



**SUMMER
2022**

THE WIRE

The Magazine of The Royal Corps of Signals



A message from The Master of Signals,
Major General Sharon Nesmith, on the occasion of
Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee
on the 6th February 2022:

“As the Master of Signals, I am very proud to congratulate Her Majesty The Queen on her Platinum Jubilee on behalf of the Royal Corps of Signals. The Corps has changed dramatically during her reign, but Her Majesty’s leadership has remained an inspiration to all throughout that time. Your Majesty, we send our very best wishes on this momentous occasion.”



Corps Formation: 28th June 1920

Corps Motto: Certa Cito

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Falklands 40th Anniversary

Memories of those involved in the Falklands Conflict

Andrew Turner

“As some of you may be aware the Falklands War took place 40 years ago during the period April to June and has been commemorated in many places across the country. Why am I writing about this now? Well because I was there and whilst every year I remember those no longer with us, I felt that as its been so long I ought to record something to pass on to others. This is not about heroics or celebrating war (who does!) but just a recollection of what life was like as a 20 something year old serving in the Royal Signals.

I joined as a junior soldier, training as a Radio Telegraphist. This resulted in me learning Morse, typing, as well as everything involved in operating VHF and HF radios to send messages over a distance of between 5 and 200+ miles. I was posted to my first unit which was 5 Infantry Brigade Signal Squadron. I worked in various roles which utilised these skills and especially in the Falklands.

So it was nearly Easter in 1982, a Friday afternoon and we were all looking forward to a weekend ‘off duty’ when we were told to parade as something was happening... We heard that the Argentinians had invaded the Falklands. Having heard the news broadcasts, the penny immediately dropped and we knew what the parade would be about. So briefing completed, we began collecting or buying equipment, to this day I still have my bergen that I bought as I knew the issued large pack would not be big enough, it saw use on many scout camps, I also still have the clear plastic welding goggles in their wrapper, these were issued to protect me from snow blindness.

Our vehicle and radio set up was for in peacetime, installed in 4 tonne lorries which were way too big to move when in the Falklands. So, we collected brand new Land Rovers which we converted before and during our pre-deployment training in Sennybridge. Between shifts we fitted hardtops and even painted the Land Rovers, we also installed Norwegian heaters which turned out to be useless as you could not use them when static.





Each detachment was three operators and a Land Rover which had a HF Radio running off four large lorry type batteries with two teleprinters, all mounted in the back of the vehicle. We had to tow a ¾ tonne trailer with two massive generators and six cans of fuel along with radio masts and other communications kit. A few vehicles also had a 9x9 tent which linked to the back of the Land Rovers when set up, others had a 20x20 tarpaulin that was stretched over the back and pegged out. The tent/tarpaulin housed a table for a printer and secure communications equipment and for the lucky few a kerosine heater. For our 'accommodation' there was a basha somewhere near the vehicle so that you were always available for your next shift or to go on sentry duty. All this was then covered in a 40x40 camouflage net which with its poles were strapped to the roof when mobile!



So, after a long weekend leave to see our families, we sailed on the QE2 to South Georgia via Freetown, Sierra Leone and Ascension Island. In South Georgia we transferred to the Canberra to sail into San Carlos, thankfully this was an uncontested landing unlike the first one. When we deployed forward from San Carlos it took three attempts for a Sea King helicopter to lift one of our Land Rovers as this was too heavy, we had to offload the cam net and poles and our personal kit onto the trailers before they could lift a Land Rover. Due to the loss of helicopters as a result of the sinking of the Atlantic Conveyor, it was some time before we had all our detachments ashore and in fact some didn't land until after the war. We deployed forward to Goose Green, initially I was part of the HQ Guard, watching inlets for sea landings or as a sentry outside buildings used by the 5 Infantry Brigade Headquarters. During this time we lost our Commanding Officer and a Troop Staff Sergeant along with the crew of a Gazelle helicopter, shot down whilst replenishing one of the Squadron rebroadcast detachments. We still meet in May each year to remember them along with the other 254 who paid the price. Not long after this we moved forward to Fitzroy, on the day the Sir Galahad was hit. This really brought home the reality of where we were and I found out how little practical first aid I knew. A real lesson learnt here and something the army made sure would not be an issue again as they initiated formal annual training for every soldier thereafter.



After what seemed like ages, but was only days, I was back operating on a secure teleprinter detachment to send what most would understand as telex messages. This meant being on a radio network with detachments at 3 Commando Brigade and **General Moore's** HQ. Due to the fact that in our peacetime role we did not have the latest equipment, there were problems working on the network. We had to use what is known as Single Side Band (SSB) rather than suppressed SSB like the 3 Commando Brigade and the main HQ. As a result, we would knock their signal out as we could not hear them transmitting. We were therefore not popular on the network as a signal could take minutes to transmit, unlike the immediacy of email today, and you had to then wait for confirmation it had been received. Imagine how frustrating it would be to have to start a message again. The messages were on paper tape which had to be kept dry and we were working in such cold temperatures, remember the lack of kerosine heaters and in fact no fuel for them, we had to burn paper in our tent to keep our hands warm for typing as you couldn't do this wearing gloves.



We remained in Fitzroy until the end of the war. For once we drove our Land Rovers onto Mexeflotes, which is a motorised



Fitzroy



Welcome home



London reunion 2019

pontoon, to transfer to a Navy logistics ship and had our first shower since leaving the Canberra which was such luxury.

Overnight we sailed round to Stanley Harbour and a few of us cross decked the Land Rovers onto a merchant ship. This was in the middle of the harbour down a ramp, onto a Mexeflote and up onto the merchant ships ramp, quite an experience and something health and safety today would challenge. Just a few of us joined the merchant ship to sail down to South Georgia to pick up the Marines who had captured the island. We then sailed all the way back to the UK having dropped the Marines off at Ascension Island so they could fly home. As I recall not long after leaving Ascension we lost an engine and so limped home, it was a very slow journey from there. In all we were at sea for about a month, getting back to Southampton at the end of July to be greeted by our families, home safe and sound. I personally am thankful to have been part of such an operation and take stock of this every day, thankful that I came back, mindful of those that didn't or who are still suffering today. Thank you for reading."

Nyg Parry



"One enjoyable event which happened, myself and a few of my fellow Technicians of the 205 Signal Squadron, as part of 5 Airborne Brigade, decided it was time for a shower. At the time we were located in someone's back garden in a hut. However there were materials and grounds sufficient for us to build one. So we all got together and found some corrugated sheets to make a shower cubicle, along with a poncho sheet as a shower curtain, some wood and an old ammunition box, pierced some holes and fitted it above the sheets to form a shower head. We found an old oil drum which was cut in half, the type you might use as a BBQ. This was used to heat the water above a peat fire. It took three of us to have a shower, one keeping the water and fire going and another to carry the water to the person standing above you to fill the ammunition box for the water to shower you. You were allowed, I think, two or three water loads, one to soak you, one to lather you and one to rinse. The fun part was you had to make a dash from the hut to the shower which was about 20 feet away, in the freezing cold as it was winter there at the time, with just a towel, and then back again. However, once dried we all agreed it was the best shower we have ever had especially in the field. We were the envy of the remainder of the Squadron and especially HQ.

Another funny story, but it had its serious element at the same time. A friend and myself, having just arrived with the Squadron, into the area at Darwin were tasked with carrying out a house search. We came to this room in the building where we heard sounds coming from the closed room. In true war film style we decided to rush the room and shoot anything that moved, me on one side of the door and my mate on the other. As we burst in we got the shock of our lives, just as we were about to open fire, this almighty huge pig went crazy and barged past us and ran out of the building. When we searched the room we found it had been used as a food store for the Argentinians with loads of pasta and somehow the pig got trapped in the room and was merely chomping away at everything it could eat. After a few minutes to settle down we finally were able to report the building clear.

The saddest moment of our time there was hearing the news at the loss of our OC **Maj Michael Forge**, and A Tp **SSgt John Baker** along with the crew of the Gazelle Helicopter, **Chris Griffin** and **Simon Cockton**, they were flying in, was shot down on 6 June by friendly fire. This incident is well documented. It was sad not only due to loss of life, but **Maj Forge** had only been with us for a month having just taken over the Squadron. At the time we were all told it was an Argentinian outpost that had shot the helicopter, with Blowpipe (Surface to Air missile system). It was six years later after reading the Sun newspaper whilst stationed in Germany, that I found out it was Blue on Blue. A really sad day for us all, for everyone who lost their lives."

Keith Dobson

"I sailed on MV Baltic from Southampton on 9 May (I was flown off the QE2 where my troop was as MV Baltic was carrying the bulk of Signals secure equipment and encoding equipment and as I was DV'd, became the custodian). I landed with a small company from Bravo Troop on 26 May 1982 at San Carlos and joined the Marines and Paras to protect the bridge to allow the remainder of 5 Bde and supplies to land. I spent several days burying secure equipment, patrolling, and digging trenches for fellow 5 inf bde signallers who would be arriving on the QE2. In those few days, we experienced constant air raids from low flying Argentinian jets causing death on land and destruction to ships in the sound (bomb alley).



During my time I was deployed as Signals det for 10 Field Workshops coordinating prisoners who were being returned from special forces and para fighting patrols and was also deployed (flown by Sea King) to Goose Green to facilitate hot water and electricity for prisoners (using my unused generators), Fitzroy during the Sir Galahad hit and finally Port Stanley.

After the war I sailed on 5 July on the MV Nordic to pick up Royal Marines from Grytviken South Georgia and South Sandwich islands, then to Ascension Island to drop off bodies to be flown back to the UK. I finally arrived back in Southampton UK in mid August 1982.

An extract from my diary 19 May 1982 – Keith Dobson aged 19yrs, 205 Signal Squadron, 5 Infantry Brigade HQ & Sig Squadron:

After having completed another night shift in the radio room I slept until midday, then having had a light lunch of pineapple and mangos that had been taken on board the ship from Sierra Leone, we suddenly had an 'action stations' drill alarm on the ship and we all took our positions. My stand by position was back in the radio room. When all the commotion had finished, I went to the restaurant area to write a letter. I was thinking about the landing tomorrow at the Ascension Islands but my hopes were soon turned to horror as we learned that we were not going to dock there anymore. A decision had been made to set sail directly towards the Falkland Islands. It had happened – Mrs Thatcher had given the instruction and we were now at war and were to proceed to the islands to engage. We had no choice but to follow the orders. I quickly wrote a letter to let Keran, my future wife, to let her know what was happening. It was emotional and I took off my dog tags from around my neck and dropped them into the envelope so that she would remember me if the worst happened. My hopes for the future had

suddenly become shorter. I retired to bed early. I am sad and full of lost ambitions.

Port San Carlos – East Falklands, Tuesday 8 June 1982 – Keith Dobson aged 19yrs, 205 Signal Squadron, 5 Inf Bde:

*We had left the UK for the Falkland Islands exactly 32 days ago and had been on the ground for many weeks. I was told that we had to move quickly to a new location and to set up a communications command for 10 Field Workshops who needed to organise and coordinate the growing number of Argentinian prisoners that we were now taking. **Chris Golley** and **Mark (Fritz) Davies** helped me to move our radio equipment and our personal kit about a kilometre (one click) and to re-site the antennas outside an animal shed in Port San Carlos. During the move we had an air raid red, we quickly dug in and returned fire on the low flying Argentinian aircraft that fired indiscriminately on our positions. This went on agonisingly until the guns of HMS Fearless gave out several huge ear-splitting explosions and plumes of smoke and blew the aircraft out of the sky. We watched as the enemy aircraft exploded into pieces and flames then crashed to the ground.*

*We were still reeling with grief and mortified by the loss of our 205 Signal Squadron OC **Maj Mike Forge** and **SSgt Joe Baker** who had been killed in action. Fear and sadness had spread through us like a terminal virus. We felt leaderless and in a time of war that made us very nervous.*

After having set up and tested communications we were given our first hot meal from the engineers since we had landed in the Falklands. Steak and Kidney pudding, powdered mashed potato and warm gravy.

We found a large piece of green tarpaulin which had been used to cover a helicopter and propped it over the outside animal



pen to use as a cover from the extreme cold weather and to store our kit underneath. Later we were joined by **Rick Power** and **Alan Coleman** who had become detached from our unit, 205 Signal Squadron, and needed to find somewhere to bed down.

*I called HQ and arranged for a helicopter to collect them but it wouldn't arrive until the following day so told them to stay with us for the night under the tarpaulin. In exchange for the hospitality, I asked **Alan Coleman**, who was a B2 Signaller and probably more importantly, had a GPMG and a load of ammunition, to join us on shift which gave my team more, much needed sleep as we were now near exhaustion and had had little sleep for what seemed weeks."*

Christopher Higgins

"My memories around the Falklands War actually start months before as quite a lot of 1 Sqn, 30 Sig Regt, deployed on Exercise WARM BATH, Jan 1982 to Ascension Island. Was this prescient planning by 30 Sig Regt and the MoD?

A few months later after the Argentines had landed on South Georgia and raised their flag I was one of many from 1 Sqn and 2 Sqn to prepare to deploy. Then the news showed the Argentine Forces invading the Falkland Islands and we were taken to Portsmouth and taken onboard HMS Fearless. This departure was difficult for my wife, I was 21 years old and she was still 17 years old (her 18th birthday was a few weeks away in May, just days before my 22nd birthday in May). We had only been married seven months, and she was being left behind on her own in our married quarter on Blandford Camp.

Everything was rushed and I told her we would probably be back in a few days, how wrong I was. I didn't come home until late August.

None of us really thought it would actually lead to war, we thought a large show of force would be sufficient to make the Argentine Forces withdraw.

HMS Fearless sailed with the first portion of the Task Force, it being a flat bottomed ship (a necessity for its role as a Landing Platform Dock (LPD)) it wallowed, badly and I was seasick for three straight days. It was decided to have a reorganisation of personnel and the 30 Sig Regt detachment was transferred in the middle of a stormy Bay of Biscay, we were to be transferred to Landing Ship Logistic (LSL) Sir Lancelot.

The transfer was done by Sea King helicopter, as the sea was stormy, the winchman told us the pilot would not land, that he would winch us down one at a time. I had never done this before and was a little apprehensive, which was not helped when the winchman said, "when I get you close to the deck, I will judge the pitch and role of the ship and drop you the last few feet". It was definitely more than a few feet, I plummeted onto the deck wearing my webbing and backpack, carrying my weapon and a duffel bag of all of my other gear.

Although I landed on my back, the webbing and backpack cushioned the fall. Feeling somewhat chuffed I had survived the first ordeal, I disconnected myself from the winch and went into dining area of the ship to wait to be told where we were to sleep. My arrival in the dining area was met with a lot of laughter and colourful comments. Although my webbing



1: 30 Sig Regt personnel waiting for vehicles and equipment. This was one side of the gully, with a Type 12 Frigate in the background.

2: Alfie Kirkham's (Signalman Radio Telegraphist) birthday, this occurred during the war, two of our guys made him a cake, and the Royal Marine cooks also made him one, can you guess who made which?

3. Even the toilet tent was surrounded by ammunition, you did not loiter there, no one wanted a headstone with the description of "he died with his arse hanging out".

cushioned the fall, it made my shaving cream explode, all over my webbing and backpack.

Home for the next few weeks was a cabin that housed 32 of us, about the size of a single car garage, we were stacked three high on bunks that only short people could properly sit up in; cosy.

During the next couple of weeks during the transit to Ascension Island, I became a very good cheat at various card games. A bonus was I became used to the sea and the seasickness quickly went away. We stayed at Ascension Island waiting for other elements of the Task Force to join up with us. During that time various troops were again reorganised and we transferred to another LSL (I don't remember if it was the Sir Bedivere or Sir Geraint).



After the Task Force was fully assembled it started off to the South Atlantic, by this time news that more than a show of force was going to be needed and training started in earnest. We did live firing of our personal weapons at floating objects dropped into the sea from the back of the ship.

We received weapons training on the General Purpose Machine Gun (GPMG) and the Carl Gustav anti-tank weapon (neither of which I had encountered during my training as an Army Apprentice at Harrogate).

Another aspect of our training was a film titled Army Medicine in Vietnam (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3gbxZgx8g>), I think it was meant to reassure us that we would be well looked after if we were wounded, but it didn't do much for my morale, so I did what all young soldiers do, ignored it, assured that I would not be wounded.

As we got further south, into the Roaring Forties, the sea state got much worse, the ships would rise and fall 20 – 30 feet, at the top of the waves we could see other ships of the Task Force, when the ship dropped between the waves, all we could see was rushing water, grey skies and the next big wave coming. I loved it! It was exhilarating!

At some point (I don't remember exactly when) we learned of the RAF Vulcan raid on Port Stanley airfield, then the sinking of the ARA Belgrano, and the news about HMS Sheffield meant it was going to be war, either we win, I survive and get to go home or we fail and who knew what our fate would be. Once again I adopted the "ignore failure, we will win and I will go home" approach.

Thereafter the mood was much more sombre, we had a briefing the night before the landings were to take place on 21 May. Luckily for me, as that day/night was 20 May (my 22nd birthday) mail arrived and my wife had sent me a massive birthday card. This was given to me in the dining area (which doubled as "the bar") which was full of soldiers (Gunners, Signallers and more) and I got a rousing, slightly drunken, rendition of "Happy Birthday" sung to me. That was a morale booster.

The next morning we were at anchor in San Carlos water with many other ships. It was a combination of HMS Fearless and some Destroyers and Frigates to protect the LSL's and SS Canberra which was being used as a troop ship.

I was part of a group of 30 Sig Regt personnel assigned as a fire control party just below the deck, we had no training on how to fight fires, we had no protective equipment. We were shown a fire hose on a wall and where to connect it and left to it....?

We were completely unaware of what was going on around us, we heard the noise of distant machine gun fire and anti-aircraft gun fire. We didn't know that one deck above us was a GPMG set up for anti-aircraft and manned by two Royal Marines. When that machine opened up, it was loud and meant only one thing, OUR SHIP WAS THE TARGET! I didn't know if it was as we had no window to see out of.

The next moment I remember lying on the deck wishing that my WW2 pattern steel helmet would magically increase in size to give me some extra protection. Then the firing stopped and I looked up to my friends all lying on the floor as well, we all grinned sheepishly and started laughing, all pretending we weren't really scared, we were just taking proper precautions.

One of the things we did learn in basic training was about controlled firing of weapons, don't fire outside of your left and right of arc. That way you won't shoot at or near friendly forces. That kind of went out of the window, with machine gunners on the ships and on the land would blaze away, at aircraft moving at 500mph. Naturally, of the many tens of 1000's of rounds fired, most missed. The rounds that missed had to go somewhere, that somewhere was sometimes at other ships, towards soldiers and Marines ashore, some of the shore fired rounds would hit ships. Needless to say fire discipline had to be vastly improved.

Our ship was close to HMS Antelope when the bombs that had hit it went off, we heard the explosion and went on deck to see it burning. HMS Antelope had been our guard ship in the South Atlantic and I felt a sad connection to it. When we got up the next day and it was light we could see she had broken her back and was sinking. I now have some appreciation for sailors to not only lose their shipmates but to lose their ship and how difficult it must be for them.

The 30 Sig Regt detachment didn't go ashore until the fourth day (D+3). I was very happy to get off the ship, San Carlos water had become "Bomb Alley" and the ships were bomb magnets. We, with our vehicles were loaded on to an Assault Landing Craft. As we were on our way to land at Ajax Bay (designated Red Beach) there was another air raid, landing craft are small compared to a ship, I felt so much more vulnerable. Luckily as the attacking aircraft were doing 500 mph, actual duration of the attack is measured in seconds... WARNING, TAKE COVER, FAST JET ROAR...then it's all over, until the next one.

It didn't take long for the next air raid, we had just landed, we were stood on the beach (don't think a beach with golden sands, palm trees and cocktails, it was very cold, rocky grey beach and with no cover) when the next air raid happened, all I could think to do was to lie down next to the biggest rock I found and hope that it would offer some protection. We had gone ashore with cam cream on our faces and loaded (but not "ready") personal weapons.

Once again the air raid was over quickly, as were getting up to our feet, a couple of Royal Marines popped up from their trench, shaved faces with NO cam cream and eating some tinned compositions. They smiled and laughed at us, then one said "welcome to the front, want some cake?"

We laughed back and waited to be told where we were to set up.

The main buildings of the abandoned whaling plant at Ajax Bay were to be used as the Brigade Maintenance Area, and for the field hospital. The hospital was manned by Royal Marine medics and Parachute Regiment medics. They nicknamed the field hospital the "Red and Green Life Machine". We were told to go to the south, about 100m away to a shallow gully and wait for our vehicles. (See pic 1, p.6).

Once the equipment arrived we set up the tents for the Comcen and the sleeping accommodation. Then we had to put into place the "man portable" TSC502 Satellite Terminal. It was only just man portable, it took four people to move just one box.

As a Radio Technician, the main reason for my being part of the 30 Sig Regt detachment, was that I had had the most training on maintaining the VRC310. A rare beast of a radio, only ever used by 1 Sqn, 30 Sig Regt. It was an HF set using the same frequency bands as the Clansman VRC 321 radio, it was made by a different manufacturer and had a 400W

Cascade Amplifier to give it a long range capability. It was never used, it was meant as a back-up for the SatCom link but was not needed. Just as well as it would have needed the 80ft mast for the antenna. That would have made our position (and purpose) stand out and become a high value target, and we were right next to the designated heli-pad, which would have been a danger to our helicopters when they had to make high speed tactical landings.

Given that was me out of a job I became chief digger of defences, so for three days I dug trenches. ME! MOI! I am a technician and need to look after my fingernails, I don't do manual labour, but no one cared about my delicate fingers so I dug and I dug and I dug. Which was just as well as we were about to need the trenches to save our lives.

As we were in the Brigade Maintenance Area there was ammunition everywhere, pallets of 9mm rounds, pallets of 7.62mm rounds, pallets of hand grenades and pallets of mortar rounds. And when I say everywhere, I mean everywhere! (See pic 3, p.7).

The relevance of the ammunition and my digging defensive positions happened on 27 May. I was stood by the toilet tent awaiting my turn. "Toilet tent" doesn't do justice to it's magnificence, a tent placed above an open trench and across the trench was a plank to stand on, and a rail to hold onto.

Anyway, I was awaiting my turn when I heard the noise of fast jets, there were no air raid notifications so I assumed it was our own Combat Air Patrol passing by. Then the noise got louder and across the water (about a mile away) I saw two Argentine Mirage Jets fly over British positions and drop bombs...it **WAS** an air raid. I started running back to our positions shouting "air raid", when right in front me, right above the comcen I saw two Argentine A4 Skyhawks fly over.

I don't remember any sound, everything seemed to happen in super slow motion (that's how I remember it), I see the bombs drop from the aircraft wings, the retardation chutes open (these are needed when dropping bombs at low level to ensure the aircraft will be outside of the blast radius when they hit and explode), I feel sure the bombs would drop onto the comcen, logic and the laws of physics went out of the window. The bombs still had some way to travel before they hit.

They did hit, two landed in the roof of the field hospital but did not explode, the field hospital chief was **Surgeon Commander Rick Jolly**. He took a very brave decision not to evacuate the hospital but to continue to work on the wounded whilst the bomb disposal guys made the bombs



4. A Wessex helicopter that landed at Ajax Bay.

stable, he and the medics did just that, no soldier (British or Argentine) that reached the field hospital alive died. What they did is definitely the definition of "hero".

Other bombs did explode, and as we had ammunition everywhere, some of it was set off, this in turn set off more ammunition; 9mm sub machine gun rounds, 7.62mm rifle and machine gun rounds, grenades and mortar rounds were going off, for four hours, but I have no memory of those four hours, one minute it was hell on earth, then it was over. Thankfully all of the 105mm Artillery shells had been moved forward with 29 Cdo Artillery Battery to support the attack on Goose Green the next day.

It's worth noting that rank dictates where you are in the pecking order and how you experience war. At the bottom of the ladder (Corporals and below) you see in great detail everything in your immediate area, move up the ladder to major (for example) and you need to have a bigger picture with some detail, move up to Brigadier/General and it's (normally) all big picture because you need to see the big picture and not get bogged down in the detail.

Consequently, I did not know at the time (in fact it was more nearly 40 years later) that as a result of that air raid we (the British) had 6 dead and another 30 wounded (the source for this is a report by **Surgeon Commander Rick Jolly**, he was the only person to be awarded a medal by the Argentines and the British Governments, he stipulated that ALL wounded would be treated on the basis of need, not nationality, many Argentine wounded are indebted to him, his principles and his conscience).

A totally different memory is one of hygiene, the toilet tent was one thing, personal cleanliness was another. We had no water making facilities on shore, all drinking water came from the ships in jerry cans and was rationed, so it was used for drinking and cooking. At first we used some to wash in, then we tried sea water. You can clean in sea water but it is gritty and not very nice, it's even less nice when you have some clothing off (boots and socks) or down (trousers and underpants) when an air raid happens, running around in mud and snow in bare feet, or with your trousers around your ankles is at best undignified, at worst life threatening. Not only was personal hygiene an issue, so was cleaning clothes, not only did we not have the water or detergent, it was cold, snow on the ground, no way of drying clothes.

An unspoken decision was made by all, wear the same clothes unless you HAVE to change into dry clothes to avoid cold weather injuries. Consequently when we finally got to Stanley and a cabin on a ship we had all stayed in the same clothing, we almost certainly stank after a month without changing. But as we all stank no one noticed.

When I finally did get access to washing facilities I simply removed my socks and underwear (and after a shower so fabulous that I felt I was bathing in heaven... hot water is so underrated) I threw them in the bin (like everyone else I think), washing my trousers, shirt, jumper, jacket etc took three washes for the water to not be filthy in an instant.

Back to Ajax Bay and the Brigade Maintenance Area, the cold and the wet affected everyone. (See pic 5).



5. The photo was taken over the top of the comcen and shows Eager Beavers of the Cdo Logistic Regiment stuck in the mud with a landing craft just arrived (on the right) the building on the left is the Whaling Station (field hospital) before the bombs hit it.

Active Operations (Falklands War, Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan amongst others) are scary, exciting, boring, hot, cold and sometimes fun. One example is **Alfie Kirkham's** (Signalman Radio Telegraphist) birthday, this occurred during the war, two of our guys made him a cake, and the Royal Marine cooks also made him one, can you guess who made which? (See pic 2, p.6).

Another funny yet deadly episode (funny by a soldier's macabre sense of humour) happened later in the war. Without warning, HMS Exeter (a type 42 Destroyer) fired off a Sea Dart anti-aircraft missile. This is a **BIG** long range AA missile, and it makes a lot of noise.

As I watched it leave the rail the rocket motor faltered, the missile, instead of shooting up high to engage a high flying aircraft, spluttered and headed for the hillside above Ajax Bay, right towards 40 Cdo's mortar platoon. At a distance we could see little figures running away from where the missile was headed. It struck the hillside, massive bang, then we saw little figures running back to see what had happened. I heard (but cannot confirm) that the mortar platoon liked the hole the missile made and moved mortars into it.

A different, funny moment came when the only surviving Chinook (CH47) came in to Ajax Bay doing a tactical landing, at speed with a last moment flare up to drop speed and land. At the best of times the down-draft from a CH47's rotor is strong, the tactical landing knocked over the satellite dish, it blew away the sleeping tent (to the great surprise of those that were sleeping) and it would have blown the comcen tent if the people inside hadn't all grabbed the tent frame and hung on for dear life. A Wessex landed nearby, the CH47 is bigger with two massive sets of rotor blades. (See pic 4, p.8).

San Carlos became much less of a target as the Cdo units and the Army Battalions closed the ring around Port Stanley, and then suddenly it was all over! I have a copy of the notice sent by **Major General Rose** to the UK Government informing them of the Argentine Surrender. (See pic 6, p.10).

We stayed at Ajax Bay for a few more days (I think this was to give the British troops in Stanley time to secure the Argentine prisoners and weapons).

We were airlifted to the Racecourse at Stanley to set up the comcen. Although hostilities had officially ceased this was not quite the end of danger. Before we were allocated berths on the LSL alongside in Stanley we had to find our own places to sleep, one was an empty chicken hut next an Argentine Unimog (small 4x4 truck), in the back of which was a hand grenade, it looked like the fly off handle was fixed to the bed of the back of the truck. A booby trap? Quite likely, so we moved out of the chicken hut and informed bomb disposal.

At some point, I don't remember the date, there was a tragic accident at Stanley Airfield, a fully armed Harrier was landing when one of its sidewinder missiles was launched, the explosion was clearly heard in Stanley itself, myself and hundreds of others took cover not knowing if it was another air raid. It wasn't, but one person on the airfield lost a leg as a result.

We remained in Stanley for quite sometime after the majority of British Forces had left. We were flown out in late August on the same aircraft as **Major General Moore**. We flew for 18 hours (I think) to Ascension Island by C130 Hercules transport air plane, where after a couple of hours we boarded a VC10 for the final leg to RAF Brize Norton.

We had to wait on the aircraft for some time as the News Media wanted to record **Major General Moore** being greeted by the **Prince of Wales**, needless to say none of us wanted to be on that plane for a second longer than necessary as we knew our wives were waiting for us.

After a couple of hours on the bus with married couples acting like besotted teenagers we arrived back in Blandford where my wife and I made up for lost time."

Signalman Butterworth

"I started my Royal Signals journey in juniors at Albemarle Barracks, Ouston (Whitespear Troop), I was 16 in April 1980 therefore I was 18 in April 1982.

I served in 5 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn, I was in Alpha Troop and sailed on the QE2 as a radio operator (G Ops), transferred at South Georgia to Canberra to San Carlos, then Darwin, Goose Green, Fitzroy and Stanley. I lost my troop **SSgt Joe Baker** and Sqn CO **Maj M L Forge** at Mount Pleasant.

A side note, mail came in on the QE2 to Ascension Island (papers had said for people to write in support), I changed duties and was in the Sqn office, the post came in which I was told to sort out, I chose a postmark I knew, took the letter, read it, wrote back and they wrote back, I met them on my return to UK, I went back to serve again in 1983 (after training at Branford) then married her in 1984 and we are still married 38 years later. So my wife has also been on this 40 year journey."



Christopher Higgins posing with a GPMG that 45 Cdo kindly left when they moved out to start their Yomp and their battle at Two Sister Mountain.

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 HQ LEFT PORT STANLEY, IN PORT STANLEY AT 9 O'CLOCK PM FALKLAND ISLANDS TIME TONIGHT THE 14 JUNE 1982, MAJOR GENERAL MENENDES SURRENDERED TO ME ALL THE ARGENTINE ARMED FORCES IN EAST AND WEST FALKLAND, TOGETHER WITH THEIR IMPEDIMENTA. ARRANGEMENTS ARE IN HAND TO ASSEMBLE THE MEN FOR RETURN TO ARGENTINA, TO GATHER IN THEIR ARMS AND EQUIPMENT, AND TO MARK AND MAKE SAFE THEIR MUNITIONS. THE FALKLAND ISLANDS ARE ONCE MORE UNDER THE GOVERNMENT DESIRED

PAGE 2 RBDTWM 002 UNCLAS
 BY THEIR INHABITANTS.
 GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.
 SIGNED JJ MOORE.
 MSG ENDS
 BT

A copy of the notice sent by Major General Rose to the UK Government informing them of the Argentine Surrender.

40 years and still going strong for this Falklands Islands veteran

By WO1 (RSM) Stuart McCreadie

Sgt Nicholas Parkyn is soon to finish his reserve service with 13 Sig Regt, 254 (SGIS) Sig Sqn having first joined up with the regulars in 1977, and his story is one worth reading for all regular, reserve, and retired members of the Royal Corps of Signals.

Sgt Parkyn served for over 10 years in the Regular Army and then subsequently for 31 years in the reserves, taking in service in Germany, Cyprus, Gibraltar, Brunei and the Falkland Islands as well as deployment to Iraq on OP TELIC. His career has been punctuated with accolades including being 21 Sig Regt's Top Soldier, being named as Top Sergeant whilst serving with 228 Sig Sqn, and a Certificate of Commendation by Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for Wiltshire. What makes this soldier's story remarkable, particularly this year, is what he was doing in the summer of 1982.

Whilst serving in Germany in the spring of 1982, he volunteered for a job, by his own words 'for a bit of a laugh' and was subsequently attached to 45 Commando RM from April to July 1982 and deployed on OP CORPORATE; The Falkland Islands campaign. **Sgt Parkyn** deployed to the South Atlantic not on the QE2, but on a supply ship, landing in San Carlos Bay in May and quickly became part of a direct fire assault team. He was part of the famous 56-mile, 3 day 'yomp' across the island at the end of which he was heavily involved in attacking and holding the 'Two Sisters' Peaks. After two days of heavy fighting, the objective was taken and then the troops had to deal with over 400 prisoners of war.

Sgt Parkyn can now talk freely about these memories, describing the cathartic experience of re-visiting the Falklands some years later as a key turning point in how he felt about the things he saw and did during that period. He is now leaving the Army as one of only about a dozen from that campaign who are still serving, and should he see fit to attend any Royal Signals Association events in the future, people should certainly look him up.

As his Regimental Sergeant Major, who was born during the Falklands conflict while **Sgt Parkyn** was engaged in hostilities, it was a great honour for me to not only shake his hand but write these Wire notes to highlight his story to the wider Corps.



Sgt Parkyn and WO1 (RSM) McCreadie at Army HQ, Andover

Roger Coleman

"I was part of the deployment who were Royal Signals EW specialists, attached to Y Troop Royal Marines having been requested by the Navy to give front-line EW support, the way we put it was "instant Marine, with no commando course..." It was a pleasure to support the troops of 3 CDO BDE, and be part of that formation.

Here are a couple of memories from my time in the Falklands:

Sleeping through an air-raid – San Carlos

After working a long night shift (I remember the night, as HMS Antelope (I think)) I limped into San Carlos, water ablaze, and the magazine exploded during the night. After stand-to, I went to sleep in the bottom of one of our trenches (a niche had been dug into the back so as I could roll into it). Sometime later in the day, I awoke and stated to my comrades, to their astonishment, what a quiet day it had been, I had actually slept through all the air-raids of that morning....

Counter EW from the enemy – shell fire – Mt Estancia

We had been deployed to another location, where the jammer vehicle was hidden behind a peat bank near the top of a hill (Mount Estancia I believe) all that could be seen from the front (towards Two Sisters) were the two whip ariels. As we were there for a few days, creating havoc with the Argentine comms on the islands, it wasn't long before the Argentine EW teams found where we were transmitting from, especially after we tried some deception. The artillery began "walking" up the hill, but luckily for us, the peat was absorbing the 105/175 howitzer shells, so they decided to start using air-bursts, not so nice and it certainly focused the mind a bit, although somewhat worrying, the old adage, if you hear the whistle, it has missed you. It isn't until your later years, does the experience really hit home.."

THE WIRE

Online



All editions of The Wire can be read online at: royalsignals.org under Royal Corps of Signals

1952
The Queen's
Accession



1952 Representative Detachments of Corps Units which provided Coronation communications



The Queen's Platinum Jubilee 2022

70 Years of Service

A look back through the years



1975 To mark the 50th Anniversary of the presence of Royal Signals in Catterick, Her Majesty The Queen unveiled the statue of two Signalmen

2002
The Braemar
Games



Sig Connor receives the sprinting medley shield from Her Majesty



Sgt Barrington Harvey being presented the Braemar Games Shield by HM The Queen



Her Majesty The Queen inspects 90 Sig Regt at Colchester



1965 Her Majesty The Queen meets members of the Corps in Berlin



Queen visits Gan Island

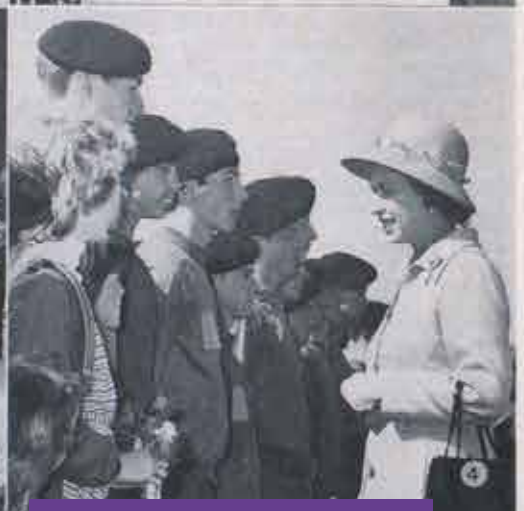
1977
The Queen's
Silver Jubilee



11 Sig Regt
Catterick Garrison

HER Majesty The Queen visited Tyne and Weir in mid-July and the Junior Signaller Wing, 11 Sig Regt had the great privilege to provide the Royal Guard of Honour when Her Majesty and His Royal Highness The

Duke of Edinburgh disembarked from the Royal Yacht, 'Britannia'. Our photoreport seeks to capture this event and a subsequent visit to Cramlington.



1. Inspection of Right Division—Lt Col H. A. Cuerden, Capt F. Common, Lt R. J. Machleson, BEM, Sgt B. C. Irwin
2. Her Majesty inspects the Guard of Honour on July 15, accompanied by Capt F. Common and Lt Col H. A. Cuerden
3. The Guard of Honour present arms, as Her Majesty leaves the quayside
4. Her Majesty speaking to members of Rapier Troop at Cramlington on July 15. Left to right: J/Sig Steven Clifford, Dennis Morris, David Bull, William Biundell, James McLaughlin, Steven Bell, Gary Line, Andrew Dawson, Gary Collins, Alan Farr, and John Charlesworth

Photo courtesy: Newcastle Chronicle and Journal Ltd
Photo courtesy: PK, HQ North-East District

Find out how the Corps were involved in the Platinum Jubilee in the Autumn edition of The Wire



Invitation Relay Race Winners

2006
The Braemar
Games



BFSAI RADCON

BRITISH FORCES SOUTH ATLANTIC ISLANDS RADCON

Sqn Comd: Sqn Ldr James Mathew BFSAI YofS: WO2 (YofS) Joshua Page

Op SOUTHERN VIGILANCE

By LCpl Mulholland

On 15 Mar 22 RADCON deployed on Ex MERCURY PUSH, the land ICS component support to Op SOUTHERN VIGILANCE. The missions and tasks were set; achieve TacCIS comms coverage from multiple sites to deliver against the Project BLACKSPOT plan. An early morning, deploying from Mount Pleasant to Port Howard ferry port to meet the Dutch tugs, normally reserved for bringing alongside RN warships, this time were loaded with Land Rover FFRs ready to sail across the Falkland Sound, to our destination of Port Howard.

After some ridiculously strong Dutch coffee the vehicles were unloaded and formed up ready to move in convoy south to Fox Bay. Our accommodation, instead of a breezy tent and Kero heater, consisted of a fully furnished farm lodge, called the Black Shanty Lodge into which we quickly unloaded our fresh rations and personal equipment.

The first day consisted of establishing the Fwd HQ inside the lodge before recovering Bowman equipment from the remote mountain site at Mt Alice. Bright and early on the second day we deployed two teams to conduct CIS reces within our defined area of focus. Attached to RADCON were two members of JCSU(SAI), one of whom was a Navy communicator (**AB Wallis**). The reces consisted of travelling to areas of interest and producing an RF heatmap by establishing comms back to the MPC JOC; after a long day of reces, we recovered back to the lodge, and were fed by the lovely **Sgt Masson** and **WO2 (YofS) Page's** cooking – an Italian take on paella.

After conducting all reces and recovering equipment from the second remote site, Byron Heights, we collapsed the Fwd HQ and made our way north to the port, ready for the crazy Dutch mariners to load the vehicles for return to East Falkland. Following a successful turnaround, we attended the Nepalese cultural evening hosted within one of the many welfare facilities MPC has to offer, to celebrate a successful deployment.

By LCpl Filmer

I was delighted to join the RADCON team as they deployed on exercise as it provided the opportunity for myself and my new team to deploy over to West Falkland. As a result, we got to see the amazing wildlife on offer from the Islands, such as watching whales, penguins, and dolphins swimming alongside the tug, along with a sheep that thought it was a dog. It was a scenic drive across the island, with snow-capped mountains giving way to amazing plains. Of note on West Falkland was the presence of actual trees, something not offered by East Falkland. The local population were very supportive as we conducted our reces, providing hot coffee and tea to help combat against the cold snowy weather we were enduring.



Worried faces all round as the barge was released to be towed behind the tug

Sig Sandesh Sunuwar hiding inside his wagon from a Turkey Vulture!



BFSAI TacCIS Support

Alongside deploying to support the BFSAI major incident plan, RADCON provide TacCIS support to the wider BFSAI community. The current roulement infantry company (RIC) is Anzio Coy, 1 LANCS. Led by **Cpl 'Cotts' Cottenden**, the Anzio Sigs team quickly developed strong ties with RADCON, providing mutual support to the teams.

One task assigned was to provide comms recces of the Onion Range Complex, to provide assurance to the RIC to run live ranges. With minimal roads, and all vehicle-based movement restricted to BV-206, the team went back to foundations - manpack, flask of hot tea and getting out on foot. This proved to be tricky, with treacherous conditions underfoot, the team quickly understood the excellent infantry training environment offered by Onion Ranges.

Conducting wider training on our ground to air radios, this enabled the RIC to confidently talk to Typhoons of 1435 Flt, 905 EAW. This training provided additional assurance to direct sorties from the ground whilst deployed on Ex CAPE BAYONET.

Working with the helicopter crews of BIH, the RADCON team managed to deploy to uninhabited islands to conduct site recces, the eeriness of the location combined with the squawks of the sea birds made for quite the experience. Also seizing the opportunity to fix faults across the islands, **CPO Dave 'Gigantaur' Holt** loaded himself onto one of the BIH helicopters to provide Naval considerations for Fwd HQ site recces.

Sig Sandesh Sunuwar providing comms from Swan Island in the Falkland Sound



Sgt Mick 'Bison Head' Masson immediately made himself at home on Tugboat Giessenstroom... check out those fancy shoes!



CPO Dave 'Gigantaur' Holt loving life in a helicopter



AB 'Wally' Wallis, ensuring the Royal Navy never deploy with a tea cosy and playing cards



Providing ground to air training with Anzio Coy, 1 LANCS, Cpl 'Cotts' Cottenden pictured



One of the recces, next to the only major junction on West Falkland



Sig Sandesh Sunuwar heading out into the wilderness

Joint Communications Support Unit (South Atlantic Islands)



Strategic Command
Defence Digital



Whale watching

OC Maj T Graham TOT Capt J Dunn Adjt Lt K Paterson

Support to Radcon on West Falkland

By LCpl Alex Filmer

As part of RADCON, I was deployed to support capability on West Falkland. As the majority of British Forces South Atlantic Islands (BFSAI) are based on East Falkland at Mount Pleasant Complex (MPC), this was a valuable opportunity to visit the island during my deployment.

A unique opportunity to see the beautiful scenery the West Island offers we made our way via tugboat crossing Falkland Sound. This is the famous strait that separates the two islands and interestingly is where the namesake of the Archipelago derives from. Named after **Antony Cary**, 5th Viscount of Falkland, former treasurer to the Navy and the original sponsor of the first English expedition to land on the islands in 1690. During our voyage, we caught sight of much of the wildlife, including whales and one of the Island's most famous residents - penguins, these swam beside us as we made our way to the West Island. Arriving on land we would then drive in convoy to Fox Bay village. This was as equally scenic and where we would be conducting our

“During our voyage, we caught sight of much of the wildlife, including whales and one of the Island's most famous residents - penguins, these swam beside us as we made our way to the West Island.”

we made our way to the West Island. Arriving on land we would then drive in convoy to Fox Bay village. This was as equally scenic and where we would be conducting our

Stanley Sea



exercise from. Once our HQ was established, we conducted Bowman checks, looking for communication black spots around the island over the course of the week. Here we would drive to each location, set up the Det and establish communications back to MPC. The weather was bitterly cold, marked with several snow showers that we had to endure. The local population was second to none though in their hospitality and we were greatly assisted by their provision of hot coffee and tea.

Spirited on by the Islander's renowned generosity we pushed on through to complete the last of the locations. Once this was achieved, we concluded our exercise and we returned to MPC. An interesting week and a great way to grasp one of the rarer opportunities and experiences whilst deployed at British Forces South Atlantic Islands.

Whale Watching Trip - by LCpl Kharka GM

Whilst deployed to British Forces South Atlantic Islands (BFSAI) I organised a trip on behalf of JCSU Defence Digital (SAI) for soldiers across the unit to experience this once in a lifetime opportunity before the onset of winter. Our journey began on Sunday 1 May, it was a cold morning with a temperature of 3°C, but with the standard Falklands breeze it felt more like -3°C! Our party consisted of soldiers and officers from across the unit. Six from our CMIS Section, three from UHQ, and two from Syscon. After being collected at MPC by Penguin Travel, we were on our way to Stanley the capital of the Falkland Islands.

After arriving at the port, we were met by our boat operator who was also interestingly ex-Army. A safety brief followed and whilst several of us wrestled with our life jackets we were warned of the slim likelihood of seeing whales. Undeterred, we departed the port at good speed and the view of Stanley and its surrounding mountains on such a beautiful day was excellent. Well underway everyone was excitedly stood out on the deck, trying our hardest to stay balanced whilst avoiding the occasional rogue wave splashing us from the bow.

At the half-way point of our journey, the boat operator brought us to an unexpected stop. Much to our amazement, we had been joined by a pod of dolphins. Leaping in and out of the water and chasing the boat we counted at least six all huddled at the stern providing us some excellent photo opportunities. It was one of the most remarkable moments of my life because I have never seen a dolphin that close before. As curious as we were of them it almost felt as if they were trying to get our attention and put on a show for us.

An amazing experience, but nonetheless our main effort remained catching sight of the whales. Leaving the dolphins, we sped on to the whale watching point. Steadily patrolling the area, we all eagerly remained on the lookout for any sign of them. In our excitement, a few thought we saw some spray, but others in our group thought we were just seeing things and dismissed this as just the breaking waves. After a good half an hour and nearly giving up hope we caught sight of a large spray followed by a tail fin. This was unmistakably a whale, and the boat's Captain briefed these were sei whales.

We would spend another half an hour playing a nautical cat and mouse, pursuing the whales' course and managing to get within 50 metres of them. Every time though they'd change positions and with their speed there was no way of keeping up. Luckily, we managed to catch several glimpses of them as they surfaced for air, each marked with an almighty spray of water and their characteristic tail fin breaking the surface. After such a fantastic display we returned to port escorted in by the dolphins. We were now more than ready to return to dry land as several of us were starting to feel the unwelcome consequences of nearly four hours on the water – sea sickness.

Finishing our day recounting our experiences in Shorty's Diner over a burger, it truly was an unforgettable experience, and will undoubtedly be one of my best memories from my time deployed here at BFSAI.

Dolphins spotted whilst whale watching





29 EOD&S Group Support Unit

660 Signal Troop



Exercise CASSINO SAPPER - by LCpl Matthew Swann and Spr Rebecca Bott

Between 21 - 26 Mar, members of 29 EOD&S Group Support Unit (GSU), including MACA Troop and 660 Signal Troop, participated in Ex CASSINO SAPPER. This was a battlefield study of Monte Cassino, Italy and the surrounding areas.

The tour began on 22 Mar with a study of “Million-Dollar Hill”, named by the American soldiers due to the cost of the artillery that was fired from there each day. This set the tone for the next few days as we moved around the Cassino area, moving from stand to stand studying various locations from the four battles of Monte Cassino. From Mt Trocchio, we then moved onto Hove Dump, the logistical HQ for the allies for four months. After a quick stop for lunch and a coffee (taking note that cappuccinos are frowned upon after 1100hrs in Italy) the group then experienced the Polish Cemetery which holds the graves of over 1000 Polish soldiers and officers who died storming point 593 and the bombed-out Benedictine Abbey in 1944.

The following few days were filled with more interesting studies and sightseeing. After a long walk along the

“One of the more emotional aspects of the trip was the visits to multiple cemeteries, including the Polish, German and Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery.”

Cavendish Road (a supply route used by the allies during the campaign) the group were treated to a tour of the Benedictine Monastery that has dominated the landscape since AD 529. It was here they were able to appreciate the impressive architecture and views from the summit.

One of our final visits was the location of the Amazon Bridge crossing and memorial for those that died ensuring the river obstacle was successfully crossed. We were able to learn about the historical importance of the bridge and more about the construction and the battle that happened across the River Rapido. One of the proudest moments in Sapper history.

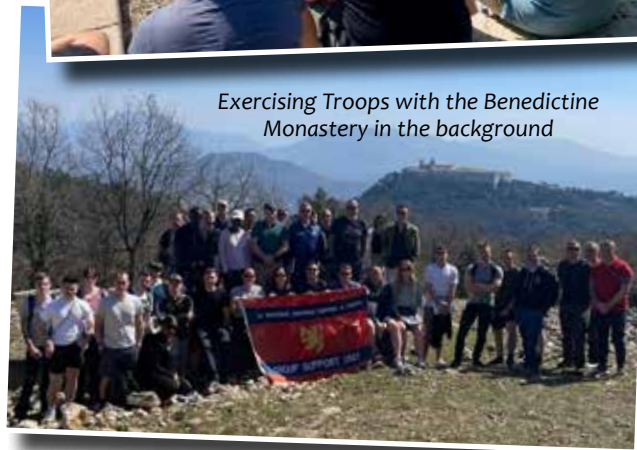
One of the more emotional aspects of the trip was the visits to multiple cemeteries, including the Polish, German and Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery. A worthwhile stop to truly show the realities of war.

During the stop everybody was asked to find a grave that they connected with and place a poppy to show their

Amazon Bridge Sapper memorial



The group learning about the Allies success of finally capturing Point 593



Exercising Troops with the Benedictine Monastery in the background

respect. A parade followed by a moment of silence at the Sword of Peace to remember the fallen, was led by the RSM and CO of 29 EOD&S GSU.

On the final day the group had the opportunity to study the objective in Rome. To start, the group were given a ticket to enter the Colosseum. For many this was their first time in Rome and was a fantastic opportunity to visit one of the seven wonders of the world. After the tour the group dispersed into smaller syndicates, walking around Rome seeing sights such as Il Vittoriano, Pantheon, Trevi Fountain, Spanish steps, Vatican City and the Sistine chapel to name a few. A good way to end a successful battlefield study that was educational, entertaining, and shone light on the history and sacrifices made.

The grave of a Signalman that died during the Monte Cassino battles





Strensall Detachment, B Company, Yorkshire (North and West) Army Cadet Force

By SSgt Henson

Detachment Commander – Lt Mike Richardson R SIGNALS
 Detachment Staff – Lt Walter Van Opstal R SIGNALS
 SSgt Charlie Henson

This is the first time that Strensall detachment has written an article for The Wire and we wanted to let you know that the future of the Corps is thriving in Strensall, just outside of York. If you have ever been to 2 Sig Regt, York as a posting, you will know Strensall well, what you may not know is that at the top of the Camp there are 30+ Army Cadets aged 12 - 18 parading twice weekly. Our cadets learn military skills such as drill, military knowledge, fieldcraft, Cadet Information Systems (CIS), skill at arms, shooting (air rifles, 5.56mm SA80 (cadet version) and 7.62mm target rifle) and wider life skills such as first aid, adventure training including Duke of Edinburgh training, map reading, community engagement and keeping active. Like everyone, the Company stopped training due to Covid, and for the past six months, we are starting to get back into the swing of training and getting away on weekend training camps as well.

On 15-17 Apr 22, the county held a first aid competition, Strensall Det entered a team of four, **Cpl Kennedy**, **LCpl Lord**, **LCpl Hogarth** and **Cadet Headington**, an exceptionally good effort by the team, however they did not get any medals as the competition was extraordinarily strong this year, we will be better next year.

On 22-24 Apr 22, we deployed the company on a Field Training exercise, where we had over 150 cadets from the company out on Strensall training area. Teaching and assessing them on all aspects of fieldcraft, covering section attacks, ambushes, and the joy of cam cream, living in bashers with the obligatory mystery meal from the cook house! The detachment officers **Lt Mike Richardson** and **Lt Walter Van Opstal** put themselves to effective use and served up food to all the cadets. An enormous amount of time and effort went into the planning and training of the cadets.



Sgt Chamberlain during one of the attacks on the training exercise



Cpl Kennedy and LCpl Hogarth showing how tall they are in the centre back of the group!



Above: The detachment officers Lt Mike Richardson and Lt Walter Van Opstal put themselves to effective use and served up food to all the cadets on the field training exercise



LCpl Holly Hogarth receiving a First Aid Award from the ACF with her parents in front of the company

During the lockdown, one of our Detachment members **LCpl Holly Hogarth** remembered her first aid training when out seeing her friends and found a young woman passed out through drink. Keeping herself calm she cleared her airway, got her into the recovery position while organising an ambulance to arrive.

One of the main practices, we push for the cadets is to help to push themselves as well or as per the ACF motto "To Inspire to Achieve", to achieve this we award the cadets star awards starting at basic, 1, 2, 3, 4 stars and finishing on master cadets. With each star level, the training gets harder and the skill more demanding, however the cadets love the challenge and the detachment is continuing to grow, I look forward to being able to provide more updates in the next edition of The Wire.



A busy night for det members LCpl Clark, Cdt James, Donohoe, Simpson, LCpl Gregory, Cdt Nicholas, LCpl Lord, Gardner, Cdt Stelling and Johnson as they all show off their star certificates and badges

THE ROYAL CORPS OF SIGNALS 2022 PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

Sponsored by

ROYAL
SIGNALS
INSTITUTION

We need your images to promote the Corps across social media and Corps publications. The competition is open to all R SIGNALS Regular and Reserve personnel, R SIGNALS Cadets, Retired personnel and Civilians who work within the R SIGNALS.

Each category winner will receive a cash prize of £50. Both the video category winner and the overall winner will receive a prize of £250. Landscape photos may appear in the Corps 2023 calendar.

There are seven categories and entrants should attempt to capture the 'spirit' of the category. The categories are:

- Sport and Adventure (S&A)
- Portrait (P)
- Life in the Field (LitF)
- Innovation (trade/engineering/equipment)
- Ethos (remembering the traditions)
- Day-to-day life
- Videography. We are inviting 60 second video entries. The winning video will feature on the R SIGNALS website and across the social media platforms. The category is 'Your Corps'.

**Closing date
for entries:
7 October 2022**

For more information and to enter go to:
royalsignals.org/royal-signals-institution/photo-competition



COMBAT READY TRAINING CENTRE (CRTC)

SO3 CIS – Capt (Tfc) RC Brown
YofS – SSgt Coombs

Over the past year and despite the continued challenge that is COVID-19, the CIS Troop of the Combat Ready Training Centre (CRTC) has continued to be pro-actively engaged (within the parameters of the pandemic safety measures) with exercise delivery support, battlefield studies, adventurous training and sports.

Towards the end of 2021, the Troop were involved in 'Ex IRON VIPER, a validation exercise for 3RLC as part of 101 Log Bde. The Troop's involvement in the exercise was centred around the exercise support delivery role, as is our usual tasking. We provide a vital communications safety net through black communication systems that allows the exercise to proceed. **Cpl Jack Buttery**, a Network Engineer in the Troop, comments further:

"IRON VIPER saw the CIS team deploy in two locations, Excon North in Swynnerton and Excon South in Westdown Camp. Without the support of the CIS department, the imperative communications safety net would not have been established, maintained or worked effectively. Without this safety net, any exercise cannot be safely run."

Another primary task is the establishment of exercise control (ExCon). The needs of ExCon vary and we are adaptable to this need. This exercise saw the need to operate Exonaut, a reporting and monitoring software. This system works in conjunction with TES so all exercising soldiers can be tracked via the screens in ExCon and

handheld tablets. Observer Mentors (OMs) can use the tablets to track soldiers and make observations out on the ground that are automatically uploaded to a central database to feed validation reports.

Ex IRON VIPER was a new opportunity for the CIS Troop as this was the first time we had worked solely on a logistical exercise. All those Troop members present on the exercise benefited from learning how a logistical force operates and communicates in the field.

Following this exercise, some members of the Troop deployed onto the Unit's battlefield study, Ex BERLIN ARCHER. This trip was to study the advance of the Red Army through the Seelow Heights and their push into Berlin itself in 1945. Members of the CIS Troop, along with others from CRTC deployed to Berlin for the study. **LCpl Danny Johns** was one of these from the Troop who deployed:

"Ex BERLIN ARCHER was a fantastic eye opener of a total war in a semi-rural (Seelow) and urban (Berlin) environment. I would recommend anyone to go to the Seelow/Berlin battlefield study - especially at Christmas when bratwurst and beer(s) in the Christmas markets were a welcome treat after an interesting day's learning."

The end of the battlefield study ran nicely into Christmas leave, a welcome respite after a busy year. Soon enough we were back in as a portion of the Troop deployed to Sennelager, Germany on Ex TALLINN DAWN in January. Our involvement being predominantly focused around safety comms, both on black and TacCIS radio nets.

In preparation, **LCpl Jack Saunderson** and **Sig Lee Bates** were tasked to set up Digital Mobile Radio (DMR), a black comms

system. We had not previously used this system so we expected teething problems. The system consisted of eight repeaters and antennas, which resulted in allowing us to have sixteen channels with a range of approximately 12km. This created a stable and secure radio network to allow critical safety comms across the exercise area.

LCpl Jack Saunderson deployed to Germany, he explains his experience whilst out there:

“The roll out of DMR systems was a learning experience for everyone in the team. However, after overcoming some issues and climbing way too many stairs to place our equipment at the top of Haustenbecker tower, we eventually got everything in and working. I also had the opportunity to go out onto the ground to understand more of how CRTC operates its exercises and even see some armour in action for the first time in my career.”

As Ex TALLINN DAWN raged on in Germany, the remainder of the Troop still in Blighty switched fire to Ex WESSEX STORM on Salisbury Plain Training Area, a staple in our FOE. This exercise saw the validation of the Light Dragoons Battle Group. Although a known entity and in most regards a routine exercise, new challenges were still met. This exercise saw us deploy data systems for the first time. This was to allow OMs and analysts in ExCon to monitor the data feed of the Light Dragoons BG. Headed up by **Cpl Josh Strangward** and his team, we provided six UADS to record and monitor the chat rooms being used by exercising troops. This allowed us to monitor UHF data comms as we had with VHF voice comms on past exercises. The final stage of the exercise (optimisation) saw **LCpl Johns** and I deployed to Dixies Corner, SennyBridge in order to facilitate and support an expeditionary ExCon for the remainder of the exercise.

Sig Harry Bates has been playing football for 3 (UK) Div Sig Regt in Bulford since joining the Troop. After attending training sessions, he got to play his first match in the quarter finals of the Regimental cup. Despite coming on in the sixtieth

minute fresh and ready to go he was unable to help overturn a 5-1 defeat. **Harry** had this to say about his first match with 3 (UK) Div Sig Regt:

“It felt great to be out on the pitch again after the pandemic and able to represent a proud Signal Regiment and equally CRTC.”

LCpl Jack Saunderson has been involved with the Corps ice hockey team prior to joining CRTC. His continued attendance at training and matches is encouraged and supported. **Cpl Josh Strangward** is also a member of the Corps Rugby team. Again, like **Jack**, his membership predates his time at CRTC, however his continued involvement is encouraged and supported. **LCpl Connor Songhurst**, our Combat Logistics Engineer and I are also involved in the Warminster Garrison Clay Pigeon shooting club on a weekly basis. If our required outputs are being achieved, members of the CIS Troop at CRTC will be given time away from work to participate in the sports they enjoy.

The hard work done by members of the CIS Troop does not pass by unnoticed by the wider Corps. Towards the end of last year **Cpl Subash Pariyar** was awarded the Corps SM's coin on the Corps Sergeant Major's visit to the Troop. This is a fantastic achievement and **Cpl Subash** is very deserving of the award. He continues to display the level of dedication and professionalism expected of, and given by, members of the Troop.

Our past year has been full to the brim, but even with many an exercise to support, the hard work done by members of the Troop has been rewarded with much earned downtime, adventurous training, sports and the odd battlefield study. Each individual is better for the experience, and each individual comes together to make the successful team that is CRTC CIS Troop.

By Lt James Newton, Troop Commander



Charlie's Day Out - by Lt Williams

Charlie's Day Out was a Troop cohesion day to Windsor Castle on 27 Jan 22. The trip was designed to absorb lessons from history and allow us to get to know one another outside of a work setting. This was particularly important for the newly formed Spec Ops Troop. The day started with the classic M25 standstill traffic which allowed the anticipation to truly build for the castle. Once we arrived, the previously nominated personnel in the troop set to work on their prepared lectures about the rich history of the castle. One of these was delivered by **Sig Holmes** on Saint Georges Chapel, this fascinating building most recently was the site of **Prince Harry and Meghan's** wedding. The state apartments were also delved into with a lecture from **Sig Matthews** who really brought the place to life. We were fortunate enough to have visited during the Changing of the Guard, this was marvellously explained in detail by **Cpl Donaldson-Crook** who had completed ceremonial duties previously and he gave a behind-the-scenes aspect on the entire ceremony. From here the Troop went for a group lunch which allowed us to discuss more about all we had learned and what future Troop cohesion activities we could do after the success of this one.

The day was highly informative and fun for all involved and allowed the Troop to relax around each other which is important when working in a readiness environment. All in all, the day was a complete success and all reported to work the next day on time (even if some had sore heads).

Exercise PEGGY PILGRIM - by LCpl Rooks

In preparation for the upcoming Nijmegen Marches, 216 (Para) Sig Sqn went on a five-day Battlefield Study to Arnhem. It was a perfect opportunity to learn more about our Squadron history and to gain a better understanding of what the Pegasus means to the people of the Netherlands. The trip gave us an opportunity to recce and qualify for the Nijmegen Marches and over the first few days we followed the



Members of 216 (Para) Sig Sqn in front of the "Windows of the Past" sculpture on Ginkel-Heath which gives an impression of the landings during Op MARKET GARDEN



The group gaining a better understanding of the local culture

footsteps of the 1st Airborne Divisional Signals, from their DZ at Ginkel Heath all the way to Arnhem Bridge. Along the way we talked through the heroic actions of the Airborne Division as well as the difficulties in command and control experienced by the local commanders on the ground.

The following day began with **LCpl Stoner** briefing us on **Deane-Drummond**, the Second-in-Command of the

16 AIR ASSAULT BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (216)

Colchester



Charlie Troop
outside
Windsor Castle





Sig Smithard-Reeves delivering a brief in front of Arnhem bridge, the objective which turned out to be "A Bridge too Far"

1st Airborne Divisional Signals at the time (now known as 216 (Para) Sig Sqn), who escaped from a PoW camp during Operation MARKET GARDEN. His incredible escape included

hiding in a cupboard for 13 days without access to any supplies! Furthermore, on 18 September 1944 **Capt Deane-Drummond**, alongside a small group of three Para soldiers managed to get within sight of Arnhem bridge, the deepest advance into town that the Brigade managed by this point.

During the remainder of the trip, **LCpl Jarret**, **LCpl Wright** and **Sig Smithard-Reeves** all gave great presentations on the significance of airborne forces as well as the importance of resilient communication plans throughout WW2. We also had ample time for group cohesion during the evenings and we were all really impressed how well the locals maintained and remembered the history of those brave British, American, Canadian and Polish forces who played a crucial role in the liberation of the Netherlands.

We are all looking forward to the 4 daagse March in Nijmegen over summer, representing the Squadron and 16 Air Assault Bde whilst paying a tribute to those who gave the ultimate sacrifice. AD UNUM OMNES!

Exercise MERCURY DAGGER 22 - by Sgt Durham

On Sunday 30 Jan 216 (Para) Sig Sqn, after weeks of preparation and planning, were waiting to deploy on the infamous annual Battle Camp Ex MERCURY DAGGER. They made the short drive down to Cinque Ports training Area in Kent and got dropped straight onto the area. After a short battle prep, the two Platoons, 1 (Dunn) Platoon commanded by **Lt Von Hannover** and 2 (Miller) Platoon commanded by **Lt Tom Williams** stepped off in search of a suitable harbour area for the night and to gain a foothold in the AO and conduct some IPB and IPE situational awareness. The following day saw the two Platoons conduct a 10km clearance patrol in a bid to better understand the ground and to engage with the local population to gather useful J2. During the patrol they encountered a mass casualty situation which included an EO threat. **Sgt Dave Plumeret-Page** was charged with assessing this stand which asked the men to manage the casualty scene and conduct necessary ground clearance. C-EO skills were required to extract the casualties from the danger area to provide life-saving first aid before arranging medical evacuation. These skills were taught by the members of the Squadron that deployed on Op PITTING, relying on their experiences at the airport disaster to pass on pertinent lessons learnt.



Some last-minute prep of the model pit before the final attack

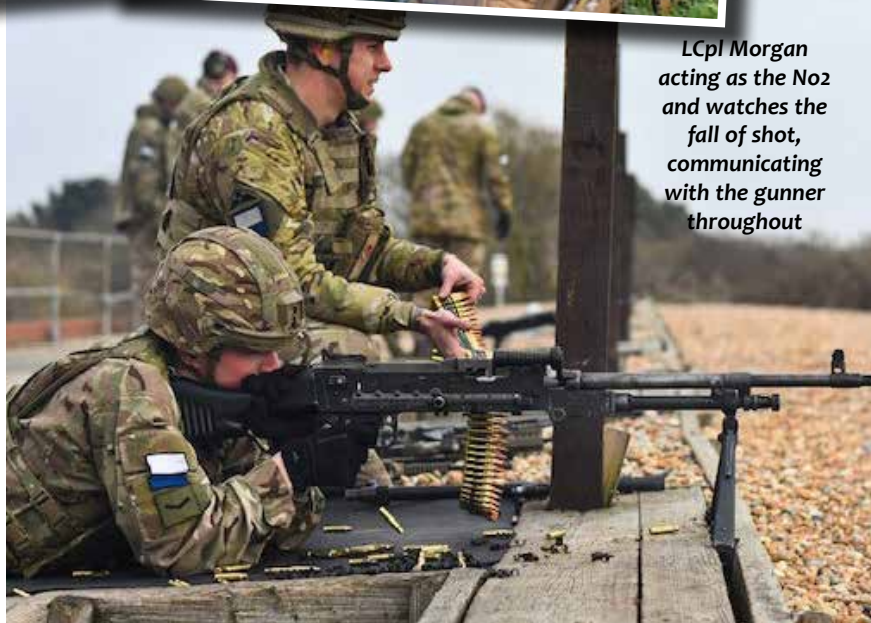
action. The week culminated in a raid to extract a non-combatant from a heavily protected enemy stronghold and executing a non-combatant evacuation operation (NEO), an action that is very prevalent within 16 X at the moment.

After the field phase came a LFMT package where members of the Squadron conducted elementary and advanced application of fire, with coaches developing individual marksmanship principles ahead of the ACMT. From there they progressed onto the GPMG (Lt role) learning how to balance the gun, POA at various ranges and further application of fire practices before moving onto GPMG (SF).



Cpl Coleman sending a MISTAT ahead of the CASEVAC. A suitable HLS was chosen... on top of the hill

Throughout, the training team dropped FragO's at specific times that required the commanders to conduct a detailed combat estimate for every task of which there were eight in total. Once they had demonstrated the due diligence in the estimate it was into preparing their orders ably assisted by their respective Platoon Sgt's, **Sgt Maynard** and **Cpl Williams**. The rest of the exercise saw the troops conduct mounted patrols and clearance patrols, operating in a complex terrain, Section and Platoon offensive and defensive



LCpl Morgan acting as the No2 and watches the fall of shot, communicating with the gunner throughout

Exercise PEGASUS WALK - by LCpl Stockdale



216 (Para) Sig Sqn on some well-earned AT in the French Pyrenees. Nothing better than a little bit of altitude training at 3000m



Immediately following the conclusion of Exercise MERCURY DAGGER, 12 members of 216 (Para) Sig Sqn set off on a snowshoeing adventure in the French Pyrenees.

Each day we began different trails of various peaks ranging from 1800 metres to 3000 metres. Our guides ensured we were challenged throughout whilst maintaining a fun aspect. We needed no encouragement in having fun as at least one member of the expedition would do their best Bambi-on-ice impression. Multiple slopes were used to slide down in a less than orthodox fashion!

The instructors expertly guided us through tricky passages; there were extremely steep, single file or sharp descents. They also shared their vast knowledge of the region's wildlife, geography, and history with us which helped keep us all engaged and interested. To finish the week's snowshoeing, we had an outdoor spa day which concluded what would be a memorable experience. Those that attended the AT were all in agreement that, albeit challenging, the week was a great success.

The UK Midlands Inter-Unit Basketball Championships - by Cpl Minnet

The UK Midlands Inter-Unit Basketball Championship, a qualifying round for the Army Inter-Unit Championships, took place on Wednesday 23 Feb at PWGB, Grantham. With the news of the competition coming up, 216 (Para) Sig Sqn got all potential players together and underwent a methodical three week training regime to select ten players who would represent the squadron during the competition.

216 (Para) Sig Sqn Basketball Team headed off to Grantham with a fresh squad and a mission to bring silverware back to

the Squadron! We arrived the afternoon prior to competition and familiarised ourselves with the surroundings to best prepare ourselves for the upcoming games. One relaxed training session and a team cohesive meal later and the team was good to go for the next day.

In the morning we found out that our first of two games were going to be against 37 Sig Regt in the afternoon, that gave the team plenty of time to eye up the competition and see who we were up against. Game one came and the starting five took a comfortable lead in the first half, this gave us an opportunity to rotate and give everyone some court time. A couple of special mentions to **Sgt Jukes** and **Cpl Elkington** for outstanding defensive performances and **Sig Davies** who had a moment of individual excellence, scoring his only basket of the tournament. The game ended with a comfortable win for 216 (Para) Sig Sqn beating 37 Sig Regt (34-9) and ensuring our place in the final against ASTGDM.

Final time; The first half was neck and neck with both teams playing well offensively and defensively throughout and when the halftime whistle blew, the score was 19-15 in favor of 216 (Para) Sig Sqn. Noticing that the opposition was tiring, the team decided to switch up and push them hard with some fresh legs. This tactic gave us a comfortable lead and also meant all members of the team featured on the score board. With jubilation, the buzzer had gone, and the final score was 32-21. That was it, 216 (Para) Sig Sqn had won the UK Midlands Minor-Unit Championships! Basketball silverware back to the Squadron and mission complete.

A massive congratulations to all the men on the team! All the hard work, training and dedication during the competition was a testament to the men's passion of the sport. One massive shout out went out to **LCpl Harris** who was awarded MVP (Most Valuable Player) by all officials on the day. His tireless effort during both games was vital for the overall success of the team. Next up is the Army Inter-Unit Finals... GO TO IT.

Exercise DRAGON MERCURY SALTADOR By LCpl Crow

Eight members of 216 (Para) Sig Sqn travelled to Sevilla, Spain, to complete an Accelerated Freefall (AFF) skydiving qualification over the period 20 Mar – 1 Apr 22. The aim was to acquire the skydiving A licence which entitles you to jump anywhere in the UK without an instructor at 15000ft.

The group started the process at the Army Parachute Association, Netheravon, where we met our highly experienced instructors with nearly 10,000 jumps each, it's safe to say we were in good hands. We commenced ground



Cpl Lear enjoying his free-fall in Spain

training, consisting of actions on malfunctions, landings assessment and getting kit issued. The next stop would be in the sky at 15000 feet ready to jump!

Unfortunately, due to inclement weather we found it hard to get the required number of jumps in, with consistent high winds and heavy cloud cover. This gave us the opportunity to visit Sevilla, and take in the culture (sample the night life). We stumbled across a bar that played British music and enjoyed getting to know the locals.

The next day we visited Gibraltar on one of our “no jump” days. We dragged ourselves up the rock as the bus was extortionate in price which no self-respecting soldier would pay. In Gibraltar we saw the rock monkeys trying to loot the tourists and visited St Michael’s Cave for a bit of culture and history.

Back at the DZ for some work we managed to get the first few jumps in as there was a small weather window and managed to get level 1 and 2 nipped before the window closed. The weather was more forgiving in the second week which meant we all managed to get the level 3 jump squared. The three jumps alone that each of us managed to get, made the trip worthwhile. Firstly, you’re in the door looking at the ground 1500 feet below, thinking, “I’m about to jump out of this plane.” The very next second you are falling towards the ground at 142 miles per hour. This alone is an experience none of us will ever forget. After 60 seconds of free-fall, wind battering us in the face whilst trying to carry out the drills required, our parachute deployed at 6000 feet and then we



were under the safety of the canopy slowly descending towards the ground. After a flare of the canopy, the body comes to rest back on terra firma. The exhilaration is second to none and a real motivator to take to the skies again.

The skydiving exercise was well worth a two-week trip to Spain, giving us all some worthwhile memories. Unfortunately, the weather was not on our side and we were only able to complete the first three levels, although we all intend to finish the course at Netheravon over the summer months to complete the “A” Licence qualification.

Queen's Birthday Honours

Congratulations to all those in our Corps who were awarded these prestigious Honours:

The Military Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire As Members (MBE)

Lieutenant Colonel (now Acting Colonel) Sally Yvonne ARTHURTON
Major Matthew Stephen JOHNS, Army Reserve
Warrant Officer Class One James MACRAE
Major (now Lieutenant Colonel) Matthew Royston MALLETT
Warrant Officer Class Two Christopher RENSHAW, Army Reserve

Queen’s Volunteer Reserves Medal (QVRM)

Lieutenant Colonel Simon Charles HUNT, VR, Army Reserve



Operation ALLIED SOLACE: In August 2021, more than 120,000 people were evacuated in the Allied airlift from Kabul airport as part of the coalition effort – including around 2,000 NATO Affiliated Afghans (NAAs), and their families. Op ALLIED SOLACE (Op ALSO) was the follow-on mission to RESOLUTE SUPPORT, providing housing, care and support while arrangements were made for follow-on movement to Allied and partner countries. Initially a 60-day mission, Op ALLIED SOLACE saw multiple extensions of mandate, eventually closing in March 2022.



Mountains overlooking the camps



Camp Bondsteel in the snow

OC Maj Jon Attwell SSM SSgt Chris Wood

Operation ALLIED SOLACE

By LCpl Shaw and LCpl Walker

On 13 Dec 21, a small contingent from 280 Sig Sqn, deployed at three weeks' notice, with limited information, to Kosovo, in support of the NATO Mission, Op ALSO. Held at very high readiness, it was a true test of the Squadron's deployment ability, with the Mission requirements constantly altering and severely limited national support available on the ground. The Squadron were tasked to provide the secure communications required for Op ALSO's main effort, the processing and relocation of NAAs, who had so recently been evacuated from Kabul.

Operating out of Camp Bechtel - a rough and ready compound accommodating NAA's on the outskirts of Ferizaj, our nine strong NATO DCIS Detachment (NDD), were responsible for supporting Task Force NOBLE (TF NOBLE) HQ, the forward mounted enabling element of Op ALSO. In addition, we were also providing CIS services to other critical mission elements, including a British-led medical detachment and a multi-national CIMIC team, who were responsible for the welfare and care of the NAAs as they awaited relocation.

To combat the lack of information, we deployed a small advance element on 7 Dec, tasked to resolve RLS issues and gather as many details on the Mission as possible, smoothing the way for the main body deployment. So, 2IC **Capt Napier** and **Sgt Bryant** were deployed, slightly unusually, via Wizz Air (think **Gemma Collins**). They travelled complete with crypto and a small NATO CIS capability, forcing **Sgt Bryant** to deploy all his diplomacy when challenged by a diligent air steward on the extra luggage just prior to the plane taking off. The

OC 280 Sig Sqn visit



280 (NATO) Signal Squadron

steward's lack of understanding, and **Sgt Bryant's** diplomacy, resulted in every other passenger loudly discussing the potential contents for the rest of the flight.

For the main body, our deployment highlights began with an early wakeup at 0315hrs on 13 Dec, ready for the shuttle bus to Brize Norton at 0400hrs. A C-27J Spartan from the Romanian Air Force had been assigned specifically for this mission and was waiting to move us to theatre. Due to the nature of the flight, and much to our surprise, the only passengers boarding would be us! Once settled and with the flight under way, we reshuffled to make use of the limited space available. **LCpl Ilahi** was given special treatment, with one of the aircrew offering up his flight jacket, tucking him in, and settling him down comfortably. (A service not available on RAF flights).

Landing at Kosovo's main airport in Pristina, we were met by the advance party and escorted by our Italian forerunners from 2nd NATO Signal Battalion to our temporary accommodation located on Camp Bondsteel. Once arrived, we immediately unloaded our baggage, and settled in location, checking out the welfare facilities on the American camp.

The following morning, we set to beginning the HO/TO process from our Italian counterparts. Although initially challenged by the language barrier and time constraints, their offering of delicious shots of Italian coffee gave us the boost we needed to crack on with the task at hand.

Quickly completing the HO/TO and wishing our farewells to the Italian unit (who seemed in a hurry to leave), we began to implement our ways of working, arranging a suitable shift rotation, allowing for around the clock availability. It was now that the snow made its winter debut, adding to the already difficult task of safe driving on the Kosovan roads. This change of circumstance also made maintaining our Satcom equipment outdoors much more difficult. We also soon found out why the Italians were so happy to leave; a change of accommodation and camp was on the horizon. Whilst our stay at Camp Bondsteel provided many welfare benefits; like easy access to the internet and 24-hour gym access, we had



DSGT in the snow



Camp Bechtel HQ



Camp Bechtel Accommodation



Jingle Jog team



had enough of hot swapping our beds in between shift rotations! It was time to relocate to Camp Bechtel.

Camp Bechtel is quite the contrast to Camp Bondsteel. It is a former construction worker accommodation site repurposed prior to the arrival of the NAAs in late 2021. Facilities are mostly focussed around the NAAs needs such as dining hall, children's day care, tearoom and a large hard standing mostly used by the children for games of football and snowball fights. There is also a HQ building from which TF NOBLE operates from. Once moved over from Camp Bondsteel, we were housed in a small compound within the camp, each floor containing shared rooms and wash facilities. Although not to the same standard as the US camp, it had hot water, toilets that worked most of the time and radiators for the cold nights over the snowy period, so it could've been worse.

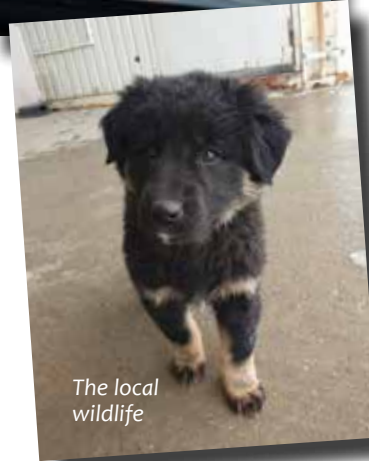
Christmas was now fast approaching so **Capt Napier** suggested a game of Secret Santa with the intent to improve morale, though we know it was the cowboy hat in the PX he really wanted. We set Christmas day off to a good start by conducting the 'Jingle Jog', a Christmas run hosted by our American friends on Camp Bondsteel; to which praises go to **Sgt Clarke**, storming ahead and giving **LCpl Ilahi** and **LCpl Shaw** a run for their money! Although **Capt Napier** had finished and was on his second coffee by the time **Sgt Clarke** came in. Following the run, we tucked into a generous Christmas lunch and opened our secret Santas. With the 2IC pleasantly 'surprised' with his 'Howdy Partner' gift, attention turned to **Sgt Anderson** and some leadership lessons from his new book "The Leadership Lessons of Jesus", to which he enlightened us with "quotes of the day" from then on. Evening came and with it, **Cpl Grochowinas'** karaoke event, which very rapidly turned into an Albanian dominated dance-off affair.

As mentioned, the facilities at Camp Bechtel were spartan, to say the least. This extended to the staff working environment too, and it was not long after Christmas that the NDD team were to have their first of many run ins with Kosovo's rolling blackouts. With a lack of power outlets, it was a constant effort of risk mitigation and monitoring to ensure our equipment was always ready go and comms remained in, ensuring there was no delay to the vital NAA resettlement efforts.

With 2022 firmly underway and the mission end still unknown, OC 280, **Maj Attwell**, paid us a visit to see for himself some of the challenges the mission presented. Of course, this period



The final drive



The local wildlife

also saw a complete change of our situation, the sun came out and the snow melted. None of the power outages, network problems or even a broken cable we had previously reported occurred in his presence. The usually bland food was of a much higher standard and the Wi-Fi signal strong, leading him to think we had embellished some of our concerns. Thankfully, on the day before he returned to the UK, he got to see the team in full action, the power surged, network connections fluctuated and the skies opened up. Very happy with his team's performance (but still believing them to be exaggerating about the poor food quality), **Maj Attwell** returned to the UK, no doubt relieved to have escaped **LCpl Shaw's** dubious investment advice.

As we hit February the Mission was extended again and with the end date still unclear, our Battalion HQ decided it was time to bring us home. So, three months after arriving we found ourselves amid another HO/TO, this time with our Croatian colleagues, who we have worked closely with over the last few years. The familiarity between the British and Croatian soldiers ensured a rapid and effective HO/TO took place, though it

must be said the standard of coffee was much worse than our first HO/TO. Prior to leaving, **Oberst (Col) Gottschalk**, DCOM TF NOBLE presented the UK NDD team with a plaque and thanked them for all their hard work, especially praising the professionalism of the team for maintaining robust DCIS in such a complex and austere environment. All that was left to do now was a final photo and to pack our bags.

In the early hours of 11 Mar, we found ourselves driving in the snow one last time, reassured in the knowledge that our flights would run on time, as the Romanian Air Force would again be our airline of choice, and not the RAF. Yet again, the soldiers of 280 Sig Sqn were the only passengers on the Romanian plane, having learnt from their first experience, doss bags and softie trousers were deployed at the earliest opportunity, with **Sgt Anderson** setting the example. As we transited over Swiss airspace we were even given the privilege of an escort. We landed at Brize Norton to a grey and wet afternoon, not pleasant by any stretch, but a nice step change from the snow of Kosovo.

So, it's onto a few weeks hard earned leave, before the return to work and preparations for the next NATO tasking that will come our way, wherever that might be. Rumours persist, but as it stands, the wait endures for confirmation of **LCpl Ilahi's** first operational medal.



