

THE wire



April 2013



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For further information, please contact:

Captain P Patel RAMC (Chairman)
Email: priyum.patel451@mod.uk
Mobile: 07914 06665 / 01252 348308

Flight Lieutenant V Mungroo RAF (Dep Chair)
Deputy Chairman
Email: vik.mungroo305@mod.uk

WO1 AK Chauhan MBE (Media & Comms)
Email: dartakc@hotmail.co.uk
Mobile: 07919 210525 / 01252 348 308

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The Wire



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Editor: Mr Keith Pritchard
Deputy Editor: Ms J Burke



Editor
Mr Keith Pritchard
Tel: 01258 482817

All correspondence and material for publication in The Wire should be addressed to:

The Wire,
RHQ Royal Signals,
Blandford Camp,
Blandford Forum, Dorset, DT11 8RH Email: thewire@royalsignals.com

Contributors

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Accounts / Subscriptions
Mrs Jess Lawson
Tel: 01258 482087

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Subscribers

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FRONT COVER

Capt Collins coming off Pylon jump on the Army Downhill



BACK COVER

LCpl Rose from 216 (Para) Sig Sqn with the Quad Pack Rebro



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NEWS FROM OPERATIONS



2nd SIGNAL REGIMENT



CO
RSM

Lt Col C Vaudin
WO1 (RSM) D Lamont

THE HALFWAY POINT - by Lt Col Vaudin

2 Signal Regiment is now approaching the halfway point in Op HERRICK 17 forming the core of the Joint Force CIS (Afghanistan) Group; it is amazing how the time has flown past so quickly. I am pleased to report that the Regiment continues to go from strength to strength delivering the 'vital link' of deployed communications and information systems to Theatre. We have had many notable successes in our time in Theatre, most of which I cannot go into the detail of due to operational security. What I can say is that at this pivotal point in the campaign the J6 community, and 2 Signal Regiment at its heart, are delivering success at every turn.

The Regiment is probably the most dispersed unit in Theatre with soldiers in every location from the Forward Operating Bases in Helmand to HQ ISAF in Kabul. The famous Cross Keys are evident almost everywhere and often recognised; that can be both a good and a bad thing... That said, everyone I speak to from the various Commanding Officers to Headquarters Staff Officers are full of praise for our work that continues to be recognised across Theatre and warmly reported.

I am sure that many more challenges lay ahead during our time on HERRICK 17 as we drive forward transition and redeployment and set the conditions for success of 3 (UK) Division Signal Regiment who will come after us. I have total confidence in the soldiers of the Regiment who are more than able to meet these challenges; indeed we are looking forward to them.

JFCIS(A) HQ - by LCpl Parvin



The pace of life in JFCIS(A) HQ continues to be fast. 2 Signal Regiment have been in place for three months and the time is passing by quickly. All the IA's are now in place and last to arrive was Col Simon Hutchinson. To that end we need to say farewell to the old Comd JFCIS(A) Col Peter Drew. In mid December we had a visit from HRH Princess Ann who spent time talking to members of JFCIS(A) about their jobs and

roles out in Theatre. A flag which had been made by all 2 Signal Regiment families back in the UK and put together by Mrs Davis, wife of Maj Mark Davis, was sent out to Afghanistan wishing 2 Signal Regiment personnel all the best for Christmas and New Year.

Christmas day was a working day like just any other, apart from a few pleasant exceptions. The CO served tea and coffee to the soldiers in Mercury Lines on Christmas morning. Everyone watched the Queen's speech in the HQ and then took part in a quiz which was won by the HQ plans team!

Over the last few weeks JFCIS(A) has been competing in the 2 Signal Regiment charity event. The challenge was for the Regt to cover the distance from Camp Bastion to York via various different physical activities and to raise money for The Army Benevolent Fund. JFCIS(A) staff completed 1500 km worth of spinning and 117km of tabbing.

The R&R plot is now well under way and there is a regular flow of people disappearing from the HQ and re-appearing a couple of weeks later. This is the next milestone for most people on tour and everyone is looking forward to getting home and seeing their family and friends for a couple of weeks.

219 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC
SSM

Maj M Davis
WO2 (SSM) C Stansfield

KABUL SUPPORT UNIT - by Capt O'Connell

2 Signal Regiment Soldiers serving in Afghanistan over the festive period were treated to a Royal morale boost by their Colonel-in-Chief, HRH the Princess Royal.



Capt Amrit meets the Colonel in Chief

The Princess, who was accompanied by her husband Vice Admiral Sir Timothy Laurence, visited Camp Bastion where the HQ of the Joint Force Communications and Information Systems (Afghanistan) are based. The Regiment, which is based at Imphal Barracks, York, deployed to Afghanistan in October 2012 for a six month period. Split across the Area of



Operations, as far north as Kabul city, and as far south as Helmand Province, the Regiment provides operational CIS to all UK Force Elements operating in the country.

The CO, **Lt Col Colin Vaudin**, said *'It was wonderful to have our Colonel in Chief visit. Soldiers, especially those on Operations, take real comfort and encouragement from these visits; it reminds them that they remain close to the hearts and in the thoughts of those we serve.'*

Having visited the Regiment earlier in the year, the Princess had plenty to discuss with the officers and soldiers. She also saw a number of pieces of equipment that the Regiment provides operational support to and also had the opportunity to view the Regimental patch work tapestry that had been made by the families back at home.

The Regiment will also love the honour of hosting HRH at their medals parade on return from operations in May 2013.

CAMP SOUTER ICS DETACHMENT - by Sgt Taylor



As Herrick 17 is now in full swing everybody here on Camp Souter is busy making improvements to the equipment that they are responsible for. Some people have found this to be a lot of work and some very long hours have been required to make sure the rest of the tour runs that little bit smoother. There has also been a slight change in the manning of the detachment with **Sgt Richie Salter** moving down from the crows nest upstairs to take overall control of the detachment, this was because he was the only Class 1 Engineer available.

Morale is high as the welfare packages so far have been excellent, with little to no issues of people not being able to contact loved ones back home. Army banter is also high with **LCpl Cavanagh** taking some stick for a letter from his mum that appeared in a well known newspaper.

On the morning of 9 December 2012 a vast majority of Camp Souter's finest turned up for a 5km Santa fun run in order to raise some money for the Army Benevolent fund and to have a giggle in the process. **Rosey, Cappers** and **Kieran** decided to build Santa's sleigh out of some old cardboard, red paint and any other bits they could lay their hands on. It unexpectedly turned out well and everyone was somewhat surprised as the sleigh made it around the whole course when **Rosey** had given it a life expectancy of at least one lap. This just goes to show the ingenuity of the guys in the Det and are confident of achieving even the most mind boggling of tasks.

HQ ISAF - UK NATIONAL SUPPORT ELEMENT - by Cpl G Hedges

December was a busy month for the NSE at HQ ISAF. The detachment is well and truly into the process of bedding in, with everyone settling into their respective roles. Apart from all the work (and there is some, promise!), everyone has been keeping themselves occupied over the festive period, not least opening the huge mountain of Christmas post arriving from home (and eating the vast quantity of confectionary

contained within). It is a difficult time to be away from family and loved ones, so these packages and message of support give everyone a tremendous boost. The 2 Sig Regt personnel have been successful in rectifying issues and establishing a new link, which has been identified by our very pleased users at various sites. The weather has been our most probing enemy, with snow at the helm and on our satellite dishes.

In anticipation of the festive season, the Det has been turned into a (very) poor mans Santa's grotto. There were many festive activities and everyone made the most of being away from family best they could. It is always difficult being away from families, even more so over the holiday season. The first Christmas event was the carol service on Christmas Eve. All of the British congregated around a bonfire and participated in **Padre Evans'** service. **Lt Owen, Sgt Taylor** and **Sig Kasper** had to present readings from the Bible during this service.

Christmas Day will forever be remembered by all, a once in a lifetime experience some would say. To start the day at 05:30, **Cpl Hedges, Cpl Pierson** and **Cpl Welburn** attended a festive spinning class hosted by an American instructor, helping to build multi-national bridges. There was a great feast for Christmas lunch, which was followed by the HQ ISAF Christmas quiz. **Sig Kasper** organised the event, while **Cpl Pierson** purchased prizes for the winning three teams. Most of the British participated and the winning team was the junior NCO representatives from the ICS Det, namely; **Cpl Hedges, Cpl Welburn, LCpl Hames** and **Sig Cormack**, winning the coveted top prize of a handcrafted chess set. The remainder of the day consisted of stuffing our faces with all sorts of morale; chocolate, sweets and crisps.



On New Year's Eve, **SSgt Stewart, Cpl Welburn, Sig Cormack** and **Sig Punglia** took part in a 5km, San Silvestre charity run for Spanish orphans. **Sig Cormack** was the most successful from our representatives. Just one hour later, **Cpl Welburn** continued his physical torture and attended the New Year's Eve spinning class. In the evening, **Cpl Welburn, LCpl McCluskey** and **Sig Punglia** went to the HQ ISAF bonfire and were treated like celebrities by the Romanian Army, insisting on having pictures taken with our boys. They continued the party with the Romanians, to see in the New Year.

A particularly honourable mention must go to **Cpl Chris 'Mo Farrah' Welburn** who, on his return from injury, was the only member of the UK NSE to attempt the 12/12/12 12 laps of camp (apart from the NAFFI girl); finishing with a respectable time of 31mins 23secs. Only a second or two behind the NAFFI girl.

KAIA - UK NATIONAL SUPPORT ELEMENT - by Cpl Watson

Now at the three month stage everybody has fully settled in at KAIA and enjoying the daily routine. In preparation for the festive period the whole UK contingent gathered at the NSE



for a Christmas decorating party, there was also a lot of mail sorting to be done, Thales took everyone out for a meal at the Thai Restaurant and a birthday cake night for somebody in the Det although they couldn't be cheered up all day.

As Christmas drew ever closer, the UK personnel at KAIA were determined not to be left out in making the NSE Christmassy. On Saturday 1 December everyone gathered in the TV room for food, drinks and to put up the Christmas decorations. **Sgt Dowson** organised the food, which involved some tasty chicken wings and a good selection of sandwiches. Of course the alcohol free beer could not be forgotten and there was plenty of it as **Sgt Dowson** again made sure the welfare money collected was well spent. As everybody was about to leave for the night it was remembered why everyone was gathering but the food and drinks were far more enjoyable. The two girls of the NSE (**Rachel** and **Stacy**) volunteered to do the decoration the next morning.

As all soldiers will tell you, mail is one of the best moral boosting things you can ever receive on tour. Starting to count the days until Christmas and waiting for parcels to arrive since families had been told to send them by the 4th to guarantee them for Christmas. Days went by with nothing, apparently due to the bad weather back in the UK as we get told every day by the Postman. The postman became one of the most loved men in the NSE as all hoped he would perform some magic and produce Christmas parcels. Sadly he turned out to be no magician or Santa. About a week or two later though, we were shocked by the amount of mail that turned up. All of a sudden the NSE looked like a mini Royal Mail sorting office back in the UK and turned everyone in to a postman for a day. This cheered everyone up for a few weeks; everybody would like to thank their families for sending lots of parcels although we must confess some of us already opened our Christmas presents we just could not wait, SORRY!

Everybody at KAIA is doing well and counting down the days, some to Christmas and others to R&R. Until then, please keep sending the parcels, letters and everything else as it is this that really makes a difference to the day.

SOUTER FORCE PROTECTION & TRANSPORT COMPANY

OC **Maj Dave Wilson**
Ops Offr **Lt Adam Hopkins**
Ops WO **WO2 Matt Whitfield MBE**

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR - by Sig 'Boxhead' Connolly

With the Christmas decorations erected, cheesy music playing, the cold weather starting to bite and snow beginning to fall this would normally be the setting for a perfect Christmas. However, SFPTC would be spending this Christmas and New Year in Kabul, Afghanistan.



By the time the 2012 celebrations began SFPTC had been in Theatre for two months. During this time the personnel based in Kabul had settled into their roles and were beginning

to fit into a routine. For some this was their first operational tour and first time away from home at Christmas, for others it was just another lamp to swing. Despite this and being in Kabul, away from their families and loved ones, morale remained high throughout.

Christmas Eve arrived and we had a carol service which started off quiet but quickly increased in volume as the better known carols were sung. When Christmas day arrived, my multiple was on guard duty, what better way to start Christmas morning! The senior ranks donned their Osprey and started a 12 hour guard duty to allow me and the rest of the multiple some time off to enjoy the day's activities. At 1200 everyone congregated in the cookhouse ready for our Christmas dinner to be served. The spread and quality was really good thanks to the awesome efforts of the KBR kitchen staff. The atmosphere was really good with everyone laughing and joking, balloons flying around and popping, some filled with gravy, juice or cranberry sauce. **WO2 Whitfield** was 'unfortunately' caught in the crossfire, luckily he saw the funny side and just wiped the gravy from his collar. It was at this moment that the cookhouse fell silent due to the entrance of **Sgt 'H' Harrington**, who after months of denial about his Australian background, entered the cookhouse in full Australian uniform. Whilst in his native uniform some say a smile was even spotted, however this is still unconfirmed. Throughout the remainder of the day there were different competitions held for everyone which consisted of; pool, darts, table football etc.

New Year saw a buffet laid out in the Osprey for all to enjoy, the AGC Acoustic Band was also in attendance. They provided good entertainment throughout the night with a number of cover tracks. There was also some audience participation for **SSgt Stewart**, who bravely attempted to sing 'Summer of 69' which was to the delight of the audience who were in stitches. After the night's entertainment finished it was back to normal routine. Being on Ops had the potential to for a miserable festive period but Christmas 2012 will be one to remember for all the right reasons.

MACEDONIAN RiP - by Cpl Dan Peck and LCpl 'Downy' Brown

A big event on the SFPTC calendar was the Macedonian Relief in Place (RiP), the incoming stage of the RiP was undertaken on 16 January by K20 and the outgoing on the 21 January by K30. SFPTC was responsible for the protective mobility and movement of the 160 strong Macedonian Force Protection Company from their working location in HQ ISAF to Kabul International Airport (KAIA). The Macedonians operate as a guard force at HQ ISAF and as per British Soldiers they operate on a six month tour of duty.



Much planning went into the RiP before the day to make sure that everything ran smoothly, as movement of a significant amount of troops plus kit in one day across Kabul is no easy task. Due to lift capability a number of runs were required to



move all the Macedonians between locations. The week in between the moves was required in order to allow them to conduct a hand over. This was to make sure that the new-to-Theatre Macedonian troops were fully conversant in their new role and operations. The Macedonians have always been very friendly towards us and a good working relationship whenever we have engaged with them. After we had finished their move to KAIA they were very appreciative of what we had done for them and thanked us for facilitating their move to start their journey home. Once the task was complete we collectively felt a deep satisfaction in knowing we helped them finish their long six month tour.

HELMAND INFORMATION COMMUNICATION SERVICES SIGNAL SQUADRON (HICSSS) – 246 GSS

OC **Maj DR Orr**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Durgabhadur Gurung**

The HICSSS HQ comprising of **Maj David Orr (OC)**, **Capt Hayden Ayres (Ops Officer)**, **WO2(SSM) Durga (SSM)**, **Capt Lok (Programme Manager)** and the trusty Supervisors, **SSgt (FoS) Pratap Ghale**, **SSgt (YofS) Neil Donaghy**, **SSgt (FoS IS) Andy Kay** took control of HICSSS on 15 Nov 12 after a good handover programme with 16 Sig Regt. Injected into the team were **SSgt Suresh Limbu** as Service Desk Manager and **Cpl Subodh ‘Tea Boy’ Sunuwar** as a Watchkeeper.

The first two months have been very busy, however, much has been achieved in that time. HICSSS have control of a healthy network and all members know their part in order to keep it this way. A battle rhythm has now become routine and everyone always makes sure that the SSM is kept happy with our frequent sessions in the gym. In particular, **SSgt(FoS IS) Andy Kay’s** attempts at Op MASSIVE are admirable, but come with a health warning as it only seems to develop his chicken legs! The Ops team also played their part in the HICSSS charity event which required each member to give up a number of lunchtimes to jump on the exercise bikes to pound the kilometres. **SSgt (FoS) Pratap Ghale** did well but clearly suffered from a lack of his daily ‘pizza’ fix!

R&R has begun which has seen a number of key personnel depart for 2 weeks of deserved rest. The Ops team are using the returns as milestone in the tour and ‘selfishly’ welcoming them back on their return. We continue to work at a healthy pace ensuring that HICSSS continue to serve the user community as well as they have for the first third of the tour.



SSgt (FoS) Pratap and LCpl Rabin are impressed with MANTIS

BASTION ICS TROOP

OC **Capt Amrit Gurung**
SSgt **SSgt Suresh Gurung**

A SHORT NOTE ON BASE RELOCATION AND CLOSURE (BRAC) – by SSgt Suresh Gurung

We are in a transitional phase in Afghanistan. The ANSF are better trained and gradually taking over the responsibility of security of their country. By the end of 2014, they will be fully in charge of security in Afghanistan. During this transitional phase, a lot of bases are closing down or being transferred to the ANSF under the banner BRAC. During BRAC, HICSSS Base Closure Teams (BCT) go to the base in question and set up either Rapidly Deployable Mission Secret (RDMS) or, our new capability, Mobile Mission Secret (MMS) in order to support Commanders with continued services during base closure. Once this is set up all original CIS equipment is gracefully shut down, dismantled, 100% accounted for and recovered back to Camp Bastion. The RDMS or MMS stays up and running until the very end. Once complete, the shut down order is given by the local commander and the BCT team tear down RDMS or MMS and recover back to Bastion.



Nice helmet! SSgt Suresh Gurung on board Merlin on his way to PBI

COLONEL IN CHIEF, HRH PRINCESSES ROYAL VISIT – by Sig Khudail Limbu

On 18 Dec 2012, our Colonel in Chief, **HRH The Princess Royal** and her husband **Vice Admiral Sir Timothy Laurence** visited HICSSS. It was a surprise visit as we were just told there would be a visit but not who the visitors were. It was only apparent in the morning of the visit that the VVIP would be our Colonel in Chief and her husband as we were briefed on some royal protocols.

HICSSS had two teams of 5 lucky people selected to meet the Colonel in Chief. The first team leader was OC HICSSS, **Maj David Orr** and the second team leader was OC Bastion ICS Tp, **Capt Amrit Gurung**. I was in the second team and in our team there was myself (**Sig Khudail**), **LCpl Paul Renton**, **Cpl Khagendra Gurung** and **LCpl Andrew Clark**.

HRH Princess Royal and her husband arrived exactly on time and were met by the JFCIS(A) Comd and Deputy Comd. They were shown around the Squadron and met other Royal Signals personnel. Our team first met **Vice Admiral Sir Timothy**. He was very friendly and approachable as he talked to every one of us in turn. Later on, we had the opportunity to meet **HRH The Princesses Royal**. Our team leader **Capt Amrit** introduced her to every one of us. The Princess was very friendly, approachable and easy to talk to. She shook hands with all of us and asked about our jobs, families and day to day life in Afghanistan. So far this VVIP visit has been the highlight of my tour. This sort of opportunity does not come often and I find myself lucky to say I was there.



FORWARD REPAIR TEAM (FRT)

Team SNCO

Sgt Dhan Gurung

NO COMMS NO BOMBS – by *Sgt Dhan Gurung*

It's been a very busy start to the tour so far with a quick handover from 16 Sig Regt. We have had several short notice taskings from our Ops team with high priority faults that need to be fixed as soon as possible. So far I have gone to 12 Patrol Bases and Forward Operating Bases in just 2 1/2 months. I was deployed to fix the Kestrel Link in PB Durai as soon as I took over my post as the FRT IC after finishing my RSOI. The FRT is based on a team of 4 individuals, **Sgt Dhan Gurung**, **LCpl Amy Mallinson**, **LCpl Lee Anson** and **LCpl Nicolas 'Santa' Santangelli**, although we often get augmented by others when more people are required. We are responsible for repairing faults out in Patrol Bases and Forward Operating Bases within Helmand, which includes Kestrel Links, VSAT Links and FOB-WiFi, which provides welfare phones and the internet facilities to the soldiers out on the ground.

Our task also includes conducting reces of all the PBs in preparation for the future Base Relocation and Closure tasks, which help us to determine manpower requirements and time estimates. So far we have closed three PBs. There are many BRAC tasks in the pipeline over the next 2-3 months. **LCpl Lee Anson** went to close down PB Nahidullah with his team and I went to PB Hazrat with **LCpl Raja** and **LCpl Josh Mazzali**. On a BRAC task we deploy with capability like Rapidly Deployable Mission Secret (RDMS) in 4+4 (4 computers + 4 telephones) configuration. RDMS has been replaced by Mobile Mission Secret (MMS) which is a lot more compact and capable RDMS. The MMS capability is put in place while we tear down the Overtask Remote Access System (ORAS) and the Kestrel link. The first FRT to deploy with MMS is at PB4 under command of **SSgt Suresh Gurung**. The FRT is very busy going out to the forward locations. There are busier times ahead but the good thing about being busy is that it makes our tour go quicker – 2 ½ months have elapsed in blink of an eye!

BASTION ICS TROOP LINE SECTION

IC **Sgt McClarence**

THE JOURNEY SO FAR – by *Sig Mcleod*

Since arriving in Theatre in November 2012, myself, **Sig Oliver 'Carlton' Mcleod**, and the rest of the line section have been constantly busy. Whether it's a new fibre pull or routine maintenance tasks there has never been a dull day. On a standard day in line section, headed by **Sgt Lee 'Claz' McClarence** and **Cpl Alex 'Reggie' Hammond**, will go about Bastion 1, 2, 3 and occasionally Camp Leatherneck fixing phone and fibre faults. As quoted by **Sig Liam 'Princess' Holland** "since being on tour I feel my installation technician skills have vastly improved, and after completing a job I get real job satisfaction, especially when the customers is happy". My colleagues and I also get the chance to fly out of Camp Bastion to MOBs, PBs and CPs to undertake jobs such as MCU moves and cable pulls. **Sig Daniel 'Griff' Griffiths** and **Sig Michael 'Magrino' Magrino** recently flew out to FOB Oulette; they said it was good to get away from Bastion and as they have never flown in helicopters (Merlins, Chinooks and Ospreys) before, it has been an amazing experience. We also work alongside two RAF Tactical Communications Wing personnel, **SAC(T) Scott Thompson** and **SAC(T) Danny Tomlinson**, which is good because they bring new strategies and methods, which aid us in fixing faults. We also work with 10 Signal Regiment personnel including **Sig Shaun 'Lighting' Williams**. On behalf of Line Section I would say it has been a great start to the tour with moral still high so far into our 6 months. I'm sure the remaining time left will be just as good.

HICSSS SERVICE DESK

Service Desk Manager

SSgt Suresh Limbu

SERVICE DESK 'THE FACE OF THE HICSSS' – by *LCpl Nirmal Rai*

In today's IT dominated world we are not strangers to calling a service desk in order to report incidents or to express our grievances with regards to the services provided by different companies or agencies. In Helmand it is exactly the same, except now we are at the other end of the phone! As service desk operators we deal with such service request calls 24/7, averaging a call every 2 minutes during the day. In addition to that we also face walk-in customers, contractors and visitors in between the calls. Well, in a nutshell, we are extremely busy. The shop window we provide is not just like a Mumbai call centre, it is also the face of HICSSS, the face of the Royal Signals and QG Signals. Well, the intensity and the pace of work was not something that was trained in MST but we are learning by doing and we are generating continual improvement.

Bastion Service Desk also acts as a Regional Point of Contact (RPOC) for Helmand Province. The Service Desk operators deal with varieties of requests. It ranges from customers' account requests on various systems that HICSSS provide, IMPEX (Import and Export data) requests, incident recording and escalation to the right resolver groups. The Bastion Service Desk is a focal point for anything and everything. We strive to return a normal level of service after an incident has been reported to us and feedback plays a very important role to the customers on the reported incident.



SSgt Suresh Limbu deals with a customer on the phone

Since the takeover from 16 Signal Regiment on 10 Nov 12 we have dealt with an influx of new personnel in Theatre. The transition process is never an easy task. We have since implemented BMC Remedy as a single Incident reporting tool which replaced the legacy CAS D and SDE. The improvement in the fault reporting system has contributed directly to the integration of incident management processes into the Service management infrastructure. As mentioned earlier, the Bastion Service Desk acts as Local Point of Contact (LPOC) for more than 2000 users based in Camp Bastion and the RPOC serves a similar number of users outside Bastion. The number of users, however, does not truly reflect all the assets and services we cover. The most commonly used method of reporting incidents to us is by phone. Some users prefer to walk-in to our humble portacabin to report any incidents directly to us. Others email, while some use the newly introduced online Routine Incident Report Form. Additionally we have to deal with contractors and visitors who have business with either HICSSS or JFCIS(A) on a daily basis. Due to the nature of the job it requires a great deal of interpersonal skills which, being Gurkhas, we are not naturally gifted with. To make it even more interesting we have to deal with some very frustrated or rather annoyed customers



occasionally. This also means we have to be prepared to take some abusive calls too. So there is no room for complacency at all. On a positive note, such situations only help to improve and develop us as competent service providers. Without the service desk, customers do not have primary point of contact for any service request and all stages of service restoration.

To sum it up, three months have gone in the blink of an eye. The second half of the tour will hopefully be as interesting and eventful as the first half. At the moment we are all looking forward to our well deserved R&R.

BASTION ICS TROOP TCW DET

Det Comd **Sgt Harris**

SO FAR SO GOOD – by SAC M Clough

4 Sqn Tactical Communications Wing (TCW) RAF arrived in Theatre at the end of November 2012 looking forward to a tough but rewarding ‘turn of the wheel’. With only a year elapsed since we were here last, the lads settled in quickly, in no small part thanks to the excellent reception received from 2 Signal Regiment.

TCW are throughout HICSSS, taking up posts on Overtask, Housekeeper, DII C(S)D, JOCS and in Line Section, and the working tempo has been high everywhere. However, regular curry nights courtesy of the Queen’s Ghurkha Signals featuring poker games and bingo, and a variety of charity events have kept spirits high and helped to reinforce the team spirit that runs through the core of HICSSS.



TCW Det Personnel posing during Curry and BBQ night. One of them had 8 steaks!

Although we have only been here for a short time we have had plenty of highs and lows and have been lucky enough to meet a few famous people; HRH Princess Anne, Prime Minister David Cameron and Greg James from BBC Radio 1. Prince Harry should have been among that list as well, but he can be seen so frequently in and around the mess (yes, it is ‘The Mess’ for us and we won’t be convinced otherwise!), that the novelty has definitely worn off now!

And as if all of this wasn’t enough to keep the morale up, we have also managed to make an appearance on Soccer AM with a photo taken of all the lads during a visit to the Merlin Detachment – naturally sporting a variety of different football shirts, and sparking a great deal of banter in the office!

“So far so good,” would be appropriate to say at this juncture. We are now almost halfway through our 4 month tour (sorry 2 Sigs!) and if things continue as they have so far, we’re going to have a great second half. Thanks certainly have to go out to everyone at HICSSS for making us feel so welcome, and we hope that our contributions to the mission



HICSSS TCW Lads with Merlin Det

have made those efforts worthwhile.

LKG ICS TROOP

OC **Lt Rich Greener**
SSgt **SSgt Laxman Gurung**

ARTICLE 2 – 1 MONTH 2 WEEKS IN – by Lt Rich Greener

Since arriving in Lashkar Gah the Troop has been kept busy with various projects both inside and outside the wire. The busy pace of life and long days have not dented the Troop’s morale, with the two girls, **Cpl Michelle Smith** and **Cpl Sarah Williams** romping ahead on the “Most Parcels Received” leader board, although the Troop OC, **Lt Rich Greener**, is a close third. The parcels have generally been enjoyed communally and so you could argue that our good moral has been Haribo fuelled.

Since last time, Lashkar Gah ICS Troop has undertaken two main projects, the larger of which involved getting one of our Battle Group HQs ready for winter. The second smaller project was a base closure, fitting in with the theme across the whole of Helmand. On arrival we inherited the outline plan of how Transition Support Unit (TSU) LKG HQ would be prepared for the winter, but not until we dug into the detail did we find out what a huge task this would be. From the start it appeared **Cpl Smith**, the LKG ICS Tp Head Installation Technician, would have her work cut out. As with all good plans it appeared simple, however the Troop OC had sleepless nights wondering at what point it would all go wrong!

The work started on time, with **Cpl Smith** finishing the build of the temporary HQ in record time, 2 days ahead of schedule. The first potential issue was dealt with seamlessly as we moved the whole HQ in a few hours one night from one tent to a replacement. Getting everyone in and working at speed resulted in a happy HQ. The work to strip out numerous HERRICKS’ worth of flooring and a horrific amount of legacy cabling was completed quickly giving the Civilian Contractors over 2 days to refurbish the tent by themselves. This is where friction started to creep in and a 2 day refurbishment turned in to a 7 day refurbishment. We were now most definitely behind schedule. However, as a testament to the confidence the HQ had in the “temporary build” the TSU had decided to conduct an Operation whilst there, giving **Cpl Michelle Smith** and team an extra day or two to complete the new and permanent HQ. This they did, and with minimal fuss, the whole HQ was moved back in one evening.

The second project running concurrently was the closure of a Police Mentoring site in the south of Lashkar Gar town. The Troop OC deployed with **Sgt Surrendra Sampang** and **Cpl Tirtha Rai** at 24 hours notice to move. Their job was to close and recover all British communications located within the middle of the ANP Compound. After a brief road move they





Sunny Christmas! LKG ICS Troop posing on Christmas day

arrived in location and assessed the situation, however a simple job turned out to be rather more difficult as the main bearer (a small satellite dish) was located on the roof of a 2 storey building. With the help of the US Marines contingent co located there, the dish was recovered from the roof of the building with the view of a castle built by Alexander the Great being an added bonus. All internal equipment was easily recovered and accounted for before the return journey to MOB LKG in the early evening.

FORWARD ICS TROOP

OC **Lt Mike Kerney**
SSgt **SSgt Suresh Limbu**

MOB PRICE ICS DET

Det Comd **Sgt Navinkaji Gurung**

MY BUMPY RIDES TO PBs – by LCpl Bhim Isyo Subba

‘Welcome to MOB Price’ - the first sentence I heard from **Sgt Navinkaji** and **Sgt Kajman Limbu** as soon as we alighted from a Chinook. We were feeling completely lost in the new place and were looking at each other with the blank faces. That was the start of our six months tour in this new place called MOB Price, later renamed HMS Price by 40 Cdo BG.

One morning early in the tour I was told by **Sgt Navinkaji Gurung** to get ready to be deployed to PB Hayatullah. They were having problem with a power supply in the Ops Room. My task was to check the power supply and get as much information about the fault as possible. I was really excited as this was first time I was going out of MOB Price. I was ready in my full protective equipment and desperately waiting to be picked up by the troops from PB Hayatullah. Finally, the waiting was over. They quickly loaded me in to the vehicle and we were off. I was desperate to get the outside view but to my dismay there were no windows. It was just a fifteen minutes drive out of the main gate. As soon as we reached the location they showed me the way to the Ops Room so that I could crack on with my job. **LCpl Sean Heavey** was the Signaller in the location. He briefed me on their equipment and the faulty power supply in the Ops Room. I did all the necessary checks and confirmed the power supply to be faulty. I took necessary information required to demand for a replacement and after that I talked **LCpl Heavey** through the necessary checks and maintenance tasks he needed to carry out regularly. Before I could have a time for a chat, they were ready to drop me back to MOB Price.

I thought that I would not get another chance to go out to the outdets, but a couple of weeks later I got another opportunity to visit PB1 (40 Commando, C Coy) to install a new VoIP phone and produce a recce report of the location. This time **LCpl Marc Carr** was coming with me and we were

staying overnight. We left MOB Price in the afternoon. The ride was bumpy and tiring. We reached PB1 in the late afternoon. As soon as we reached the location we were received by **CSgt Baudin** of 40 Commando. He showed us round the camp and took us to Ops Room where we were working for the rest of our stay. I quickly installed the new VoIP phone and meanwhile **LCpl Carr** started tidying up the cluttered cables in the Ops Room. Our plan was to finish our task in the Ops Room that day and do the recce report the following day. Luckily, we managed to complete our task in the Ops Room by the evening. **CSgt Baudin** showed us our tent which was quite close to the Ops Room. The next day, we started to work on the recce report after a good breakfast. As we were working on the report one of the signallers came and told us that they were having problems with the system. I followed to the Ops Room and found out that the whole system had drastically slowed down. I did some checks on the system and found out that their Kestrel was not receiving or sending data. After doing some physical checks, I found out that the fibre cable running from Kestrel to the Ops Room was broken. I quickly fixed the broken cable and soon the link was back and running. All Ops Room users were happy and relieved. Suddenly I realised that I didn't have much time left as our flight to Bastion was due to arrive in couple of hours. So, I quickly showed the users how to do a regular maintenance on the system and the simple checks they can carry out in case of system failure. By that time **LCpl Carr** had also finished the recce report. We were happy that we finished out tasks successfully.

My third task was to fix a fibre cable and do a recce report in PB2 (1 RGR, Delhi Coy). Like PB1, I was staying overnight. I was picked up by the Troop in the late afternoon. By the time we left the gate it was quite dark. We reached PB2 safely and on time. I was received by the Det Comd, **Cpl Novraj Gurung** 1 RGR. He showed me round the camp and took me to my tent first. He then took me to the medical centre where the fibre cable was broken. When I checked the cable one of the heads was snapped. I quickly re-headed it and everything was in and working. Since it was already late, I went to take a rest and would continue with my recce report on the following day. Next day after having a good breakfast I carried out working on the recce report. The weather was really bad on that day. I was told that there would not be any vehicle movements. So I had to stay there for another night. I managed to complete the recce report on that day. On the same day, I showed all the signallers how to do regular maintenance on the system and also taught them about general fault finding. Finally, it was time to leave. I really had a great time away from my working place but it was good to get back.

I regard myself as one of the luckiest to get the chance to step out of my working place and experience the rough rides that the outdets are experiencing. These will be my most memorable moments of my tour. I might not be getting many opportunities like these but I will definitely be more than happy to put on my protective equipment and get in to the armoured vehicles for another bumpy ride.

FOB SHAWQAT ICS DET

Det Comd **Sgt Netra Rai**

THE TOUR SO FAR – by LCpl Singha Gurung

Four of us from 246 GSS arrived in FOB Shawqat on 7 November 2012 for the much anticipated winter tour of Op HERRICK 17. On our arrival we couldn't help but notice big mud walls that dominate the FOB; these we later learnt were the remains of a British fort from the 2nd Anglo Afghan war. Once we got settled in the handover with 16 Sig Regt went pretty smoothly and we took over complete responsibility of ICS Det of TSU NDA from 9 November 2012. **Cpl Sailen Thapa**



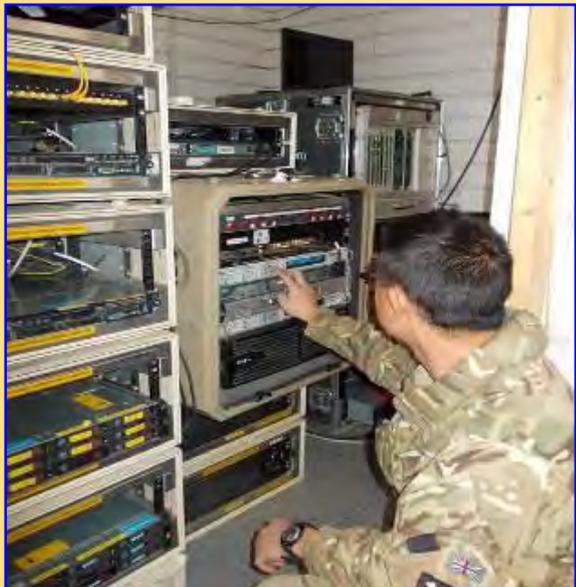
is responsible for VSAT and Promina, **LCpl Singha Gurung** looks after the servers and **LCpl Lalit Gurung** is responsible for Kestrel links. **Sig Sagun Limbu** has been more of a



Not for the camera. Sig Sagun in real scenario

Telemech than his actual trade - Royal Signals Electrician.

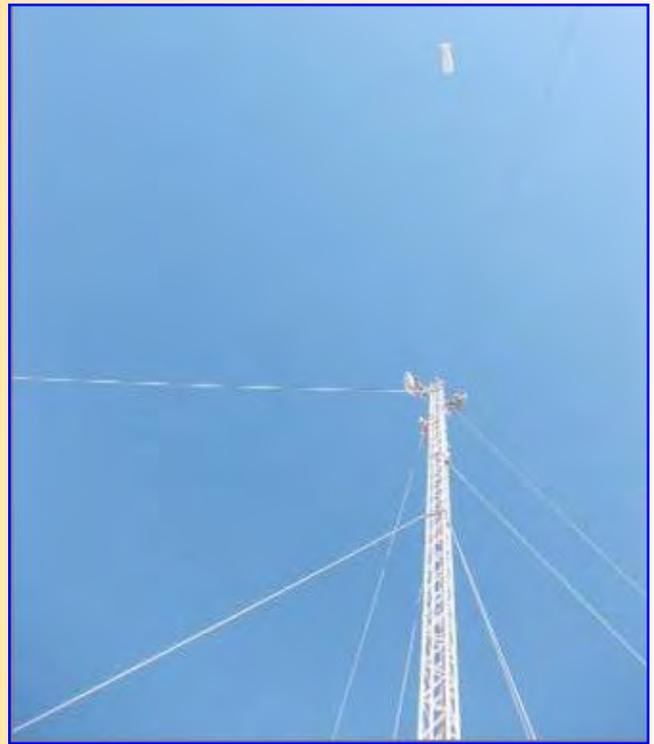
The first few weeks were quite busy since we all had to get an idea of each other's trade so that we could get on with resolving faults when others were away doing sangar duty,



How do I switch off that beeping "Panic" alarm? LCpl Singha tries to sort it out

guardian angel, prowler, vehicle search team or any other camp security related jobs. We are supporting 1st Bn The Mercian Regiment HQ in FOB Shawqat along with their 5 Patrol Bases (PBs) within our AO. All of us have been deployed to out-dets in order to resolve faults and also to carry out husbandry checks of communication equipments. Apart from our mission related communication equipment we look after other welfare systems such as FOB Wi-Fi, BFBS and Welfare phones. Visits from our commanders in Bastion have been more frequent than we anticipated. There have been more than 8 visits from our Department Heads in just over than 2 months. Visits have always been helpful since we have been getting tips and guidance on maintenance of our equipment.

The first person from our detachment has gone on R&R and there will be one person absent at a time from now until the end of March. With one less person we knew it was going to be busier but surprisingly we have been coping very well. It



Kestrel mast and PGSS balloon



LCpl Singha posing just before going to PB

all comes down to the dedication by all detachment crew on understanding not only theirs but each others responsibilities.
BASE ISTAR TECHNICAL SUPPORT (BITS) DET

Det Comd

Sgt Nirakal Gurung

BITS TEAM UPDATE – by LCpl Roshan Baidya

The Base ISTAR Technical Support team (BITS) work for 5 RA STA (Surveillance and Target Acquisition) Battery providing technical support and a service desk manned 24/7 for the ISTAR network. The BITS team comprises of **Sgt Nirakal Gurung** (Det Comd), **Cpl Saroj Rana**, **Cpl David Johnson**, **LCpl Roshan Baidya**, **LCpl Sunil Gurung**, **LCpl Ryan Bull** and **LCpl Gareth Stanley** as Forward Repair Teams.

The importance of the ISTAR network is felt widely as it provides better eyes for ISAF forces on the ground and helps Commanders in the planning and execution of Ops. It allows live video streaming and recording from Base ISTAR assets.

Our work began by deploying to fix point to point radio links, establishing new radios for resilience and clearing outstanding



faults. We have had a busy tour so far, deploying to most of the MOBs, FOBs, PBs and CPs. Things started settling as the network became more stable after some intense routine network management and as a result we now get a bit more time in Bastion. This time has been well used for organised revision in the workshop by senior members of the team.



LCpl Sunil checks PIDU

As a Class 2 CSE, working in the BITS team has been fantastic. We have the opportunity and freedom to work with routers, switches, building servers and clients and configuring other ISTAR assets under the supervision of highly experienced Class 1 CSEs. It has helped us understand the Layer 3 network and IP schema well. Working on our own when we are out on



LCpl Sunil checking PTP link

the ground for fault finding has given us more confidence and experience on the jobs.

There is a saying, 'Time flies like a flick when you get busy' and the busier we get, the quicker the tour passes. The last two months have gone so quickly that I only realised it when my R&R was suddenly a week away. We have been to most of the out Dets flying on Osprey, Chinook, Merlin, and even on road moves. Working out on the ground with different people everyday and learning how the other units work is an experience. What gives us more pleasure is that commanders and guys on the ground appreciate our job when you fix the capability and say well done and thank you. So far, we are enjoying our job as part of BITS team. We are looking forward to making this tour a success and returning home safely with our heads held high and making our Regiment proud.

FOB JUNO ICS DET

Det Comd

Sgt Dan Rai

A SHORT NOTE FROM ICS DET JUNO – by Nagendra Gurung

“Train hard fight easy” was in the hearts and minds of every soldier of 2 Sig Regt from day one of deployment training for Op HERRICK 17. We successfully completed vigorous military exercises, different comms systems courses, in-house cascade training and series of exercises like 4 Mech Bde’s CFX and FTX in preparation for Op HERRICK 17. By the end of Sep 12, nothing was left to train on and we were more than ready for deployment. Finally, we headed to Afghanistan in Oct 12 to put all our training into action and achieve our mission.

We deployed on Op HERRICK 17 as the CSR (Campaign Signal Regiment) to support the NATO mission for Afghanistan in Oct 12. Our mighty Sqn, 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn, is deployed as the HICSSS, responsible for providing information communication services for the whole of the Helmand AO. A team of 4 personnel consisting of **Sgt Dan Rai** (Det Comd), **A/Cpl David McBarron** (CSE), **LCpl Nagendra Gurung** (CS Op) and **LCpl Cameron Dowd** (IS engineer) headed to the FOB Juno to take over the responsibility of ICS Det. From the beginning, our four man team has been working tirelessly providing robust, resilient and swift communications support to the elements in FOB Juno since taking over from 16 Sig Regt in the first week of Nov 12. We look after a number of communications systems that are vital to communicate within Theatre and back to the UK. We are extremely busy providing support to this element but we are enjoying every element of our job here, working as a team rectifying faults when they arise. The Det is running smoothly as it should be as we were



A snap during OC and SSM’s visit to FOB JUNO ICS Det

well trained for this. We hope to hand over this ICS Det to next unit in an even better condition than what we inherited. Despite their busy schedule, we had the privilege of having our Sqn OC, **Maj David Orr** and SSM, **WO2 (SSM) Durga**



A/Cpl McBarron carrying out weekly IMIs on redundancy VSAT link back to BSN



Gurung in our ICS Det on 12 Dec 12. It was nice to hear their appreciation of whatever we are doing as ICS Det in FOB Juno which has boosted our morale. Now we are halfway through our tour and with the mentality of “be proactive rather than reactive”, I am sure we will have a very successful tour.

FOB OULLETTE ICS DET

LIFE SO FAR AT FOB OULLETTE – by LCpl Gyan Rai

The roller-coaster ride from Bastion to FOB Oullette (Oul) on a Merlin was extraordinary. It was a great start to what has so far been a very good tour.

The initial two weeks were a learning curve for us. The people and places were new to us as we had neither been to FOB Oul nor worked with Scots Guards before. We took some time to adjust ourselves and set our work routines. As we thought we were getting on well with our routines, we were taken by surprise by a loud bang, which seemed like an IDF. The next thing, we were on the ground, flat like a plank. Amusing to say this but it was the big gun (artillery) that had just fired without an announcement.

Our HOTO with 16 Signal Regiment went swiftly as our detachment commander, **Sgt Rabi Lama**, deployed to FOB Oul two weeks earlier than us. This is our fourth week in the FOB and we have settled in well. Work wise, we have one person on the night shift and two on the dayshift. There will be a rotation every two weeks among us. Twice every week, each



Cpl Dipendra fixing Kestrel Dish on MCU

of us is on a Sanger duty. While on Sanger, it is a chance to mix with the other departmental personnel. As we are on a winter operational tour, the temperature is rapidly dropping. During the day, it is warm and sunny like summer back in the UK, but from dusk to dawn it is icy cold. I am glad that I have brought my both top and bottom softies for my night shift. Overall, FOB Oul is a well settled operational operating base where the cookhouse provides healthy food. Moreover, it has all the necessary amenities such as a gym, a welfare hub with wireless connection, welfare phones, a local shop, a washing machine, hot shower, and a place to perform the insanity workout. I think, with a bit of ingenuity and resourcefulness, anyone can create a comfortable place to live.

CHRISTMAS DAY IN FOB OULETTE – by LCpl Gyan Rai

25 Dec 12 - on this auspicious day, we had a wonderful time. It was a warm and sunny morning in the FOB when everyone was just about to start work; the ICS team had a comical plan.

The plan was to start everyone’s Christmas day with a smile. To resemble the humorous Santa Claus, **LCpl Gyan Rai** was dressed with a Christmas hat, a long white beard and amusing looking glasses. For an elf, **Cpl Dipendra Rai** was equipped with a bag full of Christmas cards and a camera to capture all the smiles. We commenced our mission starting from the Ops room. “Ho! Ho! Ho! Merry Christmas everyone!”, I yelled when I entered the room. The entire room was silent and every pair of eyes were locked on me. Despite the peculiar atmosphere, my elf and I carried on. I gave out cards and shook hands with everyone that we came across. Many were surprised and pleased. In return, we received many complimentary remarks. One of them even said that it was his very first Christmas card. Such words were gratifying to hear.

It was a simple plan and our mission was to spread the smile. Mission accomplished!

MOBILE COMMUNICATION UNIT (MCU) – by Cpl Dipendra Rai

The Kestrel MCU (Mobile Communication Unit) has been very important asset for the terrestrial comms network across the Theatre. The mast is designed to hold four radio links on antennas at up to 30m high. This MCU is particularly used for the WAN link radio connections in Theatre. Due to the rapidly changing network configuration, it was necessary recently to install a replacement MCU in FOB Oullette. Cautious planning was required in order to tear down the pre-existing KESTREL mast infrastructure. With no falling derrick on the 20 metre mast, it became a delicate operation to bring the tower down without damaging a nearby ISO container but **Sgt Rabi Lama** and **Cpl Dipendra Rai** dealt with the obstacles well.

With no support of falling derrick and insufficient space to dismantle the tower, the whole process was very difficult. This difficulty was multiplied over time due to the dress state being raised to two, requiring us to carry an extra 15kgs of personal protection equipment. Furthermore, with the appropriate manpower, the process could have been completed within three hours rather than the three days it took due to the hostile conditions and constant IDF threat.

However there was a constant supply of brew from one of our det members, **LCpl Gyan Rai**, which kept us going. The work party (ie myself and **Sgt Rabi Lama**) had never listened to the BFBS Radio as much as we did while performing the task. Thanks to BFBS Radio! There was no need for anyone to go to the gym throughout the task since the task itself turned out to be enough work out for the day. The whole MCU has been accounted for and sent back to BSN. Despite the concerns and risks, with careful application judgement and common sense, we were able to bring the mast down successfully.



Where do I start? Sgt Rabi Lama tries to fathom



OP NEW

SO2 J6
30 Sig Regt Det
30 Sig Regt Det

Maj Nik Bruce
Sig Tommy Fullegar
Sig 'Scotty' Doherty

At the time of writing, Op NEWCOMBE, UK support to Mali, is entering into its sixth week. The initial deployment in early January 2013 was based around a Joint Force Headquarters (JFHQ) Operational Liaison and Reconnaissance Team (OLRT). Subsequently, as it became clearer that the task would likely be more enduring and require a more logistic focus, a Joint Force Logistic Component Headquarters (JFLogC) High Readiness Logistic Team (HRLT) was deployed to take over the reigns on 2 Feb 2013.

The wider plan 'in a nutshell' sees the French conducting Op SERVAL in order to drive out and reclaim large parts of Mali that had been taken over by rebel forces. The intent is for the French to be replaced by troops from a number of African countries, the African Mission in Support of Mali (AFISMA) thus allowing the Malian Armed Forces to be trained by the European Training Mission (EUTM).

The HRLT, headed by JFLgC Dep Comd, **Gp Capt Paul Warwick**, is augmented by SMEs from J2, FP, Air AT and a SENTINEL LO. We also share our facilities here on Bamako airfield with a small US detachment. Our tasks cover a fairly broad spectrum and include, liaison with the French Operational Headquarters (OHQ), HMA, support to UK C-17 operations, LO to AFISMA, and providing PJHQ with 'ground truth' on issues such as FP, security and local atmospherics. In addition there are a number of 'be prepared to' tasks in support of the UK contribution to EUTM.

Playing an absolutely key role in enabling this to happen are the two signallers from 30 Signal Regiment, part of the initial Operational Liaison Recce Team who deployed in January.

We, **Sig Tommy Fullegar** and **Sig 'Scotty' Doherty**, are part of 30 Signal Regiment, Bravo Troop 256 Sig Sqn, the high readiness troop that support Operational Liaison Recce Teams (OLRT's) at JFHQ Northwood and we were the boys on 4hrs notice to move when the call came in on Saturday 12 January, informing us to be at PJHQ Northwood ready to be briefed at 0830 the following morning. Crypto was collected and signed for, kit checked, repacked and bundled into the back of their vehicle for the short drive the following day.

An early start the next morning began what was to be a very long day. We boarded our plane that afternoon, after layovers at Casablanca and Dakar we arrived in Bamako, Mali the following day after a long tiring flight. Upon arrival we were ushered through security and taken to the VIP Lounge. Here there was a short period of deliberation as we had arrived into the country with no visas, as there was simply no time to acquire them before boarding our flight back in the UK. With some diplomatic help from the Defense Attaché our passports were stamped and we were taken to the military side of the airport to begin our tasking. The main priority was to establish an Ops Room and gain secure communications back to the UK as quickly as possible. Within the hour communications were in and the Ops Room could begin to take shape.

Whilst the Ops Room began to grow we still needed to work out where to sleep. The first option was outside in a dusty hanger co-located with the French troops. This was daunting as early indications led us to believe our task would last at least 21 days. However we had a stroke of fortune when an American spotted the Union Flag on one of the OLRT's member's arm and



COMBE



asked what they were up to. The conversation ended with the Americans offering to accommodate us in their facility (a single storey building) next to the taxi way.

Our day to day routine normally consists of maintaining communications back to the UK and normal OLRT Ops Room procedures such as spot mapping and route planning. On top of that we would go out on reces to various different embassies within Bamako. Days would generally be long and fast paced working towards sending a daily ASSESSREP back to PJHQ, normally around midnight.



We initially deployed with one Dial Up Jocs and Brent (secret data & voice), Orion (secret data), Ash (restricted Dii) with one BGAN acting as the bearer for all three systems. We also took Iridium Satcom Phones (with secret sleeves) to provide secure communications when performing recce tasks. During the day the OLRT members would work on a secret LAN and transfer work to be transmitted back to the UK via our primary means, DU Jocs. Staff mobile phones were utilised for insecure calls in country and back to the UK. We also purchased local mobile phones for in country calls as they provided a clearer, less distorted line.

As the Operation began to develop the Sentinel LO detachment (5 (AC) Sqn ISTAR platform) deployed to our location with a DU Jocs, Brent, BGAN and SECTERA secure mobile phone. There may be a future requirement for the SENTINEL LO to talk directly to the aircraft whilst on mission in order to relay information in near real time, therefore a PRC 117F has been dispatched in case this requirement arises.

The HRLT, having carried out a recce prior to their deployment, subsequently brought additional communications equipment to support the slightly larger amount of personnel being deployed and provide additional capabilities.

We are now entering our sixth week supporting the French Armed Forces in Mali. We continue to recce routes and update maps to provide more detailed situational awareness. The HRLT are providing logistical support to AFISMA troops and we continue a close link with Her Majesty's Ambassador and Defence Attaché.

Certa Cito



NEWS FROM TRAINING



11th (ROYAL SCHOOL OF SIGNALS) SIGNAL REGIMENT BLANDFORD



CO
RSM **Lt Col M C Brookes**
 WO1 (RSM) M Darby

1 (OUSTON) SQUADRON

OC **Capt G Ashman**
SSM **SSgt P Kemp**

SHQ and RTW

Life in SHQ has continued at a rapid base in SHQ and RTW dealing with the day to day running of the Sqn as well as the numerous inductions run for both Phase 2s and Permanent Staff. The post Christmas blues were soon blown away with the realisation that the ECI was only weeks away. Despite the impending inspection, the SQMS, **SSgt Paul Kemp**, still found plenty of time to get out on the golf course with his new BFF, the GSM, representing the Garrison in a number of events. The CI, **Capt Rajeev Shrestha**, has also spent as little time in the office as the SQMS, spending a number of days away preparing for the upcoming 'expedition' to Mount Everest – it's very convenient how he's managed to tag on a week's leave at the end of the trip!

CABLE SYSTEMS SECTION

Firstly, we would like to say a fond farewell to **Les Collins** who is retiring. After 22 years serving as a Tele Mech reaching the dizzy heights of WO2 (a rare feat), **Les** decided to use his wealth of knowledge and expertise to instruct in Cable Systems Section. Since February 1998, **Les** has fastidiously taught course after course, mentoring and encouraging the future of the Corps. **Les**, you have been a pleasure to work with, thanks you from us all. As we say goodbye to **Les**, we say welcome back to **Al Brookes**, returning to HSIO 1 (Ouston) Squadron, from his "tour" in Training Ops. A quick note, we would like to wish **Sgt Malcolm 'Ozzy' Osborne** good luck in his upcoming Ironman and Outlaw Triathlon. **SSgt 'Alfie' Garnett's** first ECI Inspection was as uneventful as it was welcome. An "Eeeaaassssyyyy" pass **Alfie!**

CLS SECTION

The CLS section would like to welcome **Cpl Steve Sorley-Wilkinson** and his family to the team after his recent move across from 2 Sqn.

MJDI – Development: Communications Logistic Specialist (CLS) section, received the MJDI Material Accountant (MA) baseline in January 2013. The CLS section has formed a small development team, headed by **Mr Ken Phillips** and **Mr Andy Carrick**. Working with the baseline, they will develop the MJDI MA course for Royal Signals at Blandford. The course will cover as many facets a CLS will encounter in their working life. The aim is to develop and deliver a Pilot course by June.

Contextualised Training: **SSgt Emma Stainer** is working towards the introduction of contextualised training for the SCBR course. The section is in the process of converting a classroom to simulate a Quartermaster's environment,

comprising of QM office, Receipts and Issues, and SQMS areas. The aim is to give the Phase 2 students as realistic as possible environment; they will be given lifelike scenarios to work with, followed by a small field exercise phase which will take them through setting up and running a Rolling Replen. The ready for training date is 1 Apr 13 to deliver the first contextualised training to the CSBR course finishing in Jun 13.

2 (CATTERICK) SQUADRON

OC **Maj C J Lewin**
SSM **SSgt G Bufton**

It is hard to believe that we are in February already, 2013 really has started quickly and before we know it Easter will be upon us. The daily pace of life continues to be frenetic but always in a good way. Sport for All, more CO's PT, visits to Phase 2 and 3 training exercises and the odd power cut keeping us on our toes. It has been great to see so many members of the Permanent Staff getting away for some AT; snowboarding, skiing and hillwalking in Snowdonia all on offer. Although I suspect those who joined the later felt a pang or two of jealousy; Capel Curig not the most alluring après ski location!

A very warm welcome to a few new members of Permanent Staff; **SSgt Gemma Worrall** joins us as the new Iron Troop SSgt. **Sgts Lee, Booth, Roberts** and **Chemjong** and **Cpl Chatti** join the BOT Troop massive with **Cpls Day, Bryce, Crawford, Swann** and **Donnelly** all joining the Duty of Care troops.

As ever we have a few goodbyes to say. Firstly we wish **SSM 'Randy' Randerson** and **WO2 (FoS) Simon Hurst** a fond farewell as they both depart for sunnier climes. We wish you both the best of luck with your tours and stay safe. We also say goodbye to **SSgt John Watson** who has moved on to 2 Sig Regt. Hope the move went well and that you are now settled in to your new post. We also say goodbye to **Sgt 'Pez' Perry** who departs for 15SR and **Sgt 'Higgy' Higgins** who has moved on to Army HQ and into an Information Assurance role. We were delighted to secure **Cpl Dave Burford** a post as a Sgt in 1 R Irish ISTI team. Best of luck to you and fingers crossed you get some JRF action! We also bid a sad farewell to the bulk of our QG Signals contingent, **Sgt Dipak Gurung** (2 SR), **Sgt Resham Thapa Magar** (30 SR), **Cpl Surrendra Rai** (NST) and **Cpl Dakswor Rai** (30 SR) all off to pastures new – it has been a pleasure working with you – Good luck and stay in touch.

On the promotion front we are excited to be welcoming **WO2 (SSM) Lucy Mason** (5 Sqn) on promotion to WO1 to the Sqn although extremely sad to be saying farewell to **WO1 'Loddy' Jones** who moves on to take up post as GSM Corsham Garrison. We would also like to congratulate **WO1 'Eggy' Henderson** on his selection to be RSM 16 (AA) Bde HQ and Sig Sqn. Awesome news. We also have our fingers crossed for **Sgt Edwards, Sgt Booth** and **Cpl Dakswor Rai** who recently sat their FofS entrance exams. Finally we would like to wish **Cpl Emma Miller** the best of luck as she departs on maternity leave and want to say a warm welcome to **Sgt Jenny Blackburn's** twins and congratulate **Sgt Paul Gordon** and **Sgt Andy Ward** on their recent arrivals.



The following articles outline just some of the events that we have participated in over the past few months and should help give you an insight into life within 2 (Catterick) Sqn.

THE DORSET STICKLER - by *Sig Murphy and Sig Burrett*

The Dorset Stickler is an annual event held by the running club called The Dorset Doodlers and this was its 18th year. 400 participants with over 350 finishers took part, racing over the '3 peaks' of Dorset, climbing to heights of 750 feet and with the added challenges of weather and terrain (very muddy under foot), it was a race that won't be easily forgotten. The 10 mile race took place on Sunday, a weekend of hard graft but with a sense of satisfaction upon completion.

The Regiment's entry was organised by **Sgt Wilson**, with the majority of the runners being drawn from 2 Squadron. The event was both mentally and physically challenging but the overall sense of achievement from the participants was high due to the level of competition between the different troops (and the civilians) taking part.

Our own **LCpl 'The Lung' Rana** finished in second place overall. The Regiment's team did very well overall and were competitive against all the running clubs that took part. **Sig Eccles** had to deal with nature's call on top of Hambledon Hill, but still managed to complete the entire distance. To help with the strain of the run a local sports masseur handed out free massages to competitors, which were greatly accepted by the males in the Squadron, and even a few of the females!

Despite the cold muddy ground, nearly everyone managed to finish with only a few injuries along the way, and they were helped to recovery with the free Piddle Brewery specials handed out as prizes. The challenge now is to prepare for the next year and win the event overall!

EXERCISE CATTERICK CULMINATION 1 – 3 DEC 12

- by *Sig Poole and Sig Wilkinson*

Ex CATTERICK CULMINATION was brought into play with careful planning and preparation by the talents of the Staff here at Blandford. They implemented the basic skills of a soldier; teamwork and fitness, with "think on your feet" type of activities, all with the intention of making a bond between peers and enabling us to get to know each others' strengths and weaknesses.

The first serial of the exercise that evening was a night stalk, which involved getting from the start point to our objective which was 400 metres away. The aim was to get there without being seen by staying as low and quiet as possible whilst maintaining light discipline. This was a really fun part of the exercise as it got people working together and everyone had a laugh.

The second day got off to a tough start. Our section's first challenge of the day was a navigation stand; we were split into two and then searched the camp for hidden letters. This tested our fitness as well as our memory skills, as we only had a brief look at the map. This was a good task to start off with as it got everybody warmed up and ready to go. Everyone was eager to start cutting the mustard in an attempt to be crowned top section for the exercise.

Throughout the day we completed various tasks, such as camouflaging a Land Rover - the faster, the better! Another task we had to complete was the PFA which included the minimum standard of sit ups, push ups, 800m warm up and finished off with a 1.5 mile (2.4km) run best effort. Everyone on the course was supportive and kept pushing those through who were struggling. We stuck together as a team!

The most challenging stand of the day was **Cpl 'Sunbed' Bryce's** Land Rover push. We had to push a full Land Rover 400m. Everybody put in maximum effort, squeezing every ounce of energy they could physically muster to get the Land Rover where it needed to be and be the best! Our efforts paid off as we managed to get the fastest time of the day, a major morale boost.

We found our teamwork paid off during the blindfolded task. All of the section were blindfolded except one person who then had to guide us across a command task. This led to people falling off planks and over each other in the confusion that followed. This was a real highlight of the day, everyone found it hilarious and it kept spirits high.

A fun challenge for us was the grenade throw which was the last stand of the exercise run by **SSgt 'Big' Jon Watson**. We had to leopard crawl for about 10m up to the throwing point, pull the pins, and throw the grenade, yelling "GRENADE!!" as we hit the deck. There were two targets to throw at and the closer you got, the greater the score achieved, but only the ones that landed into the blast-radius were accounted for and added onto our total score in the end.

On the last night we had a Squadron quiz, which turned out to be a really great night. It was good to have a drink together after a tough exercise. The team names were totally whacky which just made every person split their sides with laughter - it was a quality night! At the end of it all, the points were accumulated from each team and the winners were awarded a prize. Everyone applauded them for their talents and we all scooted off to our beds for the night.

The following day the last awards were given out to the respective winners of the whole exercise and Inter-Troop competition. Iron Troop came out victorious in the end, much to the delight of **Capt 'Salmon & Eggs' Dixon!** All four of Iron Troop's courses took the top positions on the leader board, proving to us that with a little determination and teamwork how brilliantly we can do!

A very well done to all that took part and very big thank you to our Troop staff that pushed us all for that little bit of extra motivation, especially **Cpl 'Olly Murs' Sanders**. We all really enjoyed this exercise; it brought out the soldier in all of us, bringing all the core values into one place. Everyone had some great laughs but overall some great memories with friends that we can take with us and share in the future.

DORSET COASTAL TRAIL "HALF" MARATHON

- by *Sig Carly McSherry*

On Saturday 8 December 2012, a "mental" group, made up of both permanent staff and Phase 2 soldiers, set out to tackle the Endurancelife Coastal Trail race in Lulworth Cove, Dorset. The team, comprising of **Capt Rich Dixon, Sgt Stuart Payne,**



Sig Carly Mcsherry enjoying herself a few miles in



Sgt Pikendra Tumbahangphe, Cpl Ghanendra Jimee, Cpl Bhaikumar Rai, LCpl Deven Rai, LCpl Gajendra Tamang, Sig David Campbell and Sig Carly McSherry gave their everything to overcome some quite “cheeky” hills and in total covered an impressive 16.5 miles (this is not a half marathon!!!) of spectacular coastal scenery. There were both highs and lows, literally, but with the sun shining, each runner persevered to the very end, legs burning. Hard work and dedication saw everyone earn themselves a shiny new medal and a great deal of personal satisfaction. A truly Spartan effort all round – well done guys!

3 (HARROGATE) SQUADRON

OC Maj J Wilson
SSM WO2 (SSM) I Wells

EXERCISE FROSTY TIGER V – by Sig Glenn

Saturday 19 January saw personnel from Blandford deploying to a small town in Austria for what I can only describe as the best week of my, all be it short so far, military career. The 24 of us, ranging from Signallers right up to Lt Col flew to Munich where we drove the rest of the way to Wadring and our accommodation, Hotel Heigenhauser. After pancake soup for dinner (which is much nicer than it sounds) and a slight misunderstanding about how much beer was included ‘gratis’, we were well along the way to starting the AT trip in proper Army fashion.



Obligatory fancy dress on Ex FROSTY TIGER V



Capt Lyndon Box showing off his bling

We hit the slopes Sunday morning and proceeded to Dob in, in my case, a lot. Our four instructors, Lt Col Mason, Capt ‘Big Guns’ Gaz Topps, Capt Lyndon Box and SSgt ‘Wobbly Hamilton’ streamed us into ability groups, and soon had us tearing about, remaining mostly upright. By all accounts, mid-January is a quiet time, leaving the piste almost all to ourselves, and the weather was pretty ideal most of the week with a bit of snow a few days in.

Each day our instructors had us working on improving our skills and technique, so that by the third day we were feeling confident and attempting the black runs. One of the best aspects of the trip was being able to talk to a range of higher ranks, getting to know about the Army from their perspective and learning how things work in a way which I just wouldn’t have back home. Being a competitive bunch, lots of us were running GPS ski monitors on our phones, the key statistic being speed. The speed award of the week had to go to Capt ‘Mentalist’ Harryman for an impressive 115kph! With a skiing skills show, night time sledging and of course the bar in the evening and dressing up on the slopes... there really wasn’t a moment to get bored all week. All our thanks go to SSgt Hamilton for organizing the trip, and a great week.



4 (MIL TRG) SQUADRON

OC Capt M Brown vice Maj E Mortimore
SSM WO2 (SSM) N Butler

CHANGES IN 611 (COMMS TRG) SIG TP, 4 (MIL TRG) SQN – by Capt Baz Rowson

611 (Comms Trg) Sig Tp has recently seen the full transition of Phase 2 CS Op trainees undertaking the recently restructured CSBR trade training field exercises. The old REGAL DRAGON and ARCHER exercises were replaced in the middle part of 2012 with the new exercise design, known as KEY DEVELOPMENT (KD) Exercises 1-4. The first courses of Phase 2 CS Op trainees completed their final field training exercise, KD 4, shortly before Christmas. This has changed the length of field exercises undertaken by Phase 2 CS Op trainees from two five-day exercises to the new four KD Exercises, each ranging from three to five days.

Ex KD 1 and 2 see the trainees in the field getting to grips with Bowman Detachment set up and routine, as well as some basic voice procedure (VP) serials. All four exercises are spaced throughout their CSBR course and serve as continued development in their field trade training as well as confirming the training they have received in the School.

Ex KD 3 is the summative exercise where trainees are tested in a number of roles. These include operating in the Tactical Headquarters, on a number of single Bowman Rear Link Detachments (RLDs) and also providing Force Protection for



the location of the Headquarters, Piddlehinton Camp. The trainees develop their VP with more complex radio traffic, maintain logging of such traffic as well as handovers and takeovers, erect antennas according to the exercise scenario and all other detachment maintenance.



Sig Steel on the G3 net in the Bde HQ

Ex KD 4 is formative and sees the trainees encounter a number of scenarios that they are likely to face in the Field Army. Again the trainees rotate through a number of roles. In the Brigade Headquarters role they are responsible for passing voice and data traffic using ComBAT and maintaining the Headquarter's G3, G6 and helpdesk services. Whilst on the helpdesk, 3 Sqn instructors give the trainees an insight into what their role would involve when working with Information Systems. Other roles on the exercise include the single Bowman RLD, a Radio Rebroadcast (RRB), Force Protection and a man-pack RLD.

The new exercise design stretches the Tp's manpower and resources to the maximum, but it has evolved the training the trainees receive. It now allows regular and timely assessment of the trainees after modules have been taught in the School and ensures that the CS Op delivered into the Field Army is a far better trained soldier.



Sig Flemming operating from his RLD

5 (MARESFIELD) SQUADRON

OC **Maj T Wood**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) L Mason**

FOFS COURSE 82

HADRIAN'S WALL

Day 1

Day one began with a drive to the start point at Bolness on Solway. Having located the start of the wall hidden behind some houses we began making the long journey to Wallsend. The first couple of hours saw us walk along mainly gravelled pathways but that was soon to change as we began to move cross country. Instantly the easy going pathways turned into boggy marshland with various group members sinking to nearly knee deep. This continued on and off for about an hour before we joined the main coast road. We followed the road whilst avoiding the local idiot who thought it sensible to swerve towards us at ridiculous speeds shouting obscenities, finally arriving in Burgh by Sands and the end of leg one.

Leg two saw us move from Burgh by Sands through Beaumont, which is where we had stayed the night before, and on towards Carlisle Castle. En route we passed through more barely passable marshland and were forced to veer off course in order to avoid a landslide.

Legs three and four were a mixture of pathways and cross country tracks of vastly differing standard. Our travelling speed had dropped slightly as a mixture of fatigue and minute ailments set in. Everyone however made it to the end of the day at Old Wall, except for the transport that is.

Whilst we were making our way east the admin team were attempting to put up the tents for the night. This proved somewhat of a challenge as the admin vehicles had not been packed as well as they could have been. Having spent 4 hours putting up tents they received the call to be at the pickup point. Tired, low on morale and with a little bit of guidance they eventually made it.

The evening finished with bacon and sausage butties before everyone turned in early ready for the next day.

Day 2

Day 2 started with a drop off at Old Wall where we finished day one. From here it was immediately off road and up hill, the rain the night before making for some very wet and boggy going. Despite this it was agreed that it was still better going than day one. Towards the end of leg two a picnic area was even found, so the group could eat in style.

Leg three was barely underway when a group of spooked cows took offence at the group hogging a track and decided to clear us off it; cue running cows and soldiers hanging from fences and trees. Thinking this was the last bit of morale we'd had all day it was a surprise that shortly afterwards **Sgt Leatherby** decided to call for transport pickup, causing **Sgt Marsh** to claim that she had "failed to embrace the change of pace". The last legs were a soul sapping series of climbs upto and along the ridgeline that the wall followed. The pain of the climbs only eased by the views from the top. After a shorter day than the first, albeit with some harsher terrain, the team made it back to the campsite in daylight, and plenty of time to square ourselves away and enjoy a relaxed pub lunch in preparation for day three.

Day 3

Day 3 began an hour earlier than the previous two days in order to ensure we had completed the day's miles in daylight. Having been dropped off at the point we finished the day before we instantly began a long climb to the highest point of the day. Having safely negotiated this we began travelling



across what **Sgt Roy Organ** described as undulating terrain. The remainder preferred to describe it as hill reps. We then began the descent towards the day's halfway point where **Sgt 'I've Recce'd this' Stanham** informed the group that the path was nice and flat and the terrain firm; how wrong can one man be as we moved ankle deep towards **Sgt 'brew boy' Tillman**, who was waiting with a hot cuppa for us all.

After this the day's walk took a turn for the worse weather wise as the rain closed in. A few detours or "dog-legs" as **Sgt Organ** described them didn't dishearten the remaining six who carried on regardless.

Day 4

Day 4 started wet and miserable and began with the descent towards the banks of the River Tyne. The terrain changed from muddy mountains to tarmac and cycle paths as we walked through the surrounding countryside towards the centre of Newcastle. **Sgt O'Donovan, Sgt Raison and Sgt Stanham** met the remaining five with a morale break of fresh donuts and coffee at around the half way point. The walk through the centre Newcastle towards our final destination took us to Wallsend, a small town on the outskirts of Newcastle where the group missed the official finish point having walked too far. The evening saw the whole group embark upon a night of festivities in the centre of Newcastle and a meeting with the member of the Newcastle Branch of the Royal Signals Association in the Royal British Legion before having a wander around the centre of Newcastle.

YOFs COURSE – PD9 AND THE BUILD-UP TO YOFs SELECTION

All those individuals who wish to become a Yeoman of Signals must make their Chain of Command know of their intentions early enough to ensure the aspiration of the individual is reflected in their SJAR. In the year building up to the selection in September, all potential applicants must apply to attend by completing and sending off the PD9 paperwork. Applicants must be recommended for promotion to Sergeant and be medically fully deployable.

What do you have to do on Yeoman of Signals Selection?

YofS selection is six days long, although much of this time is spent waiting to be interviewed. There are about sixty candidates filtered onto the selection for both YofS and YofS (EW) and these candidates will be mixed together and split down into syndicates of about fifteen. To be selected for YofS/YofS (EW), candidates must be Medically Fit to Deploy (MFD) by the time they start their respective course and therefore the first thing you will be expected to do is a PFT or if temporarily downgraded, prove to the board you will be MFD by the start date of the course. Following the PFT candidates will complete a short essay with one of a number of titles provided.

On the second day you will meet your Directing Staff (DS) who will comprise of a DE and LE officer. You will start off by doing a three minute ice breaker and then roll into a discussion group where you will lead a fifteen minute discussion and partake in the others. Everyone will then do an appreciation or a problem solving exercise. You will be given a scenario that involves some simple time, distance and speed equations. You need to formulate a plan and then present this to your DS. The following day involves command tasks in your syndicates and after this you will be waiting to do your interview. The interview panel is headed by Commandant DSCIS, accompanied by an LE Traffic, a Signal Regiment CO and another Lt Col. The process sounds gruelling but do not be put off, everyone will be feeling the same nerves and you will be surprised by your ability, the main hurdle is you own self-doubt.

The Course so far

Yeoman of Signals Course 67 started on 3 September 2012. The course has a total of 17 on it. There are 14 Sgts from the Corps, 2 attendees from the Royal Marines and a Sgt from the Royal Netherlands Army.

The course started with some defence writing, syndicate work and group presentations led by **Capt Rice**. Then a week of maths taught by **Dr Peter Barker** from the faculty. It was straightforward, as we were told numerous times to simply "follow the rules". Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) followed Maths. This was taught by **Mr Don Brealey**, again from the faculty. ITIL is a set of practices for IT service management (ITSM) that focuses on aligning IT services with the needs of a business. ITIL underpins the International Service Management Standard for IT service management. After this we had 3 weeks of Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) taught by **Mr Tom Snape** from the faculty. Here we learnt the basics in Routing & Switching, Design, Network Security, Service Provider, Storage Networking, Voice and Wireless modes. This culminated in 12 chapter tests, a practical test and a 1500 word assignment.

While some members of the course were away in Gibraltar doing some project research, the remainder attended the Defence Information Technology Services Organisation, (DITSO) course at Chicksands. We had a week of Projects in Controlled Environments (PRINCE 2), this was again taught by **Mr Brealey**. This was the methodology that encompasses the management, control and organisation of a project. PRINCE2 is also used to refer to the training and accreditation of authorised practitioners of the methodology who must undertake accredited qualifications to obtain certification.

Before Christmas we moved on to Command Support Training (CST) led **WO2 YofS Paul Hampson and Sgt 'Alf' Ramsey**. We covered FALCON Trunk Management which culminated in a week exercise with each course member leading with different command appointments. Since Christmas the course has been under **WO2 Lyons** on the Bowman System Management Course run at Scotton Hall.

Numerous assignments which count towards our Foundation Degree have been submitted throughout the course including 2000 word assignments, aide memoirs and presentations.

Fitness on the course

There is very little PT programmed into the course, this is left to your own devices and managing your time to do physical exercise is essential. The current course is a particularly fit course and all have found the time to exercise around learning, being assessed and doing exams. It is essential that you are MFD on completion of the course and there really is no excuse, other than your own idleness not to remain fit.

YofS Course – The Future

As technology changes, so does the course. Many modern communication systems are IP based, so to allow future Yeoman the ability to correctly manage these systems, YofS courses now complete the entire Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) course. Those personnel loaded on to the YofS course must complete the foundation element as a prerequisite to the course starting. Other prerequisites include the completion of foundation level ITIL and Prince 2 as well as all elements of SNCO CLM. The course also recognises the rollout of the Falcon trunk communications system by removing the legacy generic trunk package, and instead providing a specific and thorough Falcon based trunk element. This provides future communications planners a greater insight to the system architecture and its deployment.





ROYAL MILITARY ACADEMY SANDHURST (RMAS)



-by Sgt Daniel Riches

Senior R SIGNALS Rep **Maj Mike Morton**

The dubious weather has not slowed life down here at the Academy, it continues to be fast and furious and it is hard to believe that we are already into week 6 of the term. Following the Christmas break the start of the term always means the arrival of new OCdts, but this term has also seen the arrival of outstanding instructors for the CIS wing. Promotions have been coming thick and fast, almost as fast as the various visits and exercises. And even though the tempo is kept high there is still time to stop, take in the surroundings and the sweet sounds of gunfire and shouting "one, two three, one!"

COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS WING

This term has been all about out with the old and in with the new blood, seeing a small turn around of instructors within the Wing. To that end the CIS wing would like to bid a fond fare well to; **SSgt Lee Wilson (RA)**, **CoH Carl Gibbs (HCR)** and **Sgt Joanne Thomas**, and welcome **Sgt Dan Riches** and **Sgt 'Hutch' Hutchinson (RA)**.

Promotion opportunities remain high for personnel at the Academy, especially from a Royal Signals perspective seeing six people come off this year's boards. Congratulations to **Sig Callum Lawrey** and **Sig Mel Radford**, **SSgt (YofS) Kate Heron** and **SSgt DJ Seymour** for coming off their respective boards. Also congratulations to **WO1 (YofS) Marcus Bailey**, RSMI, for being successful on the 2012 LEOC board.

The C3 trainer - proves to remain an invaluable asset, allowing OCdt's exposure to the workings of an Ops room with all the assets that would be available in Theatre. The C3 trainer is used regularly by different nationalities visiting the Academy. This term so far we have had visits from the Americans and Uzbekistanis. The visit to the wing was hosted by **Maj Kelly (Mercian)** SO2 G7 Trg Plans aided by his glamorous assistants **SSgt (YofS) Kate Heron** and **Sgt Dan Riches**. During the course of the briefing it was interesting to hear that the training facility was far beyond that of which the Americans are using at their officer training academy, Westpoint.

Exercise FIRST ENCOUNTER - This is a gruelling exercise for the OCdts taking place over a 5 day period commonly referred to as "Worst Encounter" by the OCdts, where the aim is to move into an area and fortify its defences. This involved the Pls digging fire trenches down to stage 4 for all personnel which meant digging through the day and night. Just to make matters worse the weather resembled that of the Arctic for the entire exercise. This was supported by Commex Tp who did a sterling job and despite the weather went without mishap, until the journey back to the Academy when the road conditions proved a little to tricky for some. **Pte 'Clippy' Clipston's** reactions were a little too slow as he ploughed into the back of the Land Rover in front, making the front end look like a bulldogs nose. Thankfully no one was hurt apart from **Pte Clipston's** pride, and we managed to continue back without further incident.

Warrant Officers' and Serjeants' Mess Christmas function - It fell to the CIS Wing to organise the Warrant Officers' and Serjeants' Mess Christmas function on 30 November 2012.



CSgt Rob 'Rod Wobbly' Wadley (R WELSH) took the lead and soon started to jiff the other members of the Wing with the majority of the more thankless tasks.



Believe it or not there is a CP under all that snow

Senior Division were drafted in to "fix" the Christmas draw. After doing their best to avoid everything, **Sgt Nick 'Noodles' Cole** and **Sgt Stevie 'Frankie Four Fingers' Graham** (QRH) were finally cornered into taking a minimal role, a task they completed well by ensuring that **SSgt Lee 'AB Airborne' Wilson** (RA) and **Sgt John 'Jerry' Rea** (RHA) did the majority of the work. This turned out to be a mistake as **SSgt Wilson** failed to fix it correctly, resulting in many WO1s winning the prizes we wanted and the only member of CIS Wing to win anything was **CSgt Michael 'Taff' Ricketts** (MERCIAN). It was decided that the beauty treatment he won wouldn't do him much good and cement would be more effective... All in all, **CSgt Wadley** and his team dug out blind, ensuring the event was a great success and everyone had a cracking night!



Sgt Stevie Graham as SANTA!!!!!!

COMMEX TP - by Cpl Ben Mancey

We are a multi cap badge Troop consisting of one Royal Signals SSgt who is the Troop Commander, a Royal Signals Electrician Corporal who has the role as Troop 2 I/C as well as maintaining a fleet of 2kw LFGs and everyone's favourite job, the Troop..... storeman. As the electrician you are only required to deploy on the 2 main exercises each term, one being 2 weeks in Longmoor and the other a nice 3 week exercise in Scotland. As everyone will know, once the power is in the rest of the exercise is spent relaxing and waiting for someone to break something.

The rest of the Troop is made up of 18 All Arms soldiers that come from a CIS background. We deploy on all Academy exercises spread across the 3 intakes and TA/short courses. These exercises are as far spread as Wales and Scotland. We provide command posts on all MRXs, giving support to the officer cadets through their training whilst in the field. We provide assistance in the C3 trainers which is a computer based trainer and to help their command and control before they deploy on certain exercises.

WANTED – IMGES OF FORCES IN GERMANY 1945 – PRESENT DAY

British Forces will rebase from Germany to the UK by 2020. The rebasing will bring to an end the longest overseas deployment for the British Army since India in the 19th and 20th century. About 2 million British citizens have passed through British Forces Germany in its 70 year history; either as soldiers, airmen, National Servicemen, civil servants or family members with an estimate of some 200,000 being born in either the British Military Hospitals or local German clinics. The deployment is one of reconciliation and integration, reconstruction and democratization and deserves to be remembered.

In order to produce a coffee table book celebrating the British presence in Germany we would like people to send us pictures of activities of the British Military Community. To be usable they need to be of good quality; digital, negatives or slides. They would need to be supplied with information about the picture (year, location, who is in the picture (if possible) and what the activity is. As long as it is interesting the theme is not too important. We cannot use prints, but a print or a scan could be sent in advance to see if it would be suitable for the book. If the book is profitable profits will be donated to charity.

Please send your images to: Book Project
c/o Media & Comms Branch
HQ BFG
BFPO 140

Email: bfphotographer@yahoo.com or phone Lt Col Geoff Hinton on 0049 (0)172 2187914 for more information.



NEWS FROM FORMATIONS



11 SIGNAL BRIGADE



Commander
COS

Brig JJ Cole OBE
Maj H Scott

With spring in the air (and 2 foot of snow on the ground) Brigade business has carried on gathering pace. MST has been rolling on with Ex PASHTUN PANTHER, DAWN PASHTUN and ROMAN PASHTUN for JFCIS have all been carried out.

Over the last few weeks the HQ has had some excellent news from recent promotion boards; **Maj Hervey Scott** selected for promotion to Lt Col. **Capt Jason Budding**, **Capt Mark Todd**, **Capt Alex Stanger** and **Capt 'Tomo' Thompson** all being selected their Majority; many congratulations to them all.

EXERCISE ROMAN GUSTAV 17 – 21 MAR 13

Ex ROMAN GUSTAV was an 11 Signal Brigade Battlefield Study to the Monte Cassino area of Italy, intended to be a historical study of the WWII battles fought here with a particular focus on lessons learnt which may again become pertinent as the Army moves towards Contingent Operations post Op HERRICK.

Organised by the BEME, **Capt Simon Holmes**, his popularity plan began to back fire on the first morning when all but two of the party including the Brigade Commander woke up to cold showers and a less than sympathetic hotelier, who calmly explained it was due to it being -2^o outside. This was hotly followed by a shuttle bus/taxi transfer taken straight from a Carry On film, never the less all eighteen of the tour members made it safely to Heathrow's T5 in time for the flight to Rome.

The lead for the historic element was provided by Anglia Tours in the form of **Maj (Retd) Tim Saunders**; throughout he provided us with detailed (almost as if he was there) accounts of the battle from both sides. The main emphasis was to be on 20 expertly prepared presentations delivered throughout the tour by all the personnel attending.

Upon arrival at a very cold and wet first stand at the Mignano Gap, **Brig JJ Cole** set the scene for the tour and emphasised what the DS were looking to gain from the syndicate briefs; **Capt Des 'Goumier' McGuckian** was alarmed to learn at this point that he too was expected to provide input!

Day one of the study really set the scene for the remainder of the week, moving the allies from Salerno to the Gustav line, with the post evening meal discussion set aside for a 30 minute presentation and discussion on Operation SHINGLE, the Allied landing at Anzio. **Maj Simon 'Roger' Ing** and **Capt Gaz 'Kitbag' Christie** had obviously received differing instructions to the remainder of the group and proceeded to regale to a rather tired audience with a multi-media presentation lasting well over an hour. With the audience suitably dazed it was time say farewell to day one.

Day two saw a significant improvement in the weather and the historical briefs moved on to the Battles of Monte Cassino; the syndicate presentations took the Principles of War and looked at how this worked in WWII and how in our humble view this would work in the future. It is hard to imagine that eighteen people, all of which have been trained

by the same organisation could have such differing views; this is however how the scene was set for the remainder of the tour. As we moved along the course of the first battle and into the second, our historical guide briefed us that we were to follow the route the Maoris took. This in modern day Cassino was to see us trespass on railway property. He informed us that if we walked fast we may get away with it; if we were stopped he would deal with the authorities and just be very English! Luck was to be on our side and we were through the rail-yard, the underpass and safely on platform one before the Italian authorities saw us. The end of day two, on Castle Hill, we had an extremely impressive view out over the town of Cassino.

Day three opened slightly higher up Mount Cassino, we stopped at what appeared to be viewing point for an orientation discussion, what we had actually stopped at was a rather well used Italian lovers viewing point (if Dunlop ever run out of raw product we can give them directions). Post our orientation of the Cassino battlefields we moved on to the Polish Cemetery, a humbling and awe inspiring place high on the mountain with a clear view of the rebuilt Abbey. The discussion here was on the bombing of the Abbey and Cultural Sensitivity, both during WWII and how we deal with these issues in modern day warfare.



The obligatory group snap taken at the Polish Cemetery with a domineering Cassino Abbey in the background

We then moved onto the Abbey, a hugely imposing and equally impressive structure perched high on the summit of Mount Cassino, the Abbey itself was completely destroyed during the battles for Cassino and rebuilt to its original glory in the aftermath of WWII. We took time here to soak up the atmosphere and to ponder how on earth men with WWII scales of equipment fought their way up such a feature over the course of a very bitter winter. We broke for lunch at this point and were treated to the little known Italian delicacy of 'omelette in dry baguette', post lunch a crisis of DE officer proportions ensued, **Capt Jo Barr** announced the loss of her mobile phone. As she retraced her steps in an attempt to recover it the group moved off under the direction of our guide, some fifteen minutes later, with no sign of **Capt Barr** and an excess of Polish visitors heading in her direction a highly trained search team was dispatched! The first wave consisted of **Maj Simon 'I'm Ex-Infantry' Ing**; immediately this raised alarm bells with the more astute and a second wave made up of **Maj Harvey 'follow me' Scott** and **Maj Steve**



Evans followed, shortly thereafter all four returned without sign of the missing phone! Praying the weather would hold we continued on our way and walked (thankfully) down the Cavendish Road. This is the hand built road that snakes its way up the mountain and was used by the Allies to bring tanks into the battle; not ideal tank country and a feat of endurance by anyone's description. Once safely down the mountain and back into the coach **Capt Barr** announced she had located her phone, exactly where she had left it... on the coach.

Day four was to be the end of the battle for the Gustav Line and the end our trip to Italy. After an inspiring speech by the Deputy Commander the briefs and discussions soon got underway, the first of the day threatening to be the last, as a battle of our own ensued between the **Capt Si 'REME' Holmes** and **WO1 'RLC' Cochrane** over who's fault everything was. With the battle wrapped up and no clear winner the promise of coffee ensured a succinct discussion at the second stand of the day. Upon completion of the final stand of the exercise at Piedmont, **Gp Capt Lloyd** summarised the Battlefield Study and encouraged us all to take the time to look into doctrine when back at our desks and to not be afraid to pick up the history books. Prior to leaving Cassino we visited the Commonwealth War Grave where a wreath was laid on behalf of the Brigade and we took time for personal reflection.



The Commonwealth War Grave at Cassino with the Abbey in the background

A final and most special mention has to go to **Maj Simon 'Admin' Ing**, who chose to cement the reputation of DE Officers everywhere by losing his mobile phone inside the Airport. **Capt Si Holmes** risked all with the security guards to provide the evidence of his search.

Throughout the trip the syndicate presentations generated some healthy debate (akin to arguing in a Kindergarten at times), some of this was the natural fall out of intellectual thought, some however was the result of serious interrogation techniques utilised by the Deputy Commander, **Gp Capt Nick Lloyd** and **COS Maj Harvey 'Herr Flick' Scott**. Needless to say the trip was a success and enjoyed by all, and we all look forward to the next one!

MOUNTAIN BIKING AT COED-Y-BRENIN TRAIL CENTRE

The day started with a nice picturesque drive through the "valleys" on the way to Coed – y – Brenin visitors' centre to start a full day of Mountain Biking on the purpose built trails. Once everyone had their bikes issued and helmets pressed onto their heads we set off from the car park to the start point at the centre and briefed everyone on the routes to be taken.

There were a few raised eyebrows when the 'red trail' was mentioned as being difficult to which frightened people in



particular one of the G4 team! The group set off on the blue Minotour trail which didn't have much in the way to trouble any of the riders; a few technical aspects to the course that were managed by stopping beforehand and talking through the obstacles and how to tackle them. The Minotour trail now complete we then went onto the more challenging Fox trail.

Right from the off Fox had the team feeling a bit more out of their comfort zone with the steep hill to get up right at the start, only the more experienced riders didn't find it too much of a problem. As we got to the end of the first half people started breaking their bikes, first with **SSgt Davies** getting a bit aggressive with peddling and bent parts of his bike. Then after the next uphill climb we came across one of the first bits of entertaining downhill sections which everyone enjoyed... apart from the BEME, **Capt Simon Holmes**, who ended up walking up the hill with his chain in his hand. A repair was obviously needed; step away from the engineering problem BEME, let the Royal Signals Operator fix the chain! After a short climb we came across our next challenging section of the trail which most found quite hard, in particular **LCpl 'Sheepdip' Sheenan** who made a tactical dismount off his bike, straight over his handlebars and nearly being run over by the instructor.

Everyone enjoyed the day especially with the weather being really sunny, which was strange for Wales, as the region is best know for rain! The final thing to decide was who was going to be awarded the most improved rider; it was a long discussion between the instructors, **Capt Simon Ing** and **Cpl Dennis Nowell**, but the decision went to **Sig Georgina Watton**; well done.

MATTS TRAINING - by LCpl Newton

The time has come again for the mighty 11 Signal Bde HQ, to attend their annual MATTS training in sunny Wales. The advance party had departed in the early hours to get to Capel Curig and organise all the nitty gritty G4 stuff. The main body just about survived the camp; the special driving skills of **Cpl 'Colin McRae' Floyd** were on display...fortunately the Commander travelled separately. After a quick brief by **SSgt Taff Davis**, the HQ's intrepid SQMS, we were sent out amongst the Welsh public to collect equipment and finalise some training bookings; there were a few language problems especially for the Yorkshire Manchester United supporter, but **SSgt Davis** employing his linguist skills made sure we got mountain bike trails rather than goat herding trials!

The next day started bright and early, with a day full of exciting briefs, by some of the Brigade's best instructors in the Corps. Poor **Sig Watton** had the delight of doing her first presentation on healthy living, only in front of the Commander, **Brig Cole**, although terrified she managed to



deliver a very good lecture. As the day progressed it became more of a challenge to stay awake, as **LCpl Will Younger**, (yes that is his real name) found out; it was rumoured that he was falling asleep constantly **Maj Ing's** brilliant presentation on IEDs because he was tired rather than the presentation content.

The day's presentations were finally over, part of the training was coping with torture and most managed to endure it without catching the dreaded sleeping disease. The evening again saw people venture into the local area and to the local pub for local people, which had been booked for dinner. After a lovely meal, a few drinks and discussions on what the best lesson was, we made our way back to the Hilton style accommodation of Capel Curig, to have a nice sleep and prepare for the next phase of AT.



Brig Cole catching the sleeping disease during Maj Ing's lecture

HQ 11 SIG BDE AT – ASCENT OF SNOWDON

The last day of the Bde MATTs concentration in Capel Curig was used as an opportunity to conduct AT in the Snowdonia National Park. **Cpl Dennis Nowell** led a group mountain biking at Coed y Brenin and **Capt Tomo Thompson** led a group on an ascent of Snowdon.

The selected route for Snowdon was up the Pyg track and down the Miners track. Typically mixed winter weather resulted in both cloud and sunshine on the way up and Glaslyn, the small lake below Snowdon, frozen solid. Good time was made and lunch was taken on the platform of the summit railway station, which along with the café was sadly closed. The occasional patch of snow on the descent injected an element of adventure in to the training, and soon we were back on the Miners Track plodding back to Pen y Pass for coffee.

At the end of the walk the Brigade Commander presented **Maj Charlie Miller** with a small prize (a voucher for Cotswold Outdoors) for his efforts on the mountain that day. In a moment of well received comedy genius **Maj Miller** thanked the Commander for the prize and then handed it back to him suggesting that he used it to update his mountain walking clothing and equipment, as fabrics and technologies had clearly moved on since the Commander bought his breeches, boots and gloves. Evidence suggested that the Commander was using the same gear as Edmund Hillary did whilst training in Snowdonia for the 1953 first ascent of Mount Everest.



Brigadier JJ Cole OBE receiving the "best dressed Victorian mountaineer" award from Maj Charlie Miller

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Royal Signals Corps Week 20 - 24 May 2013

09:00-10:30- | 10:30-12:30 | 12:30-13:30 | 13:30-15:30 | 15:30-17:00 | 17:00- 19:00 | 19:00-21:30 | 21:30-23:30 | 23:30-23:59

Mon 20 May	(P)LOD Meeting - Harrogate Conf Rm	Signallers Plate Final Sports Ground (18:00 -20:00hrs)
Tue 21 May	Royal Signals Conference - Princess Mary Hall (PMH) Morrison Cup (Day One) - Athletics Track	Conference Guest Night - HQ Officers' Mess Signallers Cup Final Sports Ground (KO 16:00hrs)
Wed 22 May	RSIGNALS Conference Morrison Cup (Day Two & Presentations) - Athletics Track Cricket and Hockey Matches - Sports Fields	Party in the Park Sports Ground
Thu 23 May	Games Club Meeting HQ DSCIS Conf Room	
Fri 24 May		



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

Party in the Park

FREE LIVE MUSIC & FIREWORKS DISPLAY

Food Stalls

Childrens play area

Cash Bar

1700 - 2300Hrs

Wed 22nd May 2013

Blandford Camp - Athletics Track



NEWS FROM REGIMENTS



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



CO
RSM

Lt Col R J Carter
WO1 (RSM) K East

HQ SQUADRON

OC
SSM

Maj S Vernon
WO2 (SSM) C Moore

OFFICERS TO SGTS' MESS, WITH A SPOT OF RUGBY

– by Sgt Pardoe

In the bleak midwinter, just before Christmas leave, snow had fallen, snow on snow, the ground was hard as iron and water like a stone. So it was a great surprise that the QMSI signed the risk assessment for the annual Officers' Mess vs. Sgts' Mess rugby match. In fairness to the QMSI, 'Dangerous Dean' Foley, the 3 feet of snow covering the entire pitch did make for a surprisingly soft landing. Despite the adverse conditions the entire Regt and Div HQ surrounded the pitch to watch the two teams do battle.



Officers' vs Sgts' Mess Rugby - Even colder than it looks



The Sgts' Mess's answer to Ant and Dec

Skill, experience and training were not high on the list of qualities displayed but a stiff upper lip and good sense of humour were. Notably the CO Lt Col '3 seconds' Carter was able to laugh off his split eye which he received after only 3 seconds on the field. The Adj, Capt '5 seconds' Peers, fared only a little better coming off with a nose bleed after his first tackle. It was a close fought game but much to the disappointment of a majority of the crowd, the officers pulled through to win 23 - 17.

After a quick shower it was on to the Sgts' Mess for a night of jollity and Christmas cheer. Formed up by the most junior subaltern the officers of HQ 1 Armd Div and 1(UK) ADSR marched to the WOs' and Sgts' Mess for 'Carols by Firelight'. After this festive snow-filled scene the more senior officers, filled with a warm fuzzy feeling of Christmassy nostalgia, were invited in; the captains and below remained outside for 'Carols under Fire'. Salvos of snowballs bombarded these junior officers, but after a few more carols and a couple of brave soloists, everyone else was invited in. However, for the subalterns it was not over.



'I'm an officer...get me out of here!' 2Lt Dawes looks unimpressed with the menu

The Subalterns were confronted by all the Sgts' Mess' favourite reality TV shows; from 'Stars in their Eyes' to 'I'm an Officer Get Me Out Of Here'. They had to pit their youth and education against rugged and experienced SNCOs in this series of head-to-head challenges. 2Lt Emma Haley provided the first surprise of the night whilst singing Adele's 'Someone Like You', the surprise being she is actually a very talented singer. Unfortunately for Capt Yaxley there were bigger surprises in store, at least for her. The audience watched in glee as, blindfolded, Capt Yaxley pushed her hands into a tank full of live snakes! Meanwhile Sgt Ward placed his hands into a tank full of down feathers. Having lost every head-to-head and when the Sgts' Mess deemed they had eaten enough maggots and grubs, the last junior officers were invited through for a refreshing beer and an excellent buffet dinner.



A night of dancing and drinking ensued and there was many a thick head. The officers extended their thanks for a fantastic evening and everyone is looking forward to next year.



Nothing but a hound dog - SSgt (SQMS) McCrone gets his Elvis on

201 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj P Brunton**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) S Miners**

EAGLE TROOP

OC **2Lt C Dawes**
SSgt **SSgt J Stevens**

For Eagle Troop the main focus of the New Year has been Falcon. The future of the Corp's trunk network system is going to be big post-HERRICK, and 201 Sig Sqn is determined to make the best of it. Straight from Christmas leave, the Troop, under the careful SQMS coordination of **SSgt 'Dougie' Douglas** and **SSgt Zoe Dolan**, collected a fleet of 10 detachments from Ashchurch, Gloucester on a 10 day exercise. After a few days of driver training, the daunting task of accounting for and signing for the equipment began. With a fantastic effort and some long hours by all, we completed this in record time. Then, inevitably, the drive back. The 14 packet convoy was led by **Cpl Liam Young** and **Cpl Jay Nelson** through heavy snow and temperatures as low as -7 in an epic 54mph drive lasting 20 hours. All drivers involved should be congratulated.

It was a fast turnaround of a few days before deploying to Elmpt to embark on the Set To Work process to configure the equipment. Supported by a brilliant FALTAT team, this was a technically tricky undertaking, not without its teething troubles. However the Troop and Ops team were determined as ever to get the job done.

Back in barracks, there has been a flurry of activity finishing Set To Work, conducting IBDP, PACEX and lessons for our next Falcon exercise, Ex TETHERED FLIGHT. Not forgetting the essential work of maintaining our Bowman fleet for the looming RSIT inspections and conducting Board of Officers for the CO's HOTO.

This month we bid farewell to **LCpl Farrar**, who leaves for a posting to 3 MERCIANS, **Sig Porter** and MT Guru **Cpl Nelson**. A very warm welcome to newly promoted **Sgt Copland**, Blandford Bowman expert **Cpl Watson**, new CS Eng **LCpl Frank Gowlett** and **LCpl Sorrell**, gym man **Sig Ivermee** and **Sig Farmer** from 21 SR.

A busy start for Eagle Troop and some impressive work by all; we look forward to more of the same as Falcon evolves in the coming year.

FALCON SET TO WORK: ELMPT 25 JAN – 8 FEB

Falcon Set To Work aimed to configure all 10 installations and various pooled items from their factory settings. It was also an opportunity to begin a series of lessons on the equipment. The exercise was supported by the FALTAT team – the much in demand, tri-service team with expert knowledge on this complex kit. It was based at Elmpt to maximise use of time available and hosted in NATO Troop's impressive Hangar 1.

After a quick vehicle turnaround following collection from the UK, 201 Sig Sqn left a very snowy Herford parade square for an even colder Elmpt. With a phenomenal effort pulling 14 hour shifts and overnight stag, the Troop completed the first stage of the process in record time. The Troop quickly got to grips with the new kit, with particular enthusiasm from the CS Eng contingent and technical wizard **Sig Si Brigham**. The pooled items were set to work in 6 days – half the time predicted, rewarding the team with a well earned weekend.

The next stage, configuring the detachments, proved more difficult following a major technical problem with the Management Installation. Though this slowed progress, we learned a great deal about a system still in its primary stages. A hard working Sqn Ops team were also able to plan ahead for future exercises. Overall, some technical setbacks and lessons learned, but also excellent work achieved all round.

HERFORD STATION CAROL CONCERT – by 2Lt Dawes

It was a snowy December afternoon as the soldiers and families of Herford Station slid their way over icy pavements to Marienkirche Stiftberg as the sun set over Herford. We were joined in the magnificent church by members of Herford community, Lister School Choir, Konigin-Mathilde-Gymnasium Junior Choir and their families and The Queen's Minden Band. By the time the service began, hundreds of people had filled the church to the rafters. The congregation enjoyed a truly inclusive Anglo-German programme with alternate readings in German and English and translations for both provided on songsheets. The opening hymn was a beautiful rendition of Once in Royal David's City with a pitch perfect solo first verse. The evening followed a Nine Lessons and Carols format with a variety of prayers, Nativity readings and much loved Christmas carols. The packed church sung with gusto to favourites including Silent Night, In the Bleak Midwinter, and Hark the Herald. The organ and The Queen's Minden Band admirably accompanied the hymns with enthusiasm and treated us to a triumphant instrumental of festive music. The evening was highlighted with outstanding anthems 'Sing', 'The Gift', and 'As With Gladness' sung by a fantastic Lister School Choir and the ever popular Herford Military Wives Choir. The talented Konigin-Mathilde-Gymnasium Junior Choir regaled us with wonderfully arranged 'Sehet hier das Wunder' and 'Weihnachts-Quodlibet'. The evening was a huge success, raising a generous collection for The Children's Society.

After many thanks and roof-lifting applause, ushers in bulled boots directed Christmastime revellers to a mulled wine and mince pie gathering in the church annex. This was a welcome chance to meet the Herford community and catch up with colleagues from across the Division and Signal Regiment before treading carefully home full of festive cheer.

KESTREL TROOP

OC **Lt R Drysdale**
SSgt **Sgt Buckle**

EXERCISE ALPINE MERCURY GLACIER XVI – by Lt Drysdale

Cast your mind back to early November... The grass was still green, precipitation still fell as rain, and Guy Fawkes' ashes



had barely stopped smouldering. Meanwhile, in Northern Germany, a band of Alpine skiers were preparing to deploy on Ex ALPINE MERCURY GLACIER XVI with the aim of becoming Royal Corps of Signals Alpine Skiing Champions 2012.

As every skier knows, that first night in a ski resort is one of little sleep – excitement about the day ahead, nervous about how much the instructor will push you, or if indeed your legs will remember how to make the skis go forward, and how your feet are going to survive four hours, never mind weeks, in huge plastic lumps referred to as boots. For the team captain, that night consists of the knowledge that every first morning in a ski resort is carnage, no matter how experienced the team. Beginners getting to grips with carrying the new equipment, the experienced worrying about flat light and what goggles to take – “and do we need shin guards? Well, you won’t with your line!” – The banter of the expert skier.

Waking up in a not-so-snowy, pre-season Zell am See on Monday, the team prepared for the first day on the slopes with the first of many breakfasts consisting of ham, cheese, strong coffee and yoghurt. The beginners were easy to spot, and not just thanks to **Sig ‘Evvo’ Evans’** insistence on wearing T shirt and shorts everywhere he went. The nervous smiles turned to grimaces as they struggled to get to grips with carrying skis, poles, boots, gloves, helmet and goggles up to the first lift. From frustrated grimaces, they turned to abject horror as once at the top, they were one by one asked to put their skis on and slide over the snow with (apparently) no means of controlling the direction or speed of the glide. Naturally, progression was uneven. **Sig Hudson, LCpl Gardiner, Sig Benham, Sig Dom Elmieh** and **Sig ‘Evvo’ Evans** got to grips with the sport on the beginner piste, trying to mimic the long graceful sweeping turns of the veterans with varying success – there’s little point in trying to turn when you can’t control going forward or backwards, eh **Ev?!?**

Despite the large proportion of beginners in the team, by the end of the first week, 1 ADSR were looking like a strong bet for favourite, with three skiers in the top ten and our full top team in the top two groups, few teams looked like fielding such a strong first team. And even the next eight were looking good. **Sig Josh Rennie** was working hard in group three and **LCpl Nicholson** and **LCpl ‘Pritch’ Pritchard** were close behind in group five. The beginners were also showing promise – **Sig Hudson** demonstrated a natural athletic streak taking to skiing like a duck to water, **Rosie** and **Dom**, inseparable as ever, progressed evenly and **‘Evvo’** brought up the rear, holding the dubious title of “Last turner”.

No matter, three weeks of skiing can cure any number of ills. And by the start of competition week, the beginners’ slope style had improved sufficiently that they no longer had to rely on their animal skin helmet covers to look good. Unfortunately **Sig Hudson** didn’t make it this far winning the “First Casevac to Herford” race in week three thanks to an incident with a particularly soft pile of snow.

It was now the turn of the top groupers – **LCpl Crawford, LCpl ‘Tiz ‘I’m the best skier in 1 Div’ Tirrell, Lt Drysdale, Sig Rennie** and **LCpl Gooch-Hatton** to bring back the silverware. Over a long nervous four days of racing, **Tiz** and **Sig Rennie** came through for the team. **LCpl Crawford** managed to crash enough to keep the competition interesting and **Lt Drysdale** and **LCpl Gooch-Hatton** were unremarkable, posting some very relaxed times. The results went down to the wire, and after some confusion over figures 1 ADSR was wrongly awarded second place overall. Once the dust had settled, and the stewards had completed their inquiry, we were placed a noble third to 11 Signal Regiment and 10 Signal Regiment in the New Year. Well, there’s always next time. Congratulations to **Sig Rennie** who won the Instructor’s Prize ‘for skiing well and being an all-round good bloke’.

211 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj T Moran**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) R Savage**

MAIN TROOP

OC **2Lt E Haley**
SSgt **SSgt C Simmonds**

After a relatively quiet period following a well-earned Christmas leave things have begun to ramp up again for Main Troop, with no fewer than 3 exercises taking place over the next couple of weeks. So far the Troop has deployed on Ex PREMIER BATTLEAXE and, after thawing out, came through the Board of Officers unscathed. We have also had members of the Troop scattered to the four winds taking part in various exercises – **Sig Willis** and **Sig Rennie** took part in the HCDR trials in Blandford, **Cpl Thomas** and **Sig Wallington** deployed to Otterburn in support of Ex STEEL SABRE and **LCpl Rattray** and **Sig Hubbard** have left us for 2 months in sunny Brecon.

Recent departures are **Sig Jamieson** who takes up a posting at 14 Signal Regiment, and outgoing Troop OC **Lt Dave Wallis** who moves on to ATC Pirbright. The Troop wishes both of them the best of luck in their new postings, and welcomes **SSgt Chris Simmonds** from 3 CS Bn REME.

TAC TROOP

OC **Lt R Cooper**
SSgt **SSgt C Brady**

Tac Troop bids a fond farewell to **Sig ‘Boris’ Rudenko** who is moving on to pastures new in Winchester and to Troop OC **Lt Roy ‘Super Trooper’ Cooper**, who leaves us for an attachment to 2 MERCIAN on Op HERRICK. We also extend a warm welcome to **Sig Shackleton**, fresh from Blandford.

SPEC TASK TROOP

OC **2Lt J Mason**
SSgt **SSgt R Jones**

Newly-promoted **Capt Erica Roberts** makes it a full house for departing troop OCs – we wish her the best of luck in her new posting at ATC Pirbright. The Troop has also welcomed **Sig Hacking** into the fold from Main Troop.

EXERCISE PREMIER BATTLEAXE – by 2Lt Haley



The blind leading the blind - Sig Pascall at the front as the Sect attempts to navigate a minefield

It was with a sense of slight apprehension that 211 Sig Sqn deployed to a snow-covered Sennelager Training Area to conduct 2 days of ‘back-to-basics’ military skills on 23 January. The Sqn had spent the past 2 days covering various lessons designed to prepare them for the tasks ahead, but the exact nature of said tasks was being kept intentionally vague.

The day began with revision on establishing platoon harbours and patrolling, which gave the Sqn a chance to brush off the cobwebs from their



basic military skills. With the mercury well below zero it was important to keep moving, which proved a great excuse to practise actions on contact – **Sig Woolley** deserves special mention for being the only member to adopt the prone position in the snow, though he quickly changed his mind.



Sig Colquhoun about to make a leap of faith over the 'electric fence' during 3 Pl, 1 Sect's command task

Once night had fallen it was time for the sections to conduct a Navex, combined with a resupply mission, before recovering to Sennelager Camp and thawing out in the luxury of heated accommodation.

The following morning the Sqn headed back to the training area for a variety of activities: an hour-long 'burden retrieval' serial run by the PTIs, which certainly warmed everyone up; a refresher on the 6 section battle drills; and command tasks, which led to several struggling to remember their left and right as they attempted to guide a blindfolded team through a 'minefield'. The second task consisted of getting the whole section, plus kit, over an 'electric fence' – many unorthodox methods were on display, notably **Sig Braham's** brave attempt to jump the fence solo, which ended with a sore head and a dent in the icy ground. Taking inspiration from this, **Sig Roberts** fared slightly better.

There was to be no heated accommodation on the second night of the exercise; instead, the sections were sleeping in tents as the temperature dropped to -10°C. Throughout the night the sections rotated through 2 serials, the first being a close target recce of an area of enemy activity. There were some interesting interpretations of 'avoid detection', with one section stealing a mast bag as 'vital intelligence' and another attempting to take a hostage. The second activity of the night was a QRF serial, during which the sections deployed at short notice to investigate a detachment that had lost comms and was firing distress flares. They were met with a variety of challenges – a radio to fix, reports to compile and send and finally a casualty to treat and extract to the HLS half a mile away, before an hour or two of well-earned rest.

On the final morning of the exercise the Sqn was in high spirits, despite a cramped tent and several waking up to frozen bootlaces. The last challenge was to be a 3-lap race around the field between the platoons, consisting of a lap with kit, a lap with a stretcher, and finally a lap on which each Platoon had to set up a 9x9 tent en route. Unfortunately 3 Platoon was instructed to dismantle theirs as well, which led to them trailing in a distant last, but by this point only one thing mattered – the welcome flash of bright red between the snowy trees that meant the buses had arrived.

The exercise was a fantastic opportunity to refresh basic knowledge after the Christmas break, and excellent teamwork and high morale were displayed from everyone

throughout, despite the difficult conditions. Many thanks to **Lt Roberts, SSgt 'Chadders' Chadwick** and all the DS for putting it together.

212 SIGNAL SQUADRON

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

MONTE CASSINO TROOP

OC **Lt J French**
SSgt **SSgt J Bean**

RIMINI TP

OC **Lt B Edworthy**
SSgt **SSgt C Wood**

HFT EXERCISE PREMIER SHIELD 2



Ex PREMIER SHIELD 2

After months of ongoing military training within the troops it was finally time for 212 Sig Sqn to deploy to the border of Dutchestan (also known as Elmpt) to fight the Haliban. The exercise comes as the Regiment completes the HFT phase of training. The snow had finally cleared, and the weather was looking up, spirits were high and bodies were willing.

The Squadron deployed to Elmpt and started the RSOI package, where MATTs were also covered. The troops



Back to basics



conducted a 'remind and revise' from the previous HFT exercise where they built up to section level operations. The RSOI culminated in platoon level operations, where the troops were taught the mechanics of a platoon attack, then conducted a walk-through, then completed an entire day of platoon attacks. They combated depth positions in woodland and undulating terrain, bouncing around the airfield and training areas as the weather closed in.



Members of the Sqn refresh their knowledge of section attacks

The platoon was ready; **SSgt Alex Wood** had developed the platoon from bright-eyed and bushy-tailed Signals NCOs and signallers, to a close knit team of battle hardened steely eyed dealers of death. They moved like a well-oiled machine and attacked through enemy positions like a warm knife through butter. The Platoon deployed out on to the ground with an insertion TAB patrolling 'the border' engaging with the locals, and clearing out the Haliban from the AO. They occupied a delta Harbour for the night and conducted reconnaissance, ambush and fighting patrols to locate and harass the enemy.

After a few days living in a harbour it was time to establish a more permanent presence in the area. After a series of reconnaissance patrols the platoon commander, **Lt Miller**, located an area where she wanted to site her platoon and build a defended communications site (also known as a FOB). After the field phase the battle-crazy men and women of 212 Signal Squadron were beginning to show the signs of breaking; the weather had not been above freezing for several days and those who didn't have strong personal administration were beginning to suffer.

The assault on the enemy occupying the FOB ground was a thing of beauty; H-Hour was just before dawn as the sky started to lighten, there was frost in the air and ice on the ground. The platoon silently moved in, confirmation that the assaulting section were in position came as a whisper over the radio, poised like a lion stalking its prey silent and deadly, and fire support was ready watching the helpless unsuspecting enemy, ready to rain down all-consuming hellfire. 0735 H-Hour, the first crack of a weapon opened fire, followed by a deafening barrage of an entire section in fire support. The assault went in smashing positions like a charging bull, screams of controlled rage bellowed out of storming troops, quick to react to any depth position. Within minutes came over the radio 'first position clear, enemy depth 100m to the north' and with the speed and precision of lightweight boxer yet the force of a localised supernova the platoon reacted and destroyed all the enemy in the position. The call came: "re-org", the position was cleared and with no threat of IDF, after a soak period they started to build the FOB.

The FOB brought a welcome change with the introduction of tents and Kerosene heaters. The mighty 212 Signal Squadron

kept on smashing the Haliban night and day for the next few days, until the threat level increased and the enemy gained an IDF capability. The platoon was contacted and a tremendous amount of firepower rained down. After sustaining some casualties the platoon was forced to withdraw in haste to escape the onslaught. This led to an extraction under fire, which was carried out well, despite leaving a GPMG on the sentry position for the incoming enemy. No movement without fire and the casualty was constantly on the move, being taken to a secured HLS out of effective enemy fire.

This concluded the exercise and put us into the 'tea and medals' phase where top field soldier was awarded to **LCpl Lewis Waryck** and Top Section was awarded to 1 Section led by **Cpl Chris Parker**. The wooden spoon was awarded to **Cpl Reg 'Grenade' Holdsworth** for his endless morale. A massive thank you should be given to **SSgt Alex Wood** for the organisation and energy he gave to the exercise.

AREZZO TROOP

OC **Lt C Miller**
SSgt **SSgt M Loughton**

Since the start of 2013 Arezzo Troop has maintained a busy work schedule. Since his arrival to the Troop this year, **Cpl Reg Holdsworth** has maintained the Troop's Bowman detachment with **LCpl Danny Attwood** and **Sig Pat Mannion** and seen it through both 1st and 2nd line inspections and the Board of Officers inspection.

Other members of the Troop have been busy with other commitments, myself, **LCpl Attwood** and **Cpl Andy Southwood** have been to Blandford in support of the En-HCDR trials whilst the rest of the Troop were deployed on Ex PREMIER SHOOT 2, revising military skills such as section battle drills.

Arezzo Troop is now preparing for the Regimental battle camp at the end of February, but first we are all looking forward to supporting **LCpl James Beck** on Friday when he steps into the ring for the inter-Squadron boxing competition. The entire Troop is behind him and is looking forward to Friday evening.

ANZIO TROOP

OC **Lt C Buescher**
SSgt **Sgt T Durbridge**

CROSS COUNTRY... WE DO IT IN THE WOODS – by Pte Stevens

Running, specifically cross country, is arguably the hardest sport that exists. Not only is it physically painful, but it is possibly the most mentally demanding sport, too. The training is rigorous and the races are excruciating... but the best part is that accomplished feeling at the end of a race.

During my first year of cross country running for 1 (UK) ADSR, I learned the importance of orienteering, as taught in basic training. Normally I don't pay much attention to the course maps when I race, because I thought I would always have plenty of runners to follow. In Osnabrück, however, I lost sight of the leaders and when I came to an intersection I wasn't sure where to go. I guessed I would just follow the men in the hi-vis vests, as per the PTI's instructions, however I was only to be greeted by a confused German railway worker telling me he was fixing the tracks, not providing safety for the cross country race. Fortunately there was another runner coming back to guide me to the finish line. That is when I learned a friendly level of competition is as important as looking out for each other. 1 (UK) ADSR did well that day, earning enough points to climb one place up the leaderboard.



The next race in Münster was another one I would never forget. Although we had to walk for miles to the starting line in the cold, the team felt good, thinking it would be an easy course to run. However, soon it became clear that the race track was a medley of surfaces, changing from wet and slippery leaves to muddy pot holes. To top it off, ¾ of the way round and a horse appeared from nowhere. The organisers warned us of German nationals walking on the track but no one told me how to behave in the event of a horse crossing your path! As is customary in Germany, the

rider quickly informed me in the error of my ways; I was meant to give way to the horse. So that's the meaning of 'If a horse stands on you, it is because you are in the way'...

In spite of stubborn horses and navigational challenges the 1 (UK) ADSR cross country team is doing well, with the female team in first place and the male team in third. With only two more BA (G) league races left, it's all to play for... and we're feeling lucky!



2nd SIGNAL REGIMENT YORK REAR OPERATIONS GROUP



A NEW TROOP COMMANDER IN ENGINEERING SUPPORT TROOP – by 2Lt H Joseph

Arriving at a Regt in the middle of its deployment was never going to be easy, but it is fair to say that being sent on OPTAG a day before officially starting work didn't make it any easier. With Christmas leave only a week after my return from Lydd, my arrival at 2 Signal Regiment passed mostly unnoticed.

Engineering Support (ES) Troop has been reorganised for the duration of the Regiment's tour and now largely consists of Operators without a lot to operate. The tempo is varied, but since the start of the New Year more soldiers have found themselves manning the unrelenting guard rota, or being farmed out to assist other departments. This is no bad thing, as it reduces the number of soldiers with "nothing" to do (there is always something to do, surely), and improves their employability with the Regiment. With the R&R schedule now in full swing, the fact that I now have at least three more combi-van drivers than I did last week is an incredible asset to the Regiment's functionality. The Troop Cpls rallied round in mid-January to put on a trade class development week, the upshot being 3 Operators gaining their Class 2 qualification.

With my SSgt on paternity leave, I've been chucked in the deep end and have had to get to grips with the Regiment's way of doing things. When I last wrote something for *The Wire* (on attachment in June 2012), the MOSS site was the bane of my colleagues' lives down at 21 Sig Regt in Colerne, and I was blissfully unaware of what it entailed. How times change. Fortunately I have yet to be introduced to BLENHEIM and allow myself the luxury of smiling inwardly when I hear people question just how they are supposed to predict how many rounds they will need on exercises 4 years in advance.

As if my role as Troop Commander was not been enough, I have been chosen to lead a 16-man team in Afghanistan in the near future. Planning for this job has taken up considerable time, and involved liaison with RAF units due to join me, as well as civilian project managers whose technical expertise is vital to the mission. As a direct contrast to my situation of juggling many jobs, my counterpart, 2Lt Calum Gordon, has been selected to replace an officer in Theatre. As far as I can make out, his life here at 2 Signal Regiment has consisted of an afternoon assembling Osprey, packing his room, and thinning himself out in a vain attempt to take his leave card down to acceptable levels. When the obvious stress of having too much time in the day took its toll, he played Xbox or watched DVDs. He is due in Theatre before this article goes to press and we of course wish him the very best. He will probably even miss out on the joys of writing SJARs for LCpls.

It's not all boring statistics and JPA though – most recently several of my soon-to-deploy Signallers were able to jump on the bandwagon of Ex TIGER ACES, a beginners' skiing

expedition organised by 12 Mech Bde. There are plans afoot to make use of the Regiment's ECOPF in organising a pre-deployment team night at a newly opened Gurkha restaurant, