calendar. This year the committee headed up by WO2 (SSM) Dave Honeyman and SSgt (MT PSI) George Callander had a plan to totally transform the drill hall turning it into a medieval castle. This was a total success, unfortunately now that you have done it once get used to it…you’ve raised the standard now maintain it.

The evening was complemented by an excellent menu prepared by Sgt Sheila Chalmers of traditional Scottish fare and with a local(ish) band from Banff called the ‘Whigmalearie Cellidh Band’ made for a good evening. A Burns Supper will not be complete without the toasts. The evening was started with the OC Maj Stillie addressing the Haggis after being piped into the hall by Piper Scott Brown Young. Tradition has it that the Piper and the speaker down a dram but as the Piper was 14 years of age Iron Brew (another Scottish Tradition) sufficed, while the OC kept with tradition. SSgt Davy Shand then followed with the Immortal Memory. WO2 Matt Page then toasted the lasses and the reply was delivered by Mrs Cowan. The guests and mess members of both Officers and Sgts Mess were kept wanting for nothing by Cpl Kath McKenzie, Cpl ‘Crafty’ Krawczyk, LCpl Carmichael and Sig Cable.

LSGC AND VRSM PRESENTATIONS 7 FEB 2012

On 7 Feb 2012 the CO paid us his initial visit from taking post. The evening coincided with the presentations of the LSGC to WO2 (YofS) Matt Page and the VRSM to WO2 (WORTT) ‘Wullie’ Smith.

64 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC         Maj S Mchenery
SSM        WO2 (SSM) Ross

CLM TRAINING - by Cpl Beer

Over the last 4 months 38 Sig Regt have been running career development weekends for the junior soldiers. These weekends are intended to provide Signallers with the skills they need to progress to LCpl and to prepare LCpl and Cpls for Junior and Senior CLM. Each weekend starts with classroom work and eventually culminates in a variety of mil skill events such as section attacks, recce’s and surviving in the field. Along with other members of the Regt I attended the 3rd weekend; soldiers came from as far a field as Leeds, Milton Keynes and London to take part, providing an eclectic mix of accents, experience and opinions.

We all converged on Yardley Chase, one of the Army’s lesser known training areas in the wilds of Northamptonshire, and were pleasantly surprised to learn that we wouldn’t be sleeping in a ditch somewhere but instead we had accommodation with a roof and heating! In the bright, fresh
and rather chilly January morning we were split into sections with a usual mix of junior signallers and potential SNCOS; what followed was a morning of revision for some on harbour area drills, and some rather excellent orders extraction and presentation.

The afternoon was spent refreshing our map reading skills and going over target indication and fire control orders. As it was still the middle of winter the day was short which provided us with an excellent opportunity for a night navigation and patrolling exercise. We proved that although the training area was quite small it is still possible to miss a checkpoint designated by a glowing clyme by several yards. Sgt Stu Yates entertained us by finding one of the many water filled holes on the training area and testing how deep and wet it was. Using our advanced map reading skills we had acquired in Sgt Cook’s lesson earlier that day we managed to find all the checkpoints in record time, no doubt spurred on by the sub zero temperature and the thought of the chefs special soup waiting for us in the cookhouse.

The next day was spent revising Pairs Fire and Manoeuvre and, first as separate fire teams, then as sections, practicing against a willing enemy. All in all it was a long weekend, filled with valuable practice periods and revision, after ENDEX we departed to our far flung TACs secure in the knowledge that the final weekend in February would see us use all the skills we had brushed up in the preceding weekends. It would certainly be harder and less comfortable but would ultimately prepare us for forthcoming promotion courses.

Saturday afternoon and evening saw the continuation of the exercise phase, with another newly promoted JNCO, LCpl Compton doing himself and his section proud; having received, extracted, prepared and delivered recce patrol orders, he took his Section out to locate us an FUP for the next day’s dawn attack. Immediately on his return to the FOB he was tasked with an arrest op, and began the orders process all over again. The arrest op provided the final piece of intelligence needed to plan the next day’s dawn attack, and the PI HQ began work on this at around midnight.

This process was interrupted by an assault on the FOB from the insurgents. After a period of concentrated fire from the sangars failed to deter the enemy Sig Sudlow was given his first Section Commander appointment and tasked with leading a QRF to take the fight to the enemy who were duly pushed back to the village.
The next morning we had a smooth route to the FUP and at H Hour the GPMGs opened up and we began the final phase of the exercise, fighting through the village. Another newly promoted soldier, LCpl Hickey, did a stellar job of commanding his assaulting section, aggressively fighting through depth positions, well supported by his section 2IC.

The exercise was concluded with a casenbac back to the FOB, which gave the soldiers who had been attending Ops Tp an opportunity to practice their drills. It had been an intense but immensely satisfying exercise, with good facilities and equipment, loads of ammunition, and a testament to the quality of our newly promoted JNCOs.

**93 (NORTH SOMERSET YEOMANRY) SUPPORT SQUADRON**

OC  Maj PJ Smith
SSM  WO2 (SSM) C Stockwell

**39 SIGNAL REGIMENT BURN'S NIGHT - by Sgt Neil Raaff**

The night of Saturday 28 January brought about the traditional Burns Night celebrations. The festivities were hosted at Horfield TA Centre, home to 93 Sp Sqn and 57 Sig Sqn, with mess members and partners travelling from 94 Sig Sqn, Windsor and even as far afield as 56 Sig Sqn, Eastbourne. After pre-dinner drinks, and at the sound of the dinner gong we entered the transformed drill hall to the delicate sound of the bagpipes, courtesy of the City and County of Bristol Pipes and Drums. WO1 (RSM) Lythe delivered the Selkirk grace and after the soup course the Haggis was piped in. Ssgt 'Robbo' Robertson addressed the Haggis in his finest Scottish accent and the main course was served. Ssgts Butler and Wells delivered the toast to the lassies and laddies respectively. Both toasts were suitably sprinkled with euphemism and double-entendre and were well received, although the decanters of whisky on each table were probably starting to take effect at this stage. An excellently animated and word perfect (sans notes!) rendition of Tam O' Shanter was delivered by Mrs Amanda Lang, wife of Brig Lang the Hon Col of 93 Sp Sqn. Maj Ruthven delivered "the Immortal Memory". Of interest was the fact that Burns had served in his local militia. Maj Ruthven also had it on good authority that OC 93 Sp Sqn, Maj Smith, had served as Burns' Tp Sgt!

After dinner all were invited to partake in some Scottish Country Dancing. This is technical and involves a great deal of synchronised movement, not unlike an internal combustion engine; and like an internal combustion engine it should never be entrusted to anyone who is not suitably qualified or had a skin full of whisky. That aside, the enthusiasm of Fiona Grant (the Ceilidh announcer) meant that the floor filled quickly. Despite a few minor collisions and trod on toes groups managed to work their way through the dances more or less successfully and with a fair amount of laughter. An great evening was had by all with the festivities progressing well into the wee hours. Many thanks to all who helped or contributed to the delivery of this function – Slainte!

In early 2012 the focus of the Sqn is preparing for whatever role proves necessary in supporting the Olympics in the summer. Throughout the remainder of the winter and spring we will be building up individual and collective skills so that we can deliver whatever effect 39 Sig Regt (V) and 2 Sig Bde ask of us. We are also supporting the national TA recruiting “surge” with an open day in February combined with a squadron trade training weekend.

**OP HERRICK HOMECOMING EVENT AND MEDAL PRESENTATION**

The first drill night of 2012 was chosen to welcome home our Sqn members who deployed in 2011 on Op HERRICK. Families and friends were invited to see them formally welcomed back to the Sqn. LCpl Shinet and LCpl Sluz had previously been presented their operational medals during the 21 Sig Regt (AS) homecoming parade in Bath. However, Cpl 'Herbie' Hyde and Cassie Downs had deployed with 10 Sig Regt and were presented with their medals by the Sqn Honorary Colonel, the Lord Lt of Bristol, Mrs Mary Prior. Following receipt of their medals the CO stepped in to promote them both to Acting Sgt. The Sqn wishes them all the best in their new roles and good luck in completing the courses necessary to gain substantive rank. Following the presentations there was a buffet and social event for families and Sqn members. We hope the success of these 4 soldiers on operations will inspire other members to look for opportunities to deploy.

**EXERCISE BRUNEL REVIVAL, DRIVING SKILLS WEEKEND – by LCpl Morris**

A very cold and frosty Saturday morning started with the winter tradition of scraping down the vehicles so you can see and praying that your heater worked. Everyone was split up in teams of 2 where one would drive and the other would command during 'Driving Orienteering' around Salisbury Plain.

With a navigator/ radio operator in the passenger seat, 8 vehicles set off to a number of locations to answer questions when they got there. For a number of these situations this was nice and easy with lots of room to pull over. However not all areas were easy to stop at with general public and other teams wanting to stop and see the same sight. It also doesn't help if you have the wrong grid reference and drive past the location to find you have to turn around with no power steering or room. Despite this little factor, my navigator and I found most of the locations and managed to answer most of the questions even if we were an hour late to the final check point. The honour of being last to arrive at the
final check point fell to the OC and SSM who had been testing the off road capabilities of the Vauxhall Corsa. At least the CO and RSM were present to console them when they finally arrived after being rescued by the SQMS!

Once at the final check point there were a number of stands to practice marshalling vehicles, reversing with a trailer, recovering a vehicle and fitting and using night vision goggles, which involved going into the back of a van with lights out!

This was all for a good reason though as that night we were able to drive using only the night vision goggles as our aid for just under 1 km. Some found this easy whilst others found it a little more tricky than expected as the green grainy picture starts to play tricks moulding the road and the dirt path into one. With no accidents or round house kicks from Chuck Norris the day ended well.

Those that had heaters in the room welcomed Sunday with a smile whilst the rest felt like they had been run over by a block of ice. Undeterred, however, this was the day of the safe and skilled driving competition laid on by the MTWO and his Dept, where all the practice would be put into action and the points would be tallied up from the treasure hunt to find the winning team. The additional tasks involved one team member marshalling the other into a space, a vehicle tyre and document check and the old time favourite safety obstacle course. With a number of cones loosing there life and a flag pole being run over more times than it cares to remember the competition finished. After a trophy presentation for the winners and runners up of each round, and a destroyed cone for the worst driver (no names mentioned) the convoy packed up and headed back to Bristol to enjoy a roast dinner or Dominos pizza... depending how tired they were.

The Sqn would like to thank the MT dept led by the MTWO WO2 Griffiths and the REME FRT led by Cpl ‘Badders’ Badman for their vital support to the weekend.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

The Sqn welcomes back former SSM, Capt Ben Newby from an RHQ post as OC SRTT to take over the vacant role of 2IC. Lt Jo Woodgate is posted from RHQ to the Sqn and has taken over from Ben as OC SRTT. We also welcome back Cpl Michelle Dryden, returning to the Sqn after some time living overseas. Finally we wish the best of luck to Sig (now Pte) Shirin Gaffori who has decided to transfer to the Int Corps.

56 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC Maj K M Francis
SSM WO2 (SSM) G Windham

The last training night of 2011 was a roaring success as the entire unit took part in inter-troop competitions around the drill hall. Devised by Ssgt Tim Still and Lt Steph Barron the 8-12 man teams took part in various activities. 859 Radio Tp won 2 of the 3 events with 884 Brighton Tp winning the other. After the competition we all headed to the bar for end-of-year Sqn awards. Sig Jamie Goodwin won the ‘Sqn Personality’ award, Sig Ben Carson won the award for ‘Best Recruit’, the award for ‘Best Troop’ went to 884, Cpl Linford Millen won the award for dedication to the Sqn, Cpl Kris Grace won the ‘Leadership’ award, Sig Jake Cole won ‘Soldier of the Year’ and Sgt Justin Hewett won ‘Best Shot’.

BASIC SIGNALLING SKILLS COURSE – by Ssgt Tim Still

The weekend of Jan 13-15 saw the culmination of another BSS training package run by 56 Sqn which had started in December. Eighteen untraded soldiers came to Eastbourne to complete Module 2, and all passed, although some more easily than others! Approximately half the soldiers attending were from 56, and one notable student was Sig Jackson, a local soldier who scored 100% on both written exams.

Most of soldiers took the opportunity for a social on the Saturday evening and by all accounts it was a very enjoyable evening out which continued in the bar when they returned for the midnight curfew, although a couple cut it very fine!

All were fit for duty the next morning and it was another very successful BSS package run at Eastbourne.

Capt Matthew Mallett takes over the G1 baton from Capt Joe Long as they complete their Adjutant’s HOTO
the good work already done in preparing the Regt to support Op OLYMPICS. A Very warm welcome to you and we are sure you will enjoy your time in the Regt.

Last but by no means least we congratulate SSgt (YofS) Constable for his recent selection for promotion to WO2. Very well done. Next step Corps YofS!

OPS UPDATE – by WO2 (YofS) Constable

The latter part of last year and the beginning of this has been a very busy time, with the Regt focus being training and preparation to support Op OLYMPICS. This is in addition to the force generation for subsequent integration into our regular sister Regt, 3 DSRegt, for deployment on Op HERRICK. As well as meeting our standing commitments, the Regt currently has 5 of our TA soldiers on operations; LCpl Fox and Sig Osment on Op HERRICK with the LONDONs Regt, having qualified as Combat Infantrymen. In addition, Cpl Sutton, Cpl Maalouf and Sig Teslenko are currently deployed in support of operations on Op HERRICK. Furthermore, our Regt Padre, Capt Mark Speeks, is due to imminently deploy on Op TOSCA as the Regt Padre for 29 RLC. We wish him a safe tour and trust he won’t find the operational constraints of a sunny and sandy beach by the Med too much to cope with!

As we write the Regt is also in the throws of co-ordinating and facilitating the 2 Sig Bde Trade Trg Camp at Pirbright. A complex task in its own right and one which will see much of the Regt deployed in support. The aim of the camp is to provide floor walkers to assist LONDIST’s G6 Team. We might have even provided VTC, voice and data to a number of Staff Officers. The latter part of last year and the beginning of this has been a very busy time, with the Regt focus being training and preparation to support Op OLYMPICS. This is in addition to the force generation for subsequent integration into our regular sister Regt, 3 DSRegt, for deployment on Op HERRICK. As well as meeting our standing commitments, the Regt currently has 5 of our TA soldiers on operations; LCpl Fox and Sig Osment on Op HERRICK with the LONDONs Regt, having qualified as Combat Infantrymen. In addition, Cpl Sutton, Cpl Maalouf and Sig Teslenko are currently deployed in support of operations on Op HERRICK. Furthermore, our Regt Padre, Capt Mark Speeks, is due to imminently deploy on Op TOSCA as the Regt Padre for 29 RLC. We wish him a safe tour and trust he won’t find the operational constraints of a sunny and sandy beach by the Med too much to cope with!

As we write the Regt is also in the throws of co-ordinating and facilitating the 2 Sig Bde Trade Trg Camp at Pirbright. A complex task in its own right and one which will see much of the Regt deployed in support. The aim of the camp is to provide training for Class 3 CS Op (V) across 2 Sig Bde in order to qualify soldiers to deploy in support of UK and expeditionary operations.

FANY TRAINING

Many friends of the Regt and readers of past Wire articles, will know that we continue to maintain a close relationship with the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY). Under the watchful eye of the Ops Maj, Maj Andy Dick, and the Regt YofS, WO2 (YofS) Constable we have been busy fostering this relationship in recent months, providing Ops Room training to their Volunteers in order to prepare them for their impending roll as watchkeepers for Op OLYMPICS. Members of the FANY have also recently attended 2 of our Regt exercises where they joined in with the TA Officers and SNCO’s on command and control exercises, culminating in a 7 Questions Exercise and delivery of orders. We might have even recruited them for an entry into this years Lanyard Trophy … watch this space! The Regt looks forward in continuing to conduct cross training with the FANY in the very near future.

OP OLYMPICS CPX 1 & 2

With the Torch Relay and Opening Ceremony for London 2012 fast approaching, the Regt have been heavily involved in military preparations by conducting several CPXs. The first of these being Ex YELLOW FORTIOUS and Ex BLACK CHARIOT.

Ex BLACK CHARIOT provided further opportunity for us to establish the NETCEN and assess its readiness for upcoming months. Again floorwalkers were required at the NOCC and LMOC to ensure that all services remained available to Staff Officers at each location. The NETCEN was also responsible for the passage of information related to incidents to JFCIS(Olympics) ensuring a busy time for the Regt Ops team.

Both CPXs have proved to be invaluable in the preparation of the Regt for what will inevitably be a demanding summer ahead and we look forward to the next CPX.

EMERGENCY FIRST AID RESPONDER COURSE – by SSgt Marshall

The FANY offered to deliver Emergency First Aid Responder Training to the Regt. This took place in late January at Lincolns Inn TAC, where 18 members of the Regt, including the CO, completed the one day package that included defibrillator training. Members of the Regt learnt how to use a defibrillator whilst coping with public bystanders. The training also included a recap on CPR, placing a casualty in the recovery position, how to use the mouth protection sheet and how to move someone with a spine injury. The day culminated in a practical test on CPR and a multitude of other tests to qualify as competent First Aid Responders.

The FANY were extremely knowledgeable and kept the training fun and interesting. All left the TAC at the end of the day poised to undertake any ‘defibrillating’ required on the tube journey home! A thoroughly enjoyable day was had by all and the training will certainly serve the soldiers well during the Regt’s upcoming commitment to Op OLYMPICS.

... SSgt (YofS) Young and LCpl Gorman putting to use their first responder training to resuscitate an unresponsive casualty

47 (MIDDLESEX YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON

GENERAL OVERVIEW – by Capt Alex Orr

It has been a very busy period for the Sqn over the last few months with the ongoing fundraising for the ABF as well as the implementation of a new training programme which challenges the previous modus operandi of how we train members of the Sqn.

The period also saw the arrival of SSgt Paul Tinsley as the new Sqn PSI, who joins us on promotion from 1st Bn the Scots Guards, RSIST. Whilst only being in post for a short time, he has already started to make an impact in the Sqn with his enthusiasm and intricate knowledge of Bowman.
EXERCISE YEOMAN PATROL – by Sgt Spittle

With Brig Vickery’s vision of ‘re-thinking’ how we conduct training within the TA, and after much scratching of heads, the Sqn came up with the idea to trial an alternative training program. In lieu of training within the limitations of every Tuesday night, the Sqn suggestion for a trial was to conduct training for only 2 Tuesdays per month, supported by a full Tuesday night. It was believed that this approach would provide soldiers with a better quality of training and therefore be more effective. The first iteration of this training trial took place in January, where it was decreed by Capt Alex Orr that this would be a Military Skills weekend. As a result, Sgt Pat Coleman and Cpl Paul Messett busied themselves with the necessary preparations for conducting section attack and pairs fire and manoeuvre training.

The Sqn continue to support the overall TA recruiting effort, recruiting 15 new members into our ranks in the space of 6 weeks. The Sqn have also been very active in the Officer recruiting effort through regular visits to LUOTC in an effort to recruit PO’s. As a result of a successful effort, the Sqn will be hosting a PO Open Evening for interested POs at the end of February with aim of recruiting POs into the Regt to secure future of the Regt corps of Junior Officers.

EXERCISE YEOMAN PATROL – by Sgt Spittle

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Col Grocott, Brig Vickery and Maj Cornick get a ringside seat for the imminent battle about to be engaged by soldiers of 47 Sig Sqn

The Friday evening preceding the training, an advance party of Maj Dave Cornick, Capt Orr, SSgt Tinsley (his first exercise with the Sqn), SPSI Tech SSgt Charlie Hart and Cpl Messett headed down to Pirbright Training Area, whilst the remainder of the Sqn spent the night at the nice warm TA centre! Saturday morning the main body left the warmth of their camp cots at Uxbridge TAC for Pirbright, on a cold, bright morning. On arrival we were greeted by the advance party and headed towards the base for the day where the briefings began. With all the mandated safety briefs completed it was off to Cpl Messett’s battle lesson. The soldiers were split into sections and took out their much neglected cam cream and covered their faces. In LCpl Caz Langley’s case literally, there wasn’t a scrap of skin to be seen!

The Sqn were put through their paces in the pairs fire and manoeuvre lesson, practicing again and again until the DS were happy troops had assimilated the information. Cpl Messett then set up a test area for them where they were assessed on their effectiveness as a pair. Lt Tim Roberts provided the enemy but proved slightly too effective as the first pair, Sig Loren Swatton and LCpl Jacob Hennigan struggled to pick him out. The Sqn ran through the test area with aplomb, firing off rounds a plenty. Sig Laurie Gregory caused a minor issue when she and Sig Barnfield seemed to be firing at 2 different targets 90 degrees apart!

Lunchtime called and the Sqn Col, Col Don Grocott, gave a brief talk on leadership to the junior soldiers, which was very well received by all. Sig Gregory got her first experience of a cold exercise until she was sent into the tent to warm up next to the cooker where the OC gave her his recently warmed rations. She has now bought plenty of thermals and ordered a Buffalo (other warm clothing is available)!

The afternoon saw the 2 sections train under SSgt Hart and Sgt Coleman who delivered a lesson on section attacks ready for the later practical exercise. Meanwhile Capt Orr and SSgt Paul Tinsley went to meet the Bde Comd, Brig Vickery, who came to visit the Saturday training initiative to gauge the soldier’s opinion. He spent a lot of time talking to the soldiers and got an honest opinion from us. He then watched the section attacks, having spent some time with the Recruit Training Team and the recruits who were visiting for the day. The first Section attack under the leadership of LCpl Rosie Ewbank started well and finished with the killing of the 2 enemies. They then headed back to base to regroup for the next phase while the second section under the leadership of LCpl Hennigan started their attack, choking me with the amount of smoke used to hide their attack. There were a couple more attacks carried out with various section members killed off or injured to allow others to take a leadership role however Sig Andy Roberts’ reaction to the death of LCpl Ewbank caused much amusement amongst the DS. Upon return to the TAC, weapons were cleaned and cam cream removed. The Sqn left having worked hard but achieved a lot, not least the chance to fire off a couple of thousand blank rounds! It is envisaged that this new approach to Sqn level training will be adopted by all Sqn’s across the Regt.

EXERCISE RACING ICE 2 – by LCpl Ewbank

At the end of January I was fortunate to be able to attend the Army Ice Sports Championship in Igles, Austria to participate in the skeleton bobsleigh discipline. Skeleton is essentially going down an ice track on a sled, weighing around 30kg, head first. This was the second time I’d tried the sport, having attended Ex RACING ICE 1 in Nov 2011 in Winterberg, Germany, which was a training camp for beginners. It was very different from the outset because it was the Army Championships and there were a lot of experienced ‘sliders’ from every corner of the Army keen to qualify for the Inter-Service Championships Team.

Igles is a small village perched on the slopes of the Austrian Alps, with the city of Innsbruck cradled picturesquely in a bowl below it. The day I arrived it was -8o and that was the warmest it got all week. By the middle of the week it was down to -18 and was usually snowing. The track is about a mile long, built out of concrete and then refrigerated and iced over during the winter season. It’s designed to allow sliders to gain speed and momentum as they go down by making the most of the big curves which can be up to 15m high.
On the first day we started two thirds of the way up the track and were gently ‘pushed’ off, allowing us to get used to the lower section without the full momentum that would be gained from the top. Although I’d done it once before, the first time down a track is quite daunting as it’s hard to know what to expect just looking at it from the side. On the second day we were pushed off from the top and were flying down the track at about 65mph with our faces just inches off the ice. On a turn called the Kreisel, which is like one half of a figure 8, the speed and momentum caused a great amount of G Force on you and keeping your head up is impossible.

By the end of the week we were confidently doing running starts and attempting ‘swan dives’ on to the sled with varying degrees of success. My constant dread of slipping and not managing to land on the sled, but being past the point of no return and sliding down anyway, fortunately never happened! I did however, score a couple of crashes, which made starting from the top a lot more daunting and increased the pressure in the places where the crashes had happened previously.

On ‘Race Day’ I was beaten fair and square by 2 sliders with much more experience, who were also selected for the Army Team. I had a fantastic time and it is not possible to explain the absolute adrenaline rush that comes from flying down a track so fast. I would certainly recommend it to anybody who fancies trying something different.

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Sledging for grown Ups! LCpl Ewbanks about ready for ‘sliding’

68 (INNS OF COURT & CITY AND ESSEX YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

OC  Maj Alex Downing
SSM  WO2 James Paton
SPSI  SSGt James Haskell

4 DIV CROSS COUNTRY LEAGUE  – by LCpl Joe Giles

Following Christmas inductions and New Year resolutions to exercise more, all the stations e-mail requesting runners for the 4 Div Cross Country League races caught my attention. So I signed myself up and ran my first Cross Country race on Jan 11 in Blandford. Four miles of undulating ground was covered in about 36 minutes – not bad for a first attempt. I thought and my fear of being last fortunately never materialised! For the race on 25 Jan LCpl Whiffin was also roped in along with a few from other Sqns within the Regt. I cut about a minute off my time despite feeling like the speed at which I ran it should have shaved much more off! LCpl Whiffin came in a few minutes or so behind, this was her first ever race also.

LCpl Michael joined me for the next race on 22 March. We managed to put in fairly decent times despite both of us complaining of injuries before even starting! This race was in Larkhill and we managed to finish just before the rain started! Both LCpl Michael and I plan to run the next 3 cross country races before the end of the season….. watch this space!

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

OC  Maj Andy Church
SSM  WO2 Adrian Keeble
SPSI  SSGt A Wilkie

265 Sp Sqn (V) will face a number off challenges in 2012. There are opportunities for soldiers to deploy on OLYMPICS, Op HERRICK 18 and other ops. On top of this we can also expect to start implementing the recommendations of the Future Reserves 2020 report as well as carrying out our usual duties and training as part of a very busy TA Signals Regt. There will be a lot to keep us occupied this year.

The Sqn received some excellent news recently, with Cpl Jim ‘Smiler’ Sutton being named the Greater London Reserve Forces and Cadet Association’s Reservist of the Year for 2011. With Cpl Sutton due to deploy on his third operational tour to Op HERRICK at the end of February 2012, this accolade is thoroughly deserved. We send Jim their congratulations and best wishes for an enjoyable and safe tour.

This next period will see the departure of Maj Andy Church, who leaves take up post as the new SQO Plans at HQ LONDIST. We wish him the best of luck in his new post and look forward to seeing him in the future as a friend of the Sqn. With the imminent arrival of Maj Keith Wraite, the troops are keen to continue to build on the excellent work established by the outgoing OC.

EXERCISE PHOENIX GALLOP  – by Capt Steve Slaney

The year’s training got off to a good start with the majority of the Sqn deploying to Pirbright Barracks in Surrey, with the rest of the Regt to conduct trade training, ops room training and driver training. It was an opportunity for the Class 3 signallers to progress their skills with the guidance of the Class 2 operators, all under the watchful eye of the Regt YoFs, WO2 (YoFs) Constable. Sgt ‘Jason’ Bontoft was key in organising and conducting some very imaginative trade training for the electrician drivers in the Regt while the LAD were put through their paces under SSGt ‘Kev’ Harding. Although it was only the second weekend into the New Year, Christmas seemed as though it had never happened!

With any holiday cobwebs well and truly dusted off, Tuesday evening training kept up the pace set by Ex PHOENIX GALLOP, with some excellent Unit level trade training being orchestrated and delivered by Capt Paul Ukpai, SSGt Leigh ‘Griff’ Griffiths and SSGt Nick ‘Fidel’ Castro. Overall a great way to kick start the year for the Sharpshooters.

EXERCISE PHOENIX CHARGE  – by Capt Steve Slaney

February was just as busy with Ex PHOENIX CHARGE building on the lessons learnt from the previous training weekends. This time the Sqn and Regt deployed to a snow covered Crowborough camp in East Sussex. The arrival of the troops was greeted, not with a warm bed and cup of cocoa, but with well used digging implements and a cry of “Get Shovelling!!!”

Just when the troops thought it was safe to go to bed, the EDs were up at 0200hrs on Saturday morning to start their training, which for them involved a night time deployment. LCpl Ian Liscoe was heard to mutter “There’s no mention of this on those damn radio adverts” as he made his way into the cold night air (although the word “damn” has been substituted for something a little stronger and squaddie-like). Again some imaginative training for the signallers meant they too were well catered for. Sunday morning brought some driver training to keep everyone’s skills up to speed before returning to the TA Centre for the post exercise routine.
NEWS FROM SQUADRONS

4 MECHANIZED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (204)
CATTERICK

OC        Maj JS Balfour
RSM       WO1 (RSM) D Kidd

EXERCISE NORTHERN RATON
- by SSgt Paul Robinson AGC(SPS)

Ex NORTHERN RATON was a 10 day Level 3 AT Rock Climbing Ex run in the Costa Blanca Region in Southern Spain during December 2011. The aim was to conduct a Rock Climbing Foundation Course and improve the skills and proficiency of potential Rock Leaders. A 10 person team was selected from a shortlist of volunteers, 6 novices, 3 Rock Leader Trained personnel (RLT) and a Rock Climbing Instructor (RCI).

The team travelled to Newcastle Airport for our flight to Alicante. We landed after a 2 hour flight to the welcome of a warm, sunny Spanish afternoon. With the rain and frost of the UK behind us we picked up our kit bags and headed towards our accommodation in Benidorm. We booked up a complete floor of a hotel, which consisted of 2 large flats, 5 team members in each with a self catering kitchen. The remainder of the evening was spent organising the program of events for the week, collecting food stores and preparing the climbing gear for the next morning.

An early start the next morning and some last minute navigation conformation got the team moving towards Sella. Six of the team would be spending the next few days completing a RCF course under myself as the RCI. The reminder, Capt Dave Murphy, Cpl ‘Itchy’ Ineichen and LCpl James Hodson conducted their own sports climbing at the same venue. The RCF course got off to a good start with all students achieving a number of moderate single pitch climbs. The RLTs however spent most of their day walking in circles trying to locate the correct mountain, the blame was finally fell on the map, which was accused of being printed upside down. The day proved to be fairly warm, but compared to Catterick, anywhere is warmer.

As the days flew by, the challenges become greater. The teams’ climbing skills developed and the confidence grew in spades. We spent the majority of our time climbing in Toix, a fantastic mountain range along crystal clear coastal waters. A huge exposure and full days in the sun under clear blue skies.

The constant verbal encouragement by all team members was a real push to improve everyone’s climbing grades. Some impressive climbing was achieved. LCpl Hodson and Cpl Ineichen completed a huge extreme route lasting 10 hours in Mascarat. In the process collecting some good ‘Air Miles’ and leaving behind some spare skin on the rock, any excuse to drop some weight. Capt Murphy led his first extreme climb at Xalo Valley amid an entourage of photographers waiting for the money shot. LCpl Katie Holden, LCpl John Hayes and Sig Jim Wookey seconded a multi pitch 5+ (Hard, Very Severe) climb, an awesome achievement for any novice climber. Sig Shaun Lane, Cfn Antonio Kinchin and Sig Steve Kennedy achieved some fantastic climbing on some spectacular multi pitch 5 (Very Severe) routes that tested their gymnastic type abilities. The low singing melody of ‘Spider Pig’ was heard from almost all the students at some point, an amusing technique taught to control anxiety at height.

The next morning I decided the students had earned the right to join the Rock Leaders and do some advanced climbing. An awesome prospect for the students to see what level these guys were climbing. Under my ever watchful eye and the overwhelming experience of the RLTs the last couple of days were the crowning glory of our trip. Rock Climbing big exposed routes in shorts and a tee-shirts in December looking out over the Mediterranean Sea, what more could we ask for? Nobody expected to be climbing at the grades and severity that we achieved by the end of the trip.

I believe that the exercise was pitched at exactly the right level and the week was full of high morale and banter. The atmosphere was relaxed and we achieved all of the goals that were set. The exercise was a great opportunity to learn new skills out of the work environment. All students successfully
passed their RCF course and the RLTs further developed their skills towards their Rock Climb Leader Assessment. The exercise was an outstanding success and I am grateful for the opportunity to have led this trip with such a high spirited group of climbers.

EXERCISE PASHTUN HAWK

On a cold January morning elements of the Sqn left Catterick for Kent to partake in Ex PASHTUN HAWK. The exercise was an intense range package organised by 12 LSR, focussed primarily Op HERRICK 17 and would allow us to complete all the Basic Close Combat shoots required to deploy to Theatre.

The week started with the mandatory Grouping and Zeroing and quickly transitioned into automatic shoots, individual fire and manoeuvre and moving target shoots. All ranks from Sig to Capt developed on their marksmanship principles and their shooting improved. Each shoot was aimed at preparing the firers for a more complex one the following day and the first day ended with an introduction into firing in limited visibility.

For the remainder of the week the shoots became more complex, moving from individual shoots through pair’s fire and manoeuvre to section shoots in defence. The big finale for the exercise came in the Platoon in defence. This was a test of both the individual’s ability to shoot but also those in command and how they cope under pressure.

The Platoon House was a multi storey building with various firing points, inside the house there were various speakers for sound effects and to the front a range extending out to 800 metres. When the shoot started the house erupted with the noise of outgoing gunfire, the cries of target indications and fire control orders and simulations from incoming fire.

With enemy sniper fire and mortars, there was eventually an inevitable casualty. This would stretch the command and control of the commanders, with the added distractions of thick smoke and further sound effects. After fending off the final wave of attackers the exercise came to an end. It not only enabled all memers to develop their marksmanship principles, skills and drills and application of fire but also mentally prepared us all for the challenge yet to come.

THE OFFICER COMMANDING’S CUP – by Cpl Body

Following a successful HFT period and looking forward towards Op HERRICK 17, the OC has created an inter Sqn competition, aimed at encouraging teamwork, leadership and physical fitness. The OC’s Cup commenced with a Basketball Tournament led by Sqn PTI Cpl Lord. The 4 Tps all appeared keen to make a positive impact on the competition.

The first match was between the 2 comms Tps, Alamein and Messina. From the very start the PTI referees knew they would have to earn their pay over the tournament. Messina were to go on and win this game with relative ease despite the best efforts of Lt ‘the Pitbull’ McNeillie throwing his weight around the court. Next game was between the SHQ elements and a combination of MT and LAD. With WO1 (RSM) Kidd playing for Abassia Tp it was expected that Rhine Tp...
would go easy, however no mercy was shown and Rhine went on to win 3-2 with a blinding 3 pointer scored by Cfn Kinch. Each Tp were to play each other twice, so after an hour into the competition it seemed to be a grudge match, especially after many over zealous tackles and controversial refereeing. The crowd only added more fuel to the flames, encouraging and jeering their respective teams and opposition.

It was clear on the court who were the basketball geeks (Lt ‘Shrek’ Houlbrooke) and who were the rugby enthusiasts. Surprisingly by the final game only 2 participants had been sent into the sin bin, Cpl Richie Davies and Lt McNellie.

After a tough 2 hours of sweat, tears and even some blood the competition ended with a clear winner. Messina Tp proving their prowess on the court resulted in victory in the first event of the OC’s Cup. It was clear that the event was achieving it’s aims and we look forward to the next event in February, Volleyball. Hopefully this will be a friendlier affair!!!

After the majority of the Sqn return to work and we say farewell to Capt Dobson who moves onto 225 Sig Sqn (ECM), Sgt Taylor REME and Sgt Adams RLC to postings and Cpl Dodgson who leaves the Army to pursue life as a civilian, we wish them all the best with their endeavours.

The Bde is now fully focused on the year ahead with the HQ functions for all to enjoy and celebrate the end of another year. None enjoyed themselves more so than 2RRF, Ex MURCURY GALCIER XV or just trying to chew into the Sqn reconstituting and many soldiers in Kenya supporting Flame” and getting the Desert Rats back to operating in a fashion familiar to the formation. However in order to achieve this there has been extensive driver and commander training carried out on the Bulldogs to get crews able to deploy the SVR to recover the AFV 436 and it’s aims and we look forward to the next event.

Over the next 5 months the Sqn will essentially be re-teaching itself on how to operate as a multi-role Bde in a post Op HERRICK environment. Comd 7 Bde, Brig Nanson, is focused on rekindling “The Armoured Flame” and getting the Desert Rats back to operating in a fashion familiar to the formation. However in order to achieve this there has been extensive driver and commander training carried out on the Bulldogs to get crews able to deploy all the armour. Not easy task and one that has been carried out successfully by A-Fleet Manager Cpl Chilcott.

7 ARMOURED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (207)
BERGEN - HOHNE

OC Maj Bruce
RSM WO1 (RSM) Langan

The run down to Christmas was a rather turbulent time with the Sqn reconstituting and many soldiers in Kenya supporting 2RRF, Ex MURCURY GALCIER XV or just trying to chew into their extensive leave cards as a result of a year of PDT and Op HERRICK 14. However there were extensive festivities and functions for all to enjoy and celebrate the end of another year. None enjoyed themselves more so than WO2 (FoS) ‘Scotty’ Thomas, who took a shine to the drag act at the Station WOs’ and Sgt’s Mess Christmas ball.

January has seen the majority of the Sqn return to work and we say farewell to Capt Dobson who moves onto 225 Sig Sqn (ECM), Sgt Taylor REME and Sgt Adams RLC to postings and Cpl Dodgson who leaves the Army to pursue life as a civilian, we wish them all the best with their endeavours.

The Bde is now fully focused on the year ahead with the HQ staff preparing for CAST in Sennelager in May, with planning required everyone to work together and was a good team effort. Maj Bruce and WO1 (RSM) Langan heavily assisted in the delivery of commander training out on the range road. The course is classroom based as this was the first time they had been used since returning. Despite the amount of mileage and abuse inflicted upon the AFV 436 we only had one mechanical breakdown.

ALPHA TROOP CT 1 EXERCISE SKILLED RAT – by Sig Roberts

In preparation for an Ex STAFF RAT 2 Alpha Tp deployed onto CT1. The exercise began on 23 Jan 12, utilising the Monday and Tuesday to prepare for going out on the area. Preparation included erecting the ‘BFOT’ outside the armoured garages to enabled the Tp staff to estimate the build times and decipher the internal layout of the HQ. A great deal of time was also required on the armoured vehicles as this was the first time they had been used since returning from the Op tour. In order to do this all vehicles were given first works inspection and all detachments were packed as well as checked.

On the Wednesday morning we had a line up with all vehicles and armour followed by an inspection by the QM, Capt Angove. Due to a lack of qualified drivers and commanders, packets had to deploy one at a time onto the training area, with people being shuttled back and forth. Once everyone was in location the Tp began to build the HQ. The job required everyone to work together and was a good team effort.
building exercise. After a few teething problems and the frame collapsing breaking half the poles the ‘BFDT’ was up. Det crews then broke off to begin their tasks such as building the ‘sleeps’ areas, plugging the armoured dets into the HQs, building the field kitchen and sighting the antenna field.

The following day we were visited by the Sqn OC, Maj Bruce, and the RSM, WO1 Langan, to see how the training was progressing. Once the HQ was built we then went in lessons and training including armour camouflage, running and maintaining generators, HQ defence and unit SOPs covering how we work and run shifts. I found this information useful and beneficial as it was my first venture out on exercise with the unit and was able to get much of my Class 3 work book signed off. Training on basic det maintenance and skills continued for the rest of the week with us returning to barracks on Friday afternoon, leaving the HQ infrastructure setup to enable us to crack straight on with training in the following week over Ex STAFF RAT 2.

Monday saw the Tp deploy back out onto the training area with a different emphasis as this was now a tactical exercise. We were given a refresher brief on antennas which I found helpful as I hadn’t covered antenna and propagation since trade training. This was followed by antenna erection on new masts that I had never used before.

Our training then moved on to staff COMBAT applications and I was required to help with the Access Control Device (ACD) which the staff would require to use in order to work on the Staff User Terminals. We were then visited by the Bde Staff, the purpose of which was to ensure that each detachment or staff cell was in the correct location and the equipment was laid out to enable them to work. The Staff were generally happy with our work and only a few minor alterations were required. They visited once more the following day to ensure they were happy with the operating environment. Once they had left we commenced ‘tear down’. This meant we were able to practice preparing for different notice to move (NTM) states which was controlled by the Tp staff and went really smoothly. Once the collapse of the HQ was complete we returned to barracks and commenced exercise turn around.

I found the exercise greatly improved my knowledge and understanding of 207 Sig Sqn and what my job entails. It also helped on my way to achieving my Class 2 competency, I look forward to future exercise with Alpha Tp.

**BRAVO TROOP EXERCISE STAFF RỊT 2 – by Cpl Anderson**

On 31 January Bravo Tp deployed on Ex STAFF RAT 2 with snow on the ground and average daily temperatures of -6°C, this exercise was going to prove testing! After the Tp had raided the QM’s Dept for winter clothing and every spare ‘Kero heater’ known to man we deployed the Bde Fwd HQ on to Hohne training area. We were testing a new TTP and building the world largest camouflage net first followed by popping the DRAH up afterwards proved a tricky process.

The exercise purpose was to develop and practise Tp level TTPs and teach junior signallers how an armoured HQ deploys, operates and is supported. Bravo Tp have the role of support the Bde Fwd HQ which is a smaller, more manoeuvrable element of the armoured Bde formation. We had to practice firstly how it was to be built as quickly as possible, but also identify what staff cells would be working in the smaller HQ. Given its role and size we trained soldiers to work with G2 and G3 cells with additional cells being provided by 5th/12th Royal Lancers, 3 Royal Horse Artillery and 32 Engineers. With numerous visits from Bde and BG staff officers we finally know how it is to work and be supported so our future training can be more specific.

It was a good chance to develop and train individuals who have not operated in the manoeuvre environment and get them as familiar as possible with working in and amongst armour. This is a skill set that mostly the ‘old and bold’ seem to possess recently as a result of HERRICK focused training. We are now having to go back to basics traditional Royal Signals methods of operating and get crews fully competent with the detachments.

There was also a chance to test our REBRO and ECH dets and both Cpl Duncan and LCpl Clarke got to spend 24 hrs away in a remote location of Hohne trg area together.

There were many lessons taken away which will help refine future training in preparation for CAST. The most important one we learnt that the stakes and pegs used to tie everything down do in fact freeze to the ground and when you try to remove them in those temperatures they snap or bend, resulting in even the smallest peg being dug out by pick axe!

**BAG INDOOR HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIPS – by WO2 (YofS) Engleby**

Despite the busy exercise period the Sqn was able to enter a team into the annual BA(C) Indoor Hockey Competition, this year held conveniently on Hohne Garrison. The intent was to conduct some pre competition training, however with the numerous fitness clubs utilising the Garrison gymnasiums the Sqn had no option to go into the event with the motto of ‘it will be ok on the day’. Due to the Sqn being on exercise the Sqn OC, Maj Bruce, Alpha Tp experiencing minor tent dramas

Armour finally parked on the HQ

**THE WIRE, APRIL 2012**

WO1 (YofS) Stu Engleby

Despite the busy exercise period the Sqn was able to enter a team into the annual BA(C) Indoor Hockey Competition, this year held conveniently on Hohne Garrison. The intent was to conduct some pre competition training, however with the numerous fitness clubs utilising the Garrison gymnasiums the Sqn had no option to go into the event with the motto of ‘it will be ok on the day’. Due to the Sqn being on exercise the Sqn OC, Maj Bruce, WO1 (YofS) Stu Engleby, coercing the entire Sqn Ops team into playing. With the Addition of Maj Jim Bates and Capt Craig Dawson (Bde HQ), WO1 (RSM) Keith Langan and LCpl Eugene Abonge the team had great hopes of making an impact on the tournament.

Following a brief outline of the basic rules of indoor hockey it was time to warm up and see how rusty we were. WO2...
(FoS5) Scottie Thomas had the dubious honour of being goalkeeper, we are still not sure if this was due to ability or the fact that he filled most of the goal! The 5 minute practice proved that the team did have ability and the day would not be a total waste. The league draw was favourable, however the first fixture of the day was a local derby against 2 Med Regt. This was a fiercely competitive game against 2 equally matched teams resulting in an honourable goalless draw.

The rest between games gave us the opportunity to size up the competition and get some useful tips from other teams. The second game saw the Sqn take on 1 ADSR, which proved to be our easiest fixture of the day. After a frenetic start WO2 (YofS) Stu Engleby capitalised on a goalkeeper mistake to put the Sqn one up. 1 ADSR did not let this deter them and applied enough pressure resulting in them being awarded a penalty flick. Scottie Thomas proved his worth by saving the penalty, this was then followed by 2 quick goals for the Sqn scored by Capt Si Tucker and LCpl Abonge. 1 ADSR did manage a consolation goal with the final score being 3-1. In order to win the group we needed to win the final game and following a rousing half time team talk we immediately made an impact on the game, being awarded a penalty flick, duly scored by Stu Engleby. This however proved to be only a minor comeback with the game ending 4-1 to QRH. It has to be said that the score line flattered the opposition and we can be proud of our performance.

The second semi final saw 32 Engr Regt take on 2 Med Regt. The game was packed with incident and saw one of the umpires, Stu Engleby, dramatically tumble over a bench resulting in a dislocated shoulder (again) and a night in hospital. The game was eventually won by 32 Engr Regt with the final fittingly being played by the 2 best teams in the. QRH came out on top in an extremely well contested final.

Overall an excellent days hockey was had by all.

1 MECHANISED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (215)
TIDWORTH

OC Maj EA Byfield
RSM WO1 (RSM) Cartledge

Once again it has been a busy period for the Sqn providing the Staff Environment for the Bde HQ staff on exercise right up until Christmas, and then again straight after Christmas leave. In addition is the preparation of Bengal Tp departing to BATUS, supporting the BG CASTs and CATTs in Germany and Catterick and preparation for deployment to BATUS. Does it ever stop? Although WO1 (RSM) ‘Deano’ Cartledge is still the RSM on paper and has not yet been officially dined out, he has departed on his terminal leave and is sorely missed. We wish him the very best of luck and the shenanigans of his multiple leaving parties will be reported here next time!

BRIGADE COMBINED ARMS STUDY DAYS
- by Cpl Dean and Cpl Cox

Over the past few months 1 Mech Bde have been conducting Combined Arms Study days in order to improve awareness and understanding of all aspects of the Bde formation. These have covered from the combat arms such as infantry in the defence to combat service support, in particular the Brigade Support Group (BSC). The joint fires demonstration provided by 1 RHA took place on 7 Feb 12 and the Sqn hierarchy down to Cpl level departed to SPTA to expand their knowledge. Brig Robinson, Bde Comd, highlighted the importance of joint fires as part of the combined arms battle in the contemporary operating environment in the arrivals brief, emphasising the importance of wider awareness of the capability. The stands included an AS 90 gun group, 105 light gun, mortars (provided by 4 RIFLES) and ISTAR and air defence assets. The day culminated in a live firing demonstration highlighting the effects of the different fuse types as well as the provision of smoke from an AS 90 gun group, so effective it caused a brief delay whilst it dissipated. The highlight for many (at first) was the fire support group 50 metres to our front as they provided the most bangs and flashes, although many complained of headaches toward the end!

The most recent display was infantry in the defence and was supported by the 2 LANCS and 4 Rifles with contributions from 3 RTR and HCR. In a similar vein to the other days the morning commenced with a briefing; this focused on the principles of defence (which have been recently changed to MODAC), then we were broken down in order to go through a number of stands ranging from trench construction (with the assistance of a number of stuffed animals…), resupply, organic weapon systems and observation posts. The event concluded with a demonstration of the majority of these assets in the defensive role with assistance from a number of non-infantry units, again highlighting the necessity for combined arms understanding. Of particular note were the timings involved in the preparation for a defensive battle and just how quickly it can be over. The whole package has been an incredibly valuable series of demonstrations that highlight just how vital a robust communications network is to enable command and control within the combined arms battle.

EXERCISE FIRST GALLOP - by Sig Skates

Over the period 16-20 Jan Sabre Tp deployed on Ex FIRST GALLOP, a Bde HQ Staff training exercise on Salisbury Plain. We were tasked with providing the Bde Main HQ set up for the final part of a series of demanding HQ manoeuvre exercises to test both our abilities and those of the Staff.

Sabre Tp are used to such exciting exercises by now; however the knowledge that the ex was static meant morale was at an all time high, no putting up and pulling down tents, it only had
to be done the once! During the ex the Tp had 3 different taskings; to build, establish and manage the Bde HQ, RADCON and the RRB Dets deployed out on the area. RADCON, the love child of LCpl Gains, was by far the most thrilling of the 3 tasks! Setting up consisted of the 5 Main Vehicle FFRs used to establish comm's over voice and data with the other units on the ex and then to remote that capability into the Main HQ.

The other tasks that we had were to manage the defence of the area with Sanger duties and standing patrols, signing in all visitors to the Bde HQ and making sure that the kero heaters were full! The best part about manning RADCON was when the main HF net required engineering to the unworkable ESH c/s we had to take it in turns to stand outside for an hour and a half elevating the antenna from the ground, upwards in small stages, while LCpl Gains stayed in the warm drinking brews and testing once we had elevated that stage.

Manning the HQ was split into 2 details, day and night shifts. The day shift had to deal with a fully populated HQ, the bright side of day shift was keeping the frostbite at bay until returning to our 5 star pig pen accommodation where temperatures rarely climbed above 0 degrees! A big thank you goes out to Cpl ‘Pablo’ Manning who did a class effort of rotating this as best he could so that no-one went down in the freezing weather. Night shift was definitely the graveyard shift, with comm's traffic practically non existent. We kept ourselves amused with vital tasks like filling kero heaters and sweeping up. The highlight of the night shift was working extra hours into the morning to cam up a Sanger in broad daylight. Just in case it was too inconspicuous we made sure to supply a healthy stock of cylumes to create a Christmas tree effect!

Typically manning the RRB is one of the better tasks to be given on exercise, however with the lack of heating and LCpl ‘Tammy’ Williams snoring like a yeti, the experience definitely did not live up to our high expectations. The comforting fact of the week was that we were left to our own devices which showed trust and encouragement from the Tp hierarchy, and despite some trouble with nets and a lot of engineering we learnt a lot and felt proud of our achievements. Before concluding this article, special mention should be given to Bengal Tp, the B team within our Sqn. It was nice to see them set up 3 tents, which they call the Step-Up HQ. I doubt any of them could hack the pace in Bde Main HQ!

EXERCISE SNOW WARRIOR - by Sig Jemma Barton

On 7 Jan 12 the following lucky people got to go skiing for 2 weeks in Bavaria on Ex SNOW WARRIOR: SSgt Scott, Sgt Greggan, LCpl Sweet, LCpl Hibbert, Sig Albright and Sig Barton. After a lengthy journey; which included getting a minibus from Tidworth to Aldershot, then boarding a coach for an epic 18hr drive to our lodge in Bavaria, we finally arrived! I think that made up for this AT being free!

On arrival we got shown our accommodation, got all our kit issued and then had a briefing on the exercise. Later that evening we got put into our groups and met our instructors.

The next day was an early start, but nobody cared as everyone was excited to get on the slopes. With anticipation and in trepidation, we started on the blue slopes (fairly easy) and by the end of the 2 weeks I managed to get myself on to the chair lift and ski down the red routes (average difficulty) with some success! Some of the lads in my group decided it would be fun to go down the black route (hard difficulty), but there was no chance I was going down as I valued my unbroken legs. Therefore I decided to meet them at the bottom and take some photos as they came off the slope. The 2 weeks passed in a blur of skiing gracefully or falling on your ass down various slopes. One person with a large ego took a battering when he decided to show off going down the black slope, when his skis got stuck upright in the snow leading to an embarrassing dismount, luckily he was not injured. Everyone from my group passed the SF1 course (Basic Skiing) and thoroughly enjoyed themselves and said they would definitely go skiing again. So all in all, apart from a few bruises and sore behinds, it was a highly successful trip.

THE DISCOVERY OF THE FIELD ARMY - by 2Lt Celine Buescher

Fresh out of the factory, the gates of Sandhurst and a Christmas break firmly behind us, the latest Signals one-pip wonders were sent on their way across the UK and Germany, workbook in hand, en-route to our respective attachments. Having been ‘tipped off’ by previous terms about the 6-week holiday I was supposedly looking forward to, it quickly turned out they clearly had not been to 215 Sig Sqn.

Most people get to do this kind of thing as one of a pair; I found myself on my own, headed to Tidworth, wondering what to expect; ultimately a blessing in disguise. What would ‘the Field Army’ be like? We were all pretty sure Sandhurst was nothing like the real thing, but that in itself does not give you the other side of the coin. With much anticipation, yet relatively clueless I pulled up to the guardroom to be met by Lt Richard Carr and taken out for a welcome meal by him and the Sqn 2IC, Capt Emma Cameron. I was put up in the Garrison Officers’ Mess, as one of only 2 Second Lieutenants amongst an entire Bde HQ staff - simultaneously setting the multi-cadet badge scene I was about to enter as well as giving me a welcoming home in which to make lots of new friends and experience mess life with all its quirks and perks (hats off to the chefs, once again).

CS95 not being the fashion anymore, I quickly found myself kitted out with PCS, the latest – if temporary – member to join 1 Mech Bde and HQ Sig Sqn (215) and its 2 comms troops, Sabre and Bengal. I do not really know what I had expected, but the transition from Sandhurst to the Field Army is a strange process. Kept well under control and firmly in place until the very last day at the Academy, all of a sudden is a strange process. Kept well under control and firmly in place until the very last day at the Academy, all of a sudden is a strange process. Kept well under control and firmly in place until the very last day at the Academy, all of a sudden is a strange process. Kept well under control and firmly in place until the very last day at the Academy, all of a sudden is a strange process. Kept well under control and firmly in place until the very last day at the Academy, all of a sudden is a strange process. Kept well under control and firmly in place until the very last day at the Academy, all of a sudden is a strange process. Kept well under control and firmly in place until the very last day at the Academy, all of a sudden is a strange process. Kept well under control and firmly in place until the very last day at the Academy, all of a sudden is a strange process. Kept well under control and firmly in place until the very last day at the Academy, all of a sudden is a strange process. Kept well under control and firmly in place until the very last day at the Academy, all of a sudden is a strange process. Kept well under control and firmly in place until the very last day at the Academy, all of a sudden is a strange process. Kept well under control and firmly in place until the very last day at the Academy, all of a sudden is a strange process. Kept well under control and firmly in place until the very last day at the Academy, all of a sudden is a strange process. Kept well under control and firmly in place until the very last day at the Academy, all of a sudden is a strange process. Kept well under control and firmly in place until the very last day at the Academy, all of a sudden is a strange process. Kept well under control and firmly in place until the very last day at the Academy, all of a sudden is a strange process. Kept well under control and firmly in place until the very last day at the Academy, all of a sudden is a strange process. Kept well under control and firmly in place until the very last day at the Academy, all of a sudden is a strange process. Kept well under control and firmly in place until the very last day at the Academy, all of a sudden is a strange process. Kept well under control and firmly in place until the very last day at the Academy, all of a sudden is a strange process. Kept well under control and firmly in place until the very last day at the Academy, all of a sudden is a strange process. Kept well under control and firmly in place until the very last day at the Academy, all of a sudden is a strange process. Kept well under control and firmly in place until the very last day at the Academy, all of a sudden is a strange process. Kept well under control and firmly in place until the very last day at the Academy, all of a sudden is a strange process. Kept well under control and firmly in place until the very last day at the Academy, all of a sudden is a strange process. Kept well under control and firmly in place until the very last day at the Academy, all of a sudden is a strange process. Kept well under control and firmly in place until the very last day at the Academy, all of a sudden

In this respect, being a ‘Second Louie’ simultaneously comes with the good grace of what I like to call puppy-status; if there is a genuine interest to learn and intent to get it right, there is hardly a question that cannot be asked or mistake that cannot be made without having to fear much beyond a good laugh and a tease, usually followed by a professional
During my time here I have had the privilege to assist in a chit chat. The knowledge and understanding that ensued, garages, on exercise, in the offices, as well as through general positions in the Sqn and it took a mix of arranged meetings with all the key positions in the Sqn and observation and interaction in the garages, on exercise, in the offices, as well as through general chit chat. The knowledge and understanding that ensued, both of 215 Sig Sqn as well as the Royal Corps of Signals as a whole, is truly invaluable. During my time here I have had the privilege to assist in a range of activities. Quickly absorbed into the general day-to-day running of the troops (including 4 PT sessions a week), I further attended a number of Bde demo days showcasing various components of the Bde’s conventional war fighting power, heightening my understanding of their interaction on a grander scale. Summary dealings, court appearances, discipline and financial briefs also featured. Having come in at the start of the year I even got roped in to deliver MATTs. One of the highlights in terms of the Sqn’s operational role was experiencing the build and running of a Bde HQ first hand on Ex FIRST GALLOP, the last one in an intense cycle of Bde exercises. Eye-opening not only from a Signals perspective (though mostly so) but also through getting the opportunity to be a fly on the wall for a Bde level planning exercise. Think Sandhurst times 10! It once again proved that experiencing something hands-on is better than a thousand words.

The OC, Maj Elizabeth Byfield, set me a task by asking me to design and instruct on a PNCO Training Day to assist in the preparation of Sqn members for the more infantry-related parts of their PNCO courses. Aside from the content, for which I was kindly assisted by various members of the Sqn, Sjt Wood, Cpl Dean, Cpl Kerr and Cpl Day in particular, this also provided me with the real-life experience of just how hectic things can get and how crammed a Sqn calendar is. I had to try and squeeze my work in between preparations for BATUK and BATUS, not to mention various courses, CASTs, CATTs and other trawls Sqn members were allocated to.

Being treated as a Tp Comd in all but formal role, I gained a wealth of experience and picked up lots of tips and tricks, particularly from Capt Cameron, Capt Arnold and Lt Carr, but really from everyone at 215 Sig Sqn, which will stand me in good stead when I take on my first troop at 1 (UK) ADSR come August. My sincere thanks go to everyone I have met and I look forward to meeting you again in the future!

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

OC Maj M Fayers
RSM WO1 (RSM) P Watson

EXERCISE SECOND FLIGHT – by Lt Cotterill

On 1 January the Airborne Task Force (ABTF) was officially placed on high readiness for contingency operations. Held at 5 days notice to move, the ABTF can be called upon to carry out short term interventions, such as Non Combatant Evacuation and Disaster Relief Operations, anywhere in the world. The force is commanded by 16 AA Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (216) and is currently formed around 3 Bn, The Para Regt. In stepping up to a contingency footing 16 AA Bde is reverting back to the role it fulfilled in the late 1990s /early 2000s. During this period the Bde deployed at short notice to several trouble spots across the globe such as, Sierra Leone, the Former Yugoslavia and Afghanistan.

Ex SECOND FLIGHT was a call out exercise designed to test the readiness of the ABTF. Initiated on the evening of Friday 27 January, every member of the Sqn received a phone call ordering them to report back to camp within 48 hours. A further 2 days preparation in camp enabled the completion of outstanding MATTs and last minute J1 documentation checks. Once complete the Sqn’s 75 strong ABTF contingent departed for the Joint Air Mobilisation Centre in South Cerney, Gloucestershire. On arrival all 18 of the Sqn’s vehicles were prepped for air travel by SSgt Dougie Porter prior to inspection by 29 Regt RLC. Concurrently all personnel were put through a rigorous J1 screening by the Bde AGC and Medical Corps contingent to ensure everything was in order as if they were going ‘out of the door’.

Next the Sqn’s Ops team, under the supervision of the Ops Offr Capt Paul Johnson and the Bde Yeoman, WO2 (YofS) Steve Crutchley, had the herculean task of pace exing the entire Bde’s combat net radios. The team performed admirably working throughout the night to ensure all coms were tested and ready to go within the allotted time frame.

Over the course of the next 24 hours the entire 1,500 strong ABTF went through the same process. It was impressive to witness just how quickly an all Arms Battle Group could be assembled on the airfields of South Cerney. The exercise enabled the Sqn to demonstrate its readiness for deployment and also instilled a sense of perspective.

The resurrection of the ABTF is a clear indication of considerations beyond the drawdown of Op HERRICK and in these uncertain times the Sqn is only to aware that the next time we arrive at South Cerney it could be for real.

REFRESHER JUMPS – by Sig Mills

After completing Ex SECOND FLIGHT, Sjt Swan, LCpl French, Sig Townsend and I were informed that our refresher jump into Everley would be going ahead the next day. This was great news as jumps are often cancelled at the last minute.
when air frames are tasked off on higher priority tasks. As an added bonus this would also mean that we would not have to endure the epic drive from South Cerney back to Colchester with the rest of the Sqn’s ABTF contingent. So we set off for RAF Brize Norton which only took an hour compared to the usual 2½ hours. On arrival we were sent straight into the hanger to pack our bergans and check all our kit. Then the waiting started, the hours dragged by until we received the go ahead to get kitted up. Parachute on, reserve on, ready to rock and roll, adrenaline pumping, no fear just excitement.

We were all loaded onto the shuttle bus to the aircraft, when we arrived we were told there was a problem with the aircraft. A further 20 minutes passed and we were told the jump was back on. Finally we were in the air. Prior to take off we had been briefed that we would be low level flying for up to 2 hours prior to jumping. This didn’t go down too well with Sg t ‘Swanny’ Swan who regurgitated his breakfast into a sick bag several times over during the flight. The 2 hours passed quickly and before we knew it we were stood up, kit checked waiting to jump, pulse rate high looking out the door of the aircraft you can’t beat the feeling.

At 800ft GREEN ON... GO !! We rushed out of the door of the C130, check canopy, steer away, release kit. You may have a split second to take in the view on the way down before the expected heavy landing. Thankfully no one injured on the drop zone completing what had been a really good jump. We tabbed off the drop zone with our kit on to the coach ready to head back to Colchester.

EXERCISE SNOWDON SIGNALLER – by Cpl Proud

Ex SNOWDON SIGNALER was a weekend long multi-activity AT package held in Capel Curig. Fourteen individuals from the Sqn took part in range of activities that included mountaineering, orienteering, mountain biking, kayaking and a high ropes course. The week offered an excellent opportunity for everyone to get away and let off some steam after what has been a busy start to the New Year.

We were split into 3 groups for the first day’s activities, rock climbing, kayaking and hill walking. After a bit of banter about the weather everyone cracked on. Cpl Nolan led the hill walking group. Cpl Proud kept everyone entertained rock climbing and demonstrating his great finesse and strength on the wall by completing the more challenging climbs. He was partnered up with Cpl ‘Corps Champion’ Pinnington, who was on hand to give his experience to the group.

The second day was exciting! The troops were split into 2 groups, mountain bikers and rock climbers. The mountain bikers where headed up by exercise OC Lt Cotterill who is supposed to be a wizard on 2 wheels. The day started off with a skills lesson going over humps and mounds which proved easy for the group. Sig Billingham displayed his great down hilling skills, grabbing every opportunity to ‘get air’. Lt Cotterill led from the front, taking all the falls for the group, bike wizard! Whilst Cpl Proud spectacularly face planted himself on the board course. The day was rounded off by Cpl ‘National Balancing Champion’ Pinnington, showing off his skills by completing the challenging black route.

Day three, the whole group went to a high ropes course. We were slightly diminished in number as Sig ‘Sick Note’ Robson had been bedded down, still feeling the effects of the freezing water temperature from Monday’s kayaking lesson. The high ropes sorted the men from the boys with more than a few wobbly legs on show around the course. Pte ‘Chef’ Bailey stormed off from the start showing monkey like skill in navigating his way through the various obstacles, whilst Sig ‘I Can Sesh’ Price struggled initially but was flying towards the end. Lt Cotterill was also struggling due to a bruised knee he gracefully injured on the bike the previous day. Yet again Cpl Pinnington was on hand to assist, shaking the rope for a slightly jittery Cpl Nolan.

Another great day was had on day 4. Lt Cotterill was keen to get the whole group to the top of Snowdon, the highest peak in Wales. In the mid February conditions this proved to be pretty challenging, with 40 mph winds lashing freezing rain on us as we ascended via the pygs path. Cpl Proud led from the rear on this one as he had carried the group all week. Our ascent was completed by having a few ‘pretend to be happy’ pictures on the summit, drenched wet through. We descended down Laandbiris for an equally epic lunch at Pete’s Eats. Cpl Pinnington was on hand to advice again.

SPORT

CROSS COUNTRY – by Sig Olukutukei

“And the winner is 216 (PARA) SIG Sqn … “sweet victory we were the Royal Signals Minor Unit Cross country champions. That didn’t come easy, there was some degree of physical training but the mental preparation was ultimate in this case.

With hardly 4 weeks of preparation (of which a whole week and a bit was Christmas and New Year) after a major exercise we knew that we had to rely on our inner strength. As part of 216 (Para) Sig Sqn this was paramount to us.

Upon arrival in Blandford the weather was relatively cool and neither the course nor terrain disappointed. Some of the teams had mint kit you could almost be mistaken for thinking that it was a fashion show of sorts. The ground was muddy and wet, perfect conditions for cross-country. To give us a psychological lift we donned our maroon t-shirts during the initial warm up. The starting horn sounded and off we sprinted. We kept pushing each other along the way. The finishing stretch had a long gradual hill which was the hardest bearing in mind all the lactic acid that the muscles had accumulated while traversing the undulating ground on the “killer loop” that we had to do twice. All that starts well ends well. After all of our team were in we had a quick change of clothes and a warm brew as we awaited the awards. We travelled back to Colchester in high spirits as we took home the minor unit trophy to the delight of team OC Lt Cotterill.

Two weeks later, on the back of winning the Royal Signals Minor Unit Championships we travelled down to Camberley to compete in the Army Cross-Country Championships at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. Stakes were higher and there were great expectations from us. Checking on the weather conditions from the ubiquitous apps that have become our lifestyle we confirmed what we had expected earlier the conditions were adverse. The temperatures were...
freezing cold and the ice would cover most of the course meaning we had to change tact to a more sure footed easy run to compete as well as to avoid injury. Upon arrival at RMAS we interacted with some of our long lost colleagues that we had met either on tour or doing the normal Regtl postings. We were very anxious as we knew the course would be tough. Lt Cotterill advised us on when to put the minimum and maximum kicks while negotiating the course.

The start was fine and though slippery ice on the ground was unrelenting we nevertheless did our best. Since some of the teams had a few men to spare like 10 competing and only 8 counted we had no choice but to make every man count as we were exact. Thank God by the end of it we all finished the course injury free. After the tough race we went for a cup of tea at the café while discussing how we could have done it better. In a sense we didn’t expect much from this race so we took our time and only came into the awards hall 5 minutes ahead of the scheduled start time of the awards. No sooner had we stepped in than we heard “216” being called out. That’s how we took home the runners up title for the Army Minor Unit Cross-country Championships behind the Army School of Physical Training.

FOOTBALL – by Sgt Swan

The season re-started after Christmas with a friendly against a local non–league side, Brightlingsea FC. Played on a heavy pitch, not ideal for both sides but we did get the ball down and for the first 20 minutes we were the better side. At half time with the score at 1-0 to the Brightlingsea, we changed 8 of the starting 11 to give everyone a run out. As the game went on their football did the talking. Despite slipping to a 4-0 defeat, we gave a great account of ourselves against a strong non-league side, who sit 9th in their league. All the hard work was put back into the training pitch in preparation for the game against 10 SR in the Signaller Cup 2nd round.

The game against 10 SR, was a tight affair, after leading 2-0 with goals from LCpl Daniel Chapman and Sig Jason Rose, with 10 minutes to go we thought we were going through to the next round. However you have to give credit to 10 SR who never gave up and fought us all the way into extra time, with the final score 5-2 to 10 SR.

With the Signaller Cup game over, it’s back to the league and the plate, where we wait the losers of 2 SR v 18 SR. Whoever our opponents are they know that we will be up for a battle. Our season is still far from over and we still have some testing games to come. With goals from LCpl Daniel Chapman and Sig Jason Rose, with 10 minutes to go we thought we were going through to the next round. However you have to give credit to 10 SR who never gave up and fought us all the way into extra time, with the final score 5-2 to 10 SR.

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RUGBY – by Sig Jenkins

216 (PARA) SIG SQN 35 – 13 10 SIG REGT

This was our third fixture of the season and we were all hoping for a victory going into the game with 2 wins behind us. 216 (Para) Sig Sqn quickly took the lead by a great try from LCpl Verebasaga aka ‘Fridge’ within the first 10 minutes. The conversion was successful by Sig Jenkins who was also captain for the fixture. The score was 7-0 and 216 (Para) Sig Sqn were dominating the first half. It was a physical game, especially in the forwards with Cpl Clarke leading by example as pack leader. ‘Fridge’ and LCpl Nakancagac were breaking the gain line in true Fijian style. LCpl Nakancagac was fly half and his misleading dummy passes had us all falling for it. The second try came from Sig Watkins when he broke the gain line at around the halfway line, sidestepped the opposition fullback and placed the ball down under the posts for a easy conversion. At 14-0, 216 (Para) Sig Sqn started to spread the ball wide with Cpl McGhee at fullback also breaking the gain line in great style. With the forwards going strong, it was creating a great platform for Sig Jenkins to get the ball to the backs which created excitement every time Lt Howley had the ball in his hands. Breaking the gain line, Lt Howley then offloaded the ball to Sig Watkins who scored his second try of the game and extended the score to 21-0 with a successful conversion. That brought the end of the first half.

The second half started very much as the first half ended. Strong forward driving from the Sqn’s forwards. With us receiving the kick off, LCpl Dodd caught the ball and drove a good distance with his pack behind him. This drive brought us up to the half way line where Sig Binks picked up and drove forward. The fourth try was again scored by Sig Watkins which meant his hat trick and the 5th try was scored by SSgt Dunn. Conversions were successful and the score was now 35-0. 10 Sig Regt scored 2 tries towards the end of the game, however it did not trouble or worry the Sqn whose fitness proved vital again. Despite the attempts by 10 Sig Regt to unsettle our fullback, Cpl McGhee stayed strong and was always sure to get us on the front foot.

Man of the match was LCpl Britton who was outstanding in the forwards on the day. His fierce tackling, strong running and accurate lineout throws was never short of excellent.

Our next game is against 30 Sig Regt which we are strongly looking to win to make us undefeated this season.

ALPHA TROOP – by Lt Cotterill

Tp Comd Lt A Cotterill
Tp SSgt SSgt D Porter

With the Sqn re-orbiting from 3 to 2 radio troopers, Alpha Tp has rapidly grown in size to 40 personnel with one Tp Comd and 10 soldiers transferring in from the now moth balled Charlie Tp. Alpha Tp will continue to provide both the Bde Para TAC and Bde TAC HQ elements to the ABTF. The uplift in manpower will enable the continual rotation of personnel in and out of high readiness.

We welcome the return of Cpl ‘Trig’ Hensby from 11 SR and Cpl Rankin from 3 ADSR. Sig Iatsenko and Barton have been posted in after completing their CS Ops Cse at Blandford. The Tp has seen the departure of Capt Tom Draper to 22 SR as Ops Offr of 248 QGS Sig Sqn. Cpl Sale has picked up A/Sgt on transfer to the Cadet Training Team and Cpl Campbell has started a 2 year attachment to the Pathfinders.

BRAVO TROOP – by Sig Parker

Tp Comd Lt T Howley
Tp SSgt Sgt J Miller

Since returning from the Christmas break, Bravo Tp has been extremely busy maintaining the large vehicle fleet in preparation for the RSIT inspection during the early part of Feb. In total 18 dets including dismounts are held in Bravo Tp, the Main HQ Tp. Preparations for the RSIT were halted with the initiation of Ex SECOND FLIGHT on Fri 20 Jan 12.

As per the instruction Bravo Tp moved over night with the Sqn down to JAMC, South Cerney. Whilst at JAMC all troops and vehs dets were checked for readiness, after which a full PACEx was initiated. Troops’ medical, insurance, identification and quals dets were checked to confirm deployability whilst dets’ weight, dangerous air cargo and faults were checked.

On returning to Colchester we turned the kit around in the main workshop to JAMC, South Cerney. Whilst at JAMC all troops and vehs dets were checked for readiness, after which a full PACEx was initiated. Troops’ medical, insurance, identification and quals dets were checked to confirm deployability whilst dets’ weight, dangerous air cargo and faults were checked.
In terms of arrival, Bravo Tp welcomes Sigs Latimer and Harman. It also falls to Bravo Tp to say goodbye and good luck to CPL Machin and LCpl McDonald.

_SUPPORT TROOP – by LCpl McCoy_

QM
Capt F Fensom
RQMS
WO2 (RQMS) P Henderson

Support Tp has had an exceptionally busy period over the last couple of months starting with the usual wind down for Christmas by deploying on 16 Bde CAST in Warminster, with all ABTF assets from the Tp deployed as well as extra life support elements to look after the staff it was a busy end to a busy year for the Tp.

After a well needed Christmas break it was back to normal jogging for the Tp with both the LSI and RSIT inspection teams popping round for a brew, always a pleasure. We are now looking forward to our transition to JAMES (Land) and have already started plugging through the enjoyable online JAMES training packages in preparation for our uplift.

Congratulations go to WO2 (RQMS) ‘Egg’ Henderson on his recent selection for promotion to WO1 and we wish him all the best on his GAP YEAR in Blandford before hopefully on his recent promotion to WO2.

A warm welcome to the Tp goes to Sgt ‘Matty’ Gill on posting from 10 Sig Regt and hope both he and his family settle in well in sunny Colchester. On the farewells front we would like to say goodbye to LCpl ‘Frenchy’ Doherty on his departure to Civy street and wish him all the best in his future career as an RSM.

Support Tp SSgt
WO2 (RQMS) P Henderson

As always the pace of life has been busy within the MT. After CAST in early December and then Christmas Leave the Tp were thrown straight into LSI prep which in turn proved worthwhile as the department passed with a green, we now look forward to the next test, the ECI in May. During this period the Tp has also been preparing for their role in ABTF and has been working hard to ensure that all personal kit, vehicles and kit are held at high readiness. This was tested on Ex SECOND FLIGHT where a practise call-out to JAMC South Cerney was made to confirm we have full capabilities and are ready to go should a real deployment arise.

The Tp welcomes the arrival of SSgt Andy ‘Dunny’ Dunn from 7 Sig Regt (which hopefully means Sgt ‘Thomo’ Thompson can get home once in a while) and prepares for the imminent departure of 6 personnel.

Good Luck to LCpl Gibbons who is currently tabbing across North Yorkshire on P Coy and to the boxers from the Tp, LCpl ‘Lights Out’ Bagshaw and Sig ‘Hit em Hard’ Hanson in their forthcoming battle with 16 CS Med Regt. Well done to Sig Sumner who finished 173rd out of 400 competitors in the Army cross country championships. Congratulations to (Art Veh) SSgt Danny Bentley on his recent promotion to WO2.

**12 MECHANIZED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (228) BULFORD**

OC
Maj SE Irwin
RSM
WO1 (RSM) D Boughen MBE

With an upcoming deployment on Op HERRICK 16 228 Sig Sqn have been hard at work preparing for this tremendous commitment. However the training that has taken place has left us well suited to deploy. In the meantime we have been paid off and made us feel proud that we had represented the Sqn so successfully. For me it also reflected the level of fitness I have achieved during MST. I will definitely continue to train and hopefully after tour I will be able to continue representing the Sqn at Cross Country events.

**INTER-CORPS CROSS COUNTRY - by Sig Symons**

In January I was a member of the female cross country team entered by the Sqn into the Inter-Corps cross country competition. Four of us took part in the event that was held at Blandford, with a multitude of other teams from different units entering. The course consisted of a 4 mile run across difficult terrain and with poor weather conditions, an already difficult course was made all that harder. The route itself started with a lap around the cricket pitch, down the road towards the assault course, up chalk hill, down CO’s hill, up CFT Hill, through the orchards then down Pond Bottom finishing with another lap around the cricket pitch.

I had done a few running events prior to this and found that this was one of the most challenging. I was happy with the fact that the team and I managed to complete it in a reasonably strong time. As a Sqn we didn’t have much time to prepare for the event due to MST for our deployment on Op HERRICK 16 in March, however I was still anticipating a decent result even with strong competition from other units. After everyone had finished we waited for the results to be calculated and went on to attend the presentation. Much to our delight we achieved 2nd place out of the minor units.

The result made us feel like all the hard work we had put in had paid off and made us feel proud that we had represented the Sqn so successfully. For me it also reflected the level of fitness I have achieved during MST. I will definitely continue to train and hopefully after tour I will be able to continue representing the Sqn at Cross Country events.

**DANISH CFX - by Sig Firman**

On 5 December 2011 12 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (228) was tasked to aid the Danish Army in Denmark by providing secure comms via Bowman. As a result our RLD was called to step forward and take on the role. My det commander CPL Parham and I plus 4 others set off in our vehicles which were full of equipment and bergans filled with cold and wet kit as we expected the worst. On our 3 hour journey to Harwich we had nothing but rain and strong winds but thought nothing of it dry and warm inside our vehicle. Then we began our 22 hour ferry trip. It felt like we were being thrown around like rag dolls. At one point I compared it to something similar to what Alice in Wonderland must have felt as she fell down the rabbit hole. We took pride in our ability to not suffer from sea sickness whilst many around us were both feeling the effects and distributing their discomfort liberally on the deck.

When we stepped foot on solid ground again we were amazed to find out that the weather was far better than back home in England, with all the cold weather kit that we
brought with us becoming nothing but extra weight to carry around the exercise area. Despite everyone driving on the wrong side of the road at some point we managed to get to our destination in one piece.

On arrival we were given accommodation and timings for the morning and swiftly settled into a deep sleep that wasn’t interrupted by poor weather rocking our beds. In the morning the 3 dets were given locations to set up in or allocated a Coy to join. The unlucky ones went to the HQ, whilst others worked with the tank company, shadowing the Leopard MBTs as they raced over the boggy and horrid plains of the Danish countryside. We worked long and hard with our Danish allies and enjoyed practising and perfecting our skills and drills. Both sides learnt a lot from the 10 day exercise, it was truly an experience I’ll always remember and I look forward to working with them again on Op Herrick 16.

INTER SERVICES SKIING AND SNOWBOARDING COMPETITION 2012 - by Cpl Swift

During December 2011 I competed as part of the Corps’ snowboarding team. I placed 3rd overall and was selected for the ladies Army team along with Cpl Fox and Capt Jones. Sgt Mulligan, Sgt Hurst, Cpl Bibby and LCpl Sheard were all selected for the men’s snowboarding team.

After lots of e-mails and messages from team captain WO2 Moore we managed to get our admin sorted and arrived in Val Torrens, France fresh faced and ready to compete. The competition was split into 3 different disciplines – slalom, boardercross and freestyle. Slalom consists of a course of gates that are needed to be zigzagged around, freestyle consists of a course with a series of jumps where the participant is awarded points for individual flair and style, whilst boardercross is a timed event combining both. I enjoyed success on the slalom course, finishing in 4th position, however boardercross didn’t go quite as well placing 14th out of 21 racers due to spanking in early on! It went from bad to worse for me as I was forced out of the freestyle competition due to an injury. Despite this the event was a success, with the men’s Army team coming first and the woman’s team placing second behind the RAF.

With an upcoming tour of Afghanistan to contemplate snowboarding is now very much on the backburner. However I will be looking forward to next winter with an eye to improve on what I’ve achieved this year!

19 LIGHT BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (209) LISBURN

DISBANDMENT OF 19 LIGHT BRIGADE – by OC 19 Lt Bde Hq & Sig Sqn (209)

In July last year, whilst deployed on 20 Armd Bde’s FTX on Westdown Camp SPTA, the Secretary of State for Defence released a statement in the House of Commons in which he announced the disbandment of 19 Lt Bde as part of the SDSR. Now that the dust has settled and the lines in the sand have been clearly drawn it is worth informing the larger Corps family of the impact of this statement with respect to 19 Lt Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (209).

The initial tasking of 19 Lt Bde as the supporting Bde for 20 Armd Bde (Op HERRICK 15) has continued with the Bde and the Sig Sqn being a victim of its own success and being tasked with being the supporting Bde for the 2 subsequent deployments. Being almost constantly deployed in support of Mission Specific Training (MST) events since last year, the Sqn is reaching the culmination of its support to 12 Mech Bde for Op HERRICK 16 and find ourselves about to embark on a similar role with 4 Mech Bde in the coming months. This leaves the Sqn in its busy day job whilst concurrently drawing down in time to enter ‘suspended animation’ by Mar 2013.

Within the context of MST support and drawdown it is very easy to forget the Sqn’s operational role. 209 Sig Sqn currently has 31 R SIGNALS soldiers deployed on Op HERRICK 15 split between Rear Link Detachments for 2 RIFLES, 2 MERCIAN and 3 SCOTS as well as a number of augmentees for 20 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (200) TFH HQ. We very much look forward to their return at Easter in order that the Sqn can be whole once more for the first time in almost 12 months.
The Sqn continues to produce the goods demanded by enduring MST tasks bolstered by its recent operational history. From Op TELIC 9, Op HERRICK 10 and its current deployment on Op HERRICK 15 we are adamant not to dwell on the SDSR decision but instead to celebrate the Bde’s achievements over its rich and distinguished history. After all, we have been here before.

The Bde’s designation – 19th Bde – first appeared in the British Army’s Order of Battle as a Senior Reserve Militia Brigade in 1896 based in York. A ‘19 Brigade’ has been in existence intermittently since then, but primarily in times of war, notably the Boer War (1900-01), the First World War (1914-18), the Palestine Emergency (1938–9) and for North Africa and the Suez (1950-54). It was in this last incarnation that we can trace our roots to the current Bde, since then it has served with distinction in the Suez, Cyprus, as the Strategic Reserve (in several guises), in the Falklands, the Balkans, Iraq and, most recently, Afghanistan.

Both the Bde and its Sig Sqn have a strong history and we will continue its good name until we close our doors at the end of this year and finally turn off the lights in March next year. Until then we have the privilege of supporting our third Helmand Task Force brigade out of the door having received the best preparation possible whilst also closing a happy Sqn in good order. The frenetic work rate of the past 12 months will undoubtedly continue to the end with as much Adventure Training, fun and games as can be shoehorned in until we bleed the PRI funds dry!

81 SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)
CORSHAM

OC  Maj Andy Kennedy
SSM  WO2 (SSM) Matt Ticehurst

Traditionally 81 Sig Sqn recruits skilled tradesmen with specialist civilian skills and didn’t have a need for trade training in the past. Annual camp used to consist of a full Tp deployment. So across the Tp there would usually be the full range of skills though not necessarily in each and every soldier. Now with the way the world has changed and the need for 81 to adapt to meet these changes and to fully support ops, it means 81 Sqn are more likely to deploy small teams with every soldier needing the full range of copper, CAT 5 and fibre installation skills to meet each and every challenge in every Theatre that they may be deployed to.

SSgt Pickett was tasked to put together 81’s first ever Trade Training package. The schedule was tight. He deployed alone for 2 weeks at the end of Nov to Blandford and spent a few days with Cable Systems Section where the CSS SSgt Chris Sankey and his team assisted him with advice and knowhow to create all his own lesson plans on 81’s behalf. Just before Xmas 2011 some 60 lesson plans plus a full 3 weekend schedule had been put together and Sqn instructors had been assigned.

The first weekend took place over January 28/29 and covered copper and CAT5. The idea is to give students that do not have these skills lots of hands on experience and some theory. This cannot and will not replace the training that is provided at Blandford but will help to enhance the skills of the Sqn and help to plug any skills gaps in the short term.

Students watching intently whilst Cpl Tomlin demonstrates correct way to lay fibre in a tray

Student Cpl Sanderson preparing fibre for splicing after expert tuition from Sig Ashby

The remaining 2 weekends, which will cover Fibre Optics, takes place over 11/12 Feb and 03/04 March.

The first weekend was a great success and was visited by the Sqn OC Maj Kennedy, A/2IC Capt Milligan, TOT Capt Masheter, FofS WO2 Weaver and SSM WO2 Ticehurst. SSgt Pickett hopes to make this an annual event and is eagerly awaiting feedback from the soldiers on the course.

Generic copper connection demonstration
VISIT OF THE SOIN(A) BRIGADIER TJP WATTS OBE ADC

The UK MOD SANGCOM Project team were delighted to host a 3 day visit by the SOinC(A) Brig Tim Watts in December 2011.

The first morning was spent in-house and the SOinC(A) brought the military element of the SANGCOM team up to date on the Army ‘back at home’, Corps restructuring and discussed general MS Issues. He then received overview briefs from the SANGCOM departments followed by an Arabic lunch and a drive to the National Guard HQ where he met with the Commander of the Saudi Arabian Signals Corps Maj Gen Mohamed bin Khaled Al Nahidh. The day was rounded off with an evening function at the Sheraton Hotel in Riyadh with the opportunity for casual conversation with team members and their wives on the benefits and challenges of life in the Kingdom.

More visits followed on the second day: in the morning to the National Guard Signal School and the Field Force Signal Battalion; to the British Embassy to meet the Defence Attaché in the afternoon. A peek at married accommodation and life on a compound was a topic for conversation later that evening at a team social. A full team State of the Nation address marked the beginning of his final day. The SANGCOM annual photograph suitably unbalanced and later photo-shopped preceded the SOinC(A) presenting Maj Owen Finnie with his United Nations Force Commanders Commendation for his part in the notable and successful visit of the Pope to Cyprus during his previous tour.

Not a newcomer to desert driving, it was a surprise to see Brig Tim belly Lt Col Ian Hunter’s vehicle then park WO2 (FoS) Simon King’s into a sand dune at a 70 degree angle! Light refreshments, sand in a sandwich and a chuckle later concluded the visit of Brig Tim to SANGCOM in his appointment as the SOinC(A), but we later learnt that his selection to succeed Brig David Hargreaves as the PD in 2012 meant that his visit was time well spent.

NEW YEAR’S EVE DESERT TRIP

Another year, another New Year’s Eve camp out in the desert.


THE DESERT EXPERIENCE IS BUT ONE UNIQUE ASPECT OF LIFE IN THE SANGCOM PROJECT TEAM AND IS A MUST FOR ANYONE WITH THE YEN TO TRAVEL AND ENCOUNTER A DIFFERENT CORNER OF OUR PLANET.

SANGCOM HALF MARATHON AND FUN RUN

The event was the fifth and best ever supported that SANGCOM has organised and it is now firmly established in the ex-pat calendar. Held on Salwa Garden Village Compound, home to BAe, competitors run one lap for the Fun Run or 6 for the Half Marathon. Generous corporate sponsors made the day a memorable one donating provisions and equipment to help the day run smoothly and also highly sought after raffle prizes to attract the speculators. The lure of flight vouchers, multimedia equipment and Grande Hotel meals worked and the combination of cash sponsorship, raffle ticket sales and event entry fees raised a total in excess of £12,000 for the 3 nominated charities; Saudi Disabled Children, the Army Benevolent Fund and Help for Heroes.

Capt Ian Flannery takes the plaudits for a job extremely well done. The success achieved was just reward for his time, effort and not so subtle marketing ploys. Over 200 runners, joggers, plodders and walkers took part, all crossing the finishing line some showing more signs of wear and tear than others the rise in temperature sapping a few smiles as the morning went on. The spirit of the day was captured by the spectators and runners congregating at the finish to applaud the efforts of not so fit lean or mean.

Capt Flannery and Col Adrian Campbell-Black brought the
story of the Hare and the Tortoise to life. Col AC-B ably partnered by Maj Scot Steven judged that the margin between them was great enough to complete an extra half lap. It was a miscalculation and he came in second with a time of 2hrs and 4mins, 3 ½ minutes behind The Tortoise! Many other team members completed the event albeit some behind their wives and children!

**BRITISH ARMY TRAINING UNIT KENYA**

SO3 G6  
Capt Jim Boyden  
YofS  
WO2 (YofS) Bob Lindley  
FoS(S)  
SSgt Grae Tennick

TROOP UPDATE – by Capt Jim Boyden

Happy New Year to the rest of the Corps from the Equator! The Christmas Minimum Manning Period is well and truly over for CIS Tp and we are straight into a Board of Officers before the next Battle Group (1 MERCIAN) arrives to take part in another challenging Ex ASKARI THUNDER.

Since our last Wire article, the shocking accusation has been levelled at me that I might have forgotten the heroic work undertaken by our G4 team, so I must mention that BATUK CIS Tp is not purely a R SIGNALS effort and we do indeed have our resident RLC expert, currently SSgt Paul Culleton to keep our 133 strong Bowman FFR Fleet on the road. This is an extremely busy job as the fleet is constantly hammered on Exercise. As a result he is normally quite grey haired and grumpy. This makes him an ideal candidate for my newly created post of “CIS Tp SSgt” to look after the boots and haircuts, which takes some workload away from my already overworked Yeoman, WO2 (YofS) Bob Lindley.

Allied to this, we have recently had our begging request for a R SIGNALS Comms Log Spec approved by the Manning Gods at Glasgow, and it is with some glee we have received Cpl ‘Sammy’ Samson fresh from 22 Sig Regt to finally show a bewildered SO3 G6 what the difference is between an AFG 1033, a P1954 and a leave pass, and why he should not sign them all blindly. We can also warmly welcome LCpl Dave Holden from 22 Sig Regt and we are also looking forward to several other new arrivals in the next few weeks. To all of you, we wish you the very best and hope you have a safe and enjoyable tour in East Africa.

Time, tide and indeed Glasgow wait for no man, so it is with some sadness we have to wish farewell to Capt Ian Flannery well in his preparation for the Marathon Des Sables, an event not for the weak of heart or mind that takes place in April this year. A mere 250km race across the Moroccan Sahara carrying food and survival equipment for the week and 36hrs of water rations at any one time it consists of 6 legs, one of which is a double marathon of 90km. You can support him and his chosen charity by reading his blog at [http://mdsnewbies.blogspot.com/](http://mdsnewbies.blogspot.com/).

As a prelude to his next personal goal, we all wish Capt Ian Flannery well in his preparation for the Marathon Des Sables, an event not for the weak of heart or mind that takes place in April this year. A mere 250km race across the Moroccan Sahara carrying food and survival equipment for the week and 36hrs of water rations at any one time it consists of 6 legs, one of which is a double marathon of 90km. You can support him and his chosen charity by reading his blog at [http://mdsnewbies.blogspot.com/](http://mdsnewbies.blogspot.com/).

**MY FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF KENYA - by LCpl Dave Holden**

I arrived at Nairobi International airport early on a Monday in January and was straight away hit by a wall of heat, which was in fact a welcome change to the weather in the UK. I dragged my kit out to the road and was met by the BATUK Duty Driver, who did not struggle to pick out my pasty skin and bewildered expression. We can also warmly welcome LCpl Dave Holden from 22 Sig Regt and we are also looking forward to several other new arrivals in the next few weeks. To all of you, we wish you the very best and hope you have a safe and enjoyable tour in East Africa.

Time, tide and indeed Glasgow wait for no man, so it is with some sadness we have to wish farewell to Capt Dave Watson (posted back to 11 (RSS) Sig Regt) and our tame Infantrymen, LCpl Grieve demonstrating his “Blue Steel” look while preparing one of our 103 FFRs for deployment

All this means we still need a continuing supply of volunteers to serve in Kenya, so if you’re interested in this, please read on as LCpl Dave Holden has handily compiled his thoughts on his first few days below...

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and facilities. We then headed to the CIS Tp to meet the people I would be working with over the next 6 months. My first day complete, I was taken to the bar for an introduction to the Cpl’s mess and a “quiet” couple, the next few hours are understandably slightly hazy thanks to LCpl Mark Glasby.

For the remainder of the week Cpl Dave Watson began showing me my duties as a Crypto Accountant. The majority of duties seem fairly straightforward, but as I write this on Friday afternoon I am still struggling to unlock the door.

These have been my first impressions of Kenya and I look forward to the next 6 months.

BATUK CIS VISIT TO THE BRAEBURN SCHOOL IN NANYUKI – by Capt Jim Boyden

On a gloriously hot early February morning (yes, we have those in Kenya) Cpl Rob Gill and I deployed for Braeburn International School in Nanyuki as part of a BATUK Display. As part of their curriculum, the Year Three children had been taught about “soldiering throughout the ages” and having learnt about the Greeks, Romans and other heroic warriors throughout time in the classroom, they now wanted to meet some real, modern soldiers. Quite why they asked me is a mystery, so I thought I should probably take along Cpl Rob Gill in case they outsmarted me with their technical questions.

Although the BATUK Training Wing tried to steal the show by providing a GPMG and a WMIK as part of the display, it was perfectly clear to everyone that the school children were most interested in the heroes of the R SIGNALS and the handheld Motorola PMRs we had brought along to facilitate an impromptu game of “Hide and Seek” as they scattered throughout the school grounds with some surprisingly good VP. Cpl Gill gave an impressive and enthusiastic talk about how soldiers can communicate and how the R SIGNALS facilitate this and it would not surprise me if we have some future recruits off the back of his enthusiasm!

DE&S ISS SAI

OC
Maj Dave Rook
USM
WO2 (SSM) John Blowes

The constant movement of individuals joining and departing Defence Equipment and Support Information Systems and Services South Atlantic Islands (DE&S ISS SAI) has continued, with Sig Black, LCpl Gilling, Cpl White, Sig Aspinall, Cpl Indra and Cpl Biraj having departed these shores in the last 2 months. They have been replaced by Cpl Johnson, Cpl Hodson, Sgt Harvey, Cpl Charlery, LCpl Downes, LCpl Onion and Sig Venn, who have all been welcomed into the team.

CHARITY HERCULES PULL - by Capt P Gormley

Following months of planning and hard training the DE&S ISS SAI team were finally picking up the rope on Mount Pleasant Airfield, psyched up and ready to pull a 70 Tonne Hercules 1km. The tri-service team of 30, containing 16 Royal Signals personnel, were undergoing the task to raise money for the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust, the Army Benevolent Fund and the Royal Air force Association. The team were also raising funds for a local Falkland Islands charity, the Steven Jaffray Memorial Trust, which provides financial support to the dependants of sick and injured islanders who require medical care overseas, so that they can accompany them.

The event was organised following the fruition of WO2 John Blowes’ plan to organise an arduous, well advertised, tri-service, unit charity event, leading to him conjuring up the idea of pulling a 70 Tonne, C-130 Hercules aircraft. The team managed to fit in one practice pull before the event covering a 200m stretch of ground which proved to be relatively easy, boosting every ones confidence that 1km would prove to be difficult, but, not impossible. However, the runway at Mount Pleasant Airfield that the team would be pulling the Hercules along had a slight gradient which greatly increased the challenge the DE&S ISS SAI team faced on the day. The pull was initiated by the British Forces South Atlantic Island Chief of Staff, Gp Capt Toby Craig, and from the start the sheer weight of the Hercules and the strain everyone was under pulling it was clear. Capturing the events as they happened was Falkland Islands TV and British Forces Broadcasting Services who managed to cover some nice close up shots of individuals pulling strange faces as they tried to heave the massive load up the runway. Slowly but surely the team managed to grind away, pulling the plane closer towards the finish line, with great support from a crowd of spectators who had came to show their support alongside WO2 John Blowes who was providing his own motivational encouragement.

The DE&S ISS SAI team pulling the massive 70 Tonne Hercules

With 15m left to pull and the team tired and weary, everyone reset on the rope following a 1 minute break for one last pull to get the Hercules over the finish line. As everyone pulled the rope in unison the team were dismayed to find the plane was not moving thanks to the technician controlling the brakes of the plane failing to take them off, much to the annoyance the OC who ‘spat his dummy out of his pram’ but gave the final words of encouragement (less too many
expletives) to get the job done. Following a second attempt the team dragged the Hercules over the finish line and everyone celebrated completing the back breaking event. Following the event the team and spectators headed back to HQ DE&S ISS SAI to celebrate the accomplishment at a prearranged Mount Pleasant Complex family day function. Supported by the DE&S ISS SAI team. This function involved various stalls and stands set up to entertain the children, involving a paintball range, goal shoot out, fire truck and much more. Meanwhile the team and adult spectators enjoyed the BBQ and refreshments.

To celebrate the achievement the Cable Maintenance and Installation Section of DE&S ISS SAI had kindly organised a Spartan themed party at the unit’s resident bar, marketers. Following considerable effort by LCpl Onion and Cpl Johnson, the Sharkies bar was turned into a gladiator style arena and everyone went all out preparing costumes for the event where everyone partied hard following a job well done. As a result of greatly appreciated sponsorship from families, friends, units and organisations, the team had enough equipment in the old Tele Mech stores on Ascension to conduct some Site Co-ordination Installation Design Authority faults that had been identified on a previous trip.

The CMIS team consisted of a 4 man group which included Sg t Bate, Cpl Malarek, LCpl Gilling and Sig Green. On arriving at Ascension we were given the bad news that our stores at Ascension were at capacity. Fortunately we had enough equipment in the old Tele Mech stores on Ascension to conduct some Site Co-ordination Installation Design Authority faults that had been identified on a previous trip. LCpl Gilling also put his OCD to good use and cleaned up the legacy Inst Tech stores getting rid of the dead rat smell that dwelt within.

Killing time before our kit arrived, the team carried out some sight seeing of the Island. Climbing Green Mountain, reaching the Dew Pond and beyond was a tiring jaunt but worthwhile as it provided a 360 degree view of the whole island. The NASA building also proved to be a good point for sight seeing as did the Devils Ash Pit which is a dormant volcanic vent.

Once the equipment had arrived and with a few of us having gained a good sun tan, we had a large workload to get through in the 3 days we had left on Ascension. The team were required to complete the cable pull, terminate both ends and test the fibre and with the locals and RAF’s relaxed outlook in Ascension, this wasn’t going to be an easy task to achieve. After 2 days of cable pulling, we managed to get the last of the fibre into both buildings and started terminating to the relief of everyone there, 2 days in the 28 Degree sun and in uniform wasn’t any ones idea of an ‘easy’ trip. With the job successfully complete, LCpl Gilling and Cpl Malarek travelled back to the Falkland Islands, whilst Sg t Bate and Sig Green luckily had an extra day in Ascension before going on R&R.

GOOSE GREEN BATTLEFIELD TOUR - by LCpl Buckland

On Saturday 17 December, members of DE&S ISS SAI had the pleasure of going on the Goose Green Battlefield tour, recapping the events that unfolded during the 1982 Falklands conflict. Thankfully with it being summer in the southern hemisphere, the weather conditions were ideal for trekking the footstep of 2 Para during the battle of Goose Green which is probably the most well known of all the Falklands battle owing to the loss of the CO of 2 Para Lt Col ’H’ Jones.

The tour was aptly being lead by Capt Chris Collier of 2 Para and started with him taking us to the exact spot where Lt Col Jones was shot dead. It was explained that he was killed following a brave charge towards the Argentine forces in order to surprise and motivate his men who had been pinned down. It was a poignant moment standing in the exact place that he had fought so bravely and died. Capt Collier informed us that the battle of Goose Green had been hellish; 2 Para were trying to advance up a place called Darwin Hill when Argentine forces opened up on them with a heavy weight of fire! The men of 2 Para were pinned down at the bottom of the hill and could not advance up. I can’t imagine how scared these guys must have been coming up this hill, with a number of charges being attempted by 2 Para Officers. One such officer, when charging apparently shouting “come on lads, remember Arnhem!” before being shot dead, which must have really destroyed morale.

Following the death of Lt Col Jones and 2 Para successfully penetrating the Argentine defences, the newly appointed acting CO, Maj Chris Keeble, had ordered 2 captured Argentinean Warrant Officers to deliver the unconditional terms of their surrender, which he signed ‘Commander Of British Forces’. This was apparently done so that the Argentines would take him seriously, despite him only being a Major! When they eventually surrendered there were a thousand prisoners of war in total. This was far greater than the number of men in 2 Para. The acting CO managed to trick Argentinean forces by cycling men up and down the hill as a deception plan to make it look like they were a much larger force.

Capt Collier also explained that Lt Col H Jones had been furious with the BBC who had broadcast on the world service that the British were ready to attack both Darwin and Goose Green. He carried on with the assault regardless as the Argentineans apparently thought that we wouldn’t be stupid enough to broadcast our battle plans and dismissed the information, which was lucky as things could have turned out much worse if they had.

To conclude; for some who had never been to the Falklands and didn’t know much about the Falklands War, it was a real eye opener, to think that almost 30 years ago there were people fighting and dying on this island.
UNIT UPDATE

The ‘Volunteers’ have been hard at work over the last 12 months, with members of the Unit deploying to all 4 corners of the earth and supporting our host Unit JSSU (Digby). Since our last entry we have said a fond farewell to our OC of 10 years, Maj Dennis Weir MBE, who has retired from military service after a distinguished Regular and TA career. We have welcomed our new OC, Maj Graham Barber and said farewell to a number of Unit stalwarts (WO1 John Neal, WO1 Pete Derrick and WO1 (YoFS EW) Paul Friend) and welcomed a new generation of members to the Unit, from all 3 services. This offering from the ‘Volunteers’ concentrates on 2011 and our charitable work in support of the Royal British Legion (RBL), our former OC’s farewell and Ex HERMES VENTURE 2011.

FAREWELL TO MAJOR DENNIS WEIR MBE

April 2011 marked the final training weekend in Command for Maj Weir, after 10 years as OC. During this time the Unit has seen many changes, including the move from Chicksands to Digby, the change of name from 5 Comms Coy (V) to JSSU(V) and a change in the way in which the Unit is utilised by our Regular counterparts. To mark this special occasion the OC requested a German Evening be held in the club bar, the ‘Y Return’. The evening started with the arrival of the OC, resplendently dressed in his uniform, as the honorary chair of the Dannenberg Branch of the 4th Panzer Grenadiers’ Formation Dancing Team.

For this important evening we were pleased to welcome our Honorary Colonel, Air Marshal Sir Stuart Peach KCB CBE FRAes and his wife, Lady Brigitte, who were escorted to the club's Stammtisch and given a crash course in the German dice game of Schock.

Not known for short speeches, the outgoing OC did not let his predecessor’s speech had eventually died down, before thanking Dennis for all he had done for the Unit, and then announced that the German buffet was now being served, which was kind of superfluous, as by that time he did, he was the only person not in the queue.

Dennis has hung up his boots but is still a regular visitor to the ‘Y Return’, where he continues to give lessons on his Schock dice game and it has been rumoured, but not confirmed, that he has been seen to by a round for his old comrades!

LINCOLN 10KM CHARITY RUN FOR THE RBL

It has been a tradition for some years now that members of JSSU (V) take part in the annual Lincoln 10KM to raise funds for the RBL Poppy Appeal and 2011 was no exception. Indeed, such was the degree of support from across all 3 services in the Unit, that we were able, for the first time, to implement ‘a 4 bucket strategy’ which ensured that very few of the good citizens of Lincoln who lined the route were able to escape the attention of ‘the collectors’. Whilst the 10KM run was an undoubted team success where we raised over £500, our annual fundraising was greatly enhanced by the individual efforts of Sgt Claire Warburton and JT Fleur Clark who took part in the London Marathon and the Bordon ‘Hell Run’ respectively. Claire raised £2000 and Fleur £1000 through their fine individual efforts.

EXERCISE HERMES VENTURE 2011

2011’s Unit Concentration was held at Cawdor Barracks, the home of 14 Sig Regt (EW) in June. Although many of the Unit had served with the Regt in our Regular careers, it was the first time for many to visit this part of the world, for some members of the RAF and especially our Navy members.

To ensure that the ‘Volunteers’ gained maximum benefit for their time in Brawdy we were split up in to syndicates and rotated through a number of different phases, to include Operational Support, Equipment Familiarisation, Mil Training and Adventure Training. The weather was fairly good until the Mil Training weekend, when the rains arrived and we were given a good soaking. The bad weather coincided with the arrival of our Honorary Colonel, Air Marshal Sir Stuart Peach KCB CBE FRAes, who was accompanied by COS HQ JSSO, Lt Col Monty Mountford and our new S01 (V) Lt Col Graham Hay-Smith.

Most members had not been to Brawdy since Camp 2004 and this visit enabled us to be brought up to speed with the kit that the Regt were now utilising and to spend important familiarisation time in the Regtl Ops Area. Thanks must go to CO 14 and his team for allowing us to share their camp for the duration of Ex HERMES 2011, in particular the JNCOs who showed that the Regt’s future is in good hands.

POST CAMP ACTIVITIES

Around 20% of the Unit continue to provide daily support to the JSSO and wider MOD. We continue to work side by side with our Regular counterparts and looking to the future, are expected to grow our establishment significantly in 2012. Our Annual Dinner, in October 2011, was overshadowed by the tragic loss of an old friend of the ‘Volunteers’, Maj Richie Angove, who died in a terrible car crash. Rich was always a friend of the ‘Volunteers’, having joined up with a lot of us and will be sadly missed.

Finishing on a happier note, we were very proud to find out that our Hon Col was promoted to Air Chief Marshal and announced as the new Commander Joint Forces in December 2011 – we are looking forward to him ringing the bell, when he joins the Duke of Westminster in opening our new Reservist Centre at Digby, in the spring of 2012.
DIVISIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

2012 has marked the most successful season for many years for Royal Signals Alpine Racing. We had 3 units (10 Sig Regt, 11(RSS) Sig Regt and 30 Sig Regt) and 6 individuals (MSSG, HQ 11 Sig Bde, 18(UKSF) Sig Regt, 209 Sig Sqn, JSSU & 3DSR) entered into Ex SPARTAN HIKE, the UK Divisional Championships in Serre Chevalier, France and 7 Sig Regt in Ex PIPEDOWN, the German Divisional Championships in Les Contamines, France. The UK Divs were a great success for us with 3 Royal Signals racers (Capt Tom Collins, Sgt Phil Dransfield and Sgt John Howe) as firm fixtures in the top 15.

The UK Divs saw 122 racers compete over the 10 day championships in the 4 Alpine disciplines of Slalom, Giant Slalom, Super G and Downhill. The weather was on our side for the entire competition and sunshine and cold temperatures kept the race pistes in top racing condition. As we can only race Slalom and Giant Slalom at our Corps Championships, unlike the other Corps, the Div Championships are the first opportunity we have to get a taste for the speed events. The downhill in particular is a test of skill, confidence and pure bottle. 100% commitment is required to throw yourself downhill at speeds of around 100kph on 2 planks of wood in a one piece lycra suit! The Ex SPARTAN HIKE downhill was a 36 gate race with a vertical drop of 498m. The Corps had some strong results with Sgt John Howe finishing 4th, Capt Tom Collins 10th, Sgt Phil Dransfield 13th and an excellent result of 15th for LCpl Neil Harper of 3DSR who started in bib 35.

In the overall Alpine Combination the Corps did particularly well with Sgt John Howe 4th, Capt Tom Collins 7th, and Sgt Phil Dransfield 9th. Capt Jo Dawson was 1st regular female and Maj Bee Bryan second. 30 Sig Regt also tasted success and was the 5 Div Alpine and Nordic combination champions.

ARMY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Thanks to the fantastic racing of all teams, the Corps successfully qualified a staggering 19 people to the Army Championships. Unfortunately only 12 could stay out to race at the next level, but this shows great promise for the future and our aim to build a solid base of race expertise within the Corps. At the Divs teams of 4 compete for their Unit, but at the Army Championships they also compete for their Corps team. With our squad of 12 we had 4 females and 8 males to select from. Our Corps teams were captained by Capt Tom Collins and Capt Jo Dawson who selected their teams of 6 and 3 respectively for all team races based onform from the individual races. The first 2 days of giant slalom racing went well and most of our racers moved up their bib seed place to gain a better start position in the next race. On the second day of giant slalom the weather started to close in and visibility took a turn for the worse. This was the prelude to 8 hours of snowfall just before the slalom races! Luckily slalom, unlike the speed events, can be run with heavier snowfall. Over the slalom races Brig Richardson, as President Royal Signals Winter Sports, visited the Corps team to cheer us on and was impressed by the new Corps kit we
were all sporting. In fact many of the visiting military and civilian VIPs commented on our new Corps branded kit, purchased thanks to the RSGCC grant. After slalom the short skis were switched for longer downhill ones ready for 2 days of training before the race. The Army Downhill is run on the Luc Alphond piste (named after the famous French downhill racer) from halfway up the mountain to the very bottom. It is a 2.1km course with a vertical drop of 580m with 32 gates and 2 jumps to negotiate. With average speeds of around 100kph, it is not for the faint hearted.

The first day is the chance to inspect the course, check your line and start taking the jumps at close to race pace with the second day being closer to full pelt to ensure you are used to the speed. It appeared on Training Run 1, Jump 1 (Pylon jump) was too much for some and after spending 2 afternoons setting up the safety netting some people just had to test it out to check it worked. The second training day saw really high winds that shut all lifts on the mountain and meant that none of us got our practice runs in. The programme then jumped to Super G which took us all by surprise and meant a quick ski reshuffle but the racing conditions were good again for the final 2 days of speed events. Finishing the final day of racing on the downhill was an adrenaline fuelled way to end a great championships and we successfully had 5 Corps racers in the top 30. This included Cpl Chris McKechnie finishing 29th from a starting bib number of 63.

At prize-giving the Corps saw several trophies awarded. This included the Michael Pearce Memorial Trophy for the top Royal Signals Skier which was awarded to Capt Tom Collins who finished in 16th place overall. For being the biggest climber from starting bib to finishing position in the downhill, Cpl Chris McKechnie was awarded the Alpine President’s ‘bottle for bottle’ prize. The Corps Female team that consisted of Maj Bee Bryan, Capt Jo Dawson, Sgt Emily Wall and Sig Kirsty Abel won each team event and collected the overall Army Ladies Inter Corps team trophy. Capt Jo Dawson won a place on the Army Ladies team and received the much coveted ‘red jumper’ as her Army colours. She goes on to compete for the Army at the Interservice Championships in Meribel.

Thanks must go to the Corps coach WO2 Andy Dawson for all his hard work and assistance in course inspections and team advice. Also a special mention goes to Sig Ollie McLeod from 11 (RSS) Sig Regt who, as a novice, qualified to his first Army Championships and held an impressive bib position of mid 40s throughout the competition, finishing 45th overall. An incredible feat and he is definitely one to watch for the future.
The Royal Signals Corps football team has enjoyed success on and off the pitch for over 10 years. Winning Massey League trophies, Quadrangular Tournaments and the Woolwich Cup has firmly established the reputation that the Royal Signals play good football and are hard to beat. To celebrate these consistent accomplishments a grand tour was almost obligatory and where better than to the spiritual home of football, BRAZIL.

On 4 Jun, Heathrow airport welcomed 22 Royal Signals soldiers and officers eagerly anticipating the chance of lifetime to visit and play football in Brazil. On arrival the reality of the huge expectation didn’t disappoint; the team hotel was only a left handed stone’s throw from the iconic, golden Copacabana Beach framed by the tumbling breakers of the Atlantic Ocean, this is Rio Gentlemen!

After taking in the sights, the first few days consisted of acclimatisation, beach training and making new friends. The highlight was undoubtedly a trip to Estádio Olímpico João Havelange Stadium to witness the passion and intensity of Brazilian football, up close and personal, as Flamengo played Corinthians. A Flamengo goal and subsequent victory saw the partisan crowd erupt into a mix of euphoria and celebratory madness that roller-coasted off into the warm night on a Brazilian samba – which a few younger Royal Signals soldiers tagged onto in an attempt to sample the local delights.

Firmly established into routine, the training, swimming and sunbathing were nicely interrupted as the team visited the Bola Pra Frente Institute (translates to ‘move the ball forward’) on the edge of the Favelas in Guadalupe. This institute was formed by Brazilian world cup winner Jorginho in 1994, who dreamed of giving socially vulnerable young children, from deprived areas, a chance to better themselves. Combining the language of football to embrace all sports, music, arts and crafts and drama with a disciplined, clean lifestyle taught the children another view of life. The lads joined in the fantastic entertaining games with the youngsters, only conversing through football and smiles. A great fun and humbling experience enjoyed by all.

Training continued and was inter woven around excursions to the historic Maracana Stadium and Sao Cristovao, Ronaldo’s first club. This was followed by a trip to watch and learn from a training session of the talented Fluminese, featuring Deco the former Chelsea player. This certainly managed to whet the team’s appetite to play a competitive fixture, whilst not letting anyone forget that we were still in Rio enjoying the ‘days of our lives’.

The next few days saw the focus change as the coaching staff prepared the team for the first game against a team from the formidable Botafogo Juniors. A good performance from the Corps against a representative eleven from a Brazilian top tier ROYAL SIGNALS FOOTBALL TOUR – RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL 4 - 18 JUN 11
team saw the teams go in at half-time 0-0. Unfortunately the end result of a 3-1 loss wasn’t a true reflection of the contest. But a hard-fought contest it was, which tested the players and coaching staff alike against a totally different style and philosophy of football.

The packed itinerary included a VIP visit to watch the senior team of the previous day’s opposition as Botafogo took their league opponents apart 3-1. But this was only a taster of what was to follow; a trip to the formidable training camp where the Brazilian National Team would be preparing for the Copa America. It was a world class facility, in a world class setting for a world class team. It was here our team would play the second game of the tour against local opposition Teresopolis. The game saw the Brazilian team take a one nil lead from a silly mistake, which they defended resolutely under determined pressure. The Corps played attractive football but simply couldn’t find the net and were genuinely disappointed at the final whistle to have lost again after having the lion’s share of the ball.

The final match of the tour was to be played in the shadow of Sugarloaf Mountain on a perfect surface, beside the edge of the ocean. An amazing setting which had been graced by arguably the greatest footballer ever, Pele. A large partisan crowd gathered with keen media interest to witness The Royal Corps of Signals versus the might of the Brazilian Combined Services. During the National Anthems the pride of the soldiers and everyone involved in making this event an historic occasion was plain for all to see.

The Brazilians, with 2 ex-professional footballers in their starting line up began brightly. They looked good and moved the ball with confidence and ease, and with a great piece of team football scored 5 minutes into the game, ominous for the Signals. Nevertheless, undaunted by the absolute class of their opposition and belief in their own ability, the Corps created a chance that was smashed firmly and brilliantly into the back of the Brazilian net. A shock equalizer and game on! That goal however could only be likened to proverbially stirring the hornets nest. What ensued was a master class in possession football and our team was subjected to what could only be described as a lesson in football. Without brilliant defending, sheer effort and a real desire to do their absolute best, the 7 – 1 halftime score line could have been much, much worse.

Unbelievably the second half produced no further goals, a victory in itself for the Corps. As the final whistle blew, the result was irrelevant as players exchanged shirts, took photos and laughed through broken conversations. This was why we had come to Brazil, this was the fulfillment of boyhood dreams and we hadn’t let ourselves down.

The final 2 rest days were an opportunity for the majority to take full advantage of the wonderful beaches Rio had to offer, notably the Copacabana to Ipanema. The long flight back gave the squad a chance to reminisce on the trip of a lifetime and to reflect on the 2 weeks of what will definitely become cherished memories.
DOUBLE VICTORY FOR CORPS ORIENTEERING TEAMS

- by Maj Mel Rayner

The Inter Corps Orienteering Championships took place at the end of November 2011. The competition comprises a night event followed by a day event. The Corps Teams (men's long course (team of 6), men's short course (team of 4), ladies course (team of 4)) all finished as runners up the previous season, so there was quite a degree of determination to turn at least one of those categories from runners up medal to winners Silverware. The Corps also had an U25 team at the Championships. For the juniors the night event was purely an individual competition with the day event acting as the team competition.

The Night event took place at Ash Ranges on what was fortunately quite a mild night for November (the previous year we had been running around in the snow in Harrogate!). The competition is often won and certainly lost on the Night event as it is obviously significantly more difficult to relocate and correct navigational errors at night when your field of vision is limited to the beam of your head torch!

Of the 6 runners on the men’s long course, the top 4 count at night for the team and the top 5 on the day event. For the ladies and the men’s short it is 2 out of 4 at night and 3 out of 4 on the day event. There is room for some error, but not much.

The Corps runners had all individually had a pretty good start to the season, so it was all to play for at the Championships. After the night event the men’s long team were sitting 12 seconds behind the Infantry and 7 mins ahead of the RE and the RLC. On the ladies side, the Corps were in 3rd place, but just under 4 minutes covered the first 3 teams so it was close. With the 3rd person counting on the day event the ladies certainly felt that they were in a good position. Unfortunately a few members of the 2 men’s short teams found out just how much time can be lost at night if you lose contact with the map which pretty much put both teams out of contention. On the individual side U25 Sig Tom Julian from 3 DSR had a stormer of a run and was crowned U25 Night Champion 11 minutes and 5 seconds clear of the runner up. Maj Mel Rayner of HQ DCCIS joined him on the podium as the Ladies Night Champion 4 minutes and 3 seconds clear of the second place female runner.

After a team building half pint in a country hostelry not far from the ranges, the teams retired to Pirbright Camp for the night ready to do battle on the day event and convert solid over night positions into victory.

The day event was at Mytchett training area, which provided plenty of scope for error due to the complex network of tracks and contour features which is indicative of a military training area.

The men’s short cse teams redeemed themselves on the day event with some strong individual performances putting them in 4th position for the day run finishing in 3rd place. SSgt Richie Hill, 15 Sig Regt having had a disastrous night event had an excellent day performance finishing in 3rd place. SSgt (YofS) Mitchell, 10 Sig Regt also enjoyed a strong day performance.

The ladies team gradually chipped away at the advantage held by the AGC and the RLC and finished off in 1st place 11 minutes and 56 seconds ahead of the field. A strong day run by Capt Sally Calland really contributed to the overall team score.

The men’s long cse results were a nail biting finish to the event. The team knew that Capt Mark Bentley had followed his excellent night run with a strong day performance. Sgt Jamie Ranson had stormed round the day event really opening up the opportunity for the team to steal victory. These 2 were strongly supported by Sgt Andy McNally and SSgt (FofS) Steve Mallison, both of 15 Sig Regt.

Capt Neil Pollitt

Capt Mark Bentley

Capt Sally Calland - W35 runner-up

Sgt Andy McNally - M35 winner

Double Victory for Corps Orienteering Teams

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Sgt Andy McNally - M35 winner
It was all going to be down to the 5th and 6th runners. Could Maj Rhid Jones or Capt Neil Pollitt pull it out of the bag on the day and bring the Corps home to victory. Both had good runs and it was Capt Pollitt on his debut for the Corps who snuck in as the fifth counter for the Men’s Long team giving them victory over the rest by 12 minutes 15 seconds.

Sig Julian struck gold again on the U25 day event coming home a clear 2 minutes ahead of his nearest rival. The rest of the U25 team enjoyed the experience of a first major event and will hopefully be back next year to threaten the leaders.

The final role of honour for the Corps was as follows:

Men’s Long Course Team Winners
Ladies Team Winners

Individual Team members are shown below with prizes where applicable:

Men’s Long Course team

- Sgt Jamie Ranson, ATR Pirbright - M21 Runner Up
- Capt Mark Bentley, SOinC(A)
- Sgt Andy McNally, 15 Sig Regt – M35 Winner
- SSgt (YofS) Mallison, 15 Sig Regt
- Capt Neil Pollitt, 7 Sig Regt
- Maj Rhid Jones, 32 Sig Regt(V)

Ladies team

- Maj Mel Rayner, HQ DCCIS – Ladies Night Champion, W40 Winner
- Maj Katy Cale, DSL Beconsfield
- Capt Sally Calland, PRU Hohne – W35 Runner Up
- Cpl Julie Tucker, 11 Sig Regt

The other runners who represented the Corps in the Men’s Short course team and the U25 team were:

- Lt Col Eric Heritage, Lt Col Mike Complin, Maj Simon Ing, Maj Tarquin Shipley, WO1 (YofS) Heaton, SSgt Richie Hill, SSgt (YofS)
- Luke Mitchell, Sgt Dave Riches, Sig Tom Julian, Sig Bryant, Sig Underhill and Sig Northrop.

In all a fantastic performance by the Corps squad and all team members are congratulated on their performances. The training needs to be maintained now so that those trophies can be successfully defended next year.
The Army Individual Squash Championships held at Aldershot in January saw the Royal Signals seeded No 1 and 2 in the ‘Mens Open’ (LCpl Robinson and LCpl Jones) – a first for Royal Signals squash players. Both players were also young enough to play in the men’s ‘Under 25’ competition and as expected they had comfortable matches to reach the final of this event.

In the ‘Men’s Open’ the Royal Signals last had an Army Champion back in 1977 and then in 1982, so when both players reached this final as well, we were about to have our 3rd Army Champion. It was decided to play a double header match combining the 2 finals together with the winner taking both titles. LCpl Jones had played excellent squash throughout the competition, and showed a remarkable level of squash maturity and fitness. Since joining a top club near his Unit, 30 Sig Regt, his game has improved leaps and bounds. LCpl Robinson on the other hand had just completed a 4 month tour of Northern Ireland and played little squash. Robinson had a difficult semi final match against the Royal Engineers No1 player which he eventually won 3-2 despite feeling unwell after the first game.

The final was still expected to go according to seeding with LCpl Robinson, who has a much better array of winning shots, the favourite to win. However during the match LCpl Jones showed a dogged determination, his superb movement on court combined with his fitness proved too much for Robinson. Jones won the final 3-0 in what was a great match to watch between 2 young players. This was also the first time an Army ‘Under 25’ champion had also won the ‘Mens Open’ title at the same time, making Jones’s success that much more remarkable. Congratulations go to both players for reaching 2 Army squash finals.

The strength of Royal Signals continues to be strong and 3 players were selected to represent the Army at the prestigious Inter Services Championships in February. This number would have been 5 players however they were unable to play due to their work commitments. LCpl Jones represented the Mens team, LCpl Robinson the Under 25’s team and Maj Steve Bason represented Vets team. All 3 teams won their respective matches against the Navy and RAF during the competition rounding off an extremely successful year for Royal Signals squash across the board.

CORPS ORIENTEERING TRAINING CAMP
A Corps orienteering training camp, Ex MERCURY COMPASS 6, will take place 20-29 Jul in Wales, based around Aberystwyth and in conjunction with the Welsh 6 Days civilian event. The Camp is aimed at established Corps level runners, potential Corps runners and new blood with some experience. It is not suitable for complete novices. Individuals will be expected to make a personal contribution of approx £100 (possibly assisted by Unit PRIs). Details will be on the British Army orienteering website www.baoc.org.uk. If you have questions, contact the Corps Secretary Maj Mel Rayner on 94371 2389 or e-mail melanie.rayner846@mod.uk.

ORIENTEERING TRAINING COURSES
Courses are available at Longmoor for all abilities from basic skills to advanced trg. Course applications are done through the Army School of PT and details are on the BAOC website.
Every year the Royal Gibraltar Regiment is required to deploy outside of Gibraltar to complete their field training. To ensure continuity in the security of Gibraltar and the other tasks they perform, including ceremonial duties, a back-fill unit deploys for the period. Although usually an Infantry unit this year, through a series of fortunate circumstances, 10 Sig Regt offered to supply a composite squadron for the task.

Focused towards the security, contingency and ceremonial responsibilities the composite squadron planned to use the opportunity to complete concurrent quality training using the unique facilities and opportunities Gibraltar provides. The result was a highly enjoyable and successful 3-week exercise that saw troops from across the Regt demonstrating that Royal Signals soldiers are able to out-perform their teeth arm comrades! The Platoons that deployed from 18 Nov to 08 Dec 11 rotated through an MEL that included Military Training, Guard Duties and Other Tasks.

GUARD ROTATION - by Sgt Nikki Phillips

Ceremonial Guard began with Sgt James’ thorough inspection of the Convent Guard shift as they went through rigorous drill practise before being transported to the Governors’ residence. Despite Sgt James’ exceptionally high standards and constant “re-shows” we were never short of volunteers for the Convent Guard. Everyone that took part in the duty felt an immense sense of pride. This was the first time a regular Royal Signals unit had fulfilled the role and we were keen to prove that we could do the job better than the Royal Gibraltar Regiment. As the official residence of the Governor, a popular tourist site located on the main street of a busy shopping area, the Convent Guard was very much in the public eye. No pressure!

The duty itself took place during the day in No.2 dress. Required to stand perfectly still LCpl Mark Lowery was so convincing a crowd of School children asked the question “Is he alive?” Many of those that completed the duty were photographed by groups of tourists whilst Cpl Michelle Smith, one of the few females to have ever completed the duty, drew media attention from the local radio station and a Dutch TV network.

Those not on Ceremonial Guard formed the Rock Reserve – a standby Platoon on 1 hour Notice to Move for tasks ranging from security to disaster response. It wasn’t long before 1 Platoon were scrambled! An aircraft has crashed into the runway and there were casualties – at least that was the scenario we were briefed. This was an annual no-notice test of response for all Blue Light services and within 45mins the Rock Reserve was in location securing the Incident Control Point, controlling a cordon and providing assistance to those on the ground. At the end of exercise we assisted the Blue Light services with that Royal Signals specialist skill – taking down tents! With the adrenaline pumping and with everyone raring to go we had deployed to a major incident, albeit an exercise scenario, and highlighted to the Government of Gibraltar that 10 Sig Regt could respond to any incident if needed!

MILITARY TRAINING ROTATION - by LCpl Andreas Johnson

It was 0720hrs and with dreary eyes we made our way to the armoury where we were placed into 3 sections by our newly aquatinted boss, Lt Easton. Following on from a morning of grouping and zeroing we spent time confirming section battle drills. Considering our Platoon constituted soldiers that had never met before the boss seemed impressed with what had been demonstrated. Enemies were annihilated with aggression, gusto and vigour!

Day 2 saw quick progress to Platoon battle drills. Due to timing constraints, and an unexpected Compulsory Drugs
Testing, our time on the training area was cut short - but the boss felt we needed to continue training and so we set about our business around camp practising attacking fire hydrants to the bemusement of those watching us! The fun then began to start on Day 3 where training switched to complex environments including Tunnel warfare and FIBUA. Having perfected tunnel and building clearances the Platoon was ready for the final test: a 2 day confirmatory exercise “on the Rock”.

Ex BRUNO ROCK LIBERATION started with an initial patrol from Devils Tower Camp and soon arrived at the entry point to the famous Tunnel System. Expanded during World War II the tunnels are at parts wide enough to drive trucks through and the complex includes an underground power station, hospital and headquarters! As we entered the tunnels both point men put their torches on whilst everyone else had to follow in complete darkness. After a short while we went firm only for a few of us to see the “Williams Way 595 stairs” sign. The Boss looked on the map and directed his platoon up this mammoth task. It wouldn’t have been so bad if there weren’t constant chambers that needed clearing along the route. After a couple of contacts along the way we made it to our overnight harbour area to sleep. In the dark, cold, and wet tunnels we started into night routine although everyone had lost track of time with the absence of any natural light. When morning finally arrived the only indication were the alarms beeping. Without our watches we would have had no idea as to the time. Morale was high amongst the Platoon with the exception of Sig Nicholls. With no access to toilets, bags had been issued for “human waste” with a collection arranged by the RQMS. Sig Nicholls missed the collection and therefore was forced to carry his waste in the top of his bergan.

Still in complete darkness we set about our next task, to eliminate enemy forces and get to the next objective. The aggression from the previous night had only increased amongst the Platoon and in a few hours our Tunnel network was secure. After a bit of admin time Orders were given to rece 3 areas in order to regain the village. 1 Section was tasked with identifying entry routes to the area, 2 Section were to identify suitable FUPs (Forming Up Points) and last but not least 3 Section were to observe the village and gather intelligence on enemies numbers, weapons, occupied buildings and routes in and out of the houses. This was by no means an easy task but by midnight all had been achieved so after an epic uphill patrol back into the tunnels we delivered Patrol reports on the situation. After the Boss had received his orders from the Company OC, Capt Joiner, the Section Commanders then received their Orders, confirmed their plans and briefed the relevant Sections on how the final saga of this Military phase would go. H Hour was upon us and it was time for the final FIBUA Village assault!

After reaching our assaulting positions the onslaught began. Our FSP (Fire Support Position) was given the go ahead and opened up on all the enemy positions. The assaulting section cleared the first house and then laid down cover fire while the FSP made haste to clear the second house.

Once cleared the third and final house was cleared and a huge sigh of relief was heard: well done lads. It has been hard work but great fun! Thanks to Sgt Wright, Sgt Farrar and Cpl ‘Rick’ Steel (the DS) for a brilliant week’s training.

OTHER TASKS ROTATION - by Sig Turner

For 1 Platoon the Other Tasks rotation began with the first 2 days focused on a MACC tasks which had been agreed with the Gibraltar Tourist Board. With Military History covering Gibraltar the Tourist Board found it difficult to keep everything maintained to a high level. The Royal Anglian Way, a prominent tourist route joining the upper and lower Rock had fallen into disrepair. Along the route were 3 gun emplacements which had also been badly vandalised. Each Platoon had been tasked with rejuvenating an emplacement and the pathway around it. We decided to paint the main gun (its massive), the emplacement walls and ammo compartments, and approx 100m of hand rails followed by making the path more serviceable. Over the 2 days we were visited by Brig Vickery, Comd 2 Sig Bde), the CO, RSM and the Sqn OC’s all of whom were impressed with what had been achieved.
Amongst the cleaning, painting, lifting and bricking a highlight was the creation of a new species of Monkey. The hand rails had just been painted blue and we were frequently visited by monkeys on a daily basis. After many failed attempts to sway the monkeys not to jump on the rails they did anyway, so after sitting on freshly blue painted rails, Gibraltar now has the breed of the ‘Blue arsed Monkey’.

Day 3 of our Other Tasks rotation started as you would expect for the Mediterranean: blazing heat. This ensured high morale for our Adventure Training. We all met outside our accommodation block waiting for transport to the marina for a spot of boat fishing, power boating and water skiing. We split into 2 groups, one group fishing using 2 boats, and the other group either power boating or water skiing all from the same boat. In the entire day of fishing only LCpl ‘Faz’ Faro caught a fish.

My tip of the week is that when a Naval Officer is commanding the power boat, hold on for dear life, as LCpl Liam Burton found out when he was lapping it up in the sun when all of a sudden the boat quickly changed direction and launched the poor lad out. On seeing this an uproar of laughter erupted. A spluttering Liam tried to yell for help but this did not help his cause. Overall the sun, sea and extreme male bonding proved to be a winning combination. All personnel involved were once again in high spirits and ready for anything.

The final hurdle of the Other Tasks rotation was embarking on a treasure hunt. What this actually meant is gallivanting around Gibraltar filling out a questionnaire that covered all aspects of Gibraltarian history (and possibly some of its drinking establishments!). In the evening we had to produce and deliver a presentation on varied topics. It took approximately 8 hours to complete the questionnaire after visiting numerous locations which was an enjoyable experience. LCpl Burton once again shone through and somehow managed to say ‘Jurassic park era’ as the period in which the Rock was formed. Good lad, he never fails to deliver.

Finally the exercise was wrapped up with the famous Rock Run followed by a BBQ and Sqn social. With sore heads and sore legs everyone then had to board the plane back to the UK. 10 Sig Regt had done the job, with high praise from the Royal Gibraltar Regiment, the Gibraltarian Tourist Board and just about everyone else we had dealings with. On top of this we had also had excellent fun, conducted quality training, took advantage of Gibraltar’s unique opportunities and learnt lots. We had worked hard, and played hard, and all headed back with a distinct feeling of "Mission accomplished!".
EXERCISE MERCURY DRAGON

- by Cpl Scott Woodrow

When Sgt Ben Powell asked me several months ago to take part in a Three Peaks Challenge I thought it would be easy, however when he explained that we weren’t going to just do the Three Peaks but in fact complete it 3 times in 3 days, I thought he was either joking or mad. Turns out he was both. So it was that on the morning of Sunday 5 June; myself, Sgt Ben Powell, Sgt Steve ‘Shug’ Hughes and Cpl John ‘JC’ Connor set off to travel to Kinlochleven to prepare to start the next day at 1700hrs. We were accompanied by our admin team of SSgt Andy ‘Schumacher’ Hill and Cpl Greg ‘Capt Slow’ Smith who would be doing the duties of driving, making scoff, brews and telling awesome stories. After arrival we cooked up some amazing scoff and then headed for our last beer before having an early night in order to be fresh for the next 3 days.

After a morning of final prep and a wander around Fort William we descended to our start point at the foot of Ben Nevis. After some words of encouragement from our admin team we started our first ascent. The weather was amazing and with the sun on our backs we made our way up The Ben. Spirits were high as we still hadn’t fully comprehended what was in store over the next 3 days. After a quick photo at the top we descended back to the wagons where our delicious meal of ORP was awaiting us. We jumped in the wagons and made our way to Wasdale Head, the start point for Scafell Pike.

We arrived at 0300 and after a quick shake out started our ascent in the dark. Luckily the sun started to rise and it was light around 0400. We made good progress and were up and down in 2hrs 45m. Another ORP meal and then we all got our heads down as SSgt Hill and Cpl Smith drove on to Snowdon.

After arriving at Snowdon we quickly prepped kit and got on the Pyg Track. The weather started to turn and the going was a bit unsteady underfoot. Morale was still relatively high at this point and we all pushed on to get to the top, take a photo and get back down. After our descent we took around 30mins to have scoff and a brew, replenish water and then make our way back up Snowdon again. This was always going to be the hardest part of the challenge where we had to ascend a mountain that we had just summited, with a look of disbelief from civi teams who were attempting a single Three Peaks Challenge. We all pushed on and made it up and down. After we got to the vehicles we can all admit that we each had niggling injuries and were truly beginning to appreciate the size of the challenge. Once in the vehicles we were on our way back to Wasdale Head to tackle Scafell once more.

We arrived at Scafell at approximately 0145 and after 15mins to sort kit and water we were off. We knew that this would be a night time ascent and with low clouds it was pitch dark. I take the prize for “worst head torch in the world ever” it is by far the most temperamental piece of kit I have ever purchased and only worked when it decided to. I made my way up the hill by following the man in front as it was so unreliable. After a quick ascent and descent we were full of scoff and back in the wagons to go and tackle Ben Nevis twice more.
We had a brief stop off at Hamilton where we were met by Cpl Connor’s parents who had lovingly prepared us all meals of pasta and homemade bread. After nearly 2 days of ORP these meals were very welcome and after many “thank you’s” we made our way to Ben Nevis to complete our 6th and 7th hills. After some last minute scoffing of homemade bread we were ready to tackle the hill. The weather couldn’t have been more in contrast with what we encountered on our first ascent and it felt as though we went through every weather system imaginable as we climbed the winding path on our way to the top. As we made our way down, the heavens well and truly opened and by the time we had made it back to the vehicles morale was definitely at an all time low as the prospect of going back up was not one that was welcomed by anyone. Once brews were drunk and scoff was eaten spirits started to lift. Before we knew it we were back up Ben Nevis again. After passing teams on their way down who we passed on our way up and many questions of “Are you going up again?” “Didn’t you pass us before?” and “Are you all mad?” we made it to the summit. Needless to say we were all wet, tired and suffering. We pushed on as we knew that this would be the last time we had to come down this hill and that we were finally on the home stretch with only 2 mountains to go.

After more pasta it was time to get our heads down as we were driven to Wasdale Head, which was a scarier prospect than it sounds as I’m pretty sure Schumachers blood had been replaced by coffee and the contents of multiple cans of Monster. After a brief jaunt through a small Scottish town just outside Glasgow, as the M74 was closed, we made it onto the M6, through Cumbria and back to Wasdale Head. On our way up the hill the clag came in. This caused problems as it was dark and wet, however Sgt Powell pulled some ninja nav skills out of nowhere and eventually we were on our way up the correct path. Before we knew we were up and down and back in the wagons on our way to Snowdon to complete the ninth and final Mountain.

Once we arrived at Snowdon we were met by some members of HQ DISC who were to accompany us as morale on our final ascent. As it was our last day someone must have booked the weather as the sun was out and there was a light breeze which made for perfect walking weather. After a very quick ascent it was clear that Sgt Powell and Sgt Hughes were intent on getting it over with quickly with me and Cpl Connor just happy to still be walking. After our descent we crossed the finish line in a team time of 69hrs 33mins, so we had 2 ½ hours to spare. Due to this not being attempted before, it automatically made us record holders for 3 consecutive challenges, which is brilliant, but I solemnly vowed never to agree to anything Sgt Powell suggests ever again.

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By WO1 (RSM) Morgan

On 14 Dec 11 Capt Billy Morris 22 Sig Regt and WO1 (RSM) Mark Morgan 21 Sig Regt (AS) departed from London Heathrow to take part in the 100th Anniversary Amundsen Scott South Pole Race. Originally of course there were 3 in the team Sean McIlroy 7 Sig Regt unfortunately could not make it and so the 2 of us arrived in Cape Town, South Africa in order to finalise our preparations for the race. Two days of frantic lectures, kit packing and food preparation were followed by 4 days of waiting around as the weather in Antarctica was too bad for the flight into the Russian Station at Novo.

Finally on 22 Dec we made it and set up in Novo, fitting skis and packing more food prior to setting off on the training leg of the race on Christmas Eve. We were delighted to finally be in Antarctica and on ski’s and despite the weight of the pulks set off in good humour. The training leg was split over 7 days over a total distance of 150km with some hills worthy of a good Welsh mountain day and one of the strangest New Year’s Eve parties ever.

After completing the training in all climbing to an altitude of 2950m we flew forward to the start point. From here we had 800km between us and the Geographical South Pole. There were 7 teams competing in the race including 2 others from Britain, one from Germany, one from Holland, one from South Africa and a team from Norway.

There was a great feeling amongst us all at being in Antarctica exactly 100 years after the original race between Scott and Amundsen and on 4 Jan 2012 we set off on the long journey south.

Temperatures were on average -30/-35° and the romance of Antarctica was quickly replaced by a barren bleak flat white landscape day after day. We experienced a few difficult days during the move to the halfway checkpoint with Tramadol playing a big part in the treatment of chest infections and swollen joints. After completing 80km in 24 hours we arrived at the checkpoint 24 hours behind the Norwegian team and in second place. This was a mandatory 24 hour stop and a chance to recharge for the second half.

The second half was tough going as the constant effects of the weather and the weight loss took effect. We stuck at it and at 0800hrs on 24 Jan 12 made it to the South Pole, experiencing a mixture of pride, relief and exhaustion at -43°! We finished 2nd in the race which was comfortably won by the outstanding Norwegian team. We consoled ourselves that they were all SF and had conducted full time training for 6 months prior to the race (no excuse really). We lost over 2 stone each during the race (six packs already disappeared unfortunately) and I got some frostbite damage to my fingers which has put an end to my piano career for a while.
On 14 Dec 11 Capt Billy Morris 22 Sig Regt and WO1 (RSM) Mark Morgan 21 Sig Regt (AS) departed from London Heathrow to take part in the 100th Anniversary Amundsen Scott South Pole Race. Originally of course there were 3 in the team but unfortunately WO1 (RSM) Sean McIlroy 7 Sig Regt could not make it and so the 2 of us arrived in Cape Town, South Africa in order to finalise our preparations for the race. Two days of frantic food preparation were followed and as the weather in Antarctica it into the Russian Station at Nome it and set up in Novo, fitting prior to setting off on the Christmas Eve. We were Antarctica and on ski’s and the pulks set off in good humour. over 7 days over a total distance worthy of a good Welsh the strangest New Year’s Eve training, in all climbing to an altitude 7 days to the start point. From here us and the Geographical South is competing in the race including team from Germany, one from Africa and a team from Norway. 

This project started in Sep 2009 with us being accepted into the race and raising £93,000 to take part. Our sincere thanks to you all for your help in raising this significant figure, in particular we would like to thank the following:

HQ SOinc (A) Global RadioData Comms DATONG
All ranks 11 Sig Regt All ranks 22 Sig Regt WO1 (FofS) Robson WCT

We would to extend a special thanks to our sponsors: GRC, C3IA Solutions and DATONG. Without them of course our participation in the race would not have been possible, it really shows the family side of our Corps in that all the sponsorship came from ex Corps members. Thanks to Gaz and Dave Coffey in particular at GRC, Keith Parsons and Dave Coffey at C3IA Solutions and Neil Clements at DATONG, diolch o’r galon i chi gyd.

We have raised over £30,000 for charity being split between the ABF (£19,000 donated as part of the 11 Sig Regt Carrington Drum success), RBL and the RSBF.

As well as our race the Team Mercury name has recently been used for a team from the Corps competing in the Marathon Des Sables and for a team from 22 Sig Regt who will be competing in the Siberian Ice challenge in March 2012 (www.extremeworldraces.co.uk).

The Corps will be 100 years old in 2020, it would be great to see the name and spirit of Team Mercury continuing and bigger and better challenges being undertaken by our officers and soldiers leading up to this anniversary, aim high! If anyone would like more information about the South Pole Race 2012 please contact us.
Set in the beautiful setting of Ashley Wood Golf Club in the rolling hills of North Dorset, preparations are underway once more for the annual CAGE Golf Event.

CAGE was originally conceived in 1992 as a fund raising idea for the construction of the new wing for the Royal Signals Museum. The first event was held in Catterick and was a great success attracting golfers from the Royal Signals and from industry, as well as golfing celebrities mainly from Yorkshire Cricket and Leeds Football Club.

Subsequently the event moved to Dorset and has raised money for national, local and military charities as well as for Royal Signals charities. So far the event has raised more than a quarter of a million pounds which has been shared with charities including: Save the Children, the Children’s Wessex Hospice, Phab Kids and local schools for children with special needs. This year the proceeds will benefit Julia’s House and the Royal Signals Benevolent Fund.

CAGE provides an opportunity for senior people from business, the defence industry and the military CIS community to get to know each other in a relaxed setting. It also allows those who want to “swing a golf club” to do so.

CAGE has also been regularly supported by a variety of sporting legends including: Brian Close, Derek Underwood, Peter Osgood, Stuart Watkins, Don Shepherd, Ron Harris, Mervyn Kitchen, Freddie Titmus and John Conteh.

The event starts with a cocktail party, which this year will be in the Royal Signals Museum on the evening of Tuesday 10th July 2012. The next day a Stableford format golf tournament is played at the local Ashley Wood Golf Club, described by Peter Alliss as Dorset’s hidden jewel. Each team is made up of two or three corporate players with a celebrity and/or a Military player.

The golf is followed by a Regimental Black Tie Dinner in the Royal Signals Officers Mess in Blandford Garrison with entertainment provided by a Military Band.

The cost of entering a team for CAGE is £700 and there are also other sponsorship opportunities.

If you would like to join us for CAGE please contact Maj Ali Biggs at alistair_biggs980@mod.uk or by telephone on 01258 485243, but you should note that entry is limited to 30 sponsored teams.
Branch News. John Bryan is the new Hon Secretary of the Salisbury Branch and can be contacted on; 01722-320671. In light of the disbandment of the unit, there is a proposal to form a 7 Sig Regt Assn. Any current or former member of the unit who is interested in joining is asked to give their name, address and contact tel no and/or e-mail address to Assn HQ on 01258-482090 or admin@royalsignalsassociation.co.uk. Anyone willing to serve on the committee as asked to indicate this. Albert Reid is the new Hon Secretary of the Newcastle Branch and can be reached at; albertreid@mac.com

RSA Reunion: 23 - 24 June 2012. Details of the 2012 Reunion (including application forms for car passes and meals) can be found on RSA website; www.royalsignalsassociation.co.uk, however those without Internet, may obtain a copy from Assn HQ.

This is my last such report and, as I retire, I shall take with me many happy memories of all you lovely people out there. It has been my sincere privilege to serve you over the past 17 years and I am impressed by the great enthusiasm for the Corps that remains firmly with our veterans. I ask you all to give my successor as much help as you gave me and to make her feel equally as welcome. May I wish you and yours all the very best for the future. Yours sincerely, Peter Cuckow.

New Life Members. A warm welcome is extended to the following members enrolled since the last issue of The Wire:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LCpl John Allan</td>
<td>1981-90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lt Roy Ashby</td>
<td>1950-64</td>
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<td>LCpl Paul Brearley</td>
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<td>LCpl Victoria Brighton</td>
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<td>SSGt Jonathan Brooke</td>
<td>1988-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sig Andy Brown</td>
<td>1978-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sig Graham Brownhill</td>
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<td>Cpl Steve Brunsdon</td>
<td>1974-82</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSGt Steve Bush</td>
<td>1976-92</td>
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<tr>
<td>WO2 Darren Cattle</td>
<td>1991-date</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sgt Mark Cook</td>
<td>1969-80</td>
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<td>Sgt Matt Coward</td>
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<td>SSGt Dean Cox</td>
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<td>Sig Dawn Crossland(Hague)</td>
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<td>Sgt Darren Culver</td>
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<td>Sig Mark Curtis</td>
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<td>Maj Mike Curtis-Rouze</td>
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<td>Sig Damien Doherty</td>
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<td>LCpl Alex Eckford</td>
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<td>Cpl Tuc Pauls</td>
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<td>Sig David Flynn</td>
<td>2003-03</td>
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<td>Cpl David Gleeson</td>
<td>1956-58</td>
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<td>SSGt Paul Haynes</td>
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<td>Sig Bryan Hickinbottom</td>
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<td>Cpl Dave Holden</td>
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<td>Sig Matthew Hughes</td>
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<td>Sgt Tim James</td>
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<td>Cpl Gerry Jaques</td>
<td>1967-74</td>
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<td>Sig Pete Lacey</td>
<td>1974-77</td>
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<td>Capt Heather Lawrie</td>
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<td>Sgt Gary Lea</td>
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<td>Sig James Pirrie</td>
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<td>Sig Shaun Pyrah</td>
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<td>Cpl Peter Ratcliffe</td>
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<td>WO2 Neil Roome</td>
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<td>Maj Frank Running</td>
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<td>WO1 Wayne Scarrott</td>
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<tr>
<td>WO2 Michael Shaw</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cpl James Sidorowicz</td>
<td>1997-date</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cpl Fred Simpson</td>
<td>1961-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSGt Gary Smurthwaite</td>
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<td>WO2 Richie Smith</td>
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<td>Capt Sarah Stonier</td>
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<td>LCpl Lee Taylor</td>
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<td>Sig Craig Walker</td>
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<td>SSGt Tom Wandless</td>
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<td>Sig Nick Watkins</td>
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<td>LCpl Derrick Webster</td>
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<td>WO2 Bob Wells</td>
<td>1952-75</td>
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<td>WO1 Rob White</td>
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<td>Cpl David Williamson</td>
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<td>Cpl Stephen Wooding</td>
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## DONATIONS

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<td>Lorraine Phair in memory of her father who served in the Corps</td>
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<td>East Kent Branch RSA</td>
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<td>The Royal Signals (Northern) Band</td>
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<td>Essex Yeomanry Assn</td>
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<td>Maj (Retd) E H Le Quesne in memory of Maj Ron Acott and Maj Gen Tony Boyle CB</td>
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<td>West Wales Branch RSA in memory of the late Hon Treasurer, Maj Gen Tony Boyle CB</td>
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<td>Loughborough Branch RSA in memory of Maj Gen Tony Boyle CB</td>
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<td>Liverpool Branch RSA</td>
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<td>Mr G M Brownie</td>
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<td>Jack Ellis</td>
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<td>P A Drummond</td>
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<td>Mel Wright</td>
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<td>Fred Simpson</td>
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<td>39 Sig Regt (V) from the sale of Corps wristbands</td>
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<td>Lincoln Branch RSA</td>
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<td>Tayside &amp; Fyfe Branch RSA</td>
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<td>Aldershot Branch RSA</td>
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<td>Huddersfield Branch RSA</td>
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<td>Ronald F Lester in memory of his dear wife Pam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Derek Fisher in memory of Maj Peter Thomson</td>
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<td>Maj R C Offord in memory of Cpl J S Shires</td>
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<td>Exmouth Branch RSA</td>
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<td>In memory of LCpl Frank Bentley cheques totaling</td>
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<td>32 Sig Regt (V) from sales of Corps wristbands</td>
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<td>Mrs S Hyde in memory of her husband</td>
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<td>Douglas Hyder</td>
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<tr>
<td>From the will of Maj Robert J F Whistler</td>
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<td>Bedford Branch RSA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southampton Branch RSA from sales of Corps wristbands</td>
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## BATH BRANCH

### GENERAL

The Executive Committee of Chairman, Richard Davis, Secretary, Mike Macklin and Treasurer, Bob Vale, ably supported by Howard Ham, Maurice Davies and Dick Hemming have seen a very active period for the Bath Branch over the past 12 months with a mix of visits and functions to suit most tastes. The Branch is fortunate to have in the Bath area the Corsham complex of Signals formations and units and 21 Sig Regt (AS) in Colerne and their support and involvement in many of the Branch functions is very much appreciated.

### 50 Year Badges

Firstly, I am delighted to report that RSA HQ in Blandford have approved the 50 Year badges and certificates for Roy Baldwin, Don Capon, Jim Peck and Ernie Short. The Branch wishes to congratulate them all and say a big ‘thank you’ for their dedication and support over so many years.

### ACTIVITIES

**Pub Night.** A group of 25 of the faithful got together for some mid-winter cheer at the Hare and Hounds in Bath in February, where we put to bed the winter over the odd ale and looked forward to the spring and summer.

**Bletchley Park Visit.** Our first excursion of the year in April saw a select group of 12 visiting Bletchley Park where the volunteers responsible for the site made us extremely welcome. The guided tour was first class covering the history of the site and the now famous machines involved in mastering the ‘Enigma’. The unchanged nature of the main house and the various huts provided just the right ambiance for such a visit and all agreed it was a most memorable day.

**Corsham Visit.** The New Build at Corsham, now almost completed, was the object of our next visit on 28 June courtesy of Lt Col Steve Turnbull and 30 of us enjoyed a fascinating morning on tour followed by a most welcome lunch. Our guides, Maj Andy Slack and WO1 (GSM) Mark Collins were extremely well briefed and produced a comprehensive chronicle of the new buildings and their roles before moving us on to the new mess accommodation to meet the current staff over a curry lunch.

**AGM.** This year our AGM and Lunch was held on 24 Sep thanks to 43 Sig Sqn (V) at their TA Centre in Bath and 28 of us enjoyed the review of the year followed by the updates and reminiscences on members past and present over lunch.

**Bus Tour of Bath for 21 Sig Regt (AS) Families.** We are fortunate to have as an Association Member Harry Hemming who is an expert on Bath and a regular guide around the City.

**Future Intentions.** At the AGM, the Executive Team were pleased to welcome to their numbers some younger blood in...
the shape of Stephen Farrow and Arthur Threlfall-Season whose enthusiastic plans for next year are already firming up into a full and enjoyable program. Indeed by the time this article goes to print we hope to have enjoyed our first outing of the year in March to the Holburne Museum, Bath.

NORTHERN IRELAND BRANCH

Chairman: Mr Jim Reilly
Hon Sec: Capt Ian Wolfe

January Meeting. New Branch Member SSgt Paul McCann gave members a most interesting talk, with slides, on his activities in the Tiger Team from 2005 – 2009. Paul worked between Iraq and Afghanistan providing information to HQ about mobile assets in Theatre.

February Meeting – AGM. The chairman declared all offices vacant and relinquished the chair to the Vice President Mr Lightfoot who addressed the Branch. He commented that he was standing in for the President, Mr Johnston, who was unwell and unable to attend this evening. This was the first AGM Noel had missed since the 1960s.

The Election of Branch:

President: Mr Johnston
Vice President: Mr Lightfoot
Area Representative: Mr Craig
Chairman: Mr Reilly
Vice Chairman: Mr Donaldson
Secretary: Mr Wolfe
Asst Secretary: Mrs Wolfe
Treasurer: Mrs Cameron
Visiting Officer: Mr McCann and Mr Lucas
Standard Bearer: Mr Craig and Mr McCann (new) 2nd Standard Bearer: (vacant),
Auditors: Mrs Cameron and Ms Paterson
Property Member: Mr Harrison
Blandford Organiser: Mr Reilly
Reunion Banker: Mrs Cameron
Archivist: Mr Crystal
BIM: Mr Gilpin,
Membership Secretary: Mr Wolfe

A “Speaker” has been booked for our March Meeting. We look forward to hearing Mrs Eileen Bell, a former Speaker in the NI Parliament at Stormont, to give a talk to the Branch at the March meeting.

Other Business. Mr Gilpin spoke to the members on the plan for a history of Clonaver Park: Our history project has now begun and included a visit to Clonaver Park on 2nd Feb to view archives held by the TQMS. Two members of 40 Sigs joined the BIM who had brought a local history author along to advise us on the best way to present this information for posterity. Soon we will start to create a detailed history of Clonaver Park TA Centre since the early years. Branch members at the meeting were encouraged to offer suggestions and material e.g. photos with dates and description of contents, in order to make this as complete a history as possible.

Footnote: As usual, we issue an invitation to all serving or ex-members of Royal Signals, regular or TA and ex-members of ATS/WRAC who served with Royal Signals, to join us at Clonaver Park TA Centre Belfast, on the third Wednesday of each month.

56 DIV (LONDON SIGNALS) OCA

We held our annual dinner on 25 November 2011 in the Union Jack Club, Waterloo on which occasion we welcomed Maj (Retd) Keith Pritchard, Editor of The Wire, as our Guest of Honour. Keith had a few good tales to tell after which he gave us a run down on the future changes within the Corps. We were also pleased to welcome Maj Andy Dick - Ops Manager of 71 Sig Regt (V).

The occasion was used as an opportunity for our Guest of Honour to present the Hon Sec, Steve Bland, with his 50 year badge.

BEVERLEY EX BOYS ASSOCIATION

Chairman: John Hill
Secretary: Tony Hull

The Annual Reunion for the Beverley Ex-Boys Association was held on 15 Sept 2011 at the Staverton Park Hotel, Daventry.

Our Guest of Honour was Col Terry Canham with his wife, Frances. Terry’s father was Capt Terry Canham, at Beverley from 1954/56. Capt Canham was on parade when the Princess Royal, Princess Mary, visited Beverley in 1954. The younger Terry was born at Beverley and calls himself a Beverley Boy and he was proud to be invited to our Reunion Dinner. We have received a very nice thank you letter from Col Terry.

Tony Hull, Frances Canham, Col Terry Canham, Alan Davies
John Hill had provided 2 quizzes for people to do during the Dinner and Mary Wardle and Gillian Broadbent sold tickets for the usual Raffle which was drawn at the end of the evening. From all the comments and thank you’s that we have received it would appear that everybody enjoyed themselves.

Beryl and Tony Hull will be holding their annual Barbecue at their home in Northbourne, Bournemouth, on Sunday, 15 July 2012. Anyone living in the area or visiting will be welcome to attend.

BIRGELEN VETS ASSOCIATION

The Birgelen Veterans Association is now in its 12th year of operation. It was founded by Fred Searle on 5 October 2000. Within a few weeks Andy Riddell, John Francis MBE and Cyril Harding all joined as founder members. The latter, immediately offered to become the Association Secretary and has remained so to this day.

In September 2001, Maj Gen P A C Baldwin CBE, one time Adjt of 1 Wireless Regt and CO 13 Sig Regt (Radio) graciously agreed to become our President and remains so still.

The association was set up as a dedication and a focus of help to the many professional men and women of all Corps and Agencies, regardless of rank who served with the Regts and its sub-units.

Its other priority is to maintain and to sustain its nominated charity. This is currently the ‘Hilfe fur Krebskranke Kinder’ (Help for children suffering from cancer) in Ophoven, Germany. This particular charity was selected to enable us:

- Support a very worthy cause.
- To enable the Association to maintain a link with the local community.
- Foster the Anglo/German friendships formed over the 40 year life of the Regiment.

This year the Association will be holding its annual reunion in Torquay 28 Sept – 01 Oct 2012. Bookings are open now and members wishing to attend should book via the BVA for the usual Raffle which was drawn at the end of the Dinner.

Birgelen Veterans Association 12th Anniversary Reunion. The 12th Anniversary reunion of the BVA will be held at the Cavendish Hotel, Torquay, from 28th September to 01 October 2012. Bookings will be restricted to the first 100 applicants and Members wishing to attend should apply via the website: http://www.birgelenvets.org or by contacting the Secretary, Cyril Harding, at: 14 Park Close Abergavenny, Mons. NP7 5SU

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<td>1936/64</td>
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<td>Sgt RWH Aveson</td>
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<td>30-Jan-12</td>
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<td>LCpl F Bentley</td>
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<td>??:Jan-12</td>
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<td>1941/76</td>
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<td>Cpl J Cooke</td>
<td>1965/85</td>
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<td>Sig CP Dewdney</td>
<td>1946/48</td>
<td>03-Mar-12</td>
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<td>Sgt NJ Evans</td>
<td>1939/46</td>
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<td>Sig JR Fowkes</td>
<td>1974/78</td>
<td>02-Jan-12</td>
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<td>1942/46</td>
<td>23-Jan-12</td>
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<td>Maj R Halls</td>
<td>1961/97</td>
<td>16-Feb-12</td>
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<td>1954/56</td>
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<td>Sig D Lees</td>
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<td>Sgt J Wilson-Brown</td>
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<td>Sig LA Wootten</td>
<td>1942/47</td>
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Martin R Jones – Intake 36 RMAS

I was a member of Waterloo Company Intake 36 at Sandhurst, commissioned in December 1965. We are trying to organise a reunion. One of our number, Martin Jones, went into the Royal Signals. It is thought that he might later have left the Army and joined the Police - possible Shropshire Police.

If anyone is in contact with Martin could they please ask him to contact me. My details are:

Tim Clark
Tel: 0208 133 3354
Mob: (0034) 659500312
e-mail: eltimmy@gmail.com
FOAKES - Maj (TOT) Peter William Foakes died 29th November 2011

Born in 1923, Peter was very much a product of WW1 and the great depression that followed it. His father was a decorated veteran who fought the full length of the first war and some of the occupation of Germany in 1918/19 and the values he held he passed onto Peter, values which he upheld for the rest of his life.

At school in Essex, Peter proved to be an able student, and took up swimming as a favourite sport, quickly becoming champion at both school level and Essex County. His love of swimming was to last him his lifetime. Although Peter’s parents tried desperately to keep him at school, they were unable to maintain the level of expense into the 6th form and he left school to become an accountant.

The outbreak of war in 1939 saw Peter join the Home Guard and it soon became apparent to him that this was where his future lay. He joined the regular army in the Essex Regiment as a fit 17 stone man and was immediately assigned to the company Vickers Machine Gun team, serving through most of the war in that roll. On the build up to the D-Day invasion, Peter was transferred to The Royal Corps of Signals and fought with the 49th West Riding Division from Normandy through to Holland, watching the airborne assault on Arnhem, the death and destruction and the starvation of the Dutch people, three things which left a lasting impression but of which he was never able to speak, until the 50th anniversary of the D-Day landings.

Peter revelled in the Corps and after VE Day found himself being shipped to India, where he undertook training in preparation for the invasion of Singapore, but before it could take place, the A-bomb was dropped and the war against Japan ended. He wasn’t idle during his time in India and travelled extensively through the country studying Buddhism, Hindu and the Sikh religions, before being transferred back to the UK in 1947, where he announced that he would give up accountancy in favour of a career in the Royal Signals. Peter qualified as a technician and promotions quickly followed and swimming once again became his most enjoyed pastime. After spending time in Catterick, he was sent on a tour of duty in Egypt, before a posting back to BAOR and Bunde in 1958. Whilst there he was commissioned and there followed postings to York, Blandford and Berlin, where he swam and played water polo for those units and the Army. Wherever Peter went he would set up, organise and support swimming clubs that invariably went on to win most of the competitions.

In Aden, Peter spent a lot of time up country in the Arab States and was instrumental in building and setting up many of the communications systems in the airfields and airports, which were in continual use right into the 1980’s, and following his time there went to the Apprentice College at Harrogate, a posting he loved, and in 1969 was seconded to the Army in Kenya, where he inevitably swam and played water polo for the Kenyan Army, Nairobi and Kenya. 1971 saw Peter return to BAOR and eventual retirement after 31 years as Major (TOT).

Settling initially in London to civilian life, Peter soon moved to Faversham in Kent, where he began to make his presence felt. After a short period of studying at Cambridge, he began to organise and was instrumental in building a new swimming pool in the town. A keen and active member of the British Legion, he took the salute with the Mayor on Remembrance Day parades, was a staunch member and Honourable president of the town’s branch of the Masons as well as a committed member of the East Kent Branch RSA and the OCA.

Peter’s love and commitment to the Royal Signals and his swimming was legendary and he played his part in all the organisations to which he belonged until into his 80’s when the cancer from which he suffered finally took it’s toll. Peter died at home, at peace and with his family around him on 29th November 2011 and leaves his life long partner Peggy, a son, Peter and a daughter Amanda.
GARLICK – Lt Col Roger William Garlick died 17 December 2011

Roger Garlick was born on 6 June 1939 and spent his later schoolboy years in Ash Vale, Aldershot before joining the Army in 1959. He was commissioned into Royal Signals in 1961 and on completion of his ‘Q’ course, joined 22 Sig Regt in the era when the regiment was the 1 (BR) Corps Radio Regiment. He very quickly established himself as a professional and practical communicator and he was given command of the troop supporting CRAC as Commander of the 1 (BR) Corps Covering Force. He married June Brooks in 1964 and they had one child, Natasha.

In 1964 he returned to the School of Signals then in Catterick, to attend the newly introduced No 1 Communications Course. Although a career course it was also preparatory training, along with attendance on the Infantry RSOs course at the Infantry Signals Wing, then in Hythe, Kent, before being posted to an infantry battalion. At that time Royal Signals was very keen to extend its influence further forward in the BAOR battle, whilst at the same time continuing to support the Infantry with their re-equipment programme which included a significant increase in the number of unit radios in the new Clansman range as well as the issue of the first generation of the FV 432. This was exemplified by a trial scheme of sending Royal Signals subalterns to infantry battalions as Assistant RSOs to provide the more detailed communications knowledge. Roger Garlick was one of the first 5 of these subalterns and arrived in 11 Bde and joined 1st Bn The Royal Warwickshire Fusiliers in early 1965. He spent 2 years with the battalion and his success in this role contributed significantly to continuing the scheme, indeed expanding it to include the RAC regiments and from which many Royal Signals subalterns gained extremely valuable experience.

Although not a great sportsman, he was not hesitant in coming forward to support and take part in regimental teams and when necessary, he could swing a mean and wild cricket bat for a quick 30 runs. In due course following his return to the Corps, he was selected for staff training and attended Division 3 of the Staff College in 1970 which was followed in 1972 by promotion to Maj and a posting to MOD and the Directorate of Manning. This was the beginning of his non-communication specialisation; that of personnel management. Following his 2 MOD years he went off in 1974 to command 200 Sig Sqn supporting 20 Armd Bde, again in Germany. His facility for personnel management was recognised again as he returned to the Royal Signals Posting Branch called AG11 in 1976 as DAAG(O) (or SO2 Pers in modern speak).

In 1978 following his selection for Lt Col on the Pink List he became CSO London District but after only 6 months he was withdrawn to fill a crucial post in the Middle East. He went on Loan Service in late 1978 to Oman as Commander of the Sultan’s Armed Forces Signals to take over from Maj Frank Partington who had been holding the fort – almost literally - as this was a time when SAF Signals were heavily committed supporting the counter-insurgency operations in Dhofar in the south of Oman. This situation ideally suited his single minded and thoroughly professional and practical approach to communicating and he used his wide experience at all levels of tactical communications to very good effect. The military life and culture in Oman very much appealed to him like so many who have served in the Sultanate, so much so, that when his time came to leave in July 1981 he resigned his British commission and went back to the Sultan’s Armed Forces on contract. His personnel background was put to good effect in the Omani Army as a Lt Col and a senior personnel officer. He remained there using his immense experience to prepare the Omanis for their onward march to Omanisation. This led to his being hoist by his own petard as in due course he was replaced by an Omani. He and his new wife comunicator and he was given command of the troop supporting CRAC as Commander of the 1 (BR) Corps Covering Force.

When he finally retired, he and Liz happily settled into their contented way of life in Essex and amongst other things they developed their great interest in cooking. From this mutual interest and their similar sense of humour, they also compiled a cook book called obviously enough ‘A Touch of Garlick’ but sadly it did not come to fruition as a heart condition caught up with Roger and he died suddenly on 17 December 2011. Those who knew Roger and Liz will also be saddened to hear that the strain of his death on Liz, following soon after a major operation she underwent in October 2011, appears to have resulted in her having heart failure. She died just after a month after Roger on 24 January 2012. Their many friends will be saddened by the loss of both of them but those who knew them well will have a degree of empathy and an understanding that the strength of their bond continues.

COOMBER – WO2 (YofS(EW)) David Allan Coomber died 23 October 2011

David, Known as Dai, passed away peacefully at home after a short battle with Burkitts Lymphoma on 23 October 2011 aged 38. Much loved husband of Victoria, father to Owain and Bethan, son of Allan and Carol and dearly loved brother of Rhian and Rhys plus many other members of the family.

Joining the Corps in the 1989 C intake Harrogate following Phase 1 training he underwent trade training at Comms and Sy Group UK at Garats Hay (now Welbeck College) in Leicestershire. A true Spec Op Dai had a long and successful career in the Royal Signals; working in EW and EOD he served in Cheltenham, Northern Ireland, Germany, Afghanistan, Iraq and latterly at 14 Sig Regt (EW). Whilst working with EOD he attained the unique accolade of being an ECM advisor in all 3 Operational Theatres; Northern Ireland, Iraq and Afghanistan.

It was whilst undergoing his Class 1 training once again at Garats Hay that he met Victoria, a resident of Shepshed, whom he married in 1998. Dai was devoted to Victoria and their children Owain and Bethan and was never happier than when spending time with them on Newgale beach Pembrokeshire or supporting them in their activities.

The funeral took place at St Botolph CoE in Shepshed on Friday 4 November 2011 and his family took great comfort in the number of colleagues who attended to give him the send off he deserved.

THE WIRE, APRIL 2012
**BARRY - Bill Barry**

In 1935 Bill joined the City of London Signals, in response to an advertisement for recruits to become despatch riders - in those days you had to provide your own bike. He became a member of the Regt Motorcycle Display Team and participated in over 50 performances in 3 years, including the Royal Tournament in 1937 - the first time a TA unit had had that honour. They were the first motorcycle display team to be televised and mounted the first motorcycle guard of honour when HRH The Duke of Gloucester visited the tournament. During the war he served with 56th (London) Divisional Signals - the “Black Cats” of the 8th Army.

The Display Team kept together after the war and undertook various activities such as lunches and annual Ladies’ nights in Eastbourne (which continue to this day). The Team also gave displays at various venues including Catterick (the old HQ of the Royal Signals) and Blandford (the current location on HQ Royal Signals). Over the years they earned lots of money for charity and appeared in Roy Castle’s “Record Breakers” entering the Guinness Book of Records as the oldest display team ever. They also appeared in a TV commercial for Cadbury’s “Whisper” chocolate bars. Possibly their greatest achievement was for all 10 of the original team to appear again at the Royal Tournament in 1987, in the presence of the late Queen Mother, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of their first performance. This was achieved through the active support of the then current “White Helmets” Royal Signals Display Team. They were billed as “The Magnificent Old Men on their Ancient Machines”. They appear in the Tournament again in 1990, 1993 and 1996.

The current “White Helmets” send their condolences to family and friends.

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**WEST - Cpl Peter Edmund West** died 4 January 2012

Harrogate AAS 1954-1957

Royal Corps of Signals 1957-1964

*Peter* who liked to be known as *Pete* died in Lincoln County Hospital on 4 January 2012 at the age of 74. His home was in Covenham St. Bartholomew, Louth, Lincolnshire. *Pete* had been in and out of hospital for many months suffering from non-Hodgkins lymphoma.

*Pete* was born in Covenham on 18 March 1937 and remained there for all of his life living in the house that he was born in. He attended the village school and the Louth Boy's Grammar School where he gained 5 O levels. On leaving the Grammar School *Pete* passed the entrance exam for the Army Apprentices School, Harrogate and arrived there on 18 February 1954, intake 54A. After 3 years of technical training *Pete* passed off as a Radio Mechanic in the Royal Corps of Signals signing on for 8 years service and 4 in the reserve. From 1957 until 1960 *Pete* served in BAOR. He then served the remainder of his time in the United Kingdom. His discharge from the Army was in 1964.

He then worked for Radio Rentals as a service engineer for 29 years until his retirement.

*Pete* was a very active member of many organisations in Covenham. He was the Chairman of the Parish Council, Secretary and later the Chairman of the Silver Jubilee Committee, an active member in helping to organise the celebrations for the Millennium and also the Chairman of the Golden Jubilee Committee.

Somehow through all his illness he was never idle. He was always involved in local fund raising activities. With a great passion in raising funds for the Macmillan Cancer Support Group, *Pete* could be found compering quiz nights in the local pub, running auctions at charity fundraising events in Louth Town Hall. Over the years *Pete* raised over £10,000 for Macmillan Cancer Support. As a volunteer member of the Louth and District Hospice, he was the hospice’s resident quiz master. As well as helping out in the Hospice charity shop he also carried out Portable Appliance Testing as well as carrying out small electrical repairs. His enthusiasm for helping others could not be faulted.

When the Association of Harrogate Apprentices was reformed and the first reunion was held at Harrogate in 1999, who came forward and volunteered to read the lesson? - none other than *Pete West*. He made it his own and read the lesson at every reunion thereafter, often adding his own little snippets of his experiences.

*Pete* was married to Janice and during their marriage they had 2 children Amy and Jonathan. *Peter* was a very accomplished writer of poetry. He was a remarkable man and will be greatly missed by all who knew him.
NICOLL - Lieutenant Colonel (Quartermaster) James Reginald (Nick) Nicoll

I knew Nick for more than 33 years. I’m afraid I wasn’t serving – indeed, I’d only just started school - when he enlisted on 8 September 1954 as a 15 year-old! Our military paths didn’t really cross until just after the start of his commissioned service a few days before his 40th birthday in July 1978. I arrived in 2 Armd Div HQ and Sig Regt in Bünde, in June that year from Northern Ireland. Nick was posted to the HQ Sqn in Lübbecke. I saw him when we met at Regt! events; or in the field on training exercises; or deploying in the early hours on Active Edge. I became the Ops Offr and SO2 Comms and committed to work in Lübbecke each day and saw much more of Nick and Margot. They were generous hosts and great company. Nick performed particularly well when Brig James Templar, our CRA, conducted our Annual Report on the Unit which included deploying us direct from a Mess Guest Night in Lübbecke just before midnight. We had to be issued with combat kit as we were in our best Mess finery, and were sent out into the field under the command of the NCOs. Nick was completely at home as we carried out a formal parade on the snow-covered sports pitches later that day in Bünde.

Nick was always very hard working, conscientious and calm, with a marvellous if somewhat dry sense of humour. Mike Yolland and Mike Louden both recall him with great affection. Stuart Dunlop, who died last year, and Fred Orr thought most highly of him, great accolades from other senior Quartermasters. Burns’ Night was one of his favourite mess parties. Knowing who he had worked for as an RSM, coupled with his Scottish antecedents, it was not too surprising either, that he was capable of holding his drink and “remaining sober” even at the end of a very long mess night. There was an anecdote about his capacity in that respect. He supposedly was sufficiently amorous after being dined out of the WOs’ and Sgts’ Mess one night that he and Margot were blessed by a very late addition to their family – Natasha.

Our paths then diverged. We kept in touch and, 9 years on, I was delighted when Nick became my Quartermaster at 11 Sig Regt in 1989. Yet again he and Margot supported me brilliantly. Nothing was too much trouble for Nick. I had to be careful what I said because he always wanted to do the very best for me and for the Regt. He was so good at running his Local Works Maintenance Budget that the whole barracks looked pristine. Repairs were effected in hours; lights were repaired, broken windows glazed and, most appropriately I suppose for the Depot, things that were simply standing around were painted. Nick contributed particularly to the Howes/Wood memorial and the Corps Memorial that now stands in Blandford. Nick worked closely with the then Master of Signals Gen Archie Birtwistle. General Archie made very clear to me how Nick’s work had made it really straightforward and was most grateful for Nick’s support.

He was an excellent President of the Sgts’ Mess and we met there often as we were both invited to attend the dinner nights for the Sgts’ and SSgts’ Courses. Best of all, I had the greatest of pleasure in seeing him attain the second pinnacle of his military career when he was promoted to Lt Col (QM) of the Depot Regt. When he retired from the Army in 1993 some expected that he might follow the well trodden path of becoming a “retired officer”. Instead Nick chose to work in London at St George’s Field and by all accounts he continued to perform brilliantly. Free from the constraints of the Public Funds’ controls Nick did an exceptional job as ever.

Nick held the Corps in high regard. He always recalled, with great fondness, his early days in Harrogate and Ian Buckley and fellow members of the Harrogate Mafia attended his funeral. He was a devoted father and husband. During his retirement he had a number of health issues but he always remained upbeat. The last time we met, I popped in to his office en route from Paddington to Whitehall and limping well as it was before my hip operation. He was more concerned about me than he was for himself and was as upbeat as ever. Nick will be missed; his loyalty, devoted service to his Family, the Corps and his work all deserve to be remembered and celebrated. And I shall remember him too as a kind, caring and very good friend.

PEARCE - Captain Alan Pearce died 10 December 2011

Captain Alan Pearce served with the Royal Corps of Signals from 1947 until 1974. He joined in Boy Service and rising through the ranks to a commissioned officer. One of his most memorable postings was that when he was appointed RSM of 211 Sig Sqn, 11 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn, in Minden, Germany.

He gave the lads short shrift if wrong and praise when right. He was an avid supporter of ALL the Sqns sportsmen whichever team or sport that they played and was always seen on the touchlines supporting when he had the chance. He himself was a hockey player and this had been his sport for some years.

When he left the Sqn to get commissioned they gave him a farewell party to thank him for all he had done to make the Sqn the Best in BAOR.

In later years some of the lads started to hold a reunion every year at the Union Jack Club in London and when he heard of this he sent a donation to the “Drinks” fund which was very much appreciated. When the lads had a sweatshirt commissioned to wear they sent him one as a souvenir, which he had framed and put on the wall of his house.

He passed away on 10 December 2011 and his funeral was on 5 January 2012 and this was attended by 12 ex Members of 211 Sqn from all parts of the UK and Germany to say their Last Farewell to a much Respected RSM.

RIP Alan Pearce
THOMSON - Major Peter Thomson died 22 January 2012

Maj Peter Thomson died peacefully at home on 22 January with his wife Anne and family at his side. His health had been failing for some time and he spent the last 10 months of his life being looked after by Anne and his daughter Helen at her home in Droxford. Here he enjoyed a long summer supervising work in the garden and vegetable plot, skills learnt from his childhood in rural Scotland.

Peter was born on the 17 February 1925 in Belhelvie, a small village some 7 miles north of Aberdeen. He attended the local village school till 1937 when, with the aid of a scholarship, he started at Robert Gordon’s College in Aberdeen. From there he went on to Aberdeen University to study languages, with plans to go into teaching. After a year as a student at Aberdeen Peter was conscripted into the army in January 1944. Initially he completed infantry training then transferred to the Royal Corps of Signals to train as a radio operator. On completion of training he served in India for 2 years, where he developed a lifelong love of a good curry. Facing a long wait for a place back at University at the end of the war he elected to join the Regular Army after being offered a place on the long telecommunication’s engineering course at the School of Signals. He successfully completed this course in mid 1949 and was posted to Aldershot where he met his wife, Anne, who was then serving as a Lpl in the same Signal Regiment.

Peter and Anne were married in 1950 and shortly afterwards were posted to Egypt Canal Zone for 3 years, where their daughters Irene and Margaret-Anne were born. By now Peter had reached the rank of WO2. They returned to UK at the end of 1953 and a short spell in Chester where he was promoted to WO1. In early 1955 he was commissioned as a Lt Technical Officer Telecommunications (TOT) and posted to BAOR (Germany) where he was based at Air Formation Signals, Cologne with his family. While there his third daughter, Helen, was born.

He remained in Germany until 1959 when the family sailed on the troopship Nevasa to spend 3 years in Singapore, based with AF Sig Regt at Changi. Here, as the Far East TOT for all RAF airfields he had a very wide remit, managing domestic communications for airfields in Gan Island, Singapore, Hong Kong, Borneo and Malaya, and for Christmas Island during the atomic tests.

Another spell followed with BAOR from 1962 with 7 Sig Regt based at Herford in North Germany where he had normal TOT duties until 1966. He was then posted to 30 Sig Regt to become the TOT on the team carrying out the BRUIN system of communication for 1 BR Corps in Germany. He finally returned to the UK as Maj (TOT) and a short spell at the Ministry of Defence.

In September 1969 he retired from the Army to enable his daughters to pursue their education in the UK. He started work with Standard Telephone and Cable at Cockfosters, North London, in October 1969. When STC was incorporated into the large US company International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation (ITT) he was transferred to ITT HQ in Brussels for 2 years. From there he and Anne went, in 1978, to Nigeria where he spent 2 years as an executive on a state-wide telecoms contract that was part of a telephone exchange system covering the whole of Nigeria. He returned to Brussels in 1980 as Project Manager of computer based telephone exchange systems. In 1982 he returned to the UK to work at Harlow at the Computer Engineering Centre (CEC) where he remained till his retirement in 1987. He and Anne then settled in their apartment by the sea in Poole, Dorset where he enjoyed nothing more than a game of golf at the Ferndown Golf Club, fishing at Chesil beach, trips over to France, and spending time with his 3 grandchildren.

During his lifetime Peter was a very keen sportsman. Whilst in the Canal Zone in Egypt he captained the Army team at soccer, and regularly played for his Regt and Corps at hockey, cricket, tennis and golf. As a less strenuous activity he regularly played bridge. Peter loved his life in the Army and made many close lifelong friends. In old service records his conduct was always marked ‘exemplary’ and he was described as honest, trustworthy, loyal, and completely reliable, qualities his family and friends would recognise in him to the end.

Peter defied doctors’ expectations after a heart bypass in 1990 largely due to his philosophy of ‘everything in moderation’. He kept himself fit through beach walks and golf, and enjoyed a nightly glass of red wine and a ‘rusty nail’. He was always a strong family man and enjoyed a long happy marriage seeing in his 61st wedding anniversary in October 2011. He is greatly missed by his wife Anne, daughters Irene, Margaret-Anne and Helen, and grandchildren Nick, Amy and Luke.

FRYER - Sgt Donald Fryer died 15 January 2012

It is with great sadness the family and friends of Donald Fryer must announce his death in Telford, Shropshire on 15 January this year.

Donald enlisted on the 22nd February 1951 in Wolverhampton and went on to serve 22 years with the Corps, serving in the UK, France, MELF Cyprus, BAOR, Belize and N. Ireland.

He is survived by his wife Myrna.
I was sitting at home one Sunday afternoon watching the television when my phone rang and the caller, after asking for me personally, introduced himself as Colonel Cliff Walters, a Royal Signals officer. He said that he was the last Commandant at the Army Apprentice College in Harrogate and that he was writing a book about the 50 odd year history of the Army Apprentices there.

It had come to his attention that I had been running a number of former boy reunions and he asked if I had any stories which I would like to contribute to his book.

I put my thinking cap on and sat down to put my memories on paper for him, only to find that once I started I got carried away and before I knew it, I had the makings of ‘The Harrogate Army Apprentice’.

It is an excellent sequel to Cliff’s book but where he covers the history of the School/College, this is a combination of stories written by the lads who actually served there and shows the impact it had on their future lives.

Part One tells the story of what we actually did and got up to while we were there, the Army Apprentice School at Harrogate turned raw young boys, many from broken homes, into very skilled tradesmen. The skills instilled in them during their apprenticeships made the modern Army what it is today.

Part Two covers the time from when we graduated from Harrogate and served in the Regular Army showing how far up the military ladder we went. It also shows a copy of our Roll of Honour and Honours write-ups.

Returning to Civvy street and the bearing our Army lives had on our civilian careers is also covered in this section. The success stories of these former Harrogate apprentices are what this book is all about. It will certainly give a great deal of inspiration to everyone reading it, whatever their age group...

Price £15 plus £2 postage, cheques payable to Fred Carslake and sent to 29 Coopers Drive, Yate, Bristol, BS37 7XZ or available through the Royal Signals Museum.

Name: Lt Col David Hamilton
Email: secretary@lknmf.com

Refferrer site: http://www.royalsignalsassociation.co.uk/WebSite/
IP: 31.53.38.101

Message: First if I could introduce myself. I am David Hamilton the Secretary of the Lord Kitchener National Memorial Fund (LKNMF). For the Sons and Daughters of Service Families, going to University, the Council of the Lord Kitchener National Memorial Fund offers for competition up to a maximum of 25 scholarships tenable from October 2012. The value of each scholarship will be £750 and will be paid to scholars at the beginning of their course. Full details of eligibility and how to apply are available on the website www.lknmf.com. I would be grateful if you could pass this, for once “good news” to the serving and retired members of the RSA community, or provide me with the email details with whom I should address this offer. If more information is required please contact me as shown. Many thanks Lt Col David N Hamilton MBE FinstRE Secretary Lord Kitchener National Memorial Fund 01256465884 07931378876 www.lknmf.com
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