HO/TO with DCM F (Croatian)



Draw day -
Every Friday



Entry cost - £1

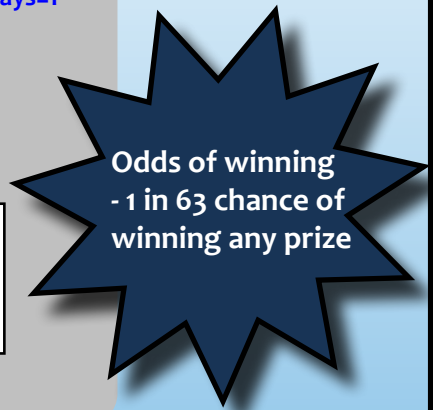
The promoter of this Unity Lottery is Royal Signals Charity, HQ Royal Signals, Griffin House, Blandford Camp, Blandford Forum, DT11 8RH. Royal Signals Charity is licensed and regulated in Great Britain by Dorset Council under account number NDSL0211



RSC Lottery

A minimum of 50% of the total lottery proceeds go to supporting the work carried out by Royal Signals Charity, 18.4% on prizes and 31.6% on expenses and administration of the lottery

- Sign up here - <https://unity.charitypayments.co.uk/play?charity=1787&plays=1>
- Player rules - <https://www.unitylottery.co.uk/rules/>
- Gambling Commission - <https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/>
- Be Gamble Aware - <https://www.begambleaware.org/>
- How the game works - <https://www.unitylottery.co.uk/prizes/>



Odds of winning
- 1 in 63 chance of
winning any prize



Sign Up



Rules



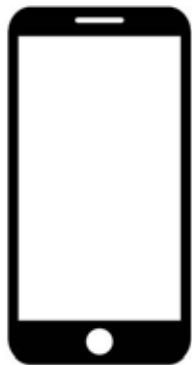
Gambling
Commission



Be Gamble
Aware



Prizes



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3rd (UNITED KINGDOM) DIVISION SIGNAL REGIMENT, BULFORD

CO Lt Col Rob Harris	RSM WO1 Michael Williams
202 SIGNAL SQUADRON	
OC Maj Craig Tee	SSM WO2 (SSM) Peter Kirkman
228 SIGNAL SQUADRON	
OC Maj Matt Bennett	SSM WO2 (SSM) Ryan Taylor
249 SIGNAL SQUADRON	
OC Maj Jonny Leigh	SSM WO2 (SSM) Shyam Lama
SUPPORT SQUADRON	
OC Maj Nat Butler	SSM WO2 (SSM) David Wood

Ex KIWI TROPHY is a prestigious March and Shoot competition held annually to commemorate the contribution of the New Zealand Expeditionary Forces during the Great War and their time at Bulford camp. The event is named after a historical depiction of a Kiwi bird carved in Beacon Hill, Bulford by the Kiwi Forces in 1919. The competition was first organised by the then Officer Commanding 249 AMF(L) Sig Squadron, **Maj Danny** in 1981 to mark the one-year anniversary of the Kiwi monument by the Sqn. After disbandment of the Sqn in Apr 03, the conservation of the monument and the continuation of the Trophy has been carried on by 3 (UK) Div Sig Regt.

This year the competition was organised by 249 Gurkha Sig Sqn, led by **Cpl Vishal Rai**. Traditionally a 14-miler March and Shoot event carrying 15 kg including personal weapon, the distance was shortened to 10 miles considering the Regiment's

involvement in various exercises and commitments in addition to COVID that restricted participants to a limited build up training. Keeping up with their commendable performances from previous years, 249 Gurkha Sig Sqn dominated the competition by securing 3 out of 4 category prizes. The winners were as follows:

Overall Individual Winner: Sig Krishna Lama (1 hr 20 min), 249 Gurkha Sig Sqn
Female Winner: Cpl Bowyer (2 hr 17 min), 202 Sig Sqn
Veteran Winner: WO2 Shyam Lama (1 hr 26 min), 249 Gurkha Sig Sqn
Winning Team: (1 hr 35 min), 249 Gurkha Sig Sqn

Individual trophies were awarded by the Army Sgt Maj, **WO1 Carney** whilst the winning team trophy was presented by the Commanding Officer 3 (UK) Div Sig Regt, **Lt Col Harris**. All the winners also had an opportunity to share their experience with visiting guest, **Brig Bliss** from the New Zealand Army.



Cpl Bowyer receiving the Female Winner Trophy from the Army SM

The competition was a resounding success and was well received by all 180 participants and 54 enablers. Ex KIWI TROPHY 2021 helped forge a strong sense of camaraderie amongst the participants whilst displaying mental resilience and overcoming physical endurances in the arduous terrain of the Salisbury Plain Training Area (SPTA).

EXERCISE KIWI TROPHY 2021

By Cpl Vishal Rai, 249 Gurkha Sig Sqn



Sig Krishna Lama receiving the Individual Winner Trophy from the Army SM

Kiwi Trophy winners with guest, Brig Bliss and CO 3 (UK) Div Sig Regt, Lt Col Harris



WO2 (SSM) Shyam Lama receiving Veteran Trophy from the Army SM



Ex LION SUN was a back-to-basics exercise to further our military skills. Whilst we were in Cyprus, we focused on our leadership, testing our confidence. For the majority of us this was our first exercise out of the UK. This was also a great opportunity for our Unit to socialise and have some downtime, away from the distractions of the normal working day.

When we first arrived in Cyprus, we had to isolate due to the COVID-19 guidelines, following this we did acclimatisation training, where PT was built up steadily to help adapt our bodies to the heat.

Op TEAMWORK gave us the chance to learn more about diversity and discuss our colleagues' cultures. This brought the group closer together as we had the chance to ask each other questions. We also had the chance to learn about the culture and people of Cyprus.

When we deployed, we conducted MATT'S training where we took part in first aid, navigation training and live firing. We also focused on battle training and how to work with military dogs on exercise and on operations. We worked on assurance patrols, vehicle searches with working dogs and casualty evacuations with RAF helicopters.

Towards the end of our time in Cyprus we took part in Adventurous Training, this consisted of mountain biking, canoeing and rock climbing. During this we enhanced our mental resilience and boosted our confidence under pressure. This was the best way to end our time in Cyprus, being able to explore the island and further develop relationships with work colleagues.

EXERCISE LION SUN

By Sig Garvey





10th SIGNAL REGIMENT

Corsham

Summit views



EXERCISE CLARKE DANCE

By Sig Shandip Rai, 251 Sig Sqn

Ex CLARKE DANCE was a two day Adventurous Training (AT) package which consisted of hill walking in Wales. Like many of my fellow Signallers, I joined the army during the COVID-19 pandemic and as a result I was unable to go on AT during basic training. This was my first opportunity to do so and as a result I snapped it up.

On the Monday we travelled to Sennybridge Camp in Wales and began to prep our kit and get a good night of rest ahead of our climb the next day. The following morning, we were up bright and early and went to collect our packed lunches before driving to Llyn y Fan Fach. Starting off, the gradient was nice and gentle and as we warmed up, we got to the top of the initial climb. There, we were greeted by the wonderful sight of the reservoir and the mountain in the background (it was even clear enough to see to the top). As we took our obligatory photos, we started to climb to the top of Llyn y Fan Fach. The climb was slow and steady and a real burner on the legs, however when we reached the plateau the scenery was worth the climb. We stopped for lunch and enjoyed the beauty of the Black Mountains. During this time **Sig Lucy Beresford** managed to get some amazing photos. The walk down was enjoyable and before I knew it, we were back at the vans for a debrief where we discussed any lessons identified. As we were due to leave **Cpl Rob Morgan** jumped in the van and couldn't find the keys – we spent the next ten minutes looking for them. They then magically appeared in the back pocket of his trousers!

Wednesday – our final day, and our goal was to summit Pen Y Fan. Starting off at the Storey Arms car park we took the path starting by the iconic red telephone box. The fog was low in the valley and visibility was initially poor. Once we had walked roughly 500m up the path the fog let up and the views went on for as far as the eye could see. From the get-go it was steep, and endurance was the name of the game. The challenge I faced climbing this hill was very exciting and foreign to my body. We took a few breaks climbing and admired the sheer scale of this marvellous mountain and the surrounding view. All of us kept going and as we got close to the top there was a three person race to be the first to touch the Pen Y Fan marker. **Sig Alfie Bennett, Sig Carl Hill** and I sprinted to the end with the victor still being debated. As the saying goes what goes up must come down and as we began our descent, I was able to enjoy the views a little bit more as it was gentler on the legs. For my first experience of AT, the hard work to summit a mountain was definitely worth the views and I look forward to my next adventure.

CO	Lt Col A Senneck	RSM	WO1 (RSM) MA Secker
81 SIGNAL SQUADRON			
OC	Maj A Green	SSM	WO2 (SSM) J Helm
225 SIGNAL SQUADRON (ECM (FP))			
OC	Maj D Coutts	SSM	WO2 (SSM) I Wallace
241 SIGNAL SQUADRON			
OC	Maj S Barker	SSM	WO2 (SSM) D Cracknell
251 SIGNAL SQUADRON			
OC	Maj T Harrison	SSM	WO2 (SSM) C Callaghan
605 SIGNAL TROOP			
	OC	Capt K Spimks	



Setting off in good weather!



At the top of Pen Y Fan



Lt Dawson trying to work out where he is

Exercise BRUNO FORTITUDE - by Sig Forbes, 241 Sig Sqn

Helping **Sgt Meaden** with the planning of Ex BRUNO FORTITUDE, 10 Sig Regt's mental health exercise covering mindfulness, wellbeing and resilience, made me realise one thing: I did not stop to take a moment to think about what it all means for me personally. When we have had events like this previously, I'm usually thinking about what freebies will be available from the different stands or getting excited about the free packed lunch meal (as we all know they're five stars). This year's event actually made me reflect on my own mental wellbeing, as well as showing me that it is ok to seek help if things ever become too much - it was a great reminder that you don't have to face anything alone. Not just for me, it gave all those who attended an insight of practices to do to help mental health and showed that talking about mental health is not a sign of weakness but an integral part of your wellbeing.

Sgt Meaden, the event OIC from 241 Sig Sqn, took great pleasure in opening the proceedings. Things got into full swing with a presentation from the Royal British Legion. **Andy**, the speaker, not only had great information on what support was available but he was an old-timer that had his own interesting story to tell. Whilst the speakers presented, stands were placed around the hall for us all to see and chat to the stand IC's during the breaks. The two highlights of the first day go to the very highly anticipated Reiki and Yoga sessions. Reiki is all about getting your headspace right by using the energy around you as a great

form of mind therapy; thanks to **Sgt Meaden** for a great introduction and session. For Yoga we were given reminders and a new approach by the instructor **Collette**. It was good for our PTI **Cpl Serrano** to understand what a flexibility session for the Squadron should entail and for the rest of us to realise how flexible we are not! We must have been quite relaxed as throughout the room the sound of flatulence could be heard every now and then! Thankfully our instructor **Collette** didn't mind and said it was normal...

Day two was an event to match the first. We had speakers and members from 241 Sig Sqn sharing experiences from personal events which stayed with a lot of people. The main highlight for me was the Limits of Beliefs session with life coach **Liz Goddard**. It made me realise your own potential is limitless and with all situations in life, difficult or not, it's all about approach, positivity and that believing in yourself is key - that is something that has stayed with me. Not to forget **Alicia** from Bazaar, giving a not so bizarre insight about the great benefits of cognitive behavioural therapy and mindfulness and finally **Cpl Hambridge** with his session on Mental Resilience training. His enthusiasm was inspiring. He managed to find the tallest person in the event to be used in his lesson while the shorter people had to carry him (each representing a pillar of mental resilience). There were a lot of laughs and strained faces. All in all, a highly successful couple of days enjoyed by all those who attended.

CO's Cup Cross Country

By LCpl Saban, 225 Sig Sqn

Fresh from qualifying as a AAPT I volunteered to plan and execute a cross country event for 10 Sig Regt's CO's Cup – an annual competition that includes a March and Shoot, Cyber competition, E-sports and touch rugby. All Squadrons from the Regiment take part; HQ Sqn, 241, 225 and 251 Sig Sqns. With all Squadrons spread across the UK, the organisation of the event was made a little bit more complicated!

During the planning phase I faced many challenges and it was more difficult than I expected. One of the more challenging issues I had to overcome was the fact this event was happening in Northern Ireland, which made security the main concern. However, I overcame this by making sure correct and relevant information was passed out to the competitors before the event. After this the focus was on getting all participants to the right place at the right time with the right kit and providing accommodation for the scope of the event. Thankfully, due to the diligent planning and the help of members of my Squadron, all other Squadrons arrived at Thiepval Barracks, Lisburn, just in time for the relevant briefs.

We then set off to the race location. Once we all arrived, we received an up-to-date route brief, including the fact that the running route was 1 mile shorter than briefed, which all the participants were happy about – until they realised it was horrifically muddy and mostly uphill! **LCpl Malin** of 225 Sig Sqn flew over the finish line to take first place for the Regiment. All competitors finished in good time, except **Cpl Adjatakou** of HQ Sqn, who must have thought the course was too short and so took the scenic route which was an extra 45-minute detour! Once everyone had been accounted for, we returned to Thiepval barracks for prizegiving. Unfortunately, 225 Sig Sqn were the first losers and placed second, with 241 Sig Sqn taking home the silverware.

On reflection of organising this event, I have definitely gained new skills and developed existing ones which will help me in the future if I decide to organise something like this again. Or if not, I've got the experience to pass onto my peers if they decide to uptake a challenge like this.



Lt Paterson storming to the finish line of the CO's cross country

Exercise COOKE SHIELD

By Sig Kolawole, 251 Sig Sqn

In January 2022, 2 Tp, 251 Sig Sqn, conducted Ex COOKE SHIELD. The exercise consisted of a comms exercise and a day's urban orienteering in London, allowing the Troop to be more conversant with the Squadron's bespoke communication assets and role. The exercise also focussed on team cohesion and was categorised into five phases.

The first phase of the exercise commenced with a day of PACEX, making sure the Detachments are fit for purpose and rectifying any faults that were identified, kit checks were also conducted in order to confirm individuals were well equipped to deploy.

The second phase was theory lessons, which was delivered by the more experienced Troop members, the lessons served as a refresher period and to allow individuals to ask questions to increase confidence in the ICS. Not only for new, but for older members of the Troop as well.

The third phase of the exercise was the deployment of the detachments, each team was called in in the early hours to receive their deployments orders, subsequently the team was dispatched to their various locations with DS accompanying them. On arrival at each location, each team was tasked to carry out different serials that they would be likely to face on a real time deployment. One of the tasks that was carried out was the CBRN attack with each team monitored by DS on how well procedures were executed. On completion of the day's training the detachment crews moved back to camp for a debrief.

The fourth phase was fairly eventful, this was an 'urban orienteering' in London. As part of the Squadron role is to conduct ceremonial activity, it's important that all members of the Squadron are well acquainted with the areas that we are likely to conduct ceremonial activity in. On arrival in London, the Troop was divided into two sections and each team was tasked to locate different places such as London Museum, The London Eye, London Bridge and the Houses of Parliament. This gave the team opportunities to see various part of London and learn something new. The sections could either stop for lunch to enjoy a delicious 'horror bag' or opt for something more exciting like a Nandos! Although guised as a fun day out the day trip also served as a location recce for the upcoming summer ceremonial season for the Squadron.

The fifth phase, which was the last day of the exercise consisted of a final works parade on the vehicles and full PACEX was carried out to ensure that all equipment remained in full working order ready to resume readiness commitments. Feedback was given on all aspects of the exercise to the Troop as a group and individuals.

To conclude, this exercise was useful and enjoyable, it empowers individual's confidence, communication and leadership skills, it was an excellent week and thanks go to all those involved in the planning and execution.

Project Caduceus

(R SIGNALS Training Transformation Programme)



The project team has been busy since its last Wire article, from Subsequent Trade Training work to ratifying the new Officers' career model and providing the Corps with a plethora of Continuing Professional Development opportunities; amongst other things.

In recent weeks the team's Project Support Officer Mrs Kate Dacombe has left the team and Civil Service after a long and illustrious career. We would like to thank Kate for all her efforts and hard work over her two-year tenure and wish her all the best on all future endeavours. The project's Plans WO also leaves the team after two years and moves on to become Sergeant Major of 259 (GIS) Signal Squadron, once again the team would like to thank WO2 Rodway for his continuous efforts over his time with the project.

With Fd Army Upskilling in full swing and the Corps' Sig-Sgt committing to their pathways, several soldiers have already completed their Upskilling training. Below are narratives direct from those Service Personnel whom have completed their pathways and have fed back to the team their experiences and thoughts.

Fd Army Upskilling

Do you see any benefit to your Upskilling pathway?

"Definitely a benefit, especially in broadening understanding of different topics and areas related to my trade."

Was the training provider helpful and providing assistance when needed?

"The training provider was extremely helpful and helped on several occasions when I was trying to register for courses and had general enquiries."

Was the process for registering and learning simple?

"Yes, the process for both registration and learning were easy to follow and simple to carry out. The instructions on the Caduceus website were clear as to what upskilling learning you needed to conduct. Once that was identified, registering for that learning was clear and simple and the process was easy to complete."

Was the website easy to follow and use?

"Yes. The Caduceus training website was easy to navigate, and it was clear which links you had to follow dependent on your rank and trade. Simple and clear layout and the diagram that explained which upskilling courses you have to do was easy to follow and use."

Is the training fit-for-purpose regarding the new CEQs?

"I believe the training modules for the upskilling was aimed at the right spec for my trade but would like to have additional courses made mandatory for my pathway. For example health and safety elements, risk assessments module (is a large part of our trade when leading a deployed team). Possible data centre management modules. I believe having these modules would greater improve the knowledge base for a class one CIE."

Did the Pj team help if required?

"I had to engage with Pj CADUCEUS several times during the whole process and each time they were helpful and supportive."

Do you see any benefit to your Upskilling pathway?

"Moving forward with my career and as the STT Pathways are primarily management style courses, the principles and knowledge I've acquired is very useful. Getting an understanding in these courses early will be hugely beneficial."

Additionally, these can be converted to civilian qualifications should I decide to go further in these spheres so getting a head start is definitely a good thing."



13th SIGNAL REGIMENT

Blandford

CO Lt Col E Swift	RSM WO1 (RSM) S McCreadie
224 SIGNAL SQUADRON	
OC Maj A Cave	SSM (des) WO2 (SSM) Taletawa
233 SIGNAL SQUADRON	
OC Maj E Shale	SSM WO2 (SSM) Shackleton
254 (SGIS) SIGNAL SQUADRON	
OC Lt Col G Complin	Acting PSAO Maj J Poulson
259 SIGNAL SQUADRON	
OC Maj D Payne (RA)	SSM WO2 (SSM) Sharpe
CIS TRIALS AND DEVELOPMENT UNIT (CISTDU)	
SO2 Maj M O'Hara	SO3 Capt D Keegan

Op RESCRIPT, The Vaccinators

By SSgt (YofS) Fricker, Regtl Ops

On 20 Dec 21, 10 members of 13 Sig Regt deployed to Cardiff to support NHS Wales as vaccinators and aid them in meeting the desired targets of offering all eligible adults a booster by the end of Jan 22. The teams began supervised training with their NHS counterparts to complete their vaccinator workbooks which are required to be signed off by a registered nurse before administrating vaccinations unsupervised. The training was excellent and carried on for the rest of the week before the Christmas stand down where deployed personnel were able to return home for a few days.

After spending Christmas at home with their loved ones, the teams travelled back to Wales on 28 Dec 21 and embedded with their vaccination centres' shift patterns. Over the next month and a half, the teams stayed in accommodation close to their vaccination centres and worked six days a week to aid the nurses and healthcare professionals. Their presence was well received from all nurses and staff as they saw waiting times reduced and an ease in their workload that they had endured for numerous months.

Throughout this deployment 13 Sig Regt personnel helped vaccinate over 9,000 people. Amongst those deployed was **SSgt (YofS) Fricker** who said, "it was an amazing experience, something I never thought I would do. It was also nice to see the positive impact on the vaccination centre staff" and **SSgt Perry** who said, "I enjoyed every minute of this deployment, I had genuine satisfaction helping the NHS, I would happily volunteer again".



Sgt Moss, SSgt Bilsby and SSgt Perry

In early Feb 22 the number of people coming in for a booster vaccination had significantly reduced which led to the drawdown of deployed personnel. By 4 Feb all 13 Sig Regt personnel had returned to unit to go on some well-deserved leave.

By SSgt Peters, 259 Sig Sqn, TacCIS Tp

Personnel from across the Regiment deployed on Op RESCRIPT, which was part of the additional support from the military to support the vaccination programme in Wales from 20 Dec 21 – 14 Feb 22. The military support was split into fourteen groups with two teams allocated across the seven Health Boards. On arrival at Maindy Barracks, Cardiff, we received our RSOI package from JMC Wales and were issued hired vehicles for the task. On the second day personnel were moved to their individual NHS Wales locations to receive training, assurance and additional training where required. That's when the fun began. I was sent to Tenby, where my team was working from for the duration of our task. As soon as we arrived at Tenby Leisure Centre where the vaccination core was operating from, we were greeted by the head nurse who was running the vaccination centre. She showed us

around the hall and introduced us to the nurses who welcomed us and thanked us for coming out and helping them. As the afternoon commenced, training was on the go. I was nervous as this was the first time learning to vaccinate someone. I never dreamt that as a Communication Specialist I'd have to go and learn something so different; something taking me out of my comfort zone that had me nervous on occasions. The support from the NHS staff was amazing, so much so that when it was my turn to take the nurse's chair and meet patients, I had the confidence to do it in a calm and friendly manner. There was a surprising amount to take in, from how we conduct ourselves to managing the patients' wellbeing and any side effects from the vaccinations they may have had. My first patient done, and I felt proud of myself. Ten patients later I was on a roll.

Leave came and went, and we were back carrying on with the shifts that we were scheduled for. Every day one of the Army vaccinators would accompany a nurse to patients that were

not able to make it to the vaccination centre for their vaccine which helped break our day up. The Tenby area was beautiful, so I managed to spend some time visiting the stunning beaches in Pembrokeshire. This was our norm for the rest of the six weeks.

The day finally came for us to leave, one filled with mixed emotions as we had made friends and learnt a new skill. We had built good working friendships with people that had made our time in Tenby much more homely than we initially thought possible and it was hard to say goodbye. But it was time for us to get back to our normal role. This is a lifetime memory that will stick with me forever.

Interoperability Troop

By Cpl T Gurung, Interop Tp, 259 Sig Sqn

Interoperability section in 259 Sig Sqn has a broad subject matter area to cover from TACCIS to OPCIS through to multinational partners. In each case there is a requirement to fully understand the complexities of the unique networks and bespoke security implications required to provide high-level support to units.

These broad skillsets and experience we develop naturally lead to supporting the Regiment in its experimentation. Building on the successes of last year's DISP Trial, February saw the second part to this experimentation investigating how the Regiment can maximise the defence of OpNet Blue by coupling an MNP with a DCC (Small) Evo and the monitoring of traffic across a closed Falcon network in the LSRC.

This trial included investigating a number of different forwarding agents, full packet capture, log analysis, firewall assurance, whilst also exploring options to remote in and forward information for analysis. The actions were well documented; with a number of SOIs created, including incident response procedures and best practice setup.

The experiment required personnel from around the Regiment in order to conduct the event. From 259 Sig Sqn; **Sgt Lamb**, **Cpl Dudley** and **Cpl T Gurung** had the technical task of building the MNP with clients, configuring the DCC(S) Evo and configuring the different services. This would allow 233 Sig Sqn to connect and configure the Falcon network and 224 Sig Sqn to carry out their testing while supported by 259 Sig Sqn.

The experiment was initially meant to last three weeks, but constraints on the availability of the MNP reduced this to effectively two. Progress was still good, with 259 Sig Sqn even getting as far as creating a basic dashboard to monitor services.

With the trial finishing, this has not stopped Interoperability section who have enjoyed the freedom to develop a capability that will enhance an important working domain. Off their own backs between taskings, they have plans to continue the experimentation on an LBS (small). Their proactiveness means they will be ready for the next set of trials and can cross-train others.



254 (SGIS) Sqn Update

By Maj Jamie Wilson, Executive Officer,
254 (SGIS) Sig Sqn

The Specialist Group Information Services (SGIS) has had a packed but very productive first quarter of this year. Firstly, we'd like to welcome to SGIS: **OCdt Christian Bolton**, **Capt Andrew Turner** and **Sgt Robert Charlton**. Sadly though, at the time of writing we're in the process of saying farewell to **Maj Jonathon Turner** who not only leaves our ranks but is also retiring after decades of Regular and Reserve service in the Corps, including as OC of the White Helmets Motorcycle Display Team. We also said farewell to **Sgt Nicholas John Parkyn** who joined the Royal Signals in 1980 as a Combat Lineman. However, he has not really left as he moves to assist with his local Army Cadet unit. Without him, SGIS weekends would not function as he selflessly provided first-class support to us over the years. Wherever there was a problem it just disappeared as 'Parky' would appear and simply sort it. A veteran of Op CORPORATE, he has dedicated his life to service and continues to do so. It is also with sadness that we say farewell to **Capt Dale Young**. Having served for many years in both the Regulars and Reserves, **Dale** has decided to hang up his beret and move onto new things. We will miss **Dale's** customary sense of humour and smile and wish him well in whatever his new challenges bring. We wish all the very best to these three long-serving members of our family and thank them for all their service.

We are hugely proud to say that we have had several of our SROs promoted over the last quarter and our congratulations go to Captains, and now Majors, **Dan Lane**, **Mat Smith** and **Dave Fletcher**. These SROs are firmly deserving of field rank and will move forward in their careers within SGIS and add huge value. The routes for SRO promotion and careers are becoming more widely acknowledged and all our SROs will be more formally career-managed and prepared in the future with our new SRO pathways initiative.

Finally, as the Training Year has closed, along with many other Reserve units this time of year, we look back on how well our numbers fared achieving their Certificate of Efficiency and can proudly state that we hit 84% this year, a significant achievement and marked increase on our previous years.

Technical Concentration 1/22 (4-7 March)

By Capt Durgan Cooper, 254 (SGIS) Sig Sqn

We recently had a very successful Technical Concentration and our first of the year which took place at Army HQ in Andover. This was one of our four focused Annual Continuous Training events that, as a nationally recruited Reserve unit, provides us with the opportunity to wrap our civilian expertise around Defence by providing specialist IT consultancy services in order to enhance Defence's operational effectiveness and efficiency. SGIS had been presented with almost 20 challenging problems to solve during its weekend and over 70 staff attended the event from across the UK. The range of tasks was extremely diverse and ranged across a number of security levels.

The tasks posed were for a variety of customers from within the Army, including the ongoing support of the Army Personnel Centre, Project THEIA, 77 Brigade and SGIS' own regiment, 13 Sig Regt.

During the weekend we were visited by no less than eleven Stars. These included **Maj Gen Copinger-Symes**, **Maj Gen Richard Spencer**, **Brig Marc Overton**, **Caroline Bellamy** and **Charlie Forte** who each gained insight into the complex issues being addressed.

Whilst SGIS provides significant value to defence, none is more apparent than when we support Project THEIA. During this Technical Concentration, SGIS supported six tasks for the Army's Digital Transformation programme. Digital Culture and Identity Access Management were two such themes where our personnel used their extensive industry insight to help assist and guide military thinking. An outcome for the Digital Culture piece resulted in SGIS proposing additions to JSP 604 including a digital policy to include all MoD and Government employees right to the point of recruitment.

The concentration concluded on the Monday with back brief presentations to the relevant customers and setting up any potential future assistance which can be provided to ensure that the effort endures.



Technical Concentration

A visit to the Royal Hospital Chelsea (25 Apr)

By OCdt Deepak Patel, 254 (SGIS) Sig Sqn



A sunny Monday morning provided outstanding conditions to support a morale component visit to the Royal Hospital Chelsea. A huge thank you upfront to **WO2 Vikki Hawtree**, **Maj Mickey Yendell** and **Maj Jonathon Poulson** for their support in organising the day. Arriving at this very special place, we all met in the bar prior to meeting our host for the tour, **John Byrne**. A true historian, **John's** knowledge of the hospital soon became apparent as we moved around the Chapel, Great Hall and grounds. His stories were rich and delivery perfect, and soon the importance of this national treasure became apparent.

As we moved around, we saw pensioners in their day uniforms but also some who were just back from an event in their famous scarlet coats. They soon noticed military ties and were quick to point out they were signallers or gunners once. After many conversations and questions, we found ourselves back in the bar and saying farewell to our host, the pensioners and a very special place. SGIS thanks the wonderful hospitality of the Royal Hospital for an informative and fun day.

Army Warfighting Experiment (Urban Understand)

By LCpl Jenkins, CISTDU

Centred around an urban theme, the first of four iterations of the Army Warfighting Experiment – Urban Understand (AWE UU) invited vendors to test the interoperability of their products. The main objective of the experiment was to achieve integration between the various sensor equipments and the three Battle Management Application (BMA) solutions; TAK, MAPLE and TORCH-X UK undergoing experimentation.

The build week involved the team working alongside the Land Systems Reference Centre (LSRC), setting up the experiment area and deploying the MANNA network, including the BANSHEE LTE radio system. Once the build phase was completed, Industry



vendors and exercising troops arrived at Blandford Camp to start the main experimental phases.

As vendors set up their equipment and provided training on the equipment to the experimenting troops, it gave us at CIS TDU an opportunity to gather initial data on the various products displayed. There were demonstrations from various vendors showcasing products such as MAPS, which demonstrated its capability and potential as a one tonne autonomous support vehicle which could be used in a variety of scenarios such as equipment transportation or CASEVAC. Later that week, from Boston Dynamics, **Spot** the robotic dog joined the experiment.

I was aligned to gather data on Black Hornet 3 (BH3) and Thermal Clip On System (TCOS), the former is a small drone capable of providing close range aerial surveillance with thermal capability. The latter is a helmet mounted device that connects to in-service NVG's providing a "Heads-Up Display" with situational awareness utilising a chest mounted Samsung S20TE TAK device.

During the experimentation phase, vendors were brought together to integrate their equipment both with each other and with the BMA solutions. The experimenting troops were then given multiple scenarios to test the utility of the products individually before finally testing everything together at once, with all BMA's and multiple sensors providing various types of data to the exercising troops on the ground.

In conclusion, the first iteration of the Army Warfighting Experiment, Urban Understand, went very well. The testing was successful, providing CIS TDU with insightful data to build on for the next iteration.

Exercise TIGER REDROCK TRAINING 22

By Lt Howe, OC C Tp (CTI, CyISOC & Trg),
224 (CPT) Sig Sqn

On a wet and windswept day of late Feb '22, members of 13 Sig Regt met just north of Bath to embark on the first part of the REDROCK series of climbing exercises, Ex TIGER REDROCK TRAINING 22 (Ex TRT 22) that was set to take place in the wild landscape of North Wales. Ex TRT 22 was the first phase of a two-part rock-climbing exercise that aimed to deliver the Rock Climbing Singlepitch Foundation (RSF) qualification through distributed training. Over the coming weeks, another group would follow in their footsteps to develop their climbing ability and add to their qualification repertoire.

This exercise aimed to provide the military with keen, qualified individuals who would progress through the JSAT schemes. The service personnel who participated in this exercise furthered their individual skills, fostering their enthusiasm to become future instructors to organise, instruct, and enable future climbing exercises.

This initial exercise provided a springboard to develop a core of dedicated climbers to progress onto the second part of the series, Ex TIGER REDROCK 22 in May 22; the Regiment's flagship AT exercise to Las Vegas, Nevada, home to the Red Rock National Conservation Area and world-class rock climbing on breath-taking Aztec Sandstone.

All members were accommodated in the Nuffield Centre in Anglesey, an affordable and reliable location to base any AT exercise. After breakfast in the centre cookhouse, the daily battle rhythm included a briefing on the location that the group would be climbing that day, the weather, risks, and considerations etc. The AT was conducted until 1600hrs, when personnel would return to the accommodation to recoup. During the afternoons of the exercise, presentations and lectures took place, forming part of the syllabus. Some of the lecture-based topics for the climbing qualification included fundamentals of the weather, mountain hazards that could be encountered, and good climbing etiquette and practice. In practice, the course participants were exposed to their first outdoor climbing experiences, enabling them to master safe belay techniques and develop vital communication skills to ensure they can climb safely without supervision.

In somewhat inclement weather, the crags used were partially protected from the elements. Overall, the exercise was a success, as the aim of delivering the RSF qualification to participants was achieved. The exercise provided the platform needed to develop a core of committed and qualified individuals to climb in Nevada on the next of the REDROCK series.

Pics from top to bottom:

- Lt Howe climbing up 'Mynydd Marian', a one-star route at Fine View Wall, Castle Inn Quarry.
- Soldiers conducting their first abseils as part of the Rock Climbing Single Pitch Foundation Award in North Wales delivered by 13 Sig Regt.
- Sgt Kirkham about to complete 'Route 2' on the Main Face Wall at Castle Inn Quarry.



On Wednesday 4 May 13 Sig Regt, (2021 winners) deployed to Imphal Barracks to compete in Exercise RACE THE SUN. Preparations for the event started long before this as competitors found themselves lubricating their bikes and 'carb loading' the night before. The team ensured they had an early night before the event (after a night of Champions League Football semi-final), with aspirations and dreams about lifting the trophy once again at the end of the competition.

As the morning of the competition arrived, we made an early commute from Queen Elizabeth Barracks to Imphal Barracks ready for the throwdown to commence! The day kicked off with multiple events starting, the first event was orienteering and BAWF (British Army Warrior Fitness) where Capt '111th in the world' led the team throughout the day. As the day progressed Cpl 'Rigid' Stringer led the cycling team on a gruelling 32km race around a daunting 1km track.

Concurrently the half marathon was taking place where Sgt 'Check-Nav' Makondi got lost on route which took his grand total to 15 miles, however, he still didn't come last. Sgt Natalie Waters got awarded for best endeavour whilst completing the cross-country run. The last event of the day was the dreaded Stretcher race, the team showed true grip, grit and gruelling determination, a true 'soldier first' performance.

As the day concluded 2 Sig Regt hosted a local band and put on a well-prepared BBQ for members of the event. For a mixed bag of abilities, the team did extremely well, bringing together personalities from across our various locations, and everyone was happy with their performance.

Exercise RACE THE SUN 2022

By LCpl Woollaston,
233 Sig Sqn



Royal Signals Major Generals



Five Royal Signals Major Generals attended the Corps Conference on Friday 17 June at Blandford Camp. Pictured in the Communications Cafe are: Major General 'Griff' Griffiths, Major General 'Rich' Spencer, the Master - Major General Sharon Nesmith, Major General 'JC' Collyer and Major General 'Rob' Anderton-Brown



14th SIGNAL REGIMENT

(ELECTRONIC WARFARE)

Haverfordwest

CO *Lt Col Moody*
RSM *WO1 Peake*

Exercise DESERT FALCON '22

By LCpl Swaine, 245 Sig Sqn

During February thirteen members of 14 Sig Regt (EW) deployed to the United Arab Emirates to take part in Ex DESERT FALCON '22, a defence engagement opportunity working with the Emirati Presidential Guard Reconnaissance Command, now known as the 'Falcon Brigade'.

Prior to our arrival as the main body, **Cpl Williams**, aided by Arabic translator **LCpl Lusty**, had spent a week laying the groundwork: teaching the Emirati EW team the basic principles and about SELLAR, the sensor equipment we would utilise during the exercise. Arriving at the accommodation in the early hours of 4 February, after a delightful isolation period in Cyprus, the first week consisted of the usual briefs, admin and a "rigorous" acclimatisation package. During this time we also got to meet our Emirati counterparts that would be joining us on the deployed exercise phase.

During phase one (of two), one EW C/S deployed to the beautifully rugged mountains of Ras Al-Khaimah alongside elements of 4/73 STA (Surveillance and Target Acquisition) Battery RA and 32 Regiment RA. Prior to their deployment the EW C/S had been briefed that they would be met by a couple of mules which they could use to carry equipment up to the FOB location over treacherous terrain – a "Mule" rather than "Mechanised EW Team" (MEWT). On arrival they found they in fact only had two mules, named **Cpl Forbes** and **LCpl Rickard**. However, once they had moved up the mountain to the FOB they pushed out numerous times throughout the week to attempt to find the enemy, utilising information gained about the enemy locations from 4/73 and the UAS (Unmanned Aerial System) detachment from 32 RA.

Our other EW C/S deployed to the desert of Al Hamra training area. The first night in the desert was rather calm for **LCpls Swaine** and **Johnson**, as we had been tasked with setting up the detachment and getting into routine. The same cannot be said for **Cpl Hamilton**, who spent most of his time scouring the dunes for a drip tray – like a mad pirate hunting for treasure – that had slipped out of our vehicles during our off-road insertion. Bedding in for the week, we taught our attached Emiratis how we would set up a detachment, the theory behind it, and some of the methods we employ for the passage of information.





During the second phase of the exercise, the desert EW C/S was bolstered with **Cpl Williams** and **LCpl Bilverstone**, whilst **LCpl Johnson** moved to the mountain C/S. Both detachments deployed to the Al Hamra training area, with the mountain C/S deploying to the desert for the first time, which had become much windier than the first week. Entertainingly for those listening on the radio back in the ISTAR HQ, this caused much stress for the detachment in setting up, leading to classically understated ‘mixed emotions’ from **Cpl Forbes**. The detachment was tasked with monitoring the enemy to the south, who were planning on crossing the scenario’s fictional border. The original desert EW C/S was deployed to the northern tip of the training area, along the coastline overlooking an urban training area that puts Copehill Down to shame. Our tasking was to monitor criminal activity within the city. Outside of our normal work routine, **LCpl Bilverstone** embarked on the arduous task of collecting shells for his fish tank.

Throughout these two phases, **WO2 (Yofs) Ball-Shaw** and **LCpl Grierson** were tirelessly working, and sometimes stressing, within the ISR HQ, the ‘ISTAR Centre’ to the Emiratis; managing communications out of the numerous detachments of the exercise areas. Also working in the ISTAR Centre was **LCpl Brett**, who was analysing information from both detachments, and **Capt Robinson**, who was the Liaison Officer to the Ops Room along with his excellent Emirati counterpart, managing the placement and schedules of the detachments across both exercise areas. Meanwhile **Lt Thorpe** was assigned to work in EXCON, helping to shape the scenario and mentoring his Emirati equivalents.

After all this we were fortunate enough to spend some time in Abu Dhabi where we were able to enjoy visits to the ‘World’s Best’ waterpark, Ferrari World, home of the world’s fastest rollercoaster, the Grand Mosque, Presidential Palace, a beach here and there, finally finishing off with a day out at Dubai Expo 2020, before heading back to the UK on 9 March.

OBJECTIVE: To deliver land EW and SIGINT training to develop the capabilities of Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) Signals Electronic Warfare Troop.



What: A 7xSP STTT to deliver Electronic Warfare and Signals Intelligence training to the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) Signals Electronic Warfare Troop.

Where: Muscat, Oman.

When: 5-25 Feb.

Who: 5xSP from 14 Signal Regiment (EW), and 2xSP from 30 Commando Information Exploitation Group Royal Marines.

Why: A request for training was received from the Royal Army of Oman (RAO), who are seeking to develop a Land Electronic Warfare and Signals Intelligence capability that is on par with the capabilities of the United Kingdom.

How: A 3-week training package delivering lessons and tests to the SAF Signals' EW troop, and tri-service CEMA Commanders.

Training Delivered:

- Electronic Warfare planning tools, considerations and the EW Estimate.
- 1st and 2nd line analysis skills, such as the intelligence cycle, combat indicators and equipment identification, and Analyst Toolsets including link and network analysis.
- Electronic Warfare Operator skills including the production of anti-jamming reports, TTOs, ACREPs, ICPs and INTSUMs.



Oman STTT – by 2Lt Regan Griffin, 223 Sig Sqn

In February, personnel from 14 Sig Regt (EW) and 30 Commando Information Exploitation Group Royal Marines spent three weeks in Oman, delivering Electronic Warfare and Signals Intelligence training to the Sultan's Armed Forces Signals Electronic Warfare troop. This was following a request by the Royal Army of Oman for assistance, as they wish to develop an Electronic Warfare and Signals Intelligence capability that mirrors that found in the British Army. Our mission was to deliver EW operator training to the SAF Signals EW Troop; however, this was soon expanded to include wider Signals Intelligence training, and the teaching of some command tools and EW planning considerations.

We noticed as soon as we arrived that the roots of the British Army's involvement in Oman are very clear with the RAO. Their rank structure, drill and tactics are very similar, and they use British Doctrine Pamphlets. In general, the RAO share a culture with other Gulf States, making them different to work with than other western nations. There is a mismatch of dress but generally, everyone is uniform. Students are very respectful, and they were engaged for the duration of the course, with attendance being sustained throughout.

Most of the students had some understanding of spoken English. To ensure efficient delivery of the lessons Cpl Baker (an OPTI(L)) was brought in to act as an interpreter and having an experienced Arabic speaker with a good

understanding of technical vocabulary proved critical to the effective delivery of the training. When we first met the EW Troop, it became clear that many of them had been present on previous STTTs, and therefore there was a need to adapt our MEL. We kept that basic course program where possible but, due to many lessons not being needed, such as the EW Family Tree, there was a lot of scope to develop the STTT to deliver more than just EW operator training. In this space we put various lessons aimed at improving the basic skills of the EW operators in other disciplines, including first and second-line analysis, identifying combat indicators, the EW Estimate and an introduction to planning tools, and operational vignettes.

The SAF Signals use a collection of EW equipment from various manufacturers. They are all in excellent condition and are regularly serviced by civilian contractors. We learnt that they had been used on exercise three times since they were procured in 2014 and are soon to be replaced with a new system. Unfortunately, the RAO did not accept our offer to take their equipment into the 14 Sig Regt (EW) inventory in the future.

Outside of delivering training, the STTT provided ample opportunity to conduct cultural visits around Muscat and wider Oman. The team undertook Adventurous Training at Wadi-Al-Shab, consisting of a hike/swim up a river valley, around two hours north of Muscat, as well as open-top kayaking at the coast. The final weekend saw us hosted by a SAF Signals Officer who facilitated cultural visits to Muttrah,

the Grand Mosque, and the Royal Army of Oman Museum (located in the 150-year-old Bait Al Falaj Fort, once the headquarters for Sultan Said bin Sultan's Armed Forces). Finally, we were hosted at a private members club for dinner, followed by coffee at the beach, where the waves lit up at night due to the bioluminescent plankton found along the coast.

Platform Weapon Operators Course (PWOC) – by LCpl Payne, 226 Sig Sqn (LEWT)

In February, 226 Sig Sqn (LEWT) deployed to Castlemartin ranges to undertake the Platform Weapon Operators Course (PWOC). Before this the Squadron successfully completed General Purpose Machine Gun (GPMG) Annual Combat Marksmanship Test's (ACMT). After completing the ACMT's, the week progressively built up from firing the weapons from a static position on a Jackal, which is an Armoured Fighting Vehicle (AFV), to eventually manoeuvring the Jackals around the range, in and out of cover to allow the gunner and commander to fire at multiple targets.

The Monday was ACMT day, which included firers to successfully destroy targets from 200m to 600m away.

On the Tuesday after all firers passed the ACMT, the Squadron were involved in two separate shoots. The first was the day shoot in which two Jackals which were parallel parked in order to get maximum firepower onto a target, were to engage and destroy pop-up targets ranging from 100m-800m. The second shoot was a night shoot, in which the same scenarios were repeated under the light of illumination flares.

Wednesday included the start of the Jackal platforms being driven around a short track and the crew (driver, commander, and gunner), working together, letting each other know when targets were up, signalling the driver to stop, and giving target indications to the firers in order to bring them on to the target. This included engaging targets from 300-800m driving in and out of cover.

The week culminated on Thursday with the annual crew test, similarly to Wednesday the Jackal platforms were driven around a slightly longer track this time, shoots included commander only, gunner only, and simultaneous shoots. Again, the crew worked together smoothly, only after a target or group of targets were destroyed, the commander would send a contact report over the net.



Overall, the STTT was a success. Students were trained and tested on most of the training objectives that they would have had attending a UK course; in terms of defence engagement the feeling was overwhelmingly positive, with the RAO happy with what was delivered and keen to continue the work on further defence engagement opportunities with both 14 Sig Regt (EW) and 30 Cdo IX Gp.

Pre-Deployment Training for ROTO 4 By LCpl Lawrence, 226 Sig Sqn (LEWT)

The loosening of lockdown restrictions saw increased training opportunities for all Royal Signals Soldiers. The Electronic Warfare Operators of 226 Sig Sqn (LEWT) are one such group. Since last year, we have been preparing to deploy on ROTO 4 for Op NEWCOMBE in Mali with the United Nations.



In February, we travelled up to Warcop in Cumbria to meet with the Royal Irish Regiment, who we will deploy alongside. Exercise PEGASUS RANGER began after introductions to the battlegroup and the other attached arms. The main objective of the two-week range package was to remind and revise knowledge on different weapon systems and get everyone qualified before their deployment in May.

On top of getting everyone through their ACMTs, the battlegroup found time to run several other range packages, including: Close Quarter Battle (CQB) shoots, a paired fire and manoeuvre lane, a section defence, and a night-time live fire. The night shoot tested the whole teams' observation and communication skills and provided some excellent opportunities for photos.

After recovering back to Cawdor Barracks, we had time to prepare for Exercise DRACO PARATUS, a Mali-specific exercise that would test our administration and trade skills. In the first few days, we worked on SOPs and got time on the equipment in a live scenario, creating an intelligence picture not dissimilar to one we would find on tour. Our two sensors spent a few days getting used to the pattern of life and changing locations frequently, after which we returned to the HQ and were given work on points for the rest of the week. After taking on the advice from our Observer-Mentors and practising set-up and tear down drills before deploying out again, we felt very confident in our ability to provide situational awareness to the battlegroup. We gained a good insight into first-line technical analysis and became quite efficient at troubleshooting our equipment in the challenging Brecon climate.

All in all, we are ready to face the challenge of the MRX and look forward to deploying later this year.



Brazilian Jiu Jitsu

By Cpl Simon Bryan, Sp Sqn

Brazilian Jiu Jitsu is one of the fastest growing sports in both the military and the nation. It is a type of martial arts that involves grappling and submissions but no striking. Believed to be one of the most effective forms of martial arts, it is practiced by the majority of elite level athletes in the UFC but is a fantastic sport in its own right. Here at 14 Sig Regt (EW), we have a team of athletes training and competing successfully under some terrific instructors, evidenced by the fact that we have been racking up the medals. I was recently able to join the ranks of medal winning competitors at the Armed Forces, Emergency Services and Veterans BJJ tournament in Aldershot.

Upon the easing of Covid restrictions the Regiment wanted to invest in more opportunities for soldiers to attend sport and purchased some mats for a BJJ club to be established on site, and in September 2021 I began attending the first few BJJ training classes being held at Brawdy. I'd had some exposure to the sport but most of my previous martial arts experience was with Thai boxing and boxing, both very different to the grappling art of BJJ. Under the tutelage of



The Jiu Jitsu Team at The Armed Forces Championships

WO1 Jim Walker (brown belt) and **WO2 Paul Lomas** (purple belt) I was training three times a week after work and during sports afternoon, learning the basics and applying that knowledge at the end of the class in live sparring. The team has continued to grow and maintain interest despite the occasional incompatibility of Army life and hobbies.

The Royal Corps of Signals BJJ team hosted their first of a series of intensive training camps in January at 21 Sig Regt, Colerne. Due to my involvement with the team at Brawdy as an Int Corps soldier I was privileged enough to get a space on the camp which involved a full week of lessons and drilling techniques with the aim of preparing us for competition. Intensive is a great word to describe it and despite feeling sore in just about every joint and muscle I own I felt prepared to enter my first competition five months after first stepping on the mats.

I signed up for the Armed Forces competition in my category (white belt, lightweight) which gave me entry to the two distinct disciplines within BJJ. These are: Gi - wearing the traditional heavy cotton trousers and jacket tied with a belt, and No Gi - typically wearing shorts and a rash guard. I was unfortunately suffering with illness in the lead up to the competition and almost pulled out. I did go however, and the illness proved to be a blessing as well as a curse as I came in just 100 grams under my weight limit.



Above left: Cpl Bryan on the podium with his silver medal at Armed Forces Champs.

Left: The Jiu Jitsu Team at Colerne Training Camp in No Gi team uniform.



I unfortunately lost my first match in the Gi by arm bar, but since the majority of my training had been No Gi, I wasn't too downbeat and looked forward to competing later. I found myself in the final of the No Gi tournament after submitting three others on the way. The final was an exhausting bout and with neither of us being able to achieve a submission in the allocated five minutes the winner would be decided by the judges. My opponent was awarded the win, meaning I would take second place and a silver medal at the podium, an achievement I was very happy to experience in my first ever competition. There were more medals to be had throughout the day from members of the 14 Sig Regt (EW) and Royal Signals teams.

Since its inception the 14 Sig Regt (EW) team has now won six Gold and ten Silver medals and even more across the Royal Signals team, a testament to the high quality of the instructors. The Royal Signals team continues to grow, as more training camps are planned for the year across the country. If you are interested in finding out more about how you can participate in the sport, then contact **WO1 Jim Walker** or **WO2 Paul Lomas**. The Signals Jiu Jitsu team can be followed on Instagram: [@signalsjiujitsu](#) and on the [Jimmy's in Sport](#) Facebook page (request to join group). More 14 Sig Regt EW sporting opportunities can be found on the [Brawdy AT and Sports](#) Facebook page (request to join group).

By LCpl P Rai, 237 Sig Sqn

On 26 February 2022, myself and another member of 237 Sig Sqn, took part in the Armed Forces Veterans and Emergency services Brazilian Jiu Jitsu (BJJ) competition.

BJJ is a martial art that combines wrestling, judo and ground fighting. It consists of joint manipulation and chokeholds which are often seen in MMA fights. It prides itself in being known as the "gentle art", allowing a smaller, weaker person to use leverage and submissions to defend themselves against a bigger opponent. The techniques you learn in BJJ, which focuses on taking your opponent down to the ground and keeping them there, enables you to attack or get into a more dominant position. This gives you the upper hand in a real-life self-defence situation.

The BJJ team at Brawdy was only formed in September 2021 post Covid restrictions lifting, starting with about six regulars to now having over forty members. For a lot of us, this was the first time competing where some of us have only been practising just under seven months. The competition is structured around weight categories and belts which signify the level or experience of an individual. There are normally two competitions in most BJJ events which are Gi and No Gi. Gi refers to the uniform worn in BJJ which is similar in look to the uniforms of karate and judo. No Gi is grappling in rash guards.

We arrived an hour before our competitive brackets started, in order to weigh in and warm up. All of us were quite excited and a bit nervous especially with this being our first time competing. Everyone being major carb lovers, it was quite a surprise we made our weight categories. We were given our fight brackets and timings and then it was a slap-bump (a sideways hi-five and fist bump) and roll. The first fight always feels a bit short because you're fresh and pumping to go. Then, the next few fights feel like the longest five minutes of your life especially when you only get a two-minute break in between. Regardless, you're always roaring to go, wanting to prove yourself and hopefully not get choked out.

We had a great outcome as a team, and I came first in the open weight category (62 – 74kg). Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the experience and meeting other practitioners of the art. If you're bored of your normal fitness routine or just looking for something new to try, BJJ is one to consider. It's not in every sport that you get to use moves with epic names such as "Kiss the Dragon".

14 Sig Regt (EW) Gym

By LCpl Taylor, Sp Sqn

I have been working in the 14 Sig Regt (EW) gym since Nov '21, it's been an enjoyable five months so far. The day normally consists of a 0730hrs start or 0700hrs (duty), a coffee, then setting up for the morning session, which is then followed by a mid-morning session and then after lunch we are usually free for our own personal training and general gym jobs. To finish, a couple of Squadrons have a late afternoon spot for PT. With the new Role Fitness Test (RFT) coming in recently it took some time to adjust to the format, however, they are now running very efficiently and smoothly. Here are some key details of the year so far:

On Thursday 10 March the Regiment took part in the monthly CO's PT. This time the session consisted of 2 x 3.5km loops with 7.5kg webbing. The route itself contained the driver training off road Land Rover track and then moving on to the airfield where there were four evenly spaced out stations for leopard crawls, lunges and broad jumps. After a thorough warm up the Regiment gathered at the start line and was told it was an individual best effort. **SSgt Thomas** (SSI) set the pace from the start, leading the Regiment into the driver training area where he handed over to a couple of other PTI's to lead the route, which gave him a chance to observe as people made their way through the water feature. The track itself was difficult, however, the SSI sending people crawling through the water feature brought a few smiles from people.



Also at 14 Sig Regt (EW), we have recently had a facility built to assist with Strength and Conditioning sessions and the Soldier Conditioning Review (SCR). The facility itself was built by BeaverFit, it contains eight BeaverFit squat racks, 20m



sprint lanes, CV kit, weight and plenty more kit and equipment. Opening soon the PTI's are looking forward for the use of more kit and space to help with taking sessions.



MTB in Coed Y Brenin – by Capt Warner, 245 Sig Sqn

Since the onset of Covid, various Royal Signals Adventurous Training expeditions have unfortunately been cancelled or significantly reduced. Seeking to reward and develop our soldiers, the immediate work around has been taking advantage of the UAAT rule – previously known as the 48hr rule.

Soldiers and Officers from 14 Sig Regt (EW) have recently been taking advantage of the exceptional cycling around Mid and South Wales over a number of unique UAAT trips. The highlight to the series so far, has seen Service Personnel travel to Coed Y Brenin (in the heart of the Snowdonia National Park) to conduct two days of cycling, a world renowned trail centre, with a selection of cycling (and XC running trails) to cater for all abilities, this was a simple choice to visit.

Alongside some exceptional cycling and scenery, we camped the night in a trailside bothy (an old house, similar to exercise houses on various training areas but with doors/windows). The bothy provided a unique experience for the Service Personnel, allowing them to cook up their own evening meal, share stories of the day's activities and get to know each other outside the work environment. From here, it was a quick pack up, and return to the trail centre to complete another trail loop before returning home within the 48hr time period.

If MTB interests you, challenge yourself to a free AT MTB course in Llanrwst on the Defence Gateway.



Hotel Bothy



Practice makes perfect



Smiles all around in the magical forest

Exercise MERCURY SNOW RIDER (MSR) '22

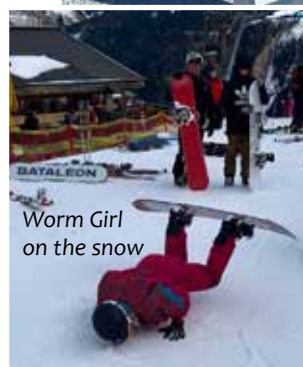
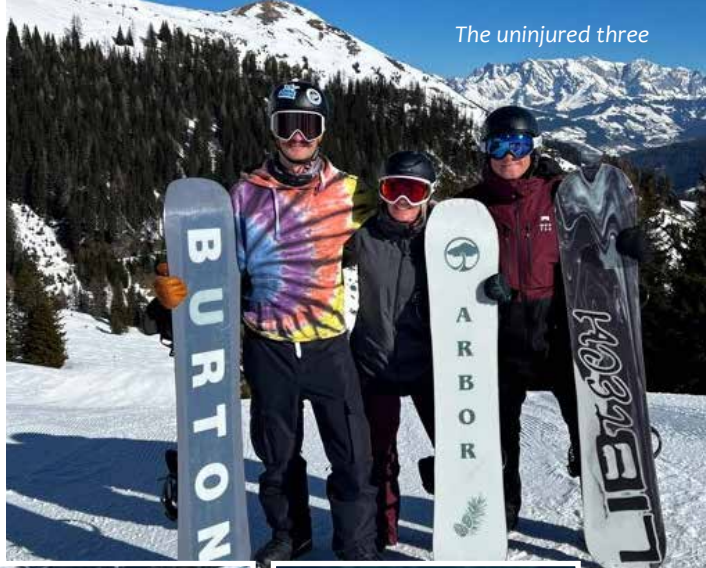
By LCpl Weaver, 245 Sig Sqn

Ex MERCURY SNOW RIDER (MSR) '22 had fewer participants this year following the pandemic and as a result I was loaned out from 14 Sig Regt (EW) and joined the 13 Sig Regt team. To break up the long drive to Rauris, Austria, we stopped for the night in Wesel, where **WO1 (Yofs) Amsden** was formally posted, so we knew where to go out for a bite to eat and span some good dits about what used to happen of an evening there. Well-rested, we set off and as always, when we eventually arrived in Rauris, it was all immediately worth the long hours of sitting in traffic in Germany due to the simply majestic scenery that greeted us.

MSR hasn't taken place for two years due to Covid and, after the long wait, we were finally back on the snow. On day one we were put into our respective categories ready for our week of instruction. Our novice riders were **Lt Convery**, who hilariously thought he would snowboard in jeans and a motorcycle jacket. We quickly sorted him out with some spare snowboard pants, and he still wore the jeans underneath. Our second novice rider was **WO1 (Yofs) Amsden**, who is a keen skier, so this was about showing him the light. **WO2 (AQMS) Thomas** and **SSgt (SSI) Price** were together in the middle of the three intermediate groups. Lastly, **SSgt (Fofs) Slade** and I (**LCpl Weaver**) were in the top intermediate group – our instructor **Jori (Yakult)** named us the 'Advanced Intermediots'.

During the first week we sustained some injuries, the most common being a bruised bum from all the falls. The worst at this point being **WO1 (Yofs) Amsden**, who, after a few hard falls we thought was just being weak, but after he deteriorated he eventually went to hospital and it turns out he had blood poisoning! So, he happily became our chalet girl, once he had recovered in hospital and re-joined us in Rauris. **SSgt (SSI) Price** became known as 'worm girl'. Not because she had worms but for breaking out the worm left, right and centre. **SSgt (Fofs) Slade** was only with us for the first week before flying back to the UK to work on his degree, but he accomplished his goal of being able to do 180's off side piste.

Tuition over, the second week was time to start the competitions. **Lt Convery** smashed the seeding for the slalom and went on to win that event. Credit to him; for a novice he had no fear whatsoever, full send, all the time. Unfortunately, he then managed to properly break himself and ended up in a cast and crutches as his form of transport, no longer via the snowboard. Although this matched with **WO1 (Yofs) Amsden's** visits to the hospital it meant that we got the wooden spoon at the end, so our team won something at least!



Worm Girl on the snow



LCpl Weaver



15th SIGNAL REGIMENT

Multicultural Day – by Pte Honey Ndey Mbye

15 Sig Regt held a multicultural day to help develop cultural awareness across the Regiment. In total, there were 10 different nationalities that provided a stand for the day including; England, Fiji, Gambia/Senegal, Ghana, Malawi, Nepal, Northern Ireland, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Wales. Each country lead provided a stand on the heritage, customs and traditions observed within their culture, as well as local food and drinks native to their country. It was an important and insightful day, providing us with an opportunity to better understand the value of cultural diversity and the need to protect and promote it. The event provided a safe space to ask questions and learn. The Regiment came together as one family learning about different individual's cultures and heritages. This helped develop understanding of others' beliefs and customs, and moreover, enabled intercultural communication.

If you would like to start learning about a different culture, I encourage all to listen to music, ask questions, keep an open mind, and open yourself up to global understanding; this is key.

CO Lt Col G Edean	RSM WO1 (RSM) C Downer
SUPPORT SQUADRON	
OC Maj M McMullan	SSM WO2 (SSM) K Roberts
207 SIGNAL SQUADRON	
OC Maj H Murray	SSM WO2 (SSM) B Palmer
255 SIGNAL SQUADRON	
OC Maj P Taylor	SSM WO2 (SSM) M Corbett



Wales and Northern Ireland

Regimental Athletics Day – by 2Lt Peter Attrill

Late April saw 15 Sig Regt host the Regimental Athletics Day at the Tidworth Oval. A great success, helping to bring the three squadrons closer together in a friendly but competitive sporting event. Every athlete, regardless of placement, was praised and encouraged by the entirety of 15 Sig Regt.

The day started with the track events, with all participants giving it their best to bring a gold medal back to their squadron. To set off the individual events, **Cfn Webb** (Sp Sqn) won gold in the 400m hurdles, followed by **WO2 (SSM) Roberts** (Sp Sqn) winning gold with an impressive performance in the 5km. The support given to contestants by the audience was loud and indiscriminate, showing that despite being different squadrons or positions, everyone attending was 15 Sig Regt at the core.

The field events started at the same time, consisting of competitions such as the long jump, triple jump, and javelin. Notably, **LCpl Rowan** (255 Sig Sqn) won the gold medal for both the female javelin and high jump. **Sgt Hadlow** (255 Sig Sqn) won gold for the men's high jump with an interesting take on how to conduct the high jump, using his height advantage to hurdle the bar.

One of the highlights of the day was the BBQ provided by the QM Dept, consisting of burgers and hot dogs, and the much-needed refreshments provided by 207 SQMS. This broke up the day and gave an earned respite before the team races and fun events of the afternoon.

The team events consisted of both the 400m and 100m relay race. Both races were won by the Support Squadron teams – well deserved victories! This was followed closely by a team based fun event, involving three legged races, goal scoring, over/under hurdles race, and backwards running – a light-hearted end to a competitive day of sport.

The CO of 15 Sig Regt (**Lt Col Endean**) wrapped up the day with a speech congratulating the participants and **Maj Murray** (OC 207) and her team for organising the athletics days. An enjoyable and competitive day which saw 255 Sig Sqn winning overall.

Capt Moreman's interesting take on how to throw the shot put

Exercise MERCURY SNOWRIDER 22

By LCpl Slaven

Ex MERCURY SNOWRIDER 22 is the annual Corps snowboard training camp and championships. After the hiatus caused by COVID-19, 15 Sig Regt were keen to get involved and **LCpl Rowan** took the lead organising and deploying 12 SP; one advanced, three intermediate and eight novice riders out to Austria.

LCpl Slaven flying through the air, winning trick "Backside 360"



The training camp was two weeks long with tuition provided by Ripstar, a professional civilian snowboard company. The first week focused on fundamentals as well as advanced techniques for those with prior experience whilst the second week was an introduction to the three competitive events which included: Parallel Giant Slalom (PGS), Slopestyle and BorderX.

Only the advanced and intermediate riders were allowed to do all three events due to safety, however the novices still managed to do PGS and BorderX. The sport took a lot of people by surprise with how difficult it was to initially learn, with mixed success.

The open competition was tough this year. Any of the top three riders from different Regiments had a chance to win the overall open championship. 15 Sig Regt however had a very successful year. Most notably and on an individual level, **LCpl Slaven** competed in the open competition - finishing 2nd in PGS, 1st in Slopestyle and 1st in the BorderX final. The BorderX was a photo finish with **LCpl Slaven** managing to win by less than a foot, and ultimately becoming the Royal Signals Snowboarding Open Corps Champion.

Competitors taking part in the hurdles



Sp Sqn SSM receiving the gold medal for the 5km from CO 15 Sig Regt



Swinton Barracks Fight Night

By LCpl Leon Smith

As Christmas leave of 21/22 drew to a close; names were put forward from across the Regiment to take part in the Swinton Barracks Fight Night competing against 1 Sig Regt, 22 Engr Regt and 26 Engr Regt. Training began in January and under the tutelage of **Capt Rahman** and **Pte Sujan** the boxers began their training. The programme was broken down into phases, helping to prepare the novice boxers into battle-hardened boxers.

This involved; endless hours of skipping, shadow boxing and foot drills to help sharpen up the fighters' ring craft. The coaches forever stressed the importance of enhancing our footwork, head movement, speed and agility.

As the weeks progressed and the boxers were getting stronger, the training standard increased. Sessions became harder, skipping became longer and more running was required from the boxers to complete in their free time. The focus began to shift towards sparring; practising timing and judgement of distance, as well as defence skills and counter punching.

The fight week soon crept up, and in preparation for the event the boxers came together along with the other station teams to prepare for the event. Together, the boxers built the ring and the seating area for spectators, ready for fight night. Fight night, the night we had all been preparing for. We had commandeered a corner of a squash court, which was to be blue teams' personal hub for relaxation and reflection. As the hours to the fights drew closer, the atmosphere grew thick with anticipation. The Signals fighters remained cool, calm and collected even though everyone that night was outside their comfort zone. The CO and RSM of 15 Sig Regt came down to wish the fighters luck, the Padre followed suit with a blessing of the boxers hands and gloves. On approaching the crunch, the fighters were warmed up progressively before it was time to step into the cauldron, ready for their bout.

Some of the more laidback personnel in the Regiment would soon show they had a pugnacious and vicious attitude in the ring, with both **Sig Quinn** and **Sig Mullen** winning a first round TKO. **Sig Quinn** stopped a slipping and rolling toe-to-toe fighter with a damaging right hook. **Sig Mullen** released his hands from the offset, well planted on the balls of his feet he set loose his jabs, claiming a quick stoppage victory after an astonishing 10 seconds. **Sig Davis** on the other hand remained



calm and focused and out of the four fighters in the Regiment, he was the only one to go the full three rounds, demonstrating the physical conditioning to go the full distance. Finally, **Sig Brady** performed admirably against a more experienced fighter, but unfortunately the fight was later stopped.

A fantastic achievement from all four fighters and on completion of the event they were respectfully invited into the WOs and Sgts' Mess for a well deserved meal and drink with the Officers, WOs and SNCOs in the Regiment. Well done to all who took part, as with all amateur boxing, 'the winning is in the getting in the ring'.

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XXII

22nd SIGNAL REGIMENT Stafford



RHQ	
CO Lt Col Matthews	RSM WO1 (RSM) S Kennedy
SUPPORT SQUADRON	
OC Maj D Lamont	SSM WO2 (SSM) S Lord
217 SIGNAL SQUADRON	
OC Maj S Thorpe	SSM WO2 (SSM) M Baker
222 SIGNAL SQUADRON	
OC Maj C Pain	SSM WO2 (SSM) A Ingoe
248 SIGNAL SQUADRON	
OC Maj D Prady	SSM WO2 (SSM) D Gurung
252 SIGNAL SQUADRON	
OC Maj G Woolley	SSM WO2 (SSM) F Kent

Gdansk Museum Visit – by LCpl Sanjaya Gurung

248 Gurkha Sig Sqn deployed on Ex STEADFAST LEDA 21 to provide Information Communication Services (ICS) in support of HQ ARRC FORWARD CP in Bydgoszcz, Poland and HQ ARRC REAR CP in Sennelager, Germany. The intent was to increase interoperability and operational effectiveness among the alliance deployed in Spain, Germany, Poland, and Greece by federating into a network.

The exercise started with a myriad of challenges from an engineering perspective, all of which were tackled head-on by our engineers. This enabled our team to meet the Full Operational Capability a day ahead of the given timeline. The next stage was the Staff Readiness Check which was scheduled for a week after and the time in between was utilised to conduct some professional development.

LCpl Sanjaya took the initiative to take Squadron Service Personnel on a visit to the Museum of the Second World War in Gdansk - a picturesque city with many historical significances. The museum's main exhibition consists of three narrative blocks: 'The Road to War', 'The Horrors of War' and 'The War's Long Shadow'.

1. **The Road to War** explains about the occurrence of pre-war political ideologies, Communism and Fascism, which eventually divided Poland from the beginning of the war.
2. **The Horrors of War** portrays the pictures taken by American journalist **Julien Bryan** who was in Warsaw when the Germans attacked in September 1939.
3. **The War's Long Shadow** illustrates the aftermath of the war.

These exhibitions illustrated the Polish experience of war against a background of the wider European countries. The museum has displayed a special message to the visitors; World War II being not just about the battles but also about forced labour, torture, murder, and the destruction of



humanity. The museum has ensured that the message is of interest to different age groups by presenting the valuable historical contents in an interesting, attractive, and modern way, utilising the latest technology available.

Sig Anil Gurung and **Sig Sunil Gurung** delivered a short briefing about the museum and its significance to their respective group. This opportunity to conduct an educational visit whilst deployed on a CT I exercise proved to be a remarkable retention tool for the deployed Service Personnel - exploiting an intriguing experience.

Exercise TRAIL RIDER 2021

By LCpl Taylor, 252 Sig Sqn

At 0815hrs on Tuesday 30 Nov 2021, a group of 14 left Innsworth for Cannop Cycle Centre in the Forest of Dean, about 40 minutes down the road. Upon arrival we gave our bikes a once over and had a few quick lessons on balancing the bike. Once happy, the safety brief was delivered, and we set off climbing the hill towards the routes. The group split into ability groups for the first day, only meeting up at the bottom of the hill for lunch. It was a tough day, but I felt I learnt a lot, and everyone enjoyed themselves. I don't recall any falls - unusual for a day of mountain biking. Regrouping at 1530hrs at the Cannop Café the groups had a review of the day's events and we returned to Innsworth.

The following day the group stayed as one for the duration, and we decided to tackle some interesting jump routes which were fast and rolling; personally, I love this kind of riding! At the top of the trails, we came across a short track with short tabletops, so we spent some time learning how to jump and take control of the bike whilst in the air. We then made our way down two longer routes back to the café just in time for lunch.

Climbing back up we passed a short (but steep) hill, so had a competition of who could climb the furthest up it before falling off. This time, at the top of the hill, we decided to use some new trails on our way down. A combination of red and black trails was an unexpected yet riveting challenge. Returning to Innsworth after a 48-hour MTB package, I was tired and ready for some well-earned rest.

In summary, it was a lovely Adventurous Training (AT) package that anyone could've enjoyed, and I believe everyone benefited from. Multiple people within the Squadron have developed an interest in pursuing MTB qualifications. AT has been limited recently due to Covid-19 restrictions, it was a big morale boost to get out with my Squadron and hit the trails. Until next time.

Exercise STEADFAST LEDA 21 TAC CP

By Lt Landymore

217 Sig Sqn, and most of 22 Sig Regt, deployed to Europe for Exercise STEADFAST LEDA 2021 (Ex STLE21). After a 4-hour delay at Brize Norton, we were off.

As quickly as we left the airport in the county of Oxfordshire, we were touching down in Paderborn, Germany. A short stop-over in Sennelager preceded the 14-hour drive to Bydgoszcz, Poland, in a convoy of MAN SVs, Land Rovers and other speed restricted vehicles. The Bluetooth speaker in the cab became our best friend and we gained valuable experience in overseas capability deployment.

A 12x24 on the exposed open ground next to an active runway would become our home for the next two months. In tandem with our colleagues from 248 Gurkha Sig Sqn, the task of constructing two Command Posts (CPs) for the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps' most forward positions went smoothly, and we were soon into routine pre-staff arrival. This lull in the battle allowed the TAC CP personnel the opportunity to visit both the Gdansk WW2 Museum and Stutthof's Death Camp; two uniquely fascinating yet sobering experiences. Days after, the staff arrived.

I was lucky enough to watch COMARRC¹, a 3-Star General, operate. His immediate team kept him up to date on events as he manoeuvred thousands of simulated soldiers around the battlespace – every small decision holding colossal impact in one way or another. The CP had its challenges along the way, but morale remained high despite sub-zero temperatures and engineering difficulties. Members of the Squadron completed a half-marathon for a worthy cause whilst others grew questionable moustaches for Movember (and I suspect to keep their face a little warmer). It was thrilling to be part of the Field Army's experimentation work around survivable command posts; we exercised from a mobile container command post with 4g enabled OpCIS (OpNetBlue) and hybrid power solutions – Project LELANTOS.

Continued on page 58



The opening address delivered by SSgt T Bartlett



The Opening of



Rebecca and Jessica admiring unseen photos of their father



Maj L Crane presenting a Pegasus Trophy to Maj D Holden



Mrs Claire McBean explaining the stories about the unseen photographs of Maj Tony McBean



The McBean family listening to McBean Troop concept



Mrs Claire McBean enjoying chatting to the Phase 2 Soldiers about their recent experience under McBean Troop

Kohima to McBean Troop, The Journey By SSgt Jim Machin

Over the last two decades, all Royal Signals soldiers who entered a period of not being under trade training, joined Kohima Troop. Any holdover time is well known to be a difficult phase for trainees and the legacy perception of Kohima Troop was universally negative. In August 2020 during a period of regimental restructure, 4 (Military Training) Squadron was given the responsibility for redesigning the construct of the troop and creating a developmental training package.

The new model employed in Kohima Troop was designed to develop military, trade, personal and leadership skills through a structured training programme. The resourced training programme, learning pathways and wider developmental activity all later codified in a Standing Operating Instruction, was systemically different. The aspiration for renaming to McBean Troop was thus born, with the intent to embody this cultural change and shift in attitude towards generating excellence in trainees during one of the most vulnerable periods in the trainee pipeline.

Maj Tony McBean was an inspirational soldier and a fitting role model for all trainees to aspire to emulate. He worked through the ranks to achieve the senior soldier appointment of Corps Sergeant Major and achieved this through hard work and professionalism through a wide and varied career. On completion of his soldier career, he commissioned as a Late Entry Officer into the Corps and reached the rank of Major, prior to sadly having his career and life cut short by motor neurone disease. Renowned for both excellence and having the best interests of soldiers at his heart, it was clear to all that the late **Maj Tony McBean** epitomised everything that the holdover troop intended to represent. Following engagement with both family and the Corps Heritage society, McBean Troop was formally adopted. In April 2021 and in line with the reorganisation, McBean Troop was formally handed back to 2 (Catterick) Squadron.

Over the period Dec 21 – Mar 22, the management of holdover trainees within 11 (Royal School of Signals) Signal Regiment was also completely redesigned and

The official opening of McBean Troop by Mrs Claire McBean

McBean Troop



The Corps Colonel and CO 11SR listening to Mrs Claire McBean explain what it was like to be married to such a role model



The Corps Colonel, Col M Brookes ADC and Mrs Claire McBean



The McBean family and VIP's



reinvigorated to ensure trainees remain competent and current in military and trade skills as well as ensuring they remained motivated about life in the British Army. On 5 Mar '22, Royals Signals Corps HQ and 11 (Royal School of Signals) Signal Regiment had the privilege of inviting and hosting the late **Maj Tony McBean's** wife, **Mrs Claire McBean**, and their daughters, **Rebecca** and **Jessica**, for the official opening and dedication of McBean Troop.

Orchestrated by **Maj Danny Holden**, **SSgt Jim Machin** and **SSgt Tim Bartlett**, this new concept of gainfully employing and training holdovers was explained via a presentation and a meet and greet with current holdover trainees to talk about their experiences under the new programme.

During the opening ceremony, The Corps Colonel, **Col M Brookes ADC** stated:

"Tony McBean was, and for those of us who knew him personally, still is, an inspirational soldier, leader and officer of the Royal Corps of Signals. The association of his name with this Troop, and the first stage of development for our most junior soldiers, as they join the Corps, is a fitting legacy which will continue to inspire soldiers of the Royal Signals for the years to come".

After the ribbon cutting and the gifting of flowers, **Claire** and her daughters were invited inside the Troop lines to view the newly commissioned painting of **Maj Tony McBean**. The hallway is designed to develop an understanding of who **Maj Tony McBean** was and what he represents today for all holdovers within McBean Troop. This is of particular significance given that every trainee in Blandford will walk these lines at some point in their training journey. The **McBean** family were delighted to see collages of photos of **Maj Tony McBean**, some of which his daughters had never seen before, and had been sourced from around the Corps from members past and present.

McBean Troop has now been entrusted with his legacy by **Mrs McBean** to ensure the history of such an outstanding role model is enduringly imparted to all the future soldiers of the Corps. On behalf of the Royal Corps of Signals, I would like to thank **Mrs Claire McBean** and her daughters for attending this occasion and formally dedicating the Troop.

The newly commissioned painting of Maj Tony McBean by Mr Ant Holder





At end-ex the site was deconstructed, and we were on the move to Emden Port in Germany. The vehicles were loaded, and we were exhausted as we boarded the coach back to Stafford.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable exercise which took us through two fascinating countries and notably tested our warm kit and engineering competence on both old and new experimentation technology. Ultimately, the exercise was a resounding success.

¹ Lieutenant General Edward Smyth-Osbourne KCVO CBE.

Exercise STEADFAST LEDA 2021

By LCpl Kiran Magar

On 16 October, 248 Gurkha Sig Sqn deployed on Ex STLE 21¹. The main objective was to ESTABLISH and SUSTAIN REAR HQ in Sennelager, Germany, and FORWARD HQ in Bydgoszcz, Poland. Both headquarters comprised of a Staff Working Environment (SWE) and Operational Communications and Intelligence Support (OpCIS) to enable the ARRC Staff Users to operate in various scenarios. Network Equipment Room's (NER) were set up, establishing robust network links for the UK force elements and NATO counterparties across various classifications.

Deploying overseas is always challenging in terms of transporting large quantities of exercise equipment and cryptographic assets safely to the deployed location. The main challenge for our Squadron however was to provide resilient services following Coronavirus Force Health Protection Measures. To overcome this challenge, necessary protective measures were implemented and rigidly followed.

For those deployed within FORWARD HQ in Poland, there was an opportunity to explore the local city and the World War 2 Museum within Gdansk. To maintain the morale of the Service Personnel in the exercise, both headquarters were able to celebrate one of Nepal's most significant festivals - Tihar. This provided a fantastic opportunity for everyone to communicate with families and loved ones – well deserved after an arduous HQ build.

This exercise presented numerous challenges, providing a plethora of opportunity for Service Personnel to showcase and enhance their technical skills. Sustaining and achieving the mission task under time pressure demonstrated the vast capability of the Squadron.

Ex STLE 21 demonstrated the Squadron ability to enable a Corps level exercise with professionalism and proficiency in all aspects – having endeavoured through adversity to represent both the Royal Signals and Queen's Gurkha Signals within an international community. We did so with utmost pride. Jai 248.

Hami Jasto Kohi Chhaina.

There is nobody quite like us.

¹ Exercise STEADFAST LEDA 2021 (Ex STLE 21) was a NATO sponsored command post and computer-assisted exercise aiming to increase interoperability and operational effectiveness within the alliance, which targets training audience like NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Spain (NADC-ESP), multi-corps land component command role (RADC) Greece, and NATO Corps Warfighting HQ at readiness.

Exercise NORDIC MERCURY GLACIER

By LCpl Jezzard and Sig Freeman-Fairhurst, 217 Sig Sqn

To start the week, we had a camp familiarisation with presentations about the winter mountain hazards and a general overview of what is going to be happening over the next three weeks. Once this was complete, we moved onto our first few lessons of the exercise, beginning with how to wax your skis and the importance of why it's done. Waxing skis enables you to perform better during races and gives you that little extra help down hills.

After this, we started to learn about the weapon system (biathlon weapon) we would use throughout the camp. We conducted a weapon handling lesson, team lessons, and eventually a weapon handling test that was completed by all competitors.

The first time on the snow was all about learning the basics; from standing up on skis without falling over (a lot harder than it sounds) to eventually moving around and just trying to gauge how it all works. Day by day, more skiing was taking place and our skills were improving slowly, but surely. After the first session was done, we started to work on the more technical side to the skiing, shifting our learning focus towards different movement patterns, stopping, and gliding. Fighting off the cold weather conditions (which reached -17°C) was challenging but learning a new and interesting skill was very enjoyable.

On Sunday we had a free day to rest, an opportunity to conduct admin and prepare ourselves for the second week of skiing.

Week two started off with classic ski pattern drills. These drills helped with the use of balance transfer. This is the need to have your body weight more directly over each foot, to help flatten the ski against the snow. There is a lever that you can adjust according to the situation and the technique. For example, techniques with a longer glide phase have a more complete weight transfer. This was then followed by a long classic ski, where we were able to use the techniques learned on skis to help us to be more efficient and make it much easier, using less effort with the right technique to conserve energy.

The second day of week two was a mixture of dry drills where we, as a regiment and team, were able to practice and get hands on the biathlon weapon. This was to test and adjust our firing positions that we were going to use during the race and on the ranges, so that we could get familiar with the weapons within our teams.

Later in the week, the programme consisted of more ranges as a team, however this time we were skating onto the range with rifles on our backs and doing laps of the biathlon loop to prepare ourselves for the race at the end of the week. This gave us confidence, balancing whilst skiing with our rifles.

Biathlon Race

At the end of the second week, we had our first race. The biathlon consisted of skate skiing and shooting around a course with a total distance of 7.2km. At the end of lap one (2km), skiers skated onto the range where they then fired five rounds at metal targets that fall when hit. This helps you to keep track of how many penalties you are required to undertake. Penalty loops are counted by how many shots you miss, which requires the skier to perform an extra 200 metre loop depending on shots missed. After another 2.4km lap is complete, you then repeat the process again, with the only difference being that this time you shoot five rounds in the standing position. Once complete, and when all the penalty loops are finished, it is a 2.8km sprint to the finish line. During the race, weapon drills must be to the highest standard as we are racing with live ammunition. The last activity of the week was a two hour classic ski to prepare for the races the following week, this required the classic technique. We conducted this as 22 Sig Regt.



Sig Freeman-Fairhurst after the biathlon race

Patrol Race

The final week started with an 18km military patrol race. This was all based on moving with speed across distance, whilst carrying kit and conducting patrol discipline. This all began early on a Monday morning and started with prepping the team's weapons and double checking kit. The patrol race

started with four stations, each station taking six minutes each.

Station one was where our kit was weighed. This had to be a total weight of 40kg or more as a team. Station two was a kit check, making sure we had every item we needed, such as food and water. Station three was an admin check for essentials such as first aid kit, map, and compass. Finally, at station four, as a team, we were inspected and asked questions individually. These questions ranged from the orders we were given, to our marksmanship principles and weather conditions during our race time. Correct answers gave our team bonus points.

Once the questions were complete, the race began. This race had three different routes: green, blue and yellow. Over the course of each route, we had to complete a command task, varying throughout the race with three different problem-solving tasks. Our aim was to complete them as quickly as possible.

During the race each team conducted two shoots, however whilst on the range each team was given their own admin box. If any kit protruded outside this box, that team was penalised and time was added on. The first shoot was after the completion of the green route, this was five shots in the prone, with the more targets we hit as a team, the smaller the time penalty. The second shoot was in the standing position, which was conducted after completion of the blue route. For this shoot, we were to use our ski poles for support. After completion of the second shoot, we moved onto our final leg of the race - the yellow route. This was 2km uphill with a command task waiting for us once we had reached the top. Once this was complete and we were back down the hill, it was a final push to the finish line. Here, there was hot food and hot brews waiting for us. Overall, we had a good race for the 22 Sig Regt team.

Classic Race

In the last week of the camp, we had a classic ski race. The classic race added up to a total of 9km around the arena, featuring plenty of uphills and downhills, which allowed us time to recover. Around an hour before the race, together as a team we looked at the temperature of the snow, allowing us to calculate which stick wax to put on our skis. This makes our skis stick to the snow, helping us to push off giving us plenty of glide. As a team, 22 Sig Regt had good results and finishing times in the classic race.



LCpl Jezzard before a ski session

Individual Training Requirement (ITR) Trial – by Cpl Gaurav Gurung

22 Signal Regimental Training Wing conducted an ITR trial at MOD Stafford, Whittington Ranges and Leek Training Area over the period 6 – 10 Dec 2021. There were eight students from the Regiment who attended.

On 1 Apr 2022, both MATTs and the Soldier First Syllabus will be formally replaced with the new ITR. To ensure that 22 Sig Regt is best placed to conduct this change, several trials in the regiment will take place over the coming months to fully understand the differences and the new training burden. This was the first of such trials.

ITR comprises three elements:

1. Core Fitness.
2. Core Education.
3. Core Combat Skills.

This trial is focused on Core Combat Skills. It delivers practical training in professional soldiering skills such as fieldcraft, navigation and marksmanship and ensures that

personnel in Field Army sub-units receive annual training in these vital skills. It also means that personnel deploying on operations receive recent training in those soldiering skills fundamental to delivering effect in-theatre.

The ITR trial started with CBRN Skills, Communication Skills and Battlefield First Aid lessons on day one at MOD Stafford. Rifle ACMT was conducted at Whittington Ranges on the second day. The team deployed to Leek Training Area on the third day, and we spent 24hrs on the field. During this field phase, we achieved all training objectives as per Core Combat Skills Policy, such as living in the field, applying camouflage/ concealment, and engaging the enemy. We also managed to practice both navigation and treatment of the casualty, including CASEVAC.

Several lessons were identified on this ITR trial:

1. We should aim to understand and improve the Core Combat Skills element of ITR and feasibility to conduct.
2. All five modules of Core Combat Skills; Fieldcraft, Navigation, Marksmanship, Protection and Communication can be achieved in a week.
3. If required, we can replace this package with CT A/B to save time and resources.
4. We had eight personnel from the Regiment for this trial, but we might have to consider if we want to capture more people in the future.

The training team - **Capt (Trg Officer) Kelly**, **SSgt (SSI) Thompson** and **Cpl Gaurav** had successfully delivered this trial. Overall, the trial was a massive success with few recommendations to move forward soon.





Pipes and Drums of the Royal Corps of Signals

Pipe President **Col M C Brookes ADC**

Corps Pipe Major **Sgt (PM) M Black**

Dumfries Tattoo 2022

By LCpl Lewis Wilson and Sig Andy Cairns

The Royal Signals Pipes and Drums played at The Dumfries Tattoo on 30 April 2022 which was the first big event for the Pipe Band since they were in Basel, Switzerland in 2019. The Dumfries Tattoo was also one of the first tattoos to go ahead after the Covid lockdown in Scotland cancelled all major events.

The Regulars in the band travelled to Edinburgh on 25 April to meet up with the Reservists in the band at Redford Cavalry Barracks to kick off the preparations prior to the tattoo. One of the Other bands taking part in the tattoo was the 2nd Battalion Royal Regiment of Scotland based in Penicuik, where the Royal Signals Band moved to on 27 April for a joint day of practice and some drill.

After meeting up with 2 Scots the Royal Signals Band moved to Kirkcudbright Training Centre on 28 April in the outskirts of Dumfries for further band rehearsals and a final tune up on the bagpipes. The band then travelled to the venue of the tattoo at The Crichton in the centre of Dumfries to get a look at the ground and get final markings for the 40th Anniversary of the Falklands display.

Saturday 30 April was the day of the tattoo when all bands including 2 Scots, Glasgow Police Pipe Band and The Dumfries Pipe Band arrived before lunch for a full run through practise to make sure everyone was sure of layout for the evening.

At 1800hrs the Royal Signals band marched on to the grounds of The Crichton with the new Drum Major, **Cpl Stewart**, at the front after completing his Class One drumming course earlier in the year.



A proud moment for Cpl Sean Stewart leading the band as Drum Major for the first time



Getting ready to entertain

The Pipes and Drums are always recruiting experienced and learner pipers, drummers and highland dancers, both Regular and Reserve. Further details are available by contacting:



Email: rsignalshq-pipesanddrums@mod.gov.uk



Phone: 07976 177667



Facebook: 'The Pipes and Drums of the Royal Corps of Signals' page



Getting out on parade and delighting the crowd



30th SIGNAL REGIMENT

Bramcote

250 Gurkha Signal Squadron

Op NEWCOMBE LRRG WARRIOR WAY CHALLENGER - by Sig Rai

The WARRIOR WAY CHALLENGER was a competition that had various robust and tactical challenges that needed to be completed in the fastest time possible by the participating team. We, being deployed on Op NEWCOMBE LRRG(M) ROTO 3 the UN peace keeping mission, had an opportunity to take part in this challenge. It was a good form of practice to engage soldiers in extracurricular activities that boost the morale of the soldiers so that they can stay focused on their work. This event was organised by the Lithuanian Army.

On 6 Mar 2022, we took part in WARRIOR WAY CHALLENGER held in Camp Castor. We had two teams registered with four members from J6 department in each team. We were the only two teams that represented the British Army. This challenge brought good experience to both teams. The dress code for the challenge was our own country uniform and 10kg of weight in our body armour.

CO	Lt Col Simon Smith	RSM	WO1 (RSM) Oliver Wood
Regt 21C		Maj Dean Whitworth	
SUPPORT SQUADRON			
OC	Maj Thoms Lappin	SSM	WO2 (SSM) Vaughan Harvey
244 SIGNAL SQUADRON (AIR SUPPORT)			
OC	Maj Nick Perkins	SSM	WO2 (SSM) Christopher Ansell
250 GURKHA SIGNAL SQUADRON			
OC	Maj Ed Adams	SSM	WO2 (SSM) Anand Limbu
256 SIGNAL SQUADRON			
OC	Maj Erica Roberts	SSM	WO2 (SSM) Leanne Gledhill
258 SIGNAL SQUADRON			
OC	Maj Rosie Bonner	SSM	WO2 (SSM) Keith Evans

The main objective of the challenge was to build teamwork, soldier's physical robustness and mental fitness. As the event was open to every country, teams from Germany, Lithuania and Sweden took part in it. On the challenge, we could see every team gave their best which made it very competitive and everyone was appreciated for their individual effort. As a soldier, we need to be fit in both mental and physical aspects but at the same time we were required to be team players and this challenge did prove this. During the challenge, each

The tyre flip was a challenge after moving those sandbags and dragging the vehicle!



Sig Krishna Karki moving the sandbags

and every team performed great and gave their best thus showing others that everyone was the best in their own aspect.

The challenge enabled all soldiers to showcase their physical and mental strength using tactics to work together as a team. The tasks were really challenging and consisted of pushing and pulling a vehicle a certain distance, but before doing so we were required to transport sandbags which were loaded and unloaded from the vehicle. There was a casualty carry over a tyre which simulated an obstacle, flipping a 200kg tyre five times, carrying two 20L jerry cans back and forth, memorising thirty pieces of equipment under twenty seconds, supplying ammunition by crawling under netting and lifting a 100kg log over our heads ten times to end it off.

As a participant, I enjoyed the challenging tasks laid out and would recommend others to take part in such challenges if they are ever given an opportunity to do so. This challenge was not only about completing tasks but how a team goes about completing the task, what tactics were to be used, how team leaders were leading and utilising the different team members. This challenge helped our team to bond better, improve leadership and teamwork skills. These elements really make us soldiers better as we aim to BE THE BEST as per the British Army motto.

Op NEWCOMBE LRRG St Davids and St Patrick's Day - by Sig Magar

On 7 Mar 22, we the LRRG (M) ROTO 3 team, celebrated St David's and St Patrick's day by completing a series of challenges that were put forward by the Commanding Officer of the Queen's Dragoon Guards (QDG). Some of the challenges included a chariot race, a leek eating competition, best PT fancy dress, picture of partner in traditional cultural dress, picture of Wales flag in the highest altitude and so on. The toughest challenge of the day was completing 3129 miles distance as a Task Group by walking, cycling or running. The distance of 3,129 miles was chosen because it is the distance from Gao, Mali back to the UK. A huge amount of effort and time was put into it. People ran long distances including marathons starting from midnight.

Overall, it was a busy day with all the challenges being conducted by the Task Group. Apart from the challenges, the main aim on the day was to raise funds for the Dreams and Wishes Charity, a Welsh Charity that is dedicated to helping seriously ill children by making their dreams and wishes come true.

On the day, we the OPCIS team prepared some Nepalese Momo (dumplings) and sold them in order to raise funds for the Welsh Charity. Introducing our local Nepalese food was an excellent opportunity for us to display our rich, diverse and unique culture and tradition amongst the people in the Task Group. We also raised funds by organizing a raffle draw. People were really excited and generous to support the raffle event. We had various prizes, and the top three lucky winners would win a ceremonial Gurkha Khukuri. Overall, we managed to raise the amount of €1,120 and a cheque was handed over to the Regimental Sergeant Major QDG.

To end the day, a specially carved Ceremonial Gurkha Khukuri was presented to the Commanding Officer **Lt Col Hugo Lloyd**, Queen's Dragoon Guards as a memento of working with the Gurkhas.

Visit of 1 Signal Brigade Commander Brigadier PRD Muir MBE - by Cpl Pun

1 (UK) Signal Brigade Commander, **Brigadier PRD Muir MBE**, visited 30 Sig Regt on 1 Mar 22. The visit started with a physical training session with 244 Sig Sqn (AS) followed by an office call and QG Signals presentation at the Himali club by **Maj Amrit Gurung** (Gurkha Major).

Later in the afternoon, the Brigade commander presented the Long Service and Good Conduct (LS&GC) medal to six service personnel and two other honours and awards in the WOs and Sgts mess in recognition of their unblemished long service in the Army. It is a matter of great pride to be a recipient of such recognition for any service personnel.



Brigade Commander with 30 Sig Regt CO and the Gurkha Major

The medal ceremony was attended by the Squadron OCs and other heads of departments within the Regiment along with the family members of the personnel receiving the medals. The citations for each recipient were read out during the ceremony. The level of experience and contributions of the personnel receiving the medals were interesting and impressive. The Brigade Commander expressed his greatest gratitude to all the recipients and thanked them for their service. After the official medal ceremony, the service personnel got the opportunity to share their day-to-day experiences with the Brigade Commander during the lunch.

The Regiment took the opportunity to share the outcome of OP TEAMWORK, during the challenge board in their respective Mess and Junior club, to the COS, Brigade Commander and Brigade Sergeant Major respectively. Finally, the visit was concluded by presenting General Service Medal (GSM) to SPs in the SUMA by the Brigade Commander.

This day will always remain a special day for me and all the personnel who were recognised and awarded on the day. It was also a great privilege and honour to host the Brigade Commander and his team in our Regiment.

244 Signal Squadron (Air Support)

Squadron Overview - by 2Lt Lazaride

Exercises and Operational deployments have ensured that 244 Sig Sqn (Air Support) is constantly active. The impressive work put in by the service personnel (SP) ensures successful deployments all around the world. The given nickname Globe Trotters for 30 Sig Regt, particularly holds true for 244. 244 Sig Sq (AS) works in support of JHC and Aviation Task Forces. This has led to a recurring 3-month tour to Mali on Op NEWCOMBE as well as various overseas exercises.

If you have recently become enthralled with all things **Wim Hof** and his cold water immersion therapy, 244 is the place

“244 Sig Sqn (AS) is bustling with exercises, deployments, AT and sport, the opportunities are truly endless.”

to practice your new hobby. As a prerequisite to deployments to Norway, service personnel

from 244 must first endure the gruelling cold weather course. This takes place in Norway and sees SP learn the skills to operate and survive in freezing conditions, the highlight being a fully submerged ice bath in the freezing lakes.

If you're under the impression that **Wim Hof** is slightly insane and you are adamant that hot weather therapy is far more effective, 244 have you covered as well. We have SP deployed to Florida, Oman and Mali, where I'm reliably informed the sun shines only slightly brighter than in Nuneaton.

We have seen a recent exercise deploy to Cyprus where the main aim was to develop High Frequency (HF) comms skills and gain a greater understanding of HF comms.

Assured by the YofS that HF comms is the lost art of warfare and the reliance on HF comms will increase substantially in the future. The exercising troops set off with the clear objective to get HF comms back to the UK from Cyprus. With a high level of skill and work ethic on display, the SP tirelessly PACEX'ed and exercised their skills, fault finding and achieving clear communications. Fortuitously, Cyprus offers many fine establishments to celebrate a successful exercise. The SP enjoyed the finest locally produced beer and ate their way through many a mixed kebab. I can confirm that they returned in good spirits (and marginally larger).

On a slightly less glamorous but no less important exercise, SP deployed on Ex ORTHRUS on Salisbury Plain, PACEXing all the kit thoroughly in the build-up. The period over the exercise ran seamlessly, the service personnel performed exceptionally well and achieved all the required objectives.

Alongside the many ongoing deployments, 244 Sig Sqn (AS) also have a multitude of sporting and AT activities available. The Boxing Team have recently started on their gruelling 12-week training camp in preparation for upcoming bouts. Under the supervision of high-level coaches and with the dedication evident by all those involved, the chances of 244 losing any of these bouts are slim. Moreover, training has started for the infamous Nijmegen March in the Netherlands, which will see the SP marching 25 miles a day for four consecutive days while carrying a minimum of 13.5kg. This has been put on hold for the past two years so everyone partaking is extremely excited for its resurgence.

To surmise, 244 Sig Sqn (AS) is bustling with exercises, deployments, AT and sport, the opportunities are truly endless. This article is just a snapshot of what 244 Sig Sqn (AS) is involved in. To encompass everything, would require this publication of The Wire to be solely dedicated to 244!

Exercise ORTHRUS - by Sig James

244 Sig Sqn (AS) deployed on EX ORTHRUS in support of JHC and Aviation Task Forces. EX ORTHRUS was a five-week exercise split across multiple locations and largely focused around everyone's favourite location, sunny Salisbury Plain. 244 Sig Sqn (AS) provided communications for 1 AVN Brigade as preparation for Ex CERBERUS.

The first phase of Ex ORTHRUS was the PACEX, this was conducted over a week in Gamecock Barracks and a week at Bulford Camp. The first week we prepared all our communications kit to deploy. Despite the Falcon detachment having endless problems, the detachment commander **Sig Dunn** with the support of SE Troop managed to get the Falcon working and online through working extensive hours.

The second week of the PACEX, 244 Sig Sqn (AS) deployed to Bulford Camp where our focus switched from Falcon to Op NET Blue. With our Op NET Blue node being freshly built, a lot of work was needed to get the detachment finished with all the applications installed. **Cpl Bagley**, being the detachment

commander of Op NET Blue, worked tirelessly to complete all tasks needed on the detachment, while also being an expert on every other detachment, he was the go-to help for any Falcon, Housekeeper and CCT120 issue, in the end we probably experienced more issues than the number of pints **Cpl Bagley** can get through in one night.

The second phase of Ex ORTHRUS, being the build phase, saw us pack everything up and move to the Land Warfare Centre where we could start building the network infrastructure for the exercise phase. Despite the accommodation at Rolleston camp, it was a big improvement on working in a tent on Bulford Camp parade square, where a slight bit of bad weather caused a river to run through our tent, and perhaps the first exercise in history where the night stag was seen as luxury compared to Rolleston camp's 20 bed studio apartments that would put the fanciest Hilton Hotel to shame. The first task was bringing ourselves online through our Falcon masts. **LCpl Bamford** took the lead, so our masts were up in no time and we were online. The entire network

infrastructure needed designing and implementing. **LCpl Bunting** with support of the install techs got the entire network designed and configured within a week, which pretty much made us ready for the exercise phase.

The exercise phase was conducted over a week with staff officers from 1 AVN Brigade arriving. 244 Sig Sqn (AS) maintained the network and provided service desk support. Our main tasks were assisting staff officers with account access, web access, ensuring the network remained online and competing in competitive chess games with any staff officer brave enough to play **LCpl Bamford**, who represented 244 Sig Sqn (AS) well, before unfortunately being valiantly shot down by an RAF Flt Lt who was secretly on the tri services chess team. The staff officers kept us busy with their difficult needs such as password resets, and re-powering UADs as the power buttons were frequently mistaken for other buttons.

To conclude, 244 Sig Sqn (AS) considers the exercise a success, despite the many issues we faced during our Pacex and build phase. During the exercise phase, communications were established and every service needed by 1 AVN Brigade was provided, thankfully none of the staff officers that left a good review saw the improvised repairs that kept the network online.

Support Squadron

Exercise **NORDIC MERCURY GLACIER 21**

By **Capt Keene**

Capt Keene and **Sgt Hodge** deployed with ten of the Regiment's finest Nordic Skiers to compete against the other Regiments in the Royal Signals Nordic Ski Championships. With the majority of the team being complete novices, the learning curve was particularly steep, but the team took the challenge head on and with high spirits.

Whilst on the trip, the team had an opportunity to learn the disciplines of Classic Skiing and Skate Skiing, to varying degrees of success. We also got to learn how to safely operate and then practise using the biathlon rifles. Safe to say we had to learn quick, before we got onto the range and had the added complexity of the -15°C temperature.

The Championship was competed for through three races; Biathlon, Patrol race and Long Classic. The Biathlon covered a distance of 7.2km and took the form of three loops of the Biathlon course and two shoots of five targets each; penalty loops were "awarded" for any targets missed, which led to a very congested penalty loop.

The Patrol race tested many elements of military skills. The Regiment supplied two teams for the race, one led by **Capt Keene** and a hors concours team led by **Sgt Hodge**, that came second out of all the teams. We covered 16km in about four hours, navigating between different checkpoints, completing



30 Sig Regt Nordic Ski Team



Patrol Race A Team --
Sig Johansen-Nish,
Sig Noel, **LCpl McCool**
and **Capt Keene**



Patrol Race B Team - LCpl Smithurst, Sgt Hodge, Sig Burrows and Sig Asif who placed 2nd in the race!

command tasks and conducting shoots on the ranges. All in all, one of the more challenging days of the Championship for all those involved, I don't think anyone enjoyed "skiing" up an Alpine slope...

The Long Classic Race was the last race and was a simple 9.1km race on classic skis. The conduct of the race was simple, just two loops, nothing to think about; which allowed the more fitness orientated of the team their time to shine. Two of the team were in the top 10 and five in the top 20.

The Royal Signals Nordic Ski team also put on an adhoc race for everyone's enjoyment, which took the form of a team relay/drag race. In teams of six, the race ran as a knock out style tournament, with the top teams from each heat progressing until the final race of six teams. 30 Sig Regt A Team triumphed in this competition, showing off our superior fitness and winning spirit. The Championship was enjoyed by all members of the team and the Regiment stands in good stead to compete for a top spot in next year's Corps Championship and even at the Army stages.

256 Signal Squadron

OC's Cup - by LCpls Hawker and Maxwell, 256 Sig Sqn

In March 22, 256 Sig Sqn began the first round of the OC's cup with an inter-Tp sporting competition. With a sunny day in front of us with temperatures hitting a balmy 18°C, we split down into our Troop teams and began with an intense rounders competition. Bravo Troop took an early lead winning both games with Alpha coming in second. Moving onto touch rugby, Bravo Troop gained a few more wins under their belt increasing their lead as they came out on top again with a staggering 12 points, despite some very suspect refereeing.

Breaking for lunch, the afternoon session began with a six-a-side football competition. Despite heroics from Alpha and Charlie, they could not combat Bravo's continued dominant winning streak and were seemingly vying for second place.

The final competition of the day was basketball, where the underdogs Charlie Troop emerged triumphant preventing Bravo from claiming a clean sweep of day one's competitions.

Resuming on Thursday, we began in full swing with netball. All three troops battled hard to gain a head start, the real warriors were Bravo and Charlie Troop, clashing for top spot. With a quick lesson in the 7Ds of dodgeball, the next event began. In a shocking and exhilarating set of games, Alpha were able to emerge victorious in a hard-fought dodgeball competition, finally things were looking up for them. After a brief lunch intermission, the OC's sports cup ended with volleyball. Despite some great efforts by Alpha, Bravo regained their top spot.

As the final sporting event concluded, we congregated at the Swan Dive bar for the awards ceremony, where unsurprisingly Bravo were announced as the overall winners and presented with victory certificates by the OC. With the closing of the competition, all eyes looked towards the next round and a chance for Alpha and Charlie to gain vengeance and unseat Bravo as the overall cup leader.

258 Signal Squadron

Exercise BEAR CLAW Hill Walking In Kinloch Leven - by LCpl Finnis

On 3 Oct 21, 258 Sig Sqn departed north on our eight-hour journey to Kinloch Leven. An adventure in itself, many of us enjoyed multiple sights upon the Scottish Border that we had not seen before. Excited to see more, upon arrival we toured the local area to gather our bearings and find some well needed food in a country pub, before settling in for the night ready for the upcoming days.

The following day commenced with a 0600hrs wake up and breakfast, followed by a safety brief from the leaders and a brief overview of the week ahead. This day consisted of climbing the Aonach Eagachridge. Though it was the easiest of all the hills that we climbed throughout the week it still presented a fair challenge, particularly as it was accompanied by the worst weather to hike in, which made us soggy and our visibility poor. We followed this ridge for approximately two miles on a loose wet stone surface, making footing increasingly difficult. Despite all these factors we still managed to see some amazing views and even a stag! Reaching the end of the first day's walk we gathered to view the 'meeting of three waters' tourist attraction.

After a good first climb on Monday we decided to stay on flat ground throughout Tuesday, following the path 'West Highland Way' which took us almost five hours to reach our destination of Fort William. Thankfully, the weather had improved for the duration of this walk meaning the gravel under foot was considerably easier to walk on, making morale a lot higher. Afterwards we boarded the minibus back to Kinloch Leven for some well needed rest.

At last the final day of walking had come. We left Kinloch Leven at 0800hrs after a hearty breakfast to conquer Ben Nevis. We arrived at the base of Ben Nevis at 0830hrs ready to take on the challenge. During the beginning of the ascent we all suffered with tired and aching legs, but this was made up for with spectacular views. Along the way we met and spoke to an array of new people keeping spirits high between everyone. Upon conquering this challenge and reaching the summit, there were rounds of praise between us all with a great sense of achievement, and even a mini snowball fight. With people eager to finish the day, the descent was fast paced.

The final day was now upon us and we were given some free time to do as we pleased, therefore we made the group decision to travel back to Fort William, as we did not get to explore the surroundings when we were there on Tuesday. We visited numerous attractions such as the whiskey distillery, Jacobite's steam train (the Harry Potter train) and some even travelled to the old Inverlochry castle. Once we returned to Kinloch Leven, we had homemade Nando's for our last big meal together.

The following morning, we left Kinloch Leven for our return journey back home to 30 Sig Regt.

During this experience I learnt a lot about myself and the people I shared this experience with. I improved my teamwork, navigation and communication skills. Overall it was such a beneficial experience, I am looking forward to the next one

Exercise INSTRUMENTED FIBUA URBAN TRAINING at Copehill Down

By Sig Crawford

On 9 Feb 22, three sections from 30 Sig Regt deployed on an instrumental urban exercise at Copehill Down training area on Salisbury Plain. The training exercise was led by 10 Queen's Own Gurkha Logistics Regiment with support from the Royal Gurkha Rifles. Everyone was excited to learn new skills that today's signallers wouldn't usually have the chance to learn in their working environment.

On the morning of 9 Feb, the group set off at 0830hrs to conduct a Live Firing Test in order to demonstrate competency on a Live fire Range. After the test was completed, we were then shown to our sleeping area, which was essentially a rundown building with a heater amongst the mock village houses of Copehill Down. Once we dropped our kit off at the sleeping area, we were issued TES kit. These laser sensors were worn over our uniforms to simulate if we were shot, wounded or dead and which area of the body was affected, which added a great realism to the exercise. Later that evening we had demonstrations on how to patrol down corridors and clear buildings in an urban environment; this gave us the appropriate knowledge for the FIBUA (Fighting in Built Up Areas) exercise and future tasks.

The following morning, we completed building clearances as fire-teams and later as sections. Throughout the day, we were given advice and knowledge from our section commanders as well as the more experienced members of our section. It was challenging but rewarding, learning new skills and using grenades for the first time. The Civilian Population (CivPop) played their role well and made the exercise as realistic as possible, acting as the local populace, friendly or enemy forces. The night ended with orders being delivered at 2000hrs by our platoon commander, we were all excited and full of anticipation about the attacks the following morning.

Reveille was at 0400hrs, ready for the big final attack at 0700hrs. The attack was long and draining, putting our military skills and knowledge to the ultimate test. We made good progress, breaching buildings and neutralising the enemy with controlled aggression. Unfortunately, during the latter stages of the attack, we received two casualties! As a team, everyone responded to the scenario using our military training to repel the enemy and treat the wounded soldiers. I took the responsibility of fireman, carrying them back to the med point where they were revived by the "god gun". This reset the TES equipment so that the wounded could be put back into the firefight and resume the battle. Finally, with all the attacks over and objectives completed, we were debriefed and sent back onto the coach, exhaustion evidencing our hard work, there wasn't a whisper on the way back. Everyone was asleep.

Sig Edwards briefing on
Sp Sqn Comms Equipment



37th SIGNAL REGIMENT

Redditch

RHQ			
CO	Lt Col J Long	RSM	WO1 (RSM) H Lawer
SRWO		WO1 P Howes	
54 (QOWWY) SIGNAL SQUADRON			
OC	Maj A Powell	SSM	WO2 (SSM) D Rogers-Pooley
33 (LANCASHIRE) SIGNAL SQUADRON			
OC	Maj M Hanna	SSM	WO2 (SSM) Maguire
48 (CITY OF BIRMINGHAM) SIGNAL SQUADRON			
OC	Maj G Blezard	SSM	WO2 (SSM) Payton
50 (NORTHERN) SIGNAL SQUADRON			
OC	Maj B Hunter	SSM	WO2 (SSM) Patterson
64 (CITY OF SHEFFIELD) SIGNAL SQUADRON			
OC	Maj W Carr	SSM	WO2 (SSM) Mace

The New Year started well and continued throughout Spring as the level of Regimental training picked up. Key activity included military training weekends, operational shooting competitions, Cyber competitions, Pass Off parades, visits, promotions, AT/sport and some reflection. On 8 Feb, CGS halted all non-operational activity in the Army to deliver Op TEAMWORK. The day was designed to enable all Army personnel (Civil Service, Reserve and Regular) to STOP, LISTEN and IMPROVE our collective culture and behaviour. The day commenced with a brief by CGS outlining the challenge followed by a comprehensive teamwork focussed package of materials hosted on Defence Connect. RHQ and sub-units took time to discuss openly the issues and themes highlighted by CGS and to reflect on how we can improve our culture to make our organisation more inclusive and in turn more effective.

Congratulations to **Capt Bob Dobson**, PSAO of 33 Sig Sqn, who made it to the last three in the 'Impact Award - COVID-19 Creative Response'. An amazing achievement and testament

to your hard work and dedication. Congratulations to our Regimental 2IC - **Maj Andrew Bowdler** on selection for promotion to Lt Col on the recent Pink List. Farewell to **Maj Ian Flannery** who departs the Regiment after a successful command tour as OC 50 Sig Sqn. A huge thank you for all you have achieved and contributed throughout your time in command. We wish you and your family all the very best in the future and especially in your current role supporting the Commonwealth Games. Congratulations to **Maj Barry Hunter** who takes over command of 50 (Northern) Sig Sqn.

Congratulations to the entire 37 Sig Regt Team who participated in Ex DEFENCE CYBER MARVEL (DCM) from 14-18 Feb. The team worked tirelessly throughout the week, expertly dealing with a huge number of exercise Cyber threats. This was the most ambitious and technically challenging competition so far and our team held their own and positioned extremely well.

Corps Colonel Reserves Visit – 1 Mar 22

Col Simon Smith VR (Corps Colonel Reserves) visited RHQ and 54 (QOWWY) Sp Sqn on Tues 1 Mar 22. The visit was extremely timely and offered an opportunity for the RHQ Team to update the Corps Colonel Reserves. Detailed briefs were also provided by **Sgt Jones** and **Sgt Thornton** on medical support and the growth of the Cyber Team within 37 Sig Regt respectively. The Corps Col visited 54 (QOWWY) Sp Sqn to observe their Tuesday evening training activity, as well as being treated to a superb Nepalese curry; led by **WO2 Gurung** and supported by **LCpl Stone** (Sp Sqn Chef).

The Corps Colonel Reserves then presented **WO2 Suresh Gurung** with his richly deserved GOC 3 (UK) Division Commendation for his support to Op RESCRIPT during the height of the pandemic, before presenting **LCpl Darren Ayers** with his QVRM after ten years of unfaltering commitment to the Army Reserve.



WO2 Gurung being presented with the GOC Commendation by Col Smith, Corps Colonel Reserves



LCpl Ayers being presented with the QVRM by Col Smith, Corps Colonel Reserves

The evening also coincided with some filming ahead of International Women’s Day (IWD) on 8 Mar. Well done to **Sig Nicklin, Pte Morrison** and **Sig Edwards** for their involvement in the #breakthebias campaign, part of this year’s theme for IWD. Media footage was taken of **Sig Nicklin, Pte Morrison** and **Sig Edwards** operating on a typical training night, conducting the SCR, working as a chef and as a Network Engineer respectively. In addition, **Sig Jessica Nicklin** was shortlisted to take part in a short video, reading out a letter she had written to her younger self which will be broadcast across Army Social Media. Well done to all as you have made an extremely important contribution to the IWD campaign.

Exercise SHERDAL SHOT

Under the mentorship of **WO2 Suresh Gurung**, 37 members of the Regiment attended Ex SHERDAL SHOT, the first OSC training event over the weekend 19-20 Feb. The aim of the concentration was to prepare the Regiment’s Team for the 7 Sig Gp Operational Shooting Competition (OSC).

In blustery and overcast conditions, the range details included shooting from the prone, kneeling and standing positions, which would all be put to the test on the OSC in March.



Training at Whittington Ranges



Sig Appleby grouping practice on Ex SHERDAL SHOT

Below: Regt Shooting Team with SVWO and CO on the final day of the 7 Sig Gp Operational Shooting Competition (see page 70 for article)



7 Group Operational Shooting Competition (OSC) Mar 2022 - by LCpl Young

7 Gp OSC was conducted at Whittington Ranges over the period 6-11 Mar 22, with strong representation from the Regiment's shooting team. Three Fire Teams entered from across the Regiment and they contested the Minor Unit competition. Phase 1 practices included Advance to Contact, short range Rural and Urban Contact. It was a closely fought contest with only four points separating all three teams, but ultimately the winning team consisted of **SSgt Pinnock, LCpl Densmore, LCpl Young** and **Sig Glover**.

Phase 2 of the competition saw the teams competing against the Regular units in a Falling Plate knockout competition. Despite some strong efforts, all teams unfortunately went out in the first round, however, there was no disappointment and everyone gained a great deal from the event.

it was an honour to have the awards presented by the CO, **Lt Col Long**, with the Minor Unit Award going to 37 Sig Regt A Team and individual honours presented to the following personnel:

Individual Awards

Top Shot - **SSgt Pinnock**
Runner Up - **Cpl Miller**
Second Runner Up - **LCpl Densmore**

Overall, it was a great opportunity to dust off some cobwebs after two years with no shooting, and for newer members to gain valuable experience of competition shooting. Well done to everyone that participated and we look forward to competing in future OSCs this year.



OSC Pistol Shoot



SSgt Pinnock with medal presented by CO 37 Sig Regt Lt Col Long

Military Training

Exercise SHERDAL WARRIOR

Personal Development and Military Training at Swynnerton took place over the weekend of 28-30 Jan. As Force Health Protection measures eased, it was great to see over a hundred Reservists from the Regiment return to weekend training and enjoying "Range Stew" again. The seniors and

officers took the opportunity to refresh themselves with the seven questions and estimate process, effective MS and Defence writing updates and some PAMIS training delivered by the Adjt. The weekend covered a range of subjects including First Aid and casualty extraction under effective enemy fire, vehicle anti ambush drills, Orders Process, Harbour Drills and Section Attacks. The weekend also offered a great opportunity to complete some collective Physical



Range Stew

Training (PT) with a CO's run and Inter Squadron Cross-Country competition.

Cpl Olivier (48 Sqn PTI) also used the opportunity to deliver a RFT(S) assessment for some of the permanent staff as the RFT(S) comes into effect from 01 Apr 22. A fantastic package overall, designed to get after the basics of soldiering and thanks go to **SSgt Craig Chuck** (33 Sig Sqn) as the lead SPSI



Ambush Drills



Sgt McDonald delivering Orders and Model Lesson

and **WO2 Gurung** for coordinating another great weekend of training.



Regt PT



Sgt Jones (Sp Sqn Medic) BCD Refresher

Matts Training

The final MATTs package was conducted at Swynnerton over the weekend 18-20 Mar and the Regiment will now switch focus to the Individual Training Requirement (ITR) that comes into effect from Apr '22.

Engagement

Exercise EMPLOYER CHALLENGE

The Regiment's team ran another successful Team Building and Leadership event at Swynnerton Training Area (STA) over the period 22-24 Mar 22. In conjunction with 159 Regt RLC, RFCA, WM Op Unity Team and Warwickshire police, the event enabled over 80 employees and police staff from across the Midlands to partake in a round robin of interactive stands. The activities were designed to push participants out of their comfort zones, covering some practical, problem solving and technical command tasks.



Casualty Extraction

On Tues 22 March, 24 employees from forces-friendly organisations in the Midlands, split into three teams of staff from Auctus Management Group Ltd, High Speed Two Limited, RSS Infrastructure Ltd, Pertemps Group, Trident Group, IPU Group and West Midlands Ambulance Service. They completed a range of tasks that included an obstacle course and simulated casualty extraction, an observation patrol in a woodland area, a radio communications exercise with problem-solving scenarios, weapon familiarisation and a computer simulated firing range, a planning exercise and a reflective leadership presentation.



Comms Exercise

Weds saw the Op UNITY Team (Commonwealth Games police and support staff) complete the package, and on Thurs female police officers and support staff finished off the week. With glorious sunshine and exceptionally high temperatures for the time of the year, feedback from all participants was excellent, with all aims well and truly met.



FEPDS Command Task

NW Bde Op VESTA

64 Sig Sqn team took part in the 4th Infantry Brigade and Headquarters North East recruiting surge in South Yorkshire. **Sgt Mahon**, **Sgt Fountain**, **Cpl Day** and other Squadron members took part in events over the weekend 25-27 Feb,

including two days at Meadowhall Shopping Centre with the Army Engagement Team, singing and working alongside South Yorkshire Police, Yorkshire Air Ambulance and The British Heart Foundation. **Sgt Fountain** and **Cpl Day** (Soldiers of Swing) also attended the Hillsborough Stadium where Sheffield Wednesday had invited them to sing and support the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant along with **Lt Col Barnbrook** and **Maj Hannaford**.



AF Covenant signing at Sheffield Wednesday FC Event

Sport

Midlands Cross-Country League Series (Oct 21 - Mar 22)

The Midlands Cross-Country Race Season 21/22 started in Stafford and finished in Bramcote with prize giving after the final race. The Regiment has been well represented over the last six months, competing in six of the seven events and travelling all over the Midlands area. The first race was in Stafford during Annual Camp (ACT) before moving onto Chillwell for Race Two at the start of November. Due to the course being shortened, it was decided that a Virtual race would replace this event. Race Three was in early December at 1MWD, North Luffenham before taking a break due to Covid restrictions. Race Four was cancelled before the QDG's hosted the replacement event for which the Regiment did not have a complete team due to injuries. The next time the Regiment raced was at 2 Royal Anglian Regt in Cottesmore in February for Race Five. The final two races were in March at MRTC in Royston and finishing off at 30 Sig Regt in Bramcote on 16 March '22.

Over the Season the team have also participated in the Midland Championships, Army Championships, Inter Corp Championships and the postponed Royal Signals Inter Unit Champs. Congratulations to the individual winners and all team members who participated throughout the season.



Midlands Minor-Unit Runners Up



*Left: SSgt Holmes - 1st Female Masters Overall
Right: WO2 Brooks - 1st Male Super Masters Overall*

Golf

Congratulations to **WO2 Suresh** Gurung who was once again crowned winner at the Regiment's Winter Golf Championships held at Styrrup Golf Club. Well done to all participants, including several novices who were competing for the first time and congratulations to the other members of RHQ/Sp Sqn team who swept up the minor prizes on offer:

- Capt Barnard** - Nearest the pin
- WO2 Brooks** - Nearest the pin
- Capt Murphy** - Nearest the 18th in 2.



SSgt Norton presenting WO2 Gurung with the Winner's Trophy



Regt Winter Championships at Styrrup Golf Club

Basketball

Uk Midlands Inter Unit Basketball Championships took place on Wed 23 Feb 22 at the ATR Grantham. The Regiment's team played well, exiting at the minor-units Semi Final stage to 216 (Para) Sig Sqn.



Regt Basketball team

Other News from the Regiment



Above: Congratulations to seven trained soldiers from the Regiment who completed their Basic Training and Passing Off Parade at ATR Grantham on 19 Mar 22. A special mention to **Sig George Bates** from 33 Sig Sqn who was awarded Best Shot from his platoon. **Above right: WO2 Suresh Gurung** used his mountain leader qualifications to support BUOTC Adventure Training in Snowdonia National Park. Pic shows some excellent scrambling as the students climbed a number of peaks in the region, including Foel Goch (831m), Moel Siabod (872m), and Glynder Fach (994m). **Right:** On the summit.





39th SIGNAL REGIMENT

Bristol

Situated in the heart of the French Alps, La Tania, France Ski Resort became the home to 24 officers and soldiers from 39 Sig Regt who were about to ski either for the first time or to hone their alpine skills on the slopes and their touring skills off-piste.

Conducted in Feb 22, the Regiment's annual Adventurous Training exercise presented a perfect opportunity for soldiers and officers to earn their Ski Foundation awards 1, 2 and 3 qualifications.

The conditions were initially excellent and location perfect for all to learn, adapt and train in alpine skiing or touring skiing. As the week progressed, each day brought its own challenges with changing snow conditions, increased slope, weather or visibility, but all skiers took those challenges head on to overcome these, improving their skills each day.

The exercise managed to deliver an impressive haul of 14 new awards; 9 x Ski Foundation 1, 1 x Ski Foundation 2 and 4 x Ski Foundation 3. Fourteen awards in total. Congratulations to all those that achieved an award and a huge well done to everyone for their hard work and engagement during the exercise.

Ski Foundation 1 - by LCpl Jim Lafferty

The group was a mix of skiers who needed to continue to develop their military skiing abilities in order to demonstrate their ability to attain the first Ski Foundation award in order to progress onto the next foundation courses. The group was

RHQ	
CO Lt Col P Mell PhD VR	RSM WO1 (RSM) P Tinsley
SRWO WO1 (SRWO) M Durrant	
43 (WESSEX AND CITY AND COUNTY OF BRISTOL) SIGNAL SQUADRON	
OC Maj A Burdge	SSM WO2 (SSM) C Downs
53 (WALES AND WESTERN) SIGNAL SQUADRON	
OC Maj C McGrath	SSM WO2 (SSM) C Beardall-Jones
93 (NORTH SOMERSET YEOMANRY) SUPPPORT SQUADRON	
OC Maj J Ingledeew	SSM WO2 (SSM) C Washer
94 (BERKSHIRE YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON	
OC Maj S Fleming	SSM WO2 (SSM) D Sterry

made up of **LCpl Jim Lafferty**, **Sig Louise Stratton** and **Sig Amelia Green** who all had limited ski experience and were just above the level of the other SF1 group.

The first day of skiing began on the Sunday, when our ascent up from La Tania revealed that the slopes were going to be full of other skiers. Upon reaching the top **Maj Gaz Topps** began to assess the ability of the group with a few blue runs before he began to critique and instruct the group.

Conditions on the second day became more challenging, after heavy snow fall overnight, and this really tested the abilities of the group who managed to keep morale high with the aid of **Maj Gaz Topps'** fantastic jokes.

LCpl Henry Griffey and Cpl Steve Foster



EXERCISE LYNX GLACIER 22

The third day showed signs of promise as the piste bashers had been busy at work overnight, so after attending lectures, the team was joined by **Maj Paul Rodenhurst** and enjoyed a day of excellent skiing conditions.

WO1 Richard Ayling led the team on the fourth day challenging the team with a black slope at the beginning, all members eventually made it down after adopting a growth mindset. They then made the long journey over to Val Thorens (VT) which is situated at the far end of the three valleys mountains and were rewarded with some sunny weather and amazing slopes.

Joined again by **Maj Gaz Topps** for the final day of the course, the team ventured to VT again to seek out the routes that were discovered the day before. They stopped for a well-deserved lunch in Meribel before joining the rest of the expedition at the top of La Tania. All of us in the group were awarded the Ski Foundation 1 qualification at the end of the training.

Ski Foundation 1 - by 2Lt Adam Pegley

The first few days of skiing proved to be a learning curve for everyone in the group as steep as the slopes. As nervous first-time skiers, we had to learn the basics quickly in order to progress from the nursery slopes. Resilience developed quickly as we all began to appreciate the famous words of **Rocky Balboa**, "It's about how much you can get hit and keep moving forward... that's how winning is done!"

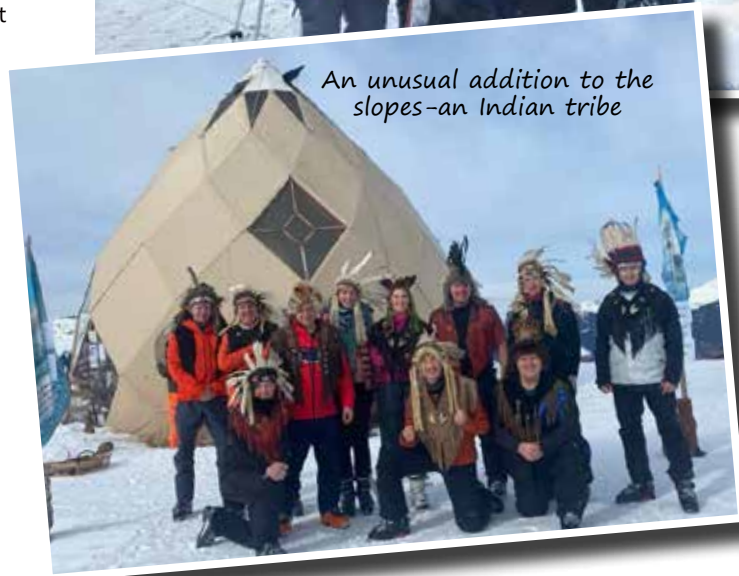
By the third day, the soldiers and officers in the group, with zero previous experience, were skiing competently and learning the way of skiing in the mountains. With excellent coaching this resulted in a trip that no one would want to miss. **Sig Amar Shankar**, from 94 (BY) Sig Sqn, Windsor, said of the week: "Excellent instructors, skiing for the first time was rather challenging, but I swiftly adapted and got over any obstacles. I would now highly recommend it to all interested to give it a try, you won't regret it."

Ski Foundation 2 - by Sig Tom Allison

Ready to hit the slopes on day 1, an assorted motley crew of skiers under the tutelage of **Maj Bob Case** set out to gain their Ski Foundation 2 qualifications. Among us were soldiers and officers of various levels of experience, all working together towards the award.

We took a day on Sunday to dust off the cobwebs and find our feet again, before entering a week of structured lessons and activities. There was a focus on learning new skills, such as carving and off piste techniques, perfecting our general form after Ski Foundation 1. Even after the first day we were all gaining confidence off-piste, and an introduction to touring and avalanche drills.

Monday and Tuesday followed a pattern of lectures in the early morning and skiing for the remainder of the day. The lectures covered the conditions in which avalanches can occur, and how to safely get around the mountain whilst minimising the risk of triggering one. This was precluded by a presentation reminding us of the goals of Adventurous Training. The skiing then consisted of a mixture of drills to improve technique, heading off-piste to gain confidence and



loosen our bodies up, and, a highlight, several games of "follow the leader" where we took turns leading the group in all sorts of exotic ways down the slopes while the others did their best to follow the exact line of those in front. Some friendly competition to create the most fun and challenging lines to follow certainly pushed our skills up a notch and got the morale up after various tumbles!

Wednesday was an introduction to ski touring and the day started with the final lectures on understanding avalanche triggers, safety, touring equipment and transceiver use. From the theory, we then made our way out onto the slopes and caught the gondola up to Chenus to alpine ski down to the start of the touring route. Here we fitted skins to our skis, adjusted our bindings and boots and with a sense of excitement and energy we headed up Chenus to get the feel of going uphill on skis for a change. We completed a number of avalanche drills en-route through the woodblock. We also learnt how to read the stability of the slope via cutting a snow trench and examining the different layers of snow. The day completed with picnic lunch off piste in a wooded area and a final exercise looking for a buried transceiver.

Thursday was a more relaxed day. By this point we'd all seen a marked improvement in our abilities, and each of us were happy leading the rest of the group up and down the slopes, successfully navigating the mountain. Our instructor was still giving us feedback on an individual level just to really get us skiing as well as we could be. We stopped for a well deserved long lunch and coffee, and individually received our course results. Then it was a relaxed journey back to meet the other groups precluded by a ski back to the chalet with all members of the expedition.

Friday was a “free-ski” day and we split up into groups of 3+ to explore the mountain at our own pace. Some chose a more café-oriented experience while some chose to safely test their new skills. Visibility was especially poor this day, but this was a great finalé to the week regardless. The exped rendezvoused for one last time for a collective ski down, before getting all of the admin sorted for an early night and 0400hrs wake-up for the return journey.

A successful week saw all of us gain experience towards our Ski Foundation 2 qualification, and all of us nonetheless walking away in one piece and as far better skiers than before.

Ski Foundation 3

The SF3 group covered a range of skiing, touring, and survival elements throughout the week. After a day of familiarisation and navigation lessons, they constructed a ski stretcher and had an introduction to emergency snow shelters.

Building on this over the rest of the week, they covered snow pack analysis and further emergency shelter lessons ahead of a day of ski touring, with lessons on route planning and weather too.

They finished the week by building overnight snow shelters, and further ski touring skills including ski retrieval and breaking trail. All four members of the group achieved their SF3 qualification, and are looking ahead to doing their SL1 course next!

Ultra Run

By Capt E Griffiths,
93 Sig Sqn

On 5 March, I successfully completed the Winter Green Man Ultra – a 45.5 mile muddy trail run around the outskirts of Bristol. After only really getting into running 18 months ago, with my furthest run being 27 miles, this was going to be a challenge both physically and mentally.

The aim was to finish within the 12-hour cut off point... I finished at 9 hours 52 mins, 76th overall and 6th female. Safe to say I was over the moon!

The support from my running club joining me at various points and getting to meet other runners along the way was an amazing experience and one that will stick with me as a life highlight. On to the next one!



Cooking for Comms - by Pte Turner-McMullan

Breakfast shift at 0600hrs arrives with its usual aroma of freshly smoked tobacco and sweet black coffee. A hasty harbour ahead of the more serious business of slow cooked pork loins, perfecting roast potatoes and cake making. The unit rising with the smell of bacon, ready for a busy development weekend. The usual suspects (**Capt Dyer**), making their pre-breakfast recces, preparing their best line of attack. Breakfast over and time to play Santa, filling everyone's favourite horror bags for lunch. A moment for reflection in the monotony of the task.

With no prior cadet or army experience I joined with an open mind. A background in technology, media and writing seeming applicable to the Signals ad for operators. However, my mathematical ability had other ideas when it came to the TST for sig trade. Rather than find myself at a loose end, the always sage **WO2 Chapman**, pointed out the urgent need for chefs. It's been less than a year since passing out and despite Covid, 43 Sig Sqn feels a familiar and welcoming place to be. My place in the kitchen giving me a unique contact point to all ranks who pass the hotplate, a daily education in rank slides and Regiment culture.

Communications are more than just a technical trade in 43 Sig Sqn, it is a fabric that forms people into one body. Be that encouragement to enlist, departing on training fully prepared by support staff, or the realisation that from regimental CO down your input is recognised. I might be RLC badged but I'm proud to be part of the Signals. Special thanks to **Sgt Jones (Jonah)**, for the wealth of tricks of the trade and cooking experience shared in such a short space of time.

Exercise SOMERSET FUSION 3

By WO2 (SSM) Craig 'Dish' Washer

Ex SOMERSET FUSION 3 was a joint MATTs training weekend conducted by 43 (Wessex) Sig Sqn and 93 (North Somerset Yeomanry) Sp Sqn over the period 4-6 Mar 22, which had been planned by **SSgt Ash O'Brien**, SPSP 93 Sup Sqn and **SSgt Alex Mitchell**, SPSP 43 Sig Sqn. The training weekend was being held at Bath Army Reserve Centre (BARC) and Colerne, home to 21 Sig Regt. Over the weekend, members of both 43 and 93 would be carrying out MATT 1 (LF4), MATT 2 (AFT), MATT 3 and MATT 4.

93 Sp Sqn arrived at BARC on the evening of 4 Mar all prepped and ready for the weekend's activities. Once we had had the welcome brief from **Maj 'Taff' Burdge**, OC 43, and the fire safety brief from **SSgt 'Sharp' Sharp**, SQMS 43, the evening was ours. The troops didn't venture down into town, as the following morning they would be either attempting the AFT or handling weapons and live ammunition carrying out LF4.

It was an early start for all troops on the Saturday morning, as the AFT was to set off at 0800hrs, in order to finish at a decent time, which would allow for the remainder of the day to go smoothly. The AFT set off dead on 0800hrs under the direction of the soon new to be QMSI, **Sgt Dan Duffins**, all ready for two laps of 21 Sig Regt's fence line. For those that

have served at 21 Sig Regt, it can be a very cold, damp and windswept location, but luckily for us we had none of that and I'm glad to say that all of the troops got around the six mile route, well within time. Once showered and changed it was time to head over to the training wing and 25 metre range, ready to conduct LF4 with **Sgt Josh Seller** and MATT 3 with **WO2 Cassie Downs**. The day's activities came to an end with everyone passing LF4 and MATT 3, so all participating troops headed back to BARC, ready to enjoy the evening meal which had been prepared by our new Regimental Catering Warrant Officer, **WO2 (RCWO) Alex Randell**, who had just joined the Regiment, coming from 101 Logistics Brigade.

Once back at BARC, time was our own and it was time for some Squadron bonding and time for me to get to know the Squadron members, as I have just assumed the role of SSM. We headed to the nearest pub, which by chance, was only 100m away from the ARC and settled in for the evening. Banter was being given and taken by all Squadron members and a good night was had by all. I didn't want the troops to feel uncomfortable in my presence, so when they started to buy the 2 for 1 cocktails, I saw my out and wished them a good night.

Sunday morning came around, which wasn't as early as the previous day, as the MATT 4 instructor was travelling from 94 (Berkshire Yeomanry) Sig Sqn, based in Windsor. When the instructor arrived, the troops were taken into the training wing for some revision of CBRN drills. Two hours later and their eyes bleeding, they finally appeared not having practised any drills. The instructor had taken them through the full CBRN lesson. Once they had recovered from the instruction, it was time to get ready for the "chamber", which was a 12 x 12 tent out the back of the 25m range at Colerne. With the CS pellets at the ready, groups of four were taken into the tent and CBRN drills carried out. One moment that stood out was when **LCpl Alan Griffey** entered the chamber, but came flying out seconds later, coughing and spluttering. It turns out his respirator wasn't fitted properly, and he had suffered the effects of CS. With his respirator checked and fitted correctly, **LCpl Alan Griffy** was led back into the chamber, to continue his drills. You'll be glad to hear that all those who entered the chamber carried out their drills correctly and passed MATT 4.

With all training complete, areas cleaned, and kit and equipment accounted for, we headed back to Bristol, our home ARC, ready to close down after the weekend. Overall a good weekend was had by all and more importantly, those troops that required MATTs 1,2,3 and 4 were on their way to qualify for their annual Certificate of efficiency (CofE).

Exercise WESSEX COMMUNICATOR 1

Our first exercise of the new training year was a lovely sunny weekend, even if the temperature at night dropped to -2°C. We started off Friday evening driving in convoy to the exercise area, where we would meet 93 Sig Sqn. Upon arriving we got the 9x9s out to get our heads down so that we could start bright and early with lessons the next morning.

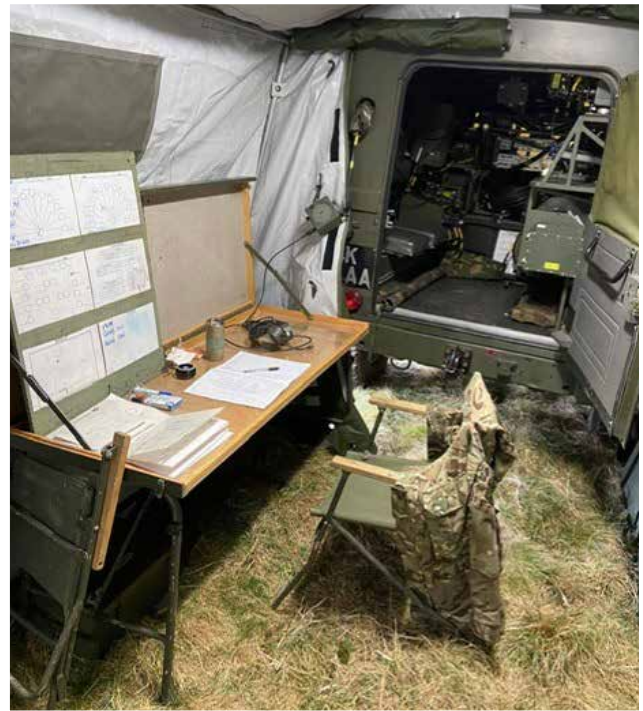
Saturday started off with frost on the ground but a beautiful smell of bacon. **Capt Freeman** of 43 Sig Sqn was cooking us all bacon and egg butties to warm us all up. We followed this with a lesson by **LCpl Hawkins** on how to cam and conceal a det. While he went through all the things to think of like Shape, Silhouette and Shine, his helpers **LCpl Cooper-Collett** and **Sig Eden** did the practical.

After a short break of hot tea, we all helped to build the Squadron Cp from what we had learnt.



Our next lesson was how to do a recce, we split down into groups of three and went out without our trailers to a six-figure grid reference armed with only an aerial photograph. We had to draw a sketch of where in the area we would build our dets, remembering technical and tactical elements of how to site a det.

Once we reported back to the Sqn Cp we collected our trailers and headed back out to our own areas. Setting up as taught from the lessons of the day and getting comms in, in the light snow was interesting but achievable. We settled in to det routine into the late evening ensuring our rations were extra hot.



Sunday morning saw the cam net and trailer frozen but not the Comms, we all managed to re-establish radio checks with zero. Mid-morning, we had the call to close down and return to the Sqn Cp. Once everything was packed up and the area swept, the SQMS of 43 Sig Sqn gave us a lesson on rolling replens followed by a walk through.

After a great weekend shaking out the cobwebs and getting back to basics it was to our ARCs for the turnaround.



71st (City of London) Yeomanry Signal Regiment *Bexleyheath*

Exercise COCKNEY PHOENIX SLIDE

Ex COCKNEY PHOENIX SLIDE was a multi-level Adventurous Training (AT) exercise organised by 71 (CoL) Y Sig Regt. Taking place from 4 - 12 Mar it saw a team of 26 deploy out to Tignes, France as both instructors and students. A wide range of experience and abilities meant that four groups were devised to accommodate all students from those who had never been in the snow to the AT veterans.

The trip began on Friday evening with everyone digging into their corner of the bus in anticipation of the 18-hour bus and ferry ride ahead. Not far into the journey we had a few games of “on the bus, off the bus” at the port terminal which kept everyone on their toes. Once on the ferry it wasn’t hard to discern that most people onboard were also part of military AT groups. Nearing the resort, we stopped at a supermarket to stock up on essentials for the week; this was a welcome break before our final ascent into Tignes. Once we arrived in resort and rooms had been allocated, it didn’t take long for people to begin to recce the local establishments, but also learn the hard way that their footwear choice might not be suitable for the Alps!

On Saturday morning the last kit was collected from the rental shop, ski passes were handed out and groups met with their instructor to begin the first day on the slopes. With the different levels of experience and ability across the Regiment, people were split into four different groups spanning SF1 to

CO	Lt Col G Darke	RSM	WO1 (RSM) L Britton
31 (MIDDLESEX YEOMANRY AND PRINCESS LOUISE'S KENSINGTON) SIGNAL SQUADRON			
OC	Maj P Jones VR	SSM	WO2 (SSM) N Scobie
36 (ESSEX YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON			
OC	Maj D Monk	SSM	WO2 (SSM) T Pun
68 (INNS OF COURT AND CITY YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON			
OC	Maj M Cahill	SSM	WO2 (SSM) C Anderson
265 (KENT AND COUNTY OF LONDON YEOMANRY (SHARPSHOOTERS)) SUPPORT SQUADRON			
OC	Maj D Lakin	Sqn 2ic	Capt M Mahoney
SSM	WO2 (SSM) S May	SPSI	SSgt M Tancock
PSI (T) Sgt A Weight			

SF3. With groups heading off to the four corners of the vast Espace Killy ski area, the chances of bumping into each other was very unlikely during the day. This was great as it led to plenty of opportunities for story swapping about the day’s mishaps over dinner or a cold one in the bar.

Each day we started on a few runs to get warmed up and decided where we wanted to go, the route selection and who would have the job of continually interpreting the piste map as lead navigator. Our instructor would continually give us tips on technique and ensured we were always being challenged.





By the afternoon, once our legs were burning, we searched for a café and used the stops for lessons on a range of subjects, including avalanche response, ski touring and weather effects on the terrain.

As with all AT, the instructors didn't want to make it too easy and made a point of challenging everyone beyond their comfort zone. This meant learning to navigate moguls, going off-piste into powder, or going down a narrow icy black piste, all of which caused a few moments of hesitation. If the instructor thought you could do it, no-one was going to back down from trying... even if it did result in a couple of tumbles and lonely walks up the piste to collect a ski.

After several days of skiing under our instructors, the last day was a free ski day, a culmination of the week's efforts where people could enjoy skiing with people from the other groups or choose to take an extended lunch to take in the scenery up the mountain.

On the last evening a group meal was organised at a restaurant for all 26 of us, a final opportunity to indulge in local Savoie cheese and wine. Everyone was able to unwind, reminisce the week's antics, compare bruises and thank the instructors. All in all a great trip and many thanks to the RSM, **Capt Tunnickliff** and **Sgt Rai** for pulling it together.

Friday was departure day, and after handing back kit to the rental shop and purchasing last minute souvenirs, we once again piled onto the bus and dug in for the journey back to Calais. A final round of "On the bus, off the bus", this time carrying all our equipment through security meant an opportunity for free phys!

On Saturday morning the bus arrived back and the final unpacking of gear began. Smiles all around, people were already discussing the next trip and when they could progress onto the next level, even to become instructors to make future trips that bit easier for the Regiment!

Exercise PHOENIX COMMUNICATOR 1 - by Sig Haw

Over the period 1 – 3 April 71 (CoL) Y Sig Regt deployed to Bramley Training Area for Ex PHOENIX COMMUNICATOR 1. This was a low-level tactical communications exercise to prepare for future deployments by providing assurance to the Commanding Officer on the operational effectiveness of the personnel and BOWMAN platforms in the Regiment.

The Friday evening began with a convoy drive to Bramley Training Area, 36 Sig Sqn left in two packets, green fleet in front with white vehicle fleet leaving shortly after. The Squadron arrived at Bramley later than first planned after a certain Tp Cpl at the front of the first packet decided they would go a different way round the M25 to what the route card said... (no names mentioned but I'm told **Cpl Vigor** knows who was commanding the lead vehicle). The first action on arrival was to set up the Squadron Command Post along with its BOWMAN det, once these were established the sleeping areas were allocated and we all retired for the night, ready for the start of the exercise in the morning.

Saturday morning started with PACEx'ing the rest of the Sqn's BOWMAN equipment and testing that all detachments were able to communicate with each other. This continued throughout the day with voice procedure being used to test the Troops' skills with other communications equipment, such as masts and antennas, being deployed.

Throughout the day on Saturday, **Sgt Denton**, who had recently completed his ICS Manager's course and was acting

as the Sqn Supervisor tasked different dets with comms reces to various locations on the training area, based both in vehicles and on foot with manpacks. This allowed the troops to appreciate not only how the equipment works, but the fundamentals of what to look for, and what not to look for, when siting a comms detachment.



In the afternoon lessons were given by **Cpl Gurney** on the different types of rebros (radio rebroadcasts) and how to set these up using the BOWMAN equipment. This assisted in increasing and consolidating knowledge across the Regiment, increasing their effectiveness.

The next day, the troops who were not on stag woke up to a frosty Sunday morning with their 12 x 12 sleeping tents frozen stiff, so much for 'spring has sprung'! After we thawed out the equipment RHQ were on the net with our next taskings. **Sgt Denton's** recce's on Saturday played well into SHQ's hands as the very next tasking from RCP was to complete two reconnaissance tasks to sites that had already been recce'd for comms. It would appear the old saying 'Time spent on reconnaissance is seldom wasted' could not be more true!

After the Recce tasks had been completed and RHQ was happy, ENDEX was declared and the squadrons got ready for the three hour drive to their respective ARCs for a well-deserved rest.



Exercise PHOENIX FIRER Series, The Regimental Shooting Team Preparation

By Sgt Nugent and Cpl Lovett



After a period of 'enforced rest' brought on by Covid-19, 71 (CoLY Sig Regt Shooting Team was eager to get back on the ranges to refresh what we had learned in previous years and to sharpen our skills.

Team Captain, **Lt Coe** put together an excellent training package of four weekends build-up to 3 Div Operational Shooting Competition 2022 (3XX OSC 22) in May. Drawing on participants from all four squadrons and supported by Regular and Reserve range staff this was a true team effort.

More than just shooting at targets, competition level shooting consists of numerous 'matches or assessments', in which a firer is expected to learn when to shoot or move, how many rounds they must accurately fire from which firing position (e.g. standing, kneeling, prone supported and unsupported), whilst being competent and safe with the weapons. Success is not guaranteed, but becoming a better individual marksman is, as well as being part of a great team representing the Regiment.

Open to all ranks and experience, the team is always looking for new members from the Regiment, specifically anyone that can commit to further training weekends and wants to be challenged at target shooting over various ranges, with both a rifle and pistol.

Over the training package provided, the Regiment's shooting team were quick to recall their shooting skills and very soon the kinetic training took place. The directing staff were pleased to see an improvement in the scores sheets as various 'matches' were repeated over and over again. The final training weekend saw emphasis on the pistol, with heart-pounding and fast 'matches' over close quarters. Overall, the directing staff and the Regimental Shooting team has put in an incredible amount of work, and we look forward to taking part in not only the competitions in 2022, but also to nurture a highly skilled shooting team for the years to follow.

Ex MERCURY SNOWRIDER 22, the Corps Annual Snowboarding Championships, is a two-week Snowboarding Camp in Rauris, Austria. This year it was Led by **SSgt Miller** from 71 (CoL) Y Sig Regt and we took eight soldiers: five intermediate/advanced riders and three complete novices. In the first week we were split down and introduced to our Ripstar instructors who provided training for the initial week. The first few days included practice on the nursery slopes for the novices but by day three the novices were ready to tackle the more challenging slopes further up the hill. Our advanced/intermediate riders continued where they left off learning new riding styles as well as freestyle boarding.

Following the first week of tuition we had the competition week allowing us to put our newly learnt skills into practice. There were many nervous riders going into the competition week, however, all members supported and encouraged each other to give their best. Dual Slalom was the first event and all team members embraced the spirit of the competition putting in their finest effort. **Cpl Asamo** returned this year as an intermediate, he did well in beating a more experienced rider.

The next event was the freestyle where only the advanced riders competed stylish and well-coordinated tricks. **SSgt Kev Miller** was the only one from our team to compete in this event and put in a brave performance even though he was suffering from a fractured rib.

The final event was the boardercross where everyone competed. **SSgt Antony Bentham** managed to take part after he recovered from a series of injuries, including a concussion that split his helmet in two. Although the whole team displayed great grit, as most were carrying injuries from the previous week, unfortunately no-one qualified into the latter rounds despite the efforts they put in.

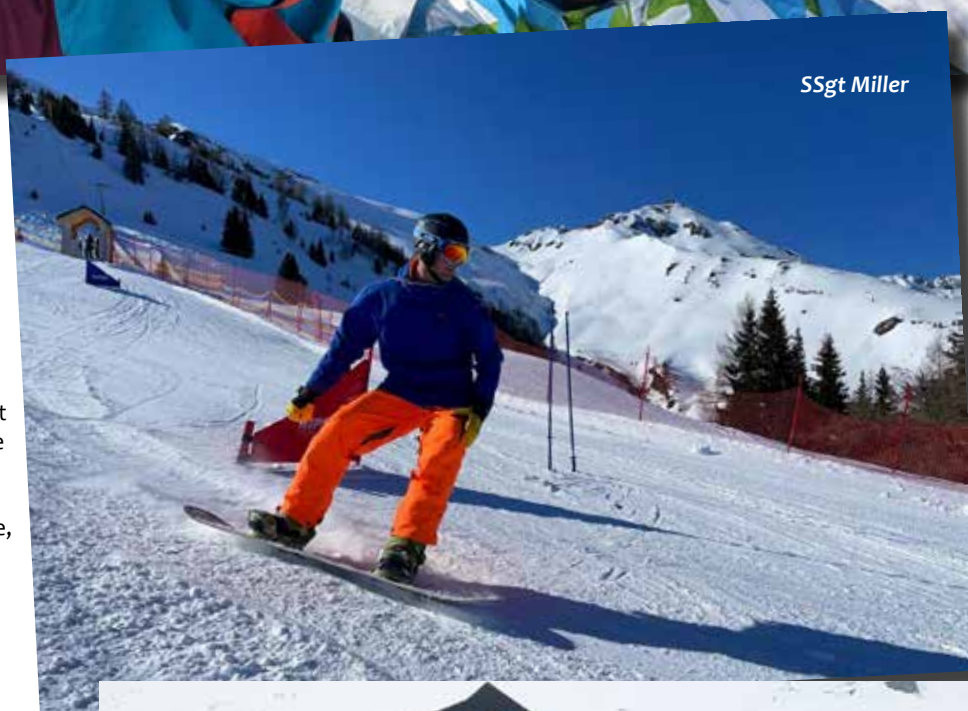
Everyone involved in Ex MERCURY SNOWRIDER thoroughly enjoyed all aspects of the camp and are keen to return and improve, hopefully making some of the podium spots for Ex MSR23.



Exercise MERCURY SNOWRIDER 22

By LCpl Norman

SSgt Miller and SSgt Bentham



SSgt Miller



LCpl Norman

Ex MERCURY POM was the Corps' main overseas orienteering training camp, which took place alongside the Portugal VII Costa Alentejana "O" Meeting (CAOM) in 2022. CAOM was a foot orienteering event, counting for International Orienteering Federation's World Ranking Events (IOF WRE) and for the Portuguese Orienteering Federation's Cup, open to people of all ages, who may participate in the competition or open classes, individually, or in a group. CAOM takes place annually and typically attracts over 1500 competitors, alongside supporters and worldwide participants.



On a gloomy morning of 24 Feb, the team: **Lt Col John Kay** (our doctor for the training camp), **Lt Col John Owens RE**, **Maj Sally Calland**, **SSgt Vicky McCreadie**, **Sgt Katie Costello** and I, headed towards Portugal, where the sun was very much shining, unlike in the UK. In the evening, we gathered at the villa we had rented which I guess we could put up with for the week!!



We welcomed both 'Johns' **Lt Col Kay** and **Lt Col Owens** with their multiple luggage and **Capt Richard Dixon** with just his carry-on, strictly following **Maj Sally Calland's** initial direction on baggage allowance... oops! On 25 Feb, we made our journey towards Santo Andre to start our first day of training where we registered for the week's events and in typical Mediterranean style walked away with a bottle of wine each... the doctor soon had his eyes on that little gift. We then made our way to the training area and practised a few elements of orienteering such as ground familiarisation and map relocation.



EXERCISE MERCURY POM

By Sig Papesch Limbu

The next day, we began the competition starting with the Long Distance race. Having only started orienteering six months previously, when asked about which race events to enter in I figured Men's Elite would be fine as that was my age category and I'm a fit young lad, how very wrong could I be! 18km later in my first elite course with fatigued legs I finally finished and everyone was very happy to finally see me again and still smiling, almost. The experience of competing with fellow GB's No 1 orienteer and the world's No 1 allowed me to aim higher for the remainder of the competition. Despite the exhaustion, each day we were more motivated and looked forward to the upcoming days.

Day two saw us complete two races, a Middle Distance followed by an Urban Sprint. With the first race complete, going to the sea of Relvas Verdas acted as a recovery 'ice bath', well for the ones brave enough to go in that is. Since it was my first urban race, the course offered a technical challenge across Santiago do Cacem's local town. With more features for reference and fast paved routes, experience of measuring short distances at a fast pace became a more important element with only seconds separating some members of the team. **Maj Sally Calland** provided tips which helped me get around the checkpoints quicker, though we're not too sure which route **Sgt Katie Costello** took differently to **Maj Sally Calland** or **SSgt Vicky McCredie**, but by the looks of her legs and the blood after the urban, the dog definitely won that fight haha!

The following day, we had a Middle Distance race for a second time. The area contained complex contours and thorny bushes which scratched our limbs. We all managed to get around in good time, with a lot of the team members using the song lyrics of an awful yet cheesy song by **Nicola Manfredi** 'You and me'. The reward of our hard work was a chance to visit the Santa Andre beach and yes chill those legs, a very important recovery part of the process!! Honest! Oh and cake!



The final day of racing for the series was around Santo Andre's busy city centre as an urban event, where I visited 23 checkpoints over 6.3km and had one of my cleanest races of the week. I felt that was partially due to the fact I'd ran over 60km in four days and my legs may have been a little more tired than most! Everyone from the week's training camp came away with lessons learnt and finer orienteering skills. **Lt Col John Owens** came second on the podium in his age category, which was fantastic. I won the Men's Final Leg Run In and **Maj Sally Calland** won the Female Run In. Cheap and tacky prizes await those lucky winners!

We concluded the entire trip with a cultural day where we discovered Lisbon city. The city offered an enchanting alternative to Europe's more popular capitals. With lively festive markets, vibrant museums, fabulous castle views and plenty of options to burn off a few mandatory glasses of Porto. Though **Maj Sally Calland's** choice of food venue was the highlight of the day when the restaurant someone suggested was too Portuguese for her liking... sorry but wouldn't that just be local cuisine, she said she'd get back to us on that one. Overall, it was a refreshing experience for me professionally and personally as I had the opportunity to expand my skills as an orienteer and had realised my potential for my future career endeavours.



SUBMISSIONS FOR THE WIRE

Prior to Unit and Regimental notes being submitted to The Wire Editor, please ensure that your Chain of Command have approved all text and images.

Once the magazine has gone to print there is no option to withdraw content and The Wire has a wide distribution.

The Editor is not responsible for the factual accuracy of articles. The views expressed are an author's own and do not necessarily express the policy and views of the Editor, the Corps or the MoD.



EXERCISE DRAGON SURETY SNOW



*Axes and crampons out to reach
Col de la Sana*

After a COVID break of three years LIAG swapped cyber space for the French Alps and Ex DRAGON SURETY SNOW. A two-week exercise; the first week saw Ski Foundation (SF) 1-3 courses delivered to nine students as distributed training and the second week, more advanced skiers completed an arduous multi day tour.

Week one started well with the advance party and main bodies converging without incident from all over the UK to meet at Chalet la Brise in Tignes. Rooms assigned by snoring levels, the Master Chef (and sometimes CO / ski instructor) had soon defrosted the first portion of several tons of homemade bolognaise to top up carbs and protein for the week ahead.

Ski training routine soon kicked in: bakery run, weather brief and the clattering walk up the road to the gondola station, trying not to decapitate other members of the group with skis or poles. Everyone initially headed to the nursery slopes to re-establish basic skills amongst bibbed toddlers and allowing the instructors to desperately try and map some of the 'paper ski CVs' to the realities of dodgy snowploughs and some gravitationally challenged students. Initial assessment over, the groups headed out onto the wider slopes building up skills and in some cases, excuses to sit out the next day after the shock of a full day's moderate exercise hitting home after two years of home working and lockdown.

Powered by more disguised bolognaise, baguette and an industrial crate of Aldi snack bars, the days ticked by with **ibby**, **Jim** and **Paul** progressing onto day tours of the Col du Grand Prix (2999m) and then the longer Tour de Grapillion des Merles over two cols. The final day focused on honing off-piste skiing skills on free ride routes. Ironically the most memorable crash occurring on-piste between two instructors, the CO and **Jonny**, following an overly competitive start to the boardercross.

In the SF1/2 groups steady progress was made with **Angus's** new ski instructor qualification being put to the test. **Col Chris** of the Cyber Advisory Team returning to the slopes after a 'short gap' of some 25 years soon had blue runs re-mastered until a slow speed manoeuvring incident took him back to the chalet sofa with a free crutch and x-ray. **Nick** outstripped all his peers thanks to grit, determination and a sneaky family warm up trip in February to earn a well-deserved SF2.

Week two started badly with two messages on the group chat showing positive COVID tests and the planned group of six dropped in minutes to four. With **Col Paul** newly arrived; **Angus** took him out for a gentle on-piste day to shake out his ski legs. Somehow this turned into a full day skiing almost all the resort with breaks on the lifts and a snack bar for lunch. Preparing for the trip ahead, the CO took **Jonny** out for an introduction to moving on steep ground with axes and crampons. Later that evening at the chalet, kit was packed, maps and avalanche forecast perused ready for a three-day remote mountain trip outside the ski resort area.

Day one of the tour started with a gentle exit from ski area skinning uphill to the Col du Grand Prix. All was going well when the rear half of the CO's bindings spontaneously detached and rolled off down the hill. Luckily it came to rest some 30m below the group from which **Angus** gallantly detached himself and descended to rescue it whilst **Jonny** led the search for any missing screws or springs higher up the hill. Completing the remainder of the ascent to the col, and much to everyone's relief, the binding was reassembled,



tested and the day resumed with the peak Ponte du Grand Prix 3059m offering an easy ascent with axes and crampons. After a spot of lunch, we headed back to the col and an off-piste descent into the valley and along to the Refuge du Leisse.

Rested from a night in the hut, day two started with four hours of uphill skinning to the Col du Charbonier with the final section offering some tricky going and a big drop back down into the valley in the event of any miscalculation. After a short period of elevated pulse rates everyone regrouped on the flat area of the col before transitioning into ski mountaineering mode, strapping skis and poles onto packs and breaking out the crampons and axes again for a challenging traverse along a narrow alpine ridge. Snow, rock and scree sections were all negotiated with increasingly tired legs and after a redistribution of kit and a few nervous moments the Col de la Sana 3411m was reached. With cloud building and visibility dropping, minds focused on the descent to the Refuge de la Femma unfortunately through some complex navigational terrain and less than ideal snow conditions. Defensive skiing was essential, taken to an extreme by **Jonny** who demonstrated a perfect commando roll with pack and skis but after a few detours to avoid rocks and drops, the group arrived in one piece at the refuge after 8hrs 45mins on the hill. Checking in, the guardian asked about our route for the day with the response receiving a respectful nod.

A deteriorating weather forecast for day three was confirmed by a look out the hut window. Fresh snow overnight was being added to with very light flurries but more importantly visibility was a lot less than on previous days promising to make navigation harder and off-piste skiing on the descents problematic. Setting off early to give a useful time contingency, another three hours of uphill skinning through some big mountain terrain led to the Col du Pisset and the final descent back to civilisation. A couple of pleasant pitches of powder skiing linked with traversing descents led to an unexpected and unwelcome uphill section. Transitioning again into 'uphill mode' re-fitting skins onto skis this was completed quickly before a tricky gully down and yet another uphill section, the bad news mitigated by the sight of the Fond de Fours hut. After a quick break to rehydrate and take on snacks, the descent continued meeting a snow-covered track and finally the ski area and a lift. A cold hard seat never felt so good. Traversing the ski area back to Tignes with heavy packs and fatigued legs was completed in very low visibility but without incident. Tea, cake and a shower at last.



Combat Ready Training Centre Skiing Expedition
 19-26 March - by LCpl Saunderson

Following another busy period for the CIS team over the past three months, it was time for some well-earned Adventurous Training (AT). Six members of the team: **Capt (Tfc) RC Brown**, **Sgt Heather**, **LCpl Saunderson**, **LCpl Songhurst**, **Sig Bates** and **Sig Appleton**, would join a further 40 other service personnel from the unit and deploy to Les Duex Alps, France to conduct Ski Foundation training SF1 and SF2. Following our flight from Bristol to Lyon everyone arrived and we were straight into it. Sunday morning saw everyone get their kit issued with the DT programme. The unit had a lot of Service Personnel who had never skied before and the excitement of getting up the mountain was clearly visible. The SF1 and SF2 groups were established and the week was set up for success.

The weather did not disappoint all week with clear skies and warm weather throughout, plenty of sun cream was being used by all. Every day started with the entire group having breakfast together in the centre dining hall at UCPA and the flurry of making our own pack lunch with a great selection of meats and salads to put into a traditional French baguette. Lunch on the slopes was serene with breathtaking views. At the end of each day all the groups would meet again to have an evening meal together and reminisce over the day's activity, including the funnies of the falls, wipe-outs and the improvements people had made. The banter was flowing which was proving to be an excellent tonic for morale and team cohesion. It was clear at this point, the speed trap competition was being actively contested by a few and it would seem (although a steward's enquiry was needed) the leader would be **Capt (Tfc) Brown**, which he was over the moon with. Day one of the expedition would actually be day one at the unit, having just completed his Phase 2 Training, for **Sig Appleton**. What a way to start your military career at your new unit, attending AT with your peer group and other officers and soldiers from the the unit. **Sig Appleton** commented:

"This has been my first AT experience in the Field Army, at my first unit, on day one. This is a strange circumstance to say the least! However, the exercise met and exceeded all expectations. Having no prior experience with skiing this seemed daunting at first. But my worries were quelled by my excellent instructor who guided and supported us throughout. Within three days my group were confident in the very basics and were moving on to more intricate techniques for novices such as parallel skiing, as well as gradually taking us to more difficult terrain and steeper slopes. At the end of the week my peers and I were skiing confidently. Even I was able to take the journey down the mountain from the top slope, with time to detour through Signal 1 slope, which I thought was aptly named. The atmosphere of the trip was amazing, being able to socialise with my new peers in the evening was fantastic. Overall, I enjoyed the trip and it has inspired me to seek future opportunities in skiing throughout my career."

LCpl Jack Saunderson joined four years ago and has been with the Troop for six months, he commented:

"Deploying to France on Ex TIGER ARCHER was my first time skiing with the Army and it was a great first experience. Getting paid to ski, gain qualifications and have some good fun in the evenings with everyone from the unit. The highlight for me had to be my group's ski touring trip where we toured across to the very top of the glacier and got some great photos at the top, before skiing back down in time for refreshments."

The expedition was a huge success with all members of the Troop gaining a pass in SF1 or SF2, It has paid dividends with team cohesion and the principles of AT being delivered, with all the team already looking forward to their next expedition. Thanks as ever must go to the instructors who accompanied our unit and delivered the DT syllabus with distinction: **Lt Col G McGachy**, **Maj M Walker**, **Capt (Tfc) C Webster**, **WO2 (RQMS) Holford**, **SSgt (YofS) Murray**, **Cpl Smith** and **Cpl Wilson**. I would recommend every one of them for their expertise and making the week thoroughly enjoyable for all.

BOOK REVIEW

SAS South Georgia Boating Club by Major Tony Shaw

Coming forty years after the launch of Op CORPORATE, the publication of this book is very timely. The author is a former Royal Signals officer who spent 13 years of a 30 year military career with the Special Air Service, and this book is an account of his early service, SAS experiences and afterwards as a civilian consultant.

The book can be divided into three roughly equal parts, covering his early experiences, including SAS selection and training, the Falklands campaign and finally his activities in civilian life. The author kept a personal record of his career throughout, and the text is all the more vivid as a result. He has the gift of dispensing facts while maintaining an absorbing narrative which holds the reader's attention, and conveys a close sense of the actions described.

As a boy, he was a grammar school scholar, and a bright student, but early experience with the Army Cadet Force inspired him to leave early, and go to the Army Apprentices Colleges Harrogate to train initially as a technician and then as a Radio Telegraphist. There, he made the most of his time, taking part in a range of sporting activities and graduating near the top of his course. His first posting was to 30th Signal Regiment at Blandford Camp, which included a 6 month detachment to the UN in Cyprus.

A subsequent detachment saw him gaining valuable service experience in Kenya, but not before he had his first contact with the SAS at their exhibition booth during a Blandford Open Day. His interest was awakened, and after a posting to 604 Signal Troop in BAOR where he continued his participation in a range of sporting activities, including free-fall parachuting, he applied to join 264 (SAS) Signal Squadron. By this time, he was a Class 1 tradesman, finishing as top student on his course, and began preparing for his transfer.

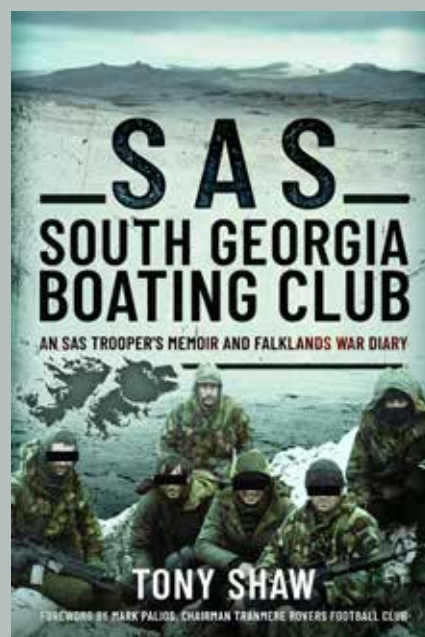
He used his time well, undergoing parachute selection, language training and gaining educational qualifications in between serving in Belize and Northern Ireland. He continued to work on his fitness, and was eventually accepted to undergo the SAS selection process. His experiences are recounted in detail, and with humour, and it is obvious that he showed great resolve and determination to overcome the personal mishaps he suffered. He was one of 11 selected out of 240 starters.

His activities with the SAS in their engagements in the Falklands are exceptionally well detailed, covering one third of the book, and bring out the harrowing ordeals which many underwent during the conflict. The successes and failures of their various missions are recounted with frankness and the typical humour which invariably accompanies the British soldier in adversity. The account is well complemented by an excellent selection of photographs.

His subsequent career saw him qualify as a Yeoman of Signals, and return to 264 Squadron as a WO1, following time out in BAOR with 7 Signal Regiment. He left the SAS on commissioning, and spent time with TA regiments before ending his service early in the rank of Major, to take up new opportunities. After a successful two years in sales and marketing, he joined the Control Risks Group as a security consultant, where unsurprisingly he encountered several of his former SAS colleagues. His time as a military contractor is covered in the same factual and authoritative fashion as the rest of the narrative, and includes fascinating insights into work in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, the Yemen and Dubai.

This is an absorbing and well written personal account, and is highly recommended.

Colonel Tom Moncur, Editor, RSI Journal



Available from Pen and Sword, <https://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk> £20 ISBN 9781399087766

A Tri-service team from Defence Digital deployed to Nepal on Expedition CYBER ANNAPURNA 22, from 20 Mar – 5 Apr. The expedition was planned around the Annapurna Himalayan Range, reaching up to maximum height of Thorung-la-pass, 5416m above sea level in the Himalayas. The expedition provided an excellent opportunity to test and explore unfamiliar territory aiming to build confidence as a team and individually by completing an arduous trek to the highest pass in the world. The expedition was designed to push everyone outside their comfort zone, challenge physically and mentally, test their character and help in developing their leadership, emotional intelligence, and management of risk. It also provided a chance to explore the

culture, history, and heritage of Nepal, which is a home to Gurkha soldiers of the British Army.

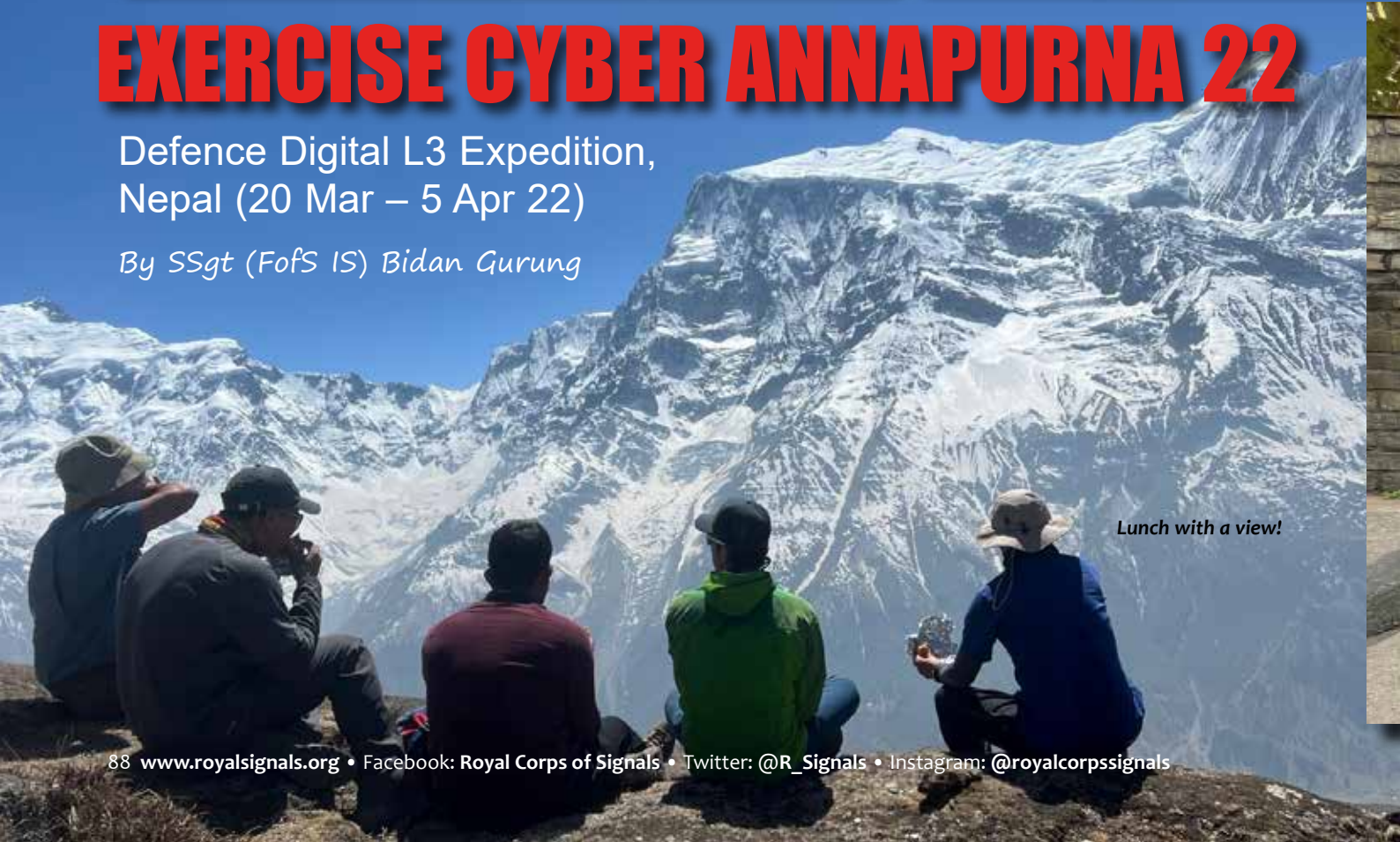
The expedition was in the planning for more than a year and required diligence because of the nature of activity, risks involved and constantly changing situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The expedition was finally approved and to avoid any delays, hiccups or last-minute cancellations, several briefs were conducted by expedition leader **Capt Pratap Ghale** to the team to capture any changes and requirements e.g. PCR tests, mandatory loan pool items, vaccinations, visas etc. A team cohesion activity and build up training was also organised in Snowdonia, prior to the deployment. Although not representing the challenging heights of the Himalayas, the 1000m ascent was aptly made interesting and treacherous by the weather, which was freezing, wet and windy. It provided an ideal opportunity for individuals to assess their stamina,



EXERCISE CYBER ANNAPURNA 22

Defence Digital L3 Expedition,
Nepal (20 Mar – 5 Apr 22)

By SSgt (FoS IS) Bidan Gurung



Lunch with a view!

mountaineering equipment and gain an appreciation for difficult walks to come at high altitudes.

The team departed UK on 20 Mar and was warmly welcomed by Trekking Company “Promote Trek Nepal” in traditional fashion with a garland made out marigold flowers and transferred to the hotel. The team on that evening had a first meal together as a group and had their first taste of the Nepalese food and culture, this included performances displaying different tribes’ music, costumes, and dance routines within Nepal. The culture and historical education continued the next day with a visit to a Buddhist monastery “Swayambunath”. Located on top of a mountain, this was believed to be self-sprung and regarded as one of the most sacred sites for Buddhists. The team next visited the “Patan Durbar Square” which is a UNESCO heritage site built by Malla Kings. This is the pride of Newari people of the valley highlighting beautiful architecture, culture, art, and engineering from that era. This beautiful square was heavily

damaged during the 2015 earthquake and the team had the chance to learn about the challenges in restoration of artefacts using correct woods, stones and skilful artisans. The day finally finished with a visit to another Buddhist stupa “Boudhanath” and to the famous Hindu temple “Pashupatinath” which is a must pilgrimage for devoted Hindus. Meanwhile a few of the team members found “Yogis” priests to take pictures with and were able to witness the last rites performed at cremation sites behind the temple. The cultural visits were educational, provided perspective to the culture, religion, and customs of Nepal; it primed the team well for the trek, which promised an unfamiliar territory and people.

The team left Kathmandu for Jagat via road, the weather was hot, roads dusty and vehicles had minimal room for manoeuvre. Although not comfortable, the team’s morale was still sky high and we were excited to finally be heading towards the start point. The journey was eventful with roads



The first evening which included a cultural dance



British Camp, Pokhara

At the top!



Above and below: fundraising for two schools



worthy of including in the world's dangerous roads documentary. It was an adventurous journey not short of a mini rollercoaster ride. The team arrived safely at their first tea house and had a well-deserved rest before the start of their trek.

The trek finally started, and the excitement of the team was evident by the chirpiness and fast cadence of the walk. This was soon slowed down by the gently increasing uphill gradient and the beautiful views, which the team stopped to admire. Everyone was mesmerised by the scenic beauty, wildlife, calmness, and purity of the nature. There were also signs of destruction and damage on route caused by landslides, reminding us of the darker side of nature. The "Taal" pond route, had no pond and there were no signs of tea houses which were frequently used by trekkers; they were swept away by the landslides.

The team were aware of the landslides and damage it caused to the local community, especially the impact it had on schools and local facilities for children. **Maj Kate Heron** kindly initiated a fund raiser to help these schools, which was whole heartedly supported by the team. Although not a huge amount, these funds were handed over to two schools in support of their rebuilding projects. The team visited the schools and were warmly welcomed by the children and the villagers. The team were humbled by the respect and gratitude shown to the group. The sombreness of the school visits slowly disappeared as the team started ascending steep hills which helped in refocussing our emotions to trekking.

After the first few days of a gentle introduction to trekking at high altitude, the rest of the days started to become longer, harder, higher, and steeper, which tested individuals physically, mentally, and emotionally. Everyone was tired after each day but had the sense of humour, camaraderie, and resilience to continue. As the trek progressed the team became a close-knit group knowing strengths and

weaknesses of the individuals. They helped each other during multiple phases of the trek, provided support and morale whenever needed while making and sharing unforgettable memories. This was evident during the daily team gathering where everyone was sharing their highlights of the day, which always included well done's, thank yous and light-hearted banter. Instances like, sharing of a Snicker Bar at summit, group dance at 5000m, group yoga session, team dip in the Ice Lake, checking each other for altitude sickness and keeping morale high with funny riddles and jokes which will forever stay in people memories.

The team completely embraced the challenge and enjoyed every moment of their trek, they conquered every ascent with a smile and tried to experience everything new along the way, like trying a yak steak, chin-up challenge at 3500m, drinking natural spring water via filter, dipping feet in natural hot springs, walking through a forest full of jasmine and rhododendron flowers, picture postcard views of majestic and mystical Himalayas, meditation at 4600m, early morning tea in front of the Annapurna Range, the memories and highlights were countless. The trek was a success with everyone reaching Thorung-la-pass at 5416m without any injuries. The expedition was an exhilarating, exciting, demanding and once in a lifetime experience. Everyone was proud of each other's achievements and hugged as a team at the top. After the finish, everyone brimming with confidence at their own abilities and jubilant at being part of the select group that completed over 5000m in the Himalayas. Everyone was pushed to their limits, and it is fair to say they came back

Final day of the trek



as mentally resilient individuals who were fitter, leaner and more considerate team members.

The trek would not have been successful without the deliberate planning by the exped leader, fantastic guidance from instructors, tour guides, funding from sponsors and support of the team members constantly lifting each other's morale in a time of need. Even the guides were impressed by the strength and grit of the team members, a few had nicknames such as "Iron lady", "Machine" and "Ninja". The trek finally finished with a recuperation day and cultural visit in Pokhara, which gave the team a chance to visit the British Army Gurkha Camp and associated museum, also the time to reminisce about events, memories, achievements, and saying farewell until the next adventure "Feri Bhetaula".

My time in Recruiting Group

By LCpl Cross, Recruiting Group, OT Chilwell

During my previous two years within Recruiting Group and being a member of the Outreach Team in Chilwell, I have been able to promote the Armed Forces and the Royal Signals to various audiences around the Midlands in a positive light.

Not only being able to visit various schools and colleges, where we conduct Elite Skills packages to give them an insight into the Army; I also got the opportunity to become a "role model soldier" for female-focused events and helping them begin their journey into the job. Even though I arrived during COVID, it was interesting to try something new by doing virtual events and podcasts, then moving onto face-to-face career fairs and national events getting to speak to members of the public.

Whilst giving me the chance to broaden my knowledge on the Army as a whole, I have had the chance to help with two productions of the Army adverts, one in the UK and the other in Cyprus (something I wouldn't have had the opportunity to do in a regular unit). I have also been able to gain my DTC qualification at Pirbright, which was eye-opening to see what it takes to become an instructor if I wanted to take that route in the future, also gaining a Level 3 qualification in Education and Training. Most recently, whilst also being able to take part in various recruitment activities, I was able to go skiing in Val d'Isere to gain my SF2 qualification to further progress me in the sport.

Coming to the end of my two year posting, being in recruitment not only has shown me a different side to the job I am doing in the Army, it has also made me grow in confidence and have time to focus on other aspects of the Army and being able to share my experiences to potential future soldiers.





EXERCISE TIGER BRUNO SKIER

By Lt E Dawson, 251 Sig Sqn



SF3 Group learning how to ski tour



Conducting Avalanche Drills

Ex TIGER BRUNO SKIER was 10 Sig Regt's ski trip to Val Thorens in France. We departed from MOD Corsham on 11 Mar 22 and after a long journey we arrived the following day. Once we arrived, we collected our ski kit from the hire shop and then the rest of the time was ours. A few of us spent the evening having a walk around the resort to see what there was and getting our bearings for the remainder of the week.

Day 1: My group comprised of **Sgt Dan Tirrell 'Tizz'** (251) as the instructor, **Lt Drew Young** (241), **Sig Charlie Grieves** (225) and **Sig Ash Saban** (225). The first day started off with mastering the basics, the snowplough, herringbone, as well as pizza and chips; all different techniques for crossing the snow or speeding up and slowing down. For someone who had never been skiing before I spent most of the day on either my face or my backside as did the rest of the group; much to the amusement of **Sgt Tirrell**. By the end of the day, we had used magic carpets (imagine a travellerator but you have to ski on to it and mastered the most basic of green runs.)

Day 2: This led to the group tackling more challenging runs, additional green runs and the beginning of some blue runs. Another steep learning curve... literally. One of the highlights of the day was **Sig Charlie Grieves** skiing under the instruction of **Sgt Dan Tirrell**. On picking up some speed he was told to turn, his reply a simple scream of **"I CAN'T I'M PANICKING"**. For the group, the day consisted of being overtaken by a great number of small children, which did little to boost our confidence but there was no way we were letting a group of children overtake us for the remainder of the trip. Speed was now the primary aim and technique was significantly lower on the list of priorities.

Day 3: This was where the pressure started ramping up with **Sgt Dan Tirrell** taking us down more challenging blue runs as well as having the pleasure of attempting to use a button lift. For those who have been skiing before I'm sure you understand the hilarity of what ensued and for those who haven't I will endeavour to explain. A button lift is roughly the size of a dinner plate and is placed between your legs, the lift will then drag you up hill. I finally mastered it on my fifth attempt after being unceremoniously dragged along the floor for a good 20 metres on the first four attempts. **Lt Drew Young** was far more gracious in his ascent and got roughly two thirds of the way up before dismounting, the remainder of the journey was spent being dragged to the top like a rag doll. Button lifts were not our forte, however, the quality of our skiing had been improving throughout.



251 Sig Sqn participants

Day 4: As a group we headed over the mountain range to Orelle. Halfway down I decided to straighten out my skis and see how much speed I could get as the slope flattened out; unfortunately, I hit a bump in the ground which made me fully eject from my skis at over 35mph. When picking myself up and dusting myself off I realised that my binding from my ski had been ripped out. So began the long walk to freedom, down the remainder of the mountain to get a ski lift to take me to the top of Val Thorens. There were several dicey sections where I had to slide down in the most controlled manner that I could, which was not the easiest of jobs. In the evening we celebrated the birthday of **Capt Rebecca Cooper (251)** which involved eating copious amounts of raclette, followed by mountains of crême brulee.



Maj McDonnell with his new helmet cover and Capt (QM) Bradshaw in action pose in the background



WO1 (RSM) Secker enjoying a hot chocolate in Val Thorens

Day 5: Our final day of proper skiing, having missed out on a great deal of skiing, the competence of **Lt Young, Sig Grieves** and **Sig Saban** made my skills look like I had only just learnt how to snowplough. As the day went on, the skills I had learnt throughout the week had felt like they were falling in place but the others were skiing off like they were qualifying for the GB Olympic team. On one of the final runs of the day **Lt Drew Young** attempted a black run before we treated ourselves to enjoy the atmosphere at Folie Douce. A brilliant end to the day.



Capt (TOT) Wood (OIC) and WO2 Munslow (Chief Instructor)

The final day of skiing was only a short run out as all kit had to be back to the hire shop by 1200hrs. With a change of clothing for the last day, **Sig Angus Muir** made it to the first chairlift of the day only to realise that he had in fact forgotten his ski pass and instead had picked up his Top Golf card. A few more runs and it was all wrapped up for lunch. Following the return of kit there was the obligatory last-minute dash for souvenirs before our coach departed at 1700hrs for the long trip home.



WO2 Munslow and his SF1 group of Sig Rai, LCpl Harkness, LCpl Arthur and Sig Asante

Thank you to **Capt (TOT) David Wood** for organising the trip, I don't think anyone wanted to leave.

EXERCISE DRAGON CRUSADER 22

By Lt Daniel Cook

*The dream team –
Instructors SSgt Kate
Hopkinson and WO2 Kerry
Hopkinson taking a
moment to admire the
view*



16 Sig Regt deployed to Kirchdorff in Tirol, Austria on a level 3 Adventurous Training exercise, held over the period 26 Feb – 19 Mar. This exercise was used to develop basic skiing levels and build on previous skiing abilities through the JSAT Skiing Scheme. The exercise was split into three syndicates each lasting one week in duration with 61 benefitting from the expedition in total.

On the week commencing 5 Mar, 20 regular and reserve soldiers, officers and I deployed from MOD Stafford to Birmingham Airport (one of three airports used), setting off at 0530hrs for a short flight to Salzburg. Once we arrived in Austria, we were met by several of the instructors and support team, to drive the remaining one hour to the hotel. We were met by the remainder of the instructors for our introduction brief, covering the skiing safety aspects and of course cultural information and expected standards. In addition to the comprehensive brief of the scheduled activities there was some much-needed refreshments which kept all of the Service Personnel happy. Although friendly and welcoming, I can't say much on how thrilled the excellent hotel staff were with our very limited communication skills.

The Service Personnel ranged from long serving reserves, regular SNCO's from 16 Sig Regt and a large number of junior soldiers. For many of the juniors this would be their first time overseas as well as their first exposure to Adventurous Training with the Army. The remainder of the first day consisted of familiarisation of the hotel, local amenities, allocation of skiing groups and kit issue. That evening saw an unhappy officer having been beaten at nails by a junior NCO in one of the local pubs, later, that same soldier saw victory against an Austrian nails veteran in the local bar.

The following day (Sunday) began with a full continental breakfast, enjoyed by all but confusing to some, and a first day kit check prior to moving to the slopes to collect the locally sourced skiing equipment. Having deployed in our groups we were brought through the local hire shop and fitted with our skis. We then took to our relevant familiarisation slopes, under the watchful eye of our instructors, to ensure our abilities were suited to the correct groups. After a few hours of skiing, we all met at the base of the slopes for a well-deserved lunch break and debrief. After lunch we were back out on the slopes for the remainder of the afternoon, stopping at 1530hrs to return to the hotel for cake and coffee. The conversations over the evening meal consisted mainly of tales of falling over and group cohesion. After our evening meal, the locals were blessed again with our presence in the same local bar. We quickly learned the well understood and known international phrase "one beer please" and sung along to some Goldie Lookin' Chain.

The remainder of the week consisted of developing the skills to gain the SF1 qualification, moving from the snow plough into parallel turning and learning how to ski under proper control, stopping and changing direction. Self-control and calmness under pressure were skills everyone gained from the activities. Many soon found out that skiing is a skill that takes patience and dedication to become proficient. You learn by doing and taking on the guidance from your instructors, who were constant bastions of advice, praise and work on points.

Gaining insight into the SF2 training requirements by attending a lesson on avalanche recovery and transceivers was hugely beneficial as was being on the same slopes as other groups so we could swap stories and advice; this was an excellent touch from the instructors. The group development could be seen from starting on the green beginner slopes and as the week progressed, moving across different resorts to the blues and reds. The final day of skiing (Thursday) saw one of our instructors humbled by falling over while getting off a chair lift, a moment enjoyed by all, that also brought the lesson home that you are always learning. We then returned to the beginners' slopes to return our kit and contemplate how far the instructors had brought us in five short days.

The last full day was used to engage with the local culture: eating, site seeing and to collect reminders or gifts for families, friends and instructors. Later in the day the local town of Kirchdorff held a fundraiser in aid of the current Ukrainian events, which was attended by many of the deployed Service Personnel to show support. A member of the community, Ukrainian by nationality, gave a thank-you speech to everyone in attendance. Although delivered in German, the passion and thankfulness were felt by all for their donations, auctioning items and playing songs. Following the day's events, we had a final meal with the top students prizes and gift giving to and from the instructors.

The final day (Saturday), our accommodation was cleaned and tidied prior to our group's departure from the hotel and our return back to MOD Stafford. The instructors and support staff were excellent and greatly appreciated by all from 16 Sig Regt and 37 Sig Regt. A top-quality expedition organised by 16 Sig Regt, with no problems or injuries. The instructors and support staff have done a fantastic job, developing confidence under pressure in their students, testing their mental and physical robustness as well as their problem-solving and initiative skills. I think every individual on the AT can't wait to deploy on another skiing expedition and are sorry it couldn't last longer.



The SF2 group on an introductory tour



LCpl Newar practising transitions and skinning up for a tour



Capt Ambrose supervising the avalanche rescue (a good supervisor never gets involved)



EXERCISE TIGER GIPFEL 22

By Capt (TOT) Paul Smith

The Royal Signals Charity is proud to be able to support various expeditions all over the world for our Signallers. These challenges help to support leadership and teamwork along with generating memories to last a lifetime. This is only made possible by the One Day's Pay Scheme which not only supports AT but also enhances morale and efficiency within units and helps Signallers in need. It is, therefore, incredibly valuable to our soldiers both in a working and private environment and we thank everyone who continues to support their charity in this way.

On 19 Mar '22 a selection of soldiers from across the Information Directorate deployed on Exercise TIGER GIPFEL 22, a 7-day Adventurous Training alpine ski exercise to Les Arcs in the French Alps. The aim of the exercise was to develop individual leadership skills within a controlled risk environment and to enhance both physical and mental robustness. The training was designed to appeal to first-time and experienced skiers alike and provided an ideal opportunity for the military staff (including Reservists within the civilian staff) to challenge and develop themselves outside of the staff working environment.

Planning for this exercise started way back in 2019 with COVID-19 posing many complications and frustrations for the event organiser **Capt (TOT) Paul 'It's not Ginger, its Sunset Caribbean' Smith**. However, with considerable perseverance, several rearranged dates, and changes to the initial plan, the exercise finally deployed in Mar '22. These complications included one of the instructors being unavailable on the morning of the exercise, leaving the beginner group with no instructor and jeopardising their involvement in the exercise. However, the power of social media prevailed and as luck would have it 4AAC were staying at the same resort and accommodation, and kindly offered to assist, saving the day.

The journey began with a short coach transfer from Army Headquarters to London Heathrow. Work routines during COVID meant that some exercise personnel required their ski touring equipment to be issued immediately prior to departure. **Maj Charles 'YouTube Sensation' Bodell-Lee** had totally underestimated the amount of bag space required for his helmet, ski poles, and avalanche probe and proceeded to spend the next 30 minutes frantically trying to strap equipment to his bag.



After a routine check in and flight, the group landed at Grenoble Airport. Unbelievably, it took four hours to get through airport security and COVID checks. The airport was that overrun and busy, the queue for security spilled outside onto the runway! After what felt like a never-ending queue inside a sweltering hot greenhouse, we found the main cause of the issue, only two airport staff completing the checks! Great!

After a couple of hours transfer from the airport, we arrived at Les Arcs at 1800hrs, staying within Résidence Lauzières. The apartments were advertised as five-person studios with self-catering facilities, but they were only realistically large enough for three people. Close quarters did have some disadvantages and the loudest snorer award was unanimously won by **Cpl Andrew 'The Fish' Fowler**. **WO2 (YofS) Tim 'Face Plant' Burns** was also unimpressed with the thinness of the "disposable bedding" that was issued, complaining that his toenails were making holes in the sheets!

The food plan for the exercise was self-catering, which meant that each room had to source their own food from the resort supermarket. Prices were very steep but that did not deter **Maj Andy 'Kevin Bridges' Rea** from displaying his amazing culinary skills with a homemade Spaghetti Bolognese (although he did seem to forget to add the herbs!). It did not take long for the rooms to start posting photos of their creative meals, with **Maj Lisa 'Tiny Feet' Butterworth's** room impressing the most with their chicken fajitas.

The remaining days of the exercise concentrated on delivering some quality ski training in both Alpine and Touring techniques. The weather conditions were glorious for the whole week and although there had been no new snow fall for a significant period, the pistes were in excellent condition. Les Arcs is a fantastic ski area and forms part of the Peisey-Vallandry ski resort.

The SF1 beginner group progressed extremely quickly and by the end of the week everyone was confidently tackling the green slopes with some members confidently skiing the blue slopes and even progressing on to the more advanced red runs. As a first-time skier **Cpl Ian 'I am definitely not a morning person' Collinge** really did not enjoy getting out of bed in the mornings, complaining that he felt like an old man with sore muscles, aches and pains. **Capt Joe 'Room Steward, Pot Wash' Willden** also progressed well throughout the week and was soon hurtling down the mountain.

The SF2 groups had an excellent introduction to ski touring and could venture a little further afield, covering the full range of the syllabus including avalanche safety drills and the infamous "step" turns required on steeper terrain. The step turn requires an element of coordination, something that **WO2 Premprasad 'Snowball down a Black run' Gurung** seemed to be missing! Although the amount of proper ski touring was limited due to the lack of fresh snow, there was still ample opportunity to apply skins and trek up the mountain to experience the breath-taking views and glorious blue skies on offer, in complete tranquillity away from any busy crowds. **Lt Col Oli 'I am doing SF2 for the 98th time' Dinnis** did have a few boot fitting issues at the beginning of the week, which led to an attempted DIY fix of stuffing cardboard in the heels of his boot. Unsurprisingly, it did not improve their comfort!

As the week came to an end everyone who attended successfully displayed the required skills to pass in their respective areas and more importantly everyone escaped injury free. This left the final day for consolidation and gave the opportunity for personnel to explore the resort without their instructors. Everyone used the opportunity to progress both their technical ability and confidence whilst ensuring to make time for a well-deserved *Après Ski*.

Exercise TIGER GIPFEL 22 was a fantastic and worthwhile exercise for all involved, the exercise saw a varied group pushed out of their comfort zone in a challenging and arduous environment, whilst helping to build team working skills and a sense of camaraderie between all that attended. A massive thanks to the ski instructors for their time, patience and fantastic instruction. A thoroughly enjoyable and challenging exercise was had by all.



48 YEARS AND COUNTING - LOOKING BACK

- by Maj (Retd) Phil McGiveron VR

Looking back in the 100th year of our Corps (2020) I was asked to pen a few pages on my service to Queen and Country. I finally left the Army on 28 Oct 2021 in my 48th year of service on my fourth Over Age Extension. It has been a thoroughly enjoyable ride, with some bumps along the way but I wouldn't change a thing (well maybe a few). As I still have a number of operational tours to pen a few pages on, such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and some other interesting ones, The Wire is kindly allowing me to continue this series to its end in continued celebration of the first 100 years of our Corps. I will now be writing as a Veteran.

I would just like to take the opportunity to say thanks for a very nice letter from the DCFA Major General Celia J Harvey OBE QVRM TD, thank you Ma'am. My thanks also go to LIAQ and Lt Col Peter Villiers and Lt Col Jeff Tremaine for organising and doing the honourable thing for the Royal Signals in making sure 47+ years' service didn't go without some noise and toasting as they very kindly and voluntarily dined me out formally with a top table Regimental dinner within their CO dining out event in Nov 21; a very grateful thanks to them and the good company of the members of LIAQ on the night and over the years especially as part of Specialist Group Royal Signals.

Cyprus - Eastern Mediterranean Sea, 9 Sig Regt (Radio), Ayios Nikolaos (Ay Nik) 30 Apr 1995 – Apr 1997

It was 1995, the sun was shining, the Mediterranean very blue, sand clear and Oasis, Blur and Springsteen were blaring out from radios, John Major was Prime Minister, The BBC computer was in its last days, 486 PCs were getting old as I was, Nintendo 64 was about to hit the markets and the 40th Eurovision song contest had just taken place and we got more than "Nul Points"! It was going to be a good year....



On a serious note, the Middle East was in turmoil again with the murder of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in November, Civil War in Afghanistan started in 1996 and Yasser Arafat gained more power becoming president of the new Palestinian national authority, the Oslo II Peace Accord was signed but suicide bombings and fighting continued, destabilising the Middle East throughout my time there. On 3 Mar '96, Israel declared all-out war on the militant group Hamas. The fighting continued and after 16 days of bloodshed, Israel and Hezbollah guerrillas pledged to end the worst fighting in the Middle East in three years. On 4 Sep, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu met with Palestinian leader Arafat and agreed to

pursue a peace settlement. Cyprus was still a split island since the Turkish invasion of 1974 and there were multiple multi service signals units, including UN, on the island. It was to be another busy operational tour of duty.

In Apr '95 I was posted to one of the most important FofS1 posts in the Corps at the time, 9 Sig Regt(Radio), arriving in the sunny Republic of Cyprus on a good old VC10 (quick bit of history: in its day only the supersonic Concorde was faster. The VC10 was often compared to the larger Soviet Ilyushin Il-62, the two types being the only airliners to use a rear-engine quad layout) although tri-stars have been around now since 1984).

I was the WO1 FofS of all matters communications technical in Ay Nik covering very important specialist systems for military and government agencies. In between the hard operational unit work it should have also been a sunshine tour BUT I arrived to find another "time of great change" already being enforced! I can't emphasize enough how awful a start it was but I was trained and experienced for this sort of political come empire building thing as all FofS (and YofS) are by the time they get to WO1; often not by choice!

The impact of the changes were immediate as on arrival on day one my predecessor and the TOT did not, let's say, see eye to eye on the changes being imposed on him quickly by the outgoing FofS1 leading to my first days witnessing many arguments between the two. On one occasion, bizarrely, the outgoing FofS1 had without warning angrily put the three-drawer top secret MOD102'd document filing cabinet on a trolley and was pushing it out the door with the TOT shouting out "Put them back!" chasing him down the corridor! (a bit of "Carry On" type slapstick). This was all the information on every system the troop needed to support them and



I expect its a rare picture now; a large part of the VC10 fleet; 5 x VC10's on the Pan at Brize on a cold wet early morning taken out of my window at the "Gateway Hotel" all squaddies will recall. One was about to take me to Cyprus (the "boxy" cars also look dated now!)

they were being given away to a new projects office being evolved (without due process I should add considering the status of the documents).

I am not judging or criticising. This was the situation I landed in and needs to be highlighted for readers; the participants were in very stressful and high profile roles and this was the end of a two year tour with FofS1 trying to implement in a rush for his own reasons before he left and it just blew up as it sometimes does in life! Instead of handing over the job, the outgoing FofS1 distributed the majority of the role to his friends FofS2 and the incoming FofS3 which if left in place having been implemented the week before I arrived would have left the WO1 FofS1 post as an emasculated Warrant Officer shuffling paper in a corner to the detriment of the cover for the systems we were responsible for and a waste of a WO1's experience. Time did prove that these changes were not needed in haste and indeed some not at all as it transpired.

Outside of work but as important and unbeknown to me as part of these rushed changes in the background the WO1 FofS1 house that all previous WO1 FofS1 were housed in as a "tied quarter" (inc the FofS1 I was taking over from who I even helped move out) as it sat amongst all the other WO1's and tri service and MOD equivalents had been quietly arranged to be given away to the incoming FofS3 to put him next to FofS2 on the senior patch. (Et tu, Brute?).

Great start, it was going to be a long tour. A house had been arranged for me in the Cpls' Patch causing issues there as they didn't want a WO1 in their midst and didn't speak to us and of course I was cut off from all the other WO1's and equivalent who were up the hill on that separate estate hindering my development of working and friendly relations. This also had a social impact sadly and impacted on my marriage and support for my young son.

The redacted unclas admin signal on the right (this was still formal signals time not email based comms) sent just



before my arrival in theatre by the outgoing FofS1 to all customer and command units (signal distribution and project names removed as sometimes project names can retain some level of interest). In effect, the outgoing FofS1 moved many elements of the role to FofS2, FofS3 and Tp SSgt. I believe I was left with some Lego to play with in the corner of the office (I like Lego so not too bad!). The signal is a good historical record of the coverage the troop had across the Ay Nik station systems 27 years ago.

So I was faced from day one with a fait accompli on restructuring which with the support of the TOT we had to fight tooth and nail with the Sqn Ldr and two FofS of the newly forming Project Office and others to re-revise/re-visit focussing instead on the benefit to the users and systems supported not empire building.

Additionally there was still baggage from the previous unit interrupting my families new start including sadly severe personal pressure from my previous unit Trg Maj contacting 9 Sig Regt more than once who was still upset I had been promoted. My family were due to arrive in weeks for a new start in life after hard Northern Ireland tours, family loss and the pressure of a difficult but successful special forces 31 Sig Regt tour; we could really have done with a smooth handover without the politics.

I include this rather serious faff here because the FofS roles (like YofS), especially in Operational units, were and still are vital to ensuring Royal Signals delivered on the mission and the focus should have been on smooth uninterrupted handovers and transition not grabbing pieces of empire. I

can't underline enough the damage it did to me and my family and the difficulties in the early days. So lessons learned – always ensure good handovers and don't implement great change in the gap when multiple key staff are changing over.

Within a few weeks of the outgoing FofS1 departure the troop became a great team in a revised structure led by good TOTs, great SSgt's, a WO1 FofS with a role, AND in the room next door! There were also two other FofS and an associated Sqn Ldr in a projects office! The men and women of the troop (and local riggers) worked and played just as

UKM 157A FOR SPO/TOT/FOS4. [REDACTED]
UKM 257A FOR DET COMD FM FOS 1
MILITARY ENGINEERING MANAGEMENT SUPPORT WITHIN THE UNIT
FOR TOT [REDACTED]
1. TM TROOP, AS WELL AS BEING IN THE PROCESS OF HAVING TO RESTRUCTURE TO ACCOMMODATE MANPOWER CHANGES, ARE HAVING TO MOVE WORKSHOPS AND SUPPORT AREAS WITHIN UNIT LINES.
2. GOLF TROOP IS NOW MANNED BY 1 X SSGT - TELE TECH SYS, PLUS 8 TECHNICIANS WORKING SHIFTS BUT WITH NO INCREASE IN MANPOWER WITHIN THE TROOP ORBAT TO ACCOMMODATE THIS COMMITMENT
3. ALL SHOULD NOTE, THAT ENGINEERING SUPPORT FOS TO UKM 257A HAS NOW CHANGED AND IS NOT UNIT FOS1, BUT UNIT FOS 2, WO2 [REDACTED] HE WILL ACT AS INTERFACE ON ALL MATTERS AT THAT SITE WEF MON 24 APR 95
4. AT THE SAME TIME HE WILL NOW BE SUPERVISING FOS AS NORMAL ON ALL COMMS RELATED MATTERS AND HAS A STAFF OF 6 TECHNICIANS WITHIN SYSCOM
5. FROM TOMORROW WE EFFECTIVELY OPERATE ANOTHER SECTION CALLED SYSTEMS WORKSHOPS FROM A REFURBISHED WORKSHOP AREA AROUND ROOMS 203/204 WHICH IS MANNED BY 3 X [REDACTED] STAFF, 1 X [REDACTED] AND 4 X ROYAL SIGNALS TELE TECH SYS
6. THEY WILL BE TASKED WITH OVERALL OPERATION, MAINTENANCE AND SUPPORT TO [REDACTED] NEW [REDACTED] BEING INSTALLED NEXT MONTH IN ROOM [REDACTED], THE PRESENT [REDACTED] SYSTEM, PLUS THE [REDACTED] POSITIONS WHEN THEY MOVE TO ROOM 603 IN JUN 95. AT PRESENT SUPERVISING FOS FOR THIS SECTION IS FOS 1 BUT THIS WILL PROBABLY SHIFT TO FOS2 AREA IN MID JUN 95. THIS WE CAN ALREADY SEE BEING A FULL TIME SECTION WITH LARGE TRC OVERHEADS
7. TO CREATE A NEW PROJECT OFFICE, TO COMBINE ALL MILITARY AND [REDACTED] EFFORT IN ONE AREA IN THE RUN UP TO [REDACTED], FURTHER WORKSERVICES ARE UNDERWAY WHICH MEAN THAT TM TP RADIO WORKSHOPS HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY LOST TO THE TROOP. ALL THE MAINT EFFORT THEREFORE IS UNDER SSGT [REDACTED] AND IS CONSOLIDATED WITHIN ONE WORKSHOPS IN ROOMS 501, 501A AND 502 (OLD TG) SUPERVISING FOS FOR MAINT EFFORT WILL CONTINUE TO BE FOS1
8. UNIT FOS3 WILL CONCENTRATE ON PROJECT EFFORT AND BE PART OF THE TEAM THAT THE SFO FORMS WITHIN THIS NEW PROJECT OFFICE
9. PLEASE BE PREPARED FOR SOME TURBULENCE WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT WHEN YOU VISIT FOR MAINT INSPECTION IN JUN 95 AND OTHERS FROM [REDACTED] VISIT DURING CCB MEETINGS IN MAY

24 Apr changes; I started on 30 Apr so done the week before!
I think the "be prepared for turbulence" last paragraph equates to "pull pin and roll grenade in and leave the island". Looking back at all the turmoil at the time "I realised I wasn't in Kansas anymore!" Tick Tock.

hard and it became a fantastic troop delivering to Government and Defence as required during a very turbulent Middle East period. After the initial eruptions and loud debates, things settled and the new team of three FofS, two CPO's, men in suits and TOT got on with the job and the Top Secret filing cabinet the outgoing FofS1 had stormed off with down the corridor, returned to its original place (immediately MOD102 checked by me!). My respect goes to anyone who served in this unit, especially "behind the fence" as we were, including the two other FofS as it was hard work, high pressure and long hours between the bonus of a bit of sun, sea, social and Keo.

On my desk in the office was a 1950's Bakelite phone that had been connected direct to a lovely spa town in UK as a hot line for major issues with vital systems for some 40 years. This was replaced with a new VoIP system and the phone was consigned to history (saved from the bin and into my growing collection!). I had a great tri-service and MOD team as usual reflecting well on the Corps and Defence in general with RAF and Naval members as well as "men in suits" and local linemen. SSgt's **Tony McClean** and **SSgt Stu Ryder** were great at being line section and Tp SSgt leads, great fun and very proactive in helping me and the TOT ensure the troop worked as a team, ensuring



On dial – "Direct line to FofS1 from xxxx."

our people did their jobs well and also as importantly enjoyed themselves too. OC **Capt (TOT) Moorhead** was the first TOT followed after a gap by **Capt Marcus Sullivan**. The CO was **Lt Col Neale** until Nov '95 and then the new CO, who was also great for the unit, **Lt Col Tim Inshaw**, took over, who was very focussed on delivering for the Government and Defence and also very proud of his unit and personnel and made sure we kept up with fitness and work as well as having great social events. One time he "beasted" the unit around the cross country route stating at the start "anyone who arrives at the end after me who is younger than me will be on remedial PT immediately!" I was way in front of him, phew! Navy CPO **Paul Wainright** and CPO **Dave Thompson** worked hard for us as did a number of the suited brethren who all became friends. Another friend **WO2 (SSM) Bob Banner** helped in smoothing out the work and social isolation me and my family had been inserted into by the outgoing changes as a very active and well liked Sgt Maj in work and the Mess, thanks **Bob**.

In 1996 I became OC for a time due to the TOT being gapped (good experience for two OC posts in later tours) and then **Capt (TOT) Marcus Sullivan** arrived who was a breath of fresh air, having carried the can for months; great at work, looked after his men and women and socially amusing although he did get us into trouble in the Turkish held North – a later story. He didn't do his reputation any good initially by hanging his Y-fronts



on the washing line outside the mess every weekend, on each in big lettering - MONDAY, TUESDAY and in order of days etc! Sorry Boss but just saying...

The troop's role was to maintain all communications equipment from line-up to satellite dishes, install new systems, provide cover for repairs and faults and generally maintain specialised equipment as well as interface with the new evolving projects office to facilitate project success and amalgamation of the new systems into the maintenance cycle. It was very interesting work with all systems unique and state of the art (no Ptarmigan or Clansman here!). WAN's LAN's Large computer suites (my NI experience was put to good use supporting TS systems) and current satellite systems as well as getting ready for the new Skynet systems and many other roles which can't be described in detail here.

In summer the working day was from 0700hrs to 1300hrs, however due to the nature of the FofS1 role I invariably would be working until 1800hrs most days, as did various members of the troop as incidents happened, it was necessary as it was an operational unit and all systems had live users needing support 24/7, so lots of shifts. It wasn't all work and no play



WO1 (FofS) Phil McGiveron "biffing" Sgt Ian Rogers watched by some of the troop; Ian fell into the water bowser below! I was just lucky as he was a big lad! Or maybe a career fall!

though, one troop event was the greased pole fight where two combatants would slide onto a pole with heavy sacks and "biff" each other until one fell off into the water bowser below. Good fun on a quiet Sunday afternoon! The CO **Lt Col Inshaw** also fought **Capt Marcus Sullivan** who diplomatically took a dive after a short fight! Shame on you Sir! There were many sporting events and also exercises to take part in but again due to the live nature of the work many in the troop didn't get a chance, however I did manage to play rugby one last time in a game of sevens for the Squadron and we won "The plate" (i.e. came 2nd) I was hurting for weeks as the ground was so hard (an age thing!) and my clothes were ripped to shreds in the melee. There was also an active WOs' and Sgts' Mess life with various large events and committees to be on. The yearly Trafalgar night (as the unit was tri service and MOD) was a good event (booklet on next page) and



Above: Plate winners Ay Nik Station Inter Trup Rugby Sevens 1996

also the Battle of Britain Night on 16 Sept '95 (ration book above).



When **Lt Col Inshaw** presented the plate at the camp rugby club he was somewhat surprised to greet a battered **WO1 (FofS) McGiverson** coming up to collect the award for the troop team (it was a seven man effort, not just me) commenting on my age and suggesting I should be careful!

He then awarded the crossed rifles for the best shots in the Regiment and I was lucky enough to still be a steady shooter at the great age of 38 and achieved my marksman on the SA 80 (I already had it for SLR) astounding him further. Next day he visited the local Ay Nik Station Scout troop and met scout leader **Baloo**; which I did in my spare time with an RAF Sgt doing another Jungle Book role. I of course didn't then, but now have the figure for **Baloo** to match! The CO commented he thought I may be following him around?



I managed to get two, week-long courses and some liaison trips to a wonderful spa town in UK and also worked on special projects with the Chicksands and RAF Digby crews being presented with a mouse mat (see they really highly thought of me!). Even bumped into my old mate **WO2 (FofS) Rus Moren** again from Harrogate and Northern Ireland days.

On weekends when not working sometimes escapes to such places as Paphos or going to the unit diving club in Episkopi were well worthwhile. I also booked a hotel room in a village just below Troodos for a week away from it all with my wife to try and spend some time together... It turned out to be a room above a brothel! When the walls were not shaking and sounds reverberating from other rooms around the place we enjoyed visiting the village and meeting interesting people... but glad to leave!

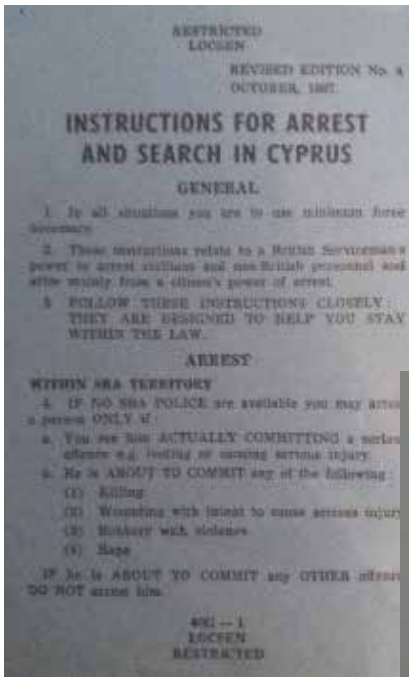
As the quarter I had was so small, myself and **Ben** made good use of the corridor by creating an office for the two of us. On the left of the pic my old 486 on which we played "Command and Conquer" for hours on end and Leisure Suit Larry,

Lemmings and Wing Commander II. On the right of the pic an old BBC that was used for games such as "breakout", "tie fighter",

"Astroids" and "Elite" which we just loved – the graphics were so basic. Note the 5.25 discs! But the 486 was super "up-to-date" as it also had a 3.25 floppy drive. The 486 provided such packages as "Word Perfect" for letters – no internet or broadband. They were a welcome escape from work, being **Baloo** in Scouts and Cubs and school!



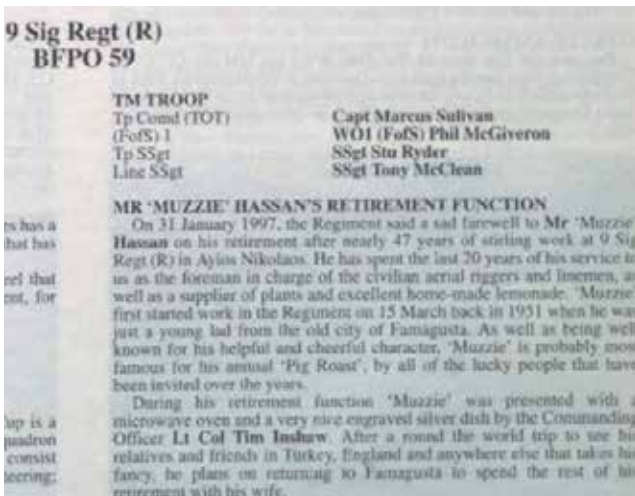
Chuckie Egg - one of the games we enjoyed playing



The Turkish Incident - The troop organised a long weekend on the Turkish occupied side of the island to take in the sites and visit a betting establishment (only for study purposes of course). The OC couldn't come so I was the senior until he joined us at the last moment which impacted everything. Three great days were had and to be honest a few had small financial losses! But at the border on our return we were surrounded by Turkish soldiers pointing their cocked automatic rifles at us. As it turned out, after lots of liaison by me and the OC the issue was identified as: The minibus had stopped on the way in for the troops to have a "wee" en route. The OC got out and took pictures of the area. Unfortunately we had stopped opposite a secret military base and the OC was seen taking pictures - as a result they thought we were spying! Not an unlikely scenario considering the reason we were in Cyprus! It was the days of camera and film still and

There was also of course the serious considerations ref heat and also search and arrest activities. As a senior Warrant Officer the odd invite to mix with the dignitaries came in which was rather nice!

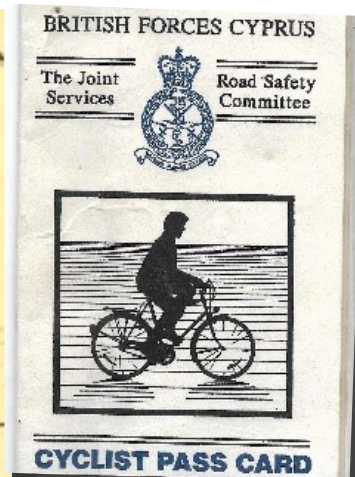
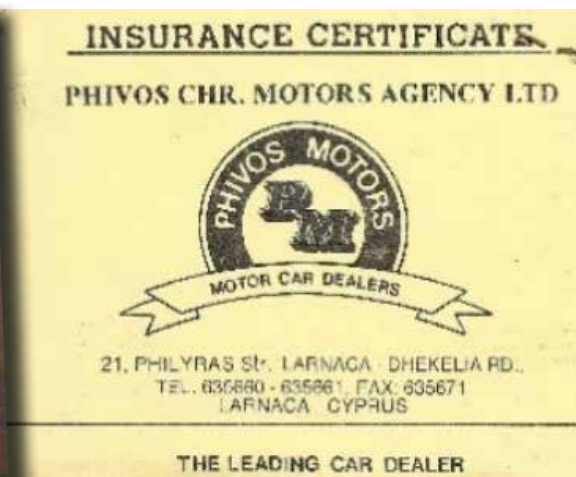
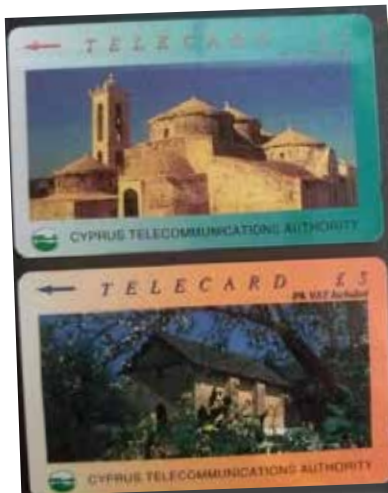
the OC had two empty film boxes in his bag but only one film in his camera, why we never knew as they were about to do bodily orifice searches, ouch! The CO had been told about the commotion and bravely walked across the border and managed to persuade them to let us go phew! Thanks **Col Tim** and no thanks **Capt Marcus** - next time no pictures..... of course as we had almost caused an international incident the interviews went on for weeks.



Troodos was one of the troop's locations we maintained (skiing also in winter) and we would also take part in the annual Troodos run which was a race from the bottom to the top uphill ALL the way, 1,952m. To say "tiring", is an understatement, to just finish was a win. I also took part in the Dhekelia Dash (an annual charity event from Ay Nik to Dhekelia, occupying a prominent position in the Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA) and BFC calendar each year) with my son Ben for charity.



Top left: TM Troop worked closely with the on-site local riggers and linemen section who were an integral part of the troop. They worked hard and played hard. Article in The Wire Jun '97 about Mr Muzzie Hassan's retirement do on 31 Jan '97. This relationship helped forge close local links and the annual muzzie pig roast was a fantastic event (not for the poor pig of course). Left: SSgt Tony McClean Tony did a great job of maintaining good links and working relations with the local line and rigging section. He, and SSgt Stu Ryder, were great assets to the Regt.



During day to day life Cyprus veterans may remember these phone cards (above left) as this was still before mobile phones hit the market. Also if you were going to buy a car, especially a tax free one, to take back to UK at the end of your tour then this merchant wouldn't be too far away who I'm sure to this day somehow was getting the posting lists so they knew who to target! Phivos Motors...

Halfway through the tour I became a single parent of **Ben** (now 10) and feel its only right to record how good his junior school was on the base. The teachers were great and **Ben**

benefited a lot from the small classes and professional teaching at the military school. He was also in the Base Scouts and did things such as Bike Proficiency; his card shown above right.

Right: Me and my son Ben on the last day of service on the island watching the ships go by before travelling. On my CO leaving interview for which I received a great report, (thanks Sir!) I did mention the CO may now have more time on his hands with my departure – he didn't laugh but I detected maybe a "smirk".



Troop Photograph 1996 showing the tri service and local nature of the troop. Men in suits not present for obvious reasons! Front row sitting left to right: SSgt Tony McClean, CPO Dave Thompson, WO2(FofS) Kev Wilson (with dodgy moustache), WO1(FofS) Phil McGiveron, Capt(TOT) Marcus Sullivan, WO2 (FofS) Nev Smirke, SSgt Stu Ryder, CPO Steve Walker and Lead Rigger Mr Hassan Jnr. Second row: our hard working good mates in the local rigger and line section. Third and fourth row: the hard working troop at large (a great tri-service team). On my going away Capt Marcus managed to slip in that he had caught me putting a document into a scanner and trying to get it working.... that turned out to be just a printer! And reminded everyone of my "long walk" from the other side of the island through the night when I couldn't find a taxi back from an impromptu extended happy hour; with the Island Police and the RMP driving past waving as they did their patrols through the night....good exercise though! (CO didn't find out about that one, phew!)

Warrant Officers' and Sergeants Mess, 9th Signal Regiment (Radio), 26 July 1996



Back Row: Sgt Thomas, Sgt Edwards, Sgt Chivers, Sgt Rogers, Sgt Clarke, SSgt Dunn, Sgt Smith, SSgt Gee, Sgt Green, Mr Scott, Mr Coughlin, Sgt Beaumont, CCCT Pearce, Sgt Wakefield, CPO Betts, SSgt(Supvr R) Marchant, CPO Walker, CPO Thompson and Sgt Ceaser
Row 4: CPO Cory, Sgt Bailey, SSgt (Supvr R) McGhee, SSgt(Supvr R) Smith, SSgt(Supvr R) Sandford, Sgt Bennett, Sgt Moffett, SSgt Webb, Sgt Henley, SSgt Hoyland, SSgt McClean, SSgt Hobbs, Mr Evans, Sgt Ramsdale, CPO Cairns, Mr Groves, SSgt Awyll, Sgt Cundiff, CPO Doney, Sgt Cameron, Sgt Strugnell, CT Black, SSgt(SQMS) Jackson, Sgt Coupland and Mr Van-De-Pol
Row 3: Miss Winder, Sgt Corby, Sgt Griffins, Sgt McNally, Sgt Hill, Sgt Boomer, Sgt Barber, CPO Webster, Sgt Butler, SSgt Hogg, Sgt Beale, SSgt Clay, CPO Turner, Sgt Cameron, Sgt Porter, Sgt Varney, CPO Ellis-Morgan, Sgt Duggan, Mr Collick, SSgt Lowther, Sgt Donnachie and SSgt Osborne
Row 2: WO2(FofS) Wilson, Mr Shaw, SSgt Dewhurst, WO2 Few, Sgt Burns, SSgt Ryder, SSgt Bowitt, Sgt Roe, SSgt(SQMS) Beggs, Mr Johnson, Sgt Milton, Sgt Brown, Mr Patrick, Sgt Sparling, Sgt Lees, Sgt Boswell, SSgt Clubb, SSgt Morrison, SSgt(RQMS) Hogan, SSgt Taylor, Mr Sterland, WO2(FofS) Smirkle, WO2(Supvr R) Kelly, WO2(CofW) Bowman
Front Row: WO2 Worsley, WO2 Blair, WO2 Bryne, WO2(SSM) Milne, WO2(SSM) Thirsk, WO2(SQMS) Ward, WO2(RQMS) Tiffin, WO1(FofS) McGiveron, WO Menzies, WO Shaw MBE, WO1(RSM) Woodcock, WO Herbert, WO1(Supvr R) Widdicombe MBE, WO1 Evans, WO2(RQMS) Mitchell, WO2(SQMS) Monaghan, WO2(SSM) Banner, WO2(SSM) Stanton, WO2 Hughes, WO2(Supvr R) Woollard and WO2 Ashworth



9 Sig Regt Corps picture kindly presented to me at WO1's dining out by WO1(RSM) John Duckworth on leaving in 1997
Below: MFO boxes everywhere!



Back to packing MFO boxes as 1997 progressed with a posting to Northern Ireland again and then changed to RSTRIT Blandford at the last moment. The picture above is of my living room in my quarter as I squeezed what I could into my allocated number of MFO boxes! The tour had been another great one, tiring but enjoyable even with the Army induced split from my wife as a direct result of Army tours, one or two persons in the past command chain and unlucky events, past and present and becoming a single parent of **Ben**. The people I met were first class nice (mostly!) and professional people, good at work and socially. Many names missed but ones I

remember: **Cpl Taff Ceaser** (duty cool spiv, able to find most things!), **Sgt Ian Rogers**, **Sgt Jim Coupland**, **Cpl Craig** and **Debbie Williams** (good mates and ones who kindly organised a secret birthday party for me, most appreciated to this day) **Sgt Steve Moore**, **Sgt Tony Smith**, **Sgt Stu Palmer**, **Cpl Dave Scragg** (good for morale), **JT Larry Lamb**, **Cpl Richie Cleminson** (great tech), **LCpls Mark Evans**, **Mark Beckett**, **Daren Cranston**, **Gray Collard**, **Chris Matthews**, **Mark Partington** and **Jim Robertson**. Also **WO2 (FofS) Nev Smikle**, **SSgt (FofS) Kev Wilson**, **WO1(YofS) Pete Martin** (later also RSTRIT), **Sgt Gary Bennett** (who with his wife invited me for Xmas '96 dinner when **Ben** was with his mother in UK, many thanks), the two **Sgt's Cameron's** (a great family couple of hard workers and popular members of troop), **WO2 (SSM) Bob Stanton** (a great firm but fun SSM), **WO2(SSM) Colin Milne**, **Capt (TOT) Marcus Sullivan**, **Capt (TOT) Terry Moorhead** and wife **Andrea**, **Capt (TFC) Jim Sykes**, **LCpl Lee Sutton**, **WO2 (SSM) Bob Banner** (a lifelong friend), **WO2 (Supvr R) 'Stitch' Steve Woollard** (my friend from NI and Harrogate) and also Senior Service **CPO Paul Wainright** and his OpO **CPO Dave Thompson** (can't remember everyone sorry it comes with working too long with "spooks"!)

I was to visit Cyprus twice more in the coming years. Once as the FofS1 RSTRIT (Royal Signals Trade Review and Implementation Team) representative briefing the Regiment on the planning and up and coming changes to the Corps trades being worked on at the time (1998). And of course enjoyed again the one thing you can't forget from Cyprus - the local amber nectar KEO and the food especially meze's. Never quite liked the "squeaky" cheese though (halloumi).

The third visit was on finishing an Afghanistan tour as a Maj (TOT) and having to return to UK via a three day decompression course in Cyprus. I spent some time on the beaches which was great and had a beer again after six months without (tasted like a bucket of sugar! - but got over that!).

Next edition: RSTRIT, TDT, CPD, Falklands and 33 Sig Regt(V). Future editions of The Wire will include multiple tours of Iraq, CONDO in Iraq and Kuwait and an Afghanistan tour as well as fun and games at Andover Army HQ.



Royal Signals Association



Patron: HRH The Princess Royal
President: The Master of Signals
Chairman: Maj Gen D McDowall

As I write this, the Garrison is a hive of activity preparing to welcome you back to Blandford for Corps Weekend 2022. It should be a fantastic event and one that is much anticipated for the Association after the uncertainty of the last two years. There will be many events to attend over the three days. An event of note is the Falklands 40th Anniversary Commemoration Presentation which will be held on Saturday 18 June. It will be a fitting tribute to commemorate the anniversary of the conflict and the experiences that are featured are inspiring and poignant. A full report from the weekend will feature in the next edition of The Wire.

The Association was very well represented at Founders Day at the Royal Hospital Chelsea this year. I was lucky enough to attend alongside 24 association members and their families on a sunny day in London, which looked resplendent in the run up to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations. The Chelsea Pensioners are magnificent hosts and I really would recommend a visit for those members who have not had the chance to attend.

Looking forward, we are excited to be preparing for our upcoming RSA Road Trip which will take us from South West England to Scotland and back again! We will be starting in Liverpool and finishing in Salisbury, visiting as many branches as we can in between. If you are not attached to a local branch but would like to come along and have an informal chat with us about either joining the RSA or any issues you would like to raise, you are very welcome. Please see the website for further details.

Our official allocation of tickets for the Cenotaph parade have yet to be confirmed. Once I have this, I will be writing to everyone who entered the ballot to confirm if they were successful in gaining a place in this year's contingent.

Lastly, the RSA section of the website has been updated making it much easier to find any documents published by Corps Headquarters. The new area will be entitled Published Documents and should be live in the coming weeks.

Thank you to all those below who have made donations to the Royal Signals Charity:

Rotherham Branch	£40	Donation in lieu of xmas cards
Mrs R Simpson	£50	Memorial donation - M Simpson
Bill May	£90	Memorial donation - John May
Bedford Branch	£100	Branch donation
Birmingham Branch	£1296	Branch donation
Dave, The Thin Red Line	£300	Personal donation
Aldershot Branch	£197	Branch donation
Mrs Churchill	£100	Personal donation
Mrs Fran Meldon	£100	Memorial donation - Bill Meldon

Tracey

Mrs T Muers
Administration Officer
Royal Signals Association



Corps Secretary: **Col (Retd) Dave Craft**
Email: David.Craft464@mod.gov.uk
Tel: 01258 482081
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Tel: 01258 482089

DARLINGTON BRANCH

President **Ray Jeffery**
Chairman **Bill Paton**
Vice Chairman **Paul Buckley**
Secretary **Joann Fletcher**
Treasurer **John Arkley**

Memorial Service

By Paul Buckley, Vice Chairman

I had the honour of attending the Memorial Service in Gaza Barracks, Catterick on Saturday 19 March 2022, which was held in memory of the fallen in Northern Ireland. The Branch Standard, was paraded by **Mr Ken Coates** who was accompanied by his partner **Jenny**.

At 11:30hrs, on a warm sunny Saturday morning the **Rev (Brig) David Hargreaves** led the Memorial Service for the Fallen in Northern Ireland on the 34th Anniversary of the deaths of **Cpl's Howes and Woods**. The service was attended by members of the RSA Association, including the Branch Standards from Catterick, Darlington and Newcastle.

Mr Lee Clarke read out the names of those within the Corps that had fallen while carrying out their service within the Province. A reading by the RSA Chairman **Maj Gen David McDowall CBE** was read from Matthew's Gospel.

The laying of wreaths was led by **Gen McDowall**, on behalf of the Royal Signals Association, **Maj Peter Watson**, President of the Catterick Branch and Officer Commanding Headquarters Company, 1st Military Intelligence Battalion and Catterick Branch Chairman, **Mr John McIlree**. A rose was placed on behalf of the daughter of **Cpl Howes** by **Mrs Helen Coulthick**.

The service was concluded with all attending singing the National Anthem.

A special thanks to the Area Rep, **Mr Iain Scriven** for organising the event, **Maj Peter Watson** and to **Mr John McIlree** for allowing external branches to the event.

Next year the event takes place on Sun 19 March 2023 and marks the 35th anniversary of the deaths of **Cpl's Howes and Woods**. Catterick Branch intends to hold a service in the Garrison Memorial Church and invites will be extended to all Regional Branches.



Correction

On page 9 of the Spring 2022 edition of The Wire it was reported that three Royal Signals soldiers were the first ever British Army recipients of the Bronze Order of Mercury. We have since been informed that this information is incorrect and that they were not the first British Army recipients of the Order.

Whilst this should not detract in any way from that fantastic honour that the three personnel mentioned have achieved we apologise for any upset that this may have caused to anyone.

SALISBURY (NO1) BRANCH

President **Phil Whitmore**
Chairman **Nigel Cullen**
Secretary **Phil Osment**
Treasurer **Ray Patrickson**

As the branch gradually emerges from the Pandemic cocoon, the month of May has been a busy month for us. In the Autumn of 2019, we decided to do something different (for us) to celebrate the Corps Centenary in 2020. So, and instead of our normal Spring Lunch, we opted for a BBQ to be held at The Wilton Scout Hut, little did we know what was just around the corner!

So, two years later, we finally managed to fulfil those plans, although we added an early Jubilee theme to our now late Centenary celebrations. The weather gods were extraordinarily good to us. Catering was provided by the unusually named "Tattymacspudface" who provided baked potatoes with a variety of fillings from the back of a converted horse box, with the BBQ meat cooked to perfection (almost) by the author and our Secretary, **Phil Osment**. They were ably assisted by **Linda** and **Sally**. Updates to the job descriptions in the Branch Constitution will now be necessary to capture these additional duties.

Garden games were provided and were extensively used as the afternoon progressed, and bottles were emptied! The Scout Hut was a perfect location, and all seemed to have a most enjoyable afternoon. On a sad note, though, we bade farewell to **Colin** and **Rowena French** who have moved to Devon to enjoy their retirement. Stalwart members of the Branch they will be sorely missed. We wish them well in their new pastures.

At the end of April, the Chairman was invited to lunch with the RSM of 3 (UK) Div Sig Regt to explore ways that a greater affiliation could be fostered between our local Signal Regiment and the Branch. Discussions were wide ranging and hopefully we will be able to progress them in the coming months. The Branch would also like to wish **WO1 (RSM) Paul Steele** the very best of luck in his new role as The Corps RSM and look forward to continuing this initiative with his successor.

Our Branch meetings are now following the normal pattern, the third Thursday of each month. They are highly informal and held in the Salisbury and South Wilts Sport Club (just off Wilton Rd and by Skew Bridge). All members, and prospective members are made very welcome.





AIR FORMATION SIGNALS ASSOCIATION



For a number of reasons our reunion in 2014 was our last one. That reunion included a coach trip to Glossop where wreaths were laid during a simple Service of Remembrance in tribute to the six members of 2nd Air Formation Signals (AFS) who hailed from Glossop and were lost when the troopship, HMT Lancastria, was bombed and sunk at St Nazaire in 1940. The last AFSA Newsletter, in Summer 2014, carried a report. More of this later.

After that, seven years ago, our Association 'went into hibernation', protracted by coronavirus restrictions. A number of committee members had died recently and others, or their families, were not well, so, following an exchange of e-mail messages with the Chairman, **Dr David Vickers**, it was decided that the Association should be disbanded. A last newsletter was distributed and the members invited to have their final say before the disbandment process formally started. There were no positive responses so the process has started.

The roots of the Association go back to 1985 when **Maldwyn Evans**, who had served in 15th and 18th Air Formation Signals, was nearing retirement and decided to try to contact those he had served with. Over the years he recruited 54 members and they met in reunion at hotels in Nottingham and Crewe with numbers attending rising from an initial 11 in 1986 to 19 in May 1993. It was then decided to disband as members were 'not getting any younger'.

However a group of stalwarts decided to try again. The first event was when five members attended a Regimental open day with 21 Sig Regt at Colerne in July 1994 where they set up a Special Event amateur radio station, with callsign GB4AFS, and a display showing the roll of DRs. The CO of the Regiment, **Lt Col David Lynham, MBE**, made them very welcome and was invited to attend the first reunion which was held in Bath three months later.

The reunion held in Bath included others who had served in Germany and the Canal Zone with 12th and 18th Air Formation Signals. Founder members were **Gerald Evans** (d. Mar 2012), **Dennis Egan** (d. Jul 2016), **Chris Collier** (d. Mar 2017) and **Colin Morgan** (d. Sept 2006). Apart from their service together a number of members were radio amateurs and Amateur Radio Special Event Stations were regularly set up and worked by them. More of this later. Others, some DRs, had been members of the Bar None Motorcycle Club in the Canal Zone where they had raced motorcycles on sand courses and still shared a love of motorcycling.

Over the years those who had served in other AFS Units joined and the name of the Association changed several times before it became stable as the Air Formation Signals Association. Apart from meeting in reunion the Association embarked on a number of projects. Among these was the creation of a crescent of 9 Copper Beech Trees (The Air Formation Signals Crescent) at the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas in Staffordshire.

A significant number of our members served in 21 AFS so it was natural that we should have a close relationship with 21 Sig Regt which had relocated from Germany to RAF Colerne in 1992. Indeed we held committee meetings there, held

occasional reunions there, set up week long Amateur Radio Special Event Stations in the Training Wing buildings there - much to the interest of the instructors when they heard the sounds of Morse Code echoing round the classrooms! We also took part in Regimental Open Days when we set up an Old Comrades Stall - often with an amateur radio station in operation. With this close association, Commanding Officers of 21 Sig Regt were invited, and agreed, to become Presidents of the Association.

But the role of 21 Sig Regt was changing. It lost its last Air Formation Signals role when 220 Squadron, which had been left behind in Germany, was disbanded in 1999. Thereafter it had an Air Support Role supporting the Joint Helicopter Force with Squadrons rotating to Afghanistan on a regular basis. During these years AFSA members sent cards, letters and parcels to the units in Afghanistan and at the end of operations presented the unit with a Silver Chinook Table Centre Piece.

With the end of the conflict in Afghanistan 244 Signal Squadron (Air Support) transferred to 10th Signal Regiment at Bramcote and 81st Signal Squadron (V) also re-affiliated. This left 21st Regiment as a standard Field Regiment of the Corps with no role to play with the Air Forces. It was thought that 'it was no longer appropriate for the AFSA to be regarded as the Regiment's Reunion Association' and so ended close relationship with the Regiment.

However we continued to meet in reunion, moving around the country from the Midlands to the North West in an endeavour to find a location that would be popular with members and, as you will see from my first paragraph, we held a very special reunion in Leeds from where we took a coach to Glossop and held a very well received Act of Remembrance at their War Memorial. As an aside, there is, at the National Memorial Arboretum a 'Merchant Navy Convoy' with a tree for every merchant ship lost in WW2. In the centre is a clearing with a giant tree, and plaque, dedicated to those who lost their lives when HMT Lancastria was lost. A number, possibly 4,000 or more but impossible to count as the vessel was grossly overcrowded with, perhaps, 9,000 servicemen and civilians aboard as it was preparing to leave.

We held three dedication services at the National Memorial Arboretum, the first two to dedicate trees as funds became available and a last one to dedicate a rock taken from the original roundabout at the entrance to Blandford Camp (after the round-about had been 're-engineered' in the 1990's) bearing a plaque explaining who Air Formation and Air Support Signallers were. One of the trees was dedicated to those who rode in the Bar-None Motorcycle Club. In these endeavours we worked closely with 19th Signal Regiment Association members who had served in the Far East.

As we fade from the scene we leave in the Museum Archives 'potted histories' of most of the major AFS Units and our Association Roll of Honour. We also leave a DVD showing all the Royal Signals related memorials that we could find at the Arboretum. Remaining financial assets will be transferred to the Royal Signals Charity and the Association Standard lodged with the museum for safe keeping and display as appropriate.

Obituaries

MAXFIELD - Brigadier Russell Maxfield CENG MIET died on 3 March 2022.

Russell Hugh Maxfield, known throughout the Corps as 'Max', enlisted in 1942 and was commissioned from 150 OCTU in 1944. He served in Italy and Greece until 1947 when he became Adjutant of 1 Training Regiment.

He joined 1 Corps Signal Regiment on its formation in Gloucester in March 1951, and remained in UK with the element that formed 5 Corps Signal Regiment in Colchester in January 1952.

In 1953 he went to Hong Kong joining 35 Infantry Brigade as Brigade Signals Officer which then took part in the anti terrorist operations in Malaya. He returned to the UK in 1955 to attend the Technical Staff Course at Shrivenham.

After qualifying he was posted to the Proof and Experimental establishment at Shoeburyness where he was senior Instrumentation Officer responsible for the measurement of weapon performance and procurement of specialist test and instrumentation equipment.

After two years in Germany as OC 4 Squadron, 7 Signal Regiment, between 1961 and 1962, he joined 30 Signal Regiment where he was involved in planning and evaluating the trials of Bruin equipment and manpack radios. In 1965 he went back to the Far East to take over command of 19 (Air Formation) Signal Regiment.

He returned to the Royal Military College of Science as Military Director of Studies in the Electronic and Guided Weapons Division, being promoted to Colonel in 1969. From 1971 to 1974 he served with the Communications and Electronics division of NATO in Brussels where he travelled widely throughout Europe, Canada and the USA.



His last appointment, still in Brussels, was as Chief of Systems Direction and Support Division NICSMA, during which time he represented NATO at the launching of SATCOM 3A from Cape Canaveral.

Max brought great enthusiasm and energy to everything he undertook; he was keen on shooting and sailing, and was a loyal supporter of the Royal Signals Institution. He contributed articles that were published in The Journal as early as 1948 and as late as 1976. He retired on 15 June 1978, taking up the appointment of Head of the Industrial Section of the Agency for the control of armaments of the Western European Union, based in Paris. He held the post for eight years, subsequently working for two years on an in depth study on the problems of verification of arms control agreements in an East West scenario.

He is much mourned by his many friends and former colleagues in the Corps.

HAYWOOD - Major Victor Haywood died on 27 February 2022.



Victor Haywood was born in 1932. Having been called up for National Service in 1950, **Victor** volunteered for the Regulars and joined the Royal Corps of Signals. His service included tours in Germany, Suez, and Cyprus. After retiring from the Regular Army in 1978 he returned to the Colours immediately as a

Reservist Squadron Sergeant Major with 71 (Yeomanry) Signal Regiment of the Territorial Army.

He was later commissioned and served as Technical Quartermaster for several years. His final appointment was as Officer Commanding Headquarters Squadron, also known as the Kent and County of London Yeomanry. He had strong family ties to the county and was honoured to have commanded 'The Kent Sharpshooters', as the Squadron was also known.

In later life **Victor** retired to Salisbury to be near his daughter and maintained links with the Corps. In 2017, after the death of his wife, he entered the Royal Hospital Chelsea. Having served half his lifetime in uniform, it was fitting that his final years were spent in the iconic 'Scarlets' in the company of old comrades.



ROBINSON – Major Malcom N Robinson died on 25 October 2021.

By *Iain Scrivin, Catterick Branch (The Spiritual Home of the Corps) Honorary Secretary*

Malcom served for 43 years; several times in Catterick and several times in BAOR. From 1960-‘69 he was in the BAOR, France, Aden, Bahrain, UK and in 1968 Northern Ireland at the start of The Troubles.

From 1969 to 1971 he served in Singapore. Over the period of 1971-‘74 he was the SQMS at 10 Signal Regiment when they were at Hounslow.

Then from 1974-‘77 he was the RQMS at 33 Signal Regiment at Huyton, Liverpool. From 1977-‘81 he filled the role of RSM 30 Signal Regiment in Blandford where he was awarded a Regimental Pennant on a 5-foot guidon, a dig at his small size.

In 1981 until 1983 he was the 2ic and Recce Officer in Soest at San Sebastian Barracks whilst serving at 206 (6 Armoured Brigade HQ & Signal Squadron) before they went airmobile. It was here that our paths crossed as I was posted into G Ops in January 1983, and he left in March. From 1983-‘87 he was the QM Gen at 14 Signal Regiment in Celle, and we were recently able to return a port decanter to the RSM 14 Signal Regiment **WO1 Darlington**.

In 1987 **Malcolm** returned to Catterick until 1990 as OC 1 Sqn, 11 Signal Regiment and again I was very close, occupying the Schemes Troop garages of 8 Signal Regiment just the other side of the wire.

Then in 1990 to 1992 **Malcom** was the QM 22 Signal Regiment in Churchill Barracks at Lipstadt, he was there when the camp closed and received a letter of thanks from **Brigadier Denaro** for a very smooth handover to the German people when 22 Signal Regiment moved out. We believe that his template was used for future moves during the draw down and disbandment of BAOR.

Finally, from 1992-‘93 he served at HQ NI (15 Signal Regiment) before finishing his career when he served for the last 10 years in Scotland, recruiting. **Malcom** finally retired in February 2003 aged 60, during his 43 years he completed the Nijmegen marches and four marathons.

Malcom passed away on 25 October 2021 but due to Covid his wife **Charmian** was unable to inter the ashes with her son in Catterick’s Hipswell Cemetery until 16 February this year. Catterick Branch was able to support her in this and we have now adopted **Charmian** and keep in touch with her via the minutes and letters. She now lives in Bridlington and if anyone would like to meet, please contact the secretary Catterick Branch and I am sure we can establish comms for you.



Last Post Requirements



In order to publish details in Last Post we require the following information:

Surname, first name, rank, years served and date of death.

An obituary with additional career and life information is welcome. Please include a photo.



To inform us of a death please contact: wire@royalsignals.org

Last Post

Name	Years served	Month of death	Name	Years served	Month of death
Peter Aitken	U/K	Apr 2022	Edward Lasseter	U/K	Apr 2022
SSgt Richard Assender	1960-84	May 2022	Sgt Alan Logie-Campbell	1964-76	Mar 2022
Cpl Edward Bellerby	1964-74	May 2022	Maj D Lycett-Gregson	1951-87	Apr 2022
John Breen	U/K	Mar 2022	Andrew Malone	1984-86	May 2022
Sig Joe Chester	U/K	May 2022	Sig Jim McCulloch	1968-80	Apr 2022
Sgt Tony Chew	1965-87	Mar 2022	Sig George McNulty	1971-74	Apr 2022
Maj Angus Cook	1950-84	Apr 2022	Anthony Moores	U/K	Mar 2022
SSgt Martin Davis	1962-89	Apr 2022	Sgt Peter Moppett	1958-60	Mar 2022
Sgt Eric Depledge	1949-66	Apr 2022	Alan Ruxton	1950's	May 2022
Glyn Eamus	U/K	Mar 2022	Cpl Victor Saunders	1959-68	Mar 2022
Maj Leland Edinger	1949-83	Feb 2022	WO2 Michael Swallow	1972-95	Feb 2022
Col Michael Hales C Eng	1955-88	Apr 2022	LCpl Aubrey Temple	1954-56	Apr 2022
Maj Kenneth Harvey TD	1951-87	Mar 2022	WO2 Scott Thomas	1996-15	Apr 2022
Sig John Hawkins	1979-95	Feb 2022	Maj George Tinker	1969-94	Mar 2022
Maj Victor Haywood	1950-90	Feb 2022	Hazel Vincent	U/K	Mar 2022
SSgt Keith Hibbins	1972-94	Feb 2022	Maj Emily Williams	U/K	Feb 2022
Sig Eric Horabin	1943-47	May 2022	Cpl Tracey Workman	1998-08	Feb 2022
Cpl Phil Kendal	1972-78	Feb 2022			

Royal Corps of Signals 'Certa Cito' Lodge 8925 Consecrated 30 May 1980



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- This is a unique lodge and a member of the 'Circuit of Service Lodges', giving access to many other military lodges throughout the UK.
- We welcome enthusiastic new members to follow the progressive route through all degrees. We welcome all those who already are Masons to become 'Joining Members'. Members come from all over the UK.
- It is a very friendly lodge with several members from the same regiments therefore creating a bit of 'banter' and fun between us, and gives a chance of meeting comrades who have served / serving together.
- We try to hold a 'Ladies Festival' each year.

Please contact our secretary David Dunn: dave47147@blueyonder.co.uk Look up our website: certacitolodge.com

We look forward to welcoming you.

Sig Gauchan handing over a cheque for £1022 that he raised for the Royal Signals Charity to the Corps Colonel, Colonel Mark Brookes



Fundraising

SWCP Salcombe Trail Running Challenge 2022

By Sig Gauchan

I am **Sig Gauchan**, currently serving under 1 Sig Regt in the British Army since 24 Oct '19. During my service I have learnt about the Royal Signals Charity and over a third of the philanthropic recipients were 65 or older. It has taken me back to find that a Royal Signals soldier has to face financial hardship even after his/her retirement. I decided to do something within my capacity therefore I took part in the Half Marathon (SWCP Salcombe Trail Running Challenge 2022) on 23 Apr to raise some funds for this charity. I spoke to my SNCO for guidance and I'm very proud to say that I got great support from my SNCO.

"As it was my first solo charity event I had a target of £500, but I surpassed my target by 200% and the final sum was £1022."

I started preparing well in advance for the run as it was my first ever attempt on a trail run. My entire motivation was to do something to help our Veterans and In-service Signalmen/women and their families. It went really

well on the day and the outstanding natural beauty of Salcombe helped greatly to complete the trail run comfortably. My parents, wife and my newly born daughter were there to support me. The fundraising went beyond my expectations. As it was my first solo charity event I had a target of £500, but I surpassed my target by 200% and the final sum was £1022. I have thoroughly enjoyed the whole process and I would definitely encourage every Signalman/woman to help the Royal Signals Charity to raise funds by taking part in different events/activities and if anyone is thinking of it then they can speak with their SNCO or the Royal Signals Charity team for help and guidance, if needed.

Lastly and most importantly I would also like to thank everyone for their support and trust they put in me by donating and making it a successful event.



Leicestershire Half Marathon

- by LCpl Ravi Ghale

On 27 Feb 22, 27 personnel from 250 Gurkha Signal Squadron, 30 Sig Regt took part in the Leicestershire Half Marathon. This event was led by **Cpl Shanteshwor Pun** and **LCpl Ganesh Chand** to raise money for The Royal Signals Charity and Queen's Gurkha Signals Association.

Leicestershire Half Marathon is an annual charity event for Macmillan Cancer Support organised by "Run-through". Despite the Squadron being at R2 readiness and personnel being engaged on various commitments, every participant was very enthusiastic and had trained hard for the event. Even though the morning of the marathon day was very chilly with a temperature around 7°C, everyone was full of excitement and carrying a smile. Some, however, showed twitchiness in their faces as it was their first half marathon. We set off at 0715hrs with two minibuses to Prestwold Hall, which was the start and finishing point for the half marathon.

Participants were released on a basis of their timings. Most of us were aiming for sub 1hr 30 min – 1 hour 45 mins finish. With the start of the countdown, our pulses started to race with excitement and pride augmented by the fact we were doing this for two wonderful charities. We set off at the announcer's 'go' and the feeling of competition was clear in everyone's eyes. The route was an interesting mix of undulating ground with loose gravel paths at the start, followed by sections on country roads, the airfield, racetrack, and some inclines followed by immediate declines.

Everyone did their best in the half marathon and triumphantly achieved their timings. Among 27 personnel who participated in the event, **Cpl Funghang** took the lead

“ We successfully managed to raise £777 for the Royal Signals Charity and £333 for the Queens' Gurkha Signals Association charity.”

with an exemplary time of 1 hour and 38 minutes. We were presented our finishers medals and the marathon then concluded with a group photograph in front of the Prestwold hall, with everyone

rejoicing their achievement and the group lead, **SSM WO2 Anand Limbu**, thanking everyone for putting out their best effort.

This event wasn't just a marathon, it also allowed us to get together as a team, foster our friendship and team cohesion which was missing for a long time due to Covid-19. We successfully managed to raise £777 for the Royal Signals Charity and £333 for the Queens' Gurkha Signals Association charity.



Sig Sanjib Rai



LCpl Ravi Ghale



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ROYAL SIGNALS RESERVE UNITS AND LOCATIONS

32 Signal Regiment RHQ	Glasgow	Glasgow Dunfermline Aberdeen Perth Edinburgh East Kilbride
52 Support Squadron 2 Signal Squadron 801 Signal Troop 40 Signal Squadron 51 Signal Squadron 822 Signal Troop		
37 Signal Regiment RHQ	Redditch	Redditch Barnet Liverpool Manchester Birmingham Coventry Shefford Derby Tus Sheffield Nottingham Leeds
54 Support Squadron 867 (Cap Band) Troop 33 Signal Squadron 842 Signal Troop 44 Signal Squadron 896 Signal Troop 897 Signal Squadron 59 Signal Squadron Kosova Troop 64 Signal Squadron 887 Signal Troop 889 Signal Troop		
39 Signal Regiment RHQ	Bristol	Bristol Bath Cardiff Gloucester Windsor
33 Support Squadron 43 Signal Squadron 53 Signal Squadron Whitney Signal Troop 94 Signal Squadron		
71 Voluntary Signal Regiment RHQ	Bedleyheath	Bedleyheath Uxbridge Coventry Cokerchester Chesham Lincoln Inn Whitby Cross
265 Support Squadron 31 Signal Squadron 1 Signal Troop 36 Signal Squadron 907 Signal Troop 48 Signal Squadron 883 Signal Troop		

Specialist Units - Members are drawn from, and tasked across the UK		
254 Specialist Group (Information Services) Signal Squadron, 13 Signal Regiment	Squadron HQ in Blandford	
81 Signal Squadron, 10 Signal Regiment	Squadron HQ in Corsham	
Land Information Assurance Group (LIAG)	Squadron HQ in Corsham	
Cyber Advisory Team (CAT)	Administered by UAG	
Joint Cyber Unit (Reserve) (JCUR)	Corsham	
Joint Cyber Unit (Reserve) (JCUR)	Cheltenham	
Joint Service Signal Unit (WJSSU)	Digby	
MAAT Reserves	Portsmouth	

NOTE: 254 (Specialist Group Information Services) Signal Squadron is now part of 13 Signal Regiment in Blandford

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- Sport and Adventure Training (Challenge and push your limits)
- Increased flexibility
- Sense of achievement, a challenge, camaraderie, excitement and your continued service to the nation



Your Time, Your Terms

To speak to someone directly for advice on how to join the Royal Signals Reserve please email:
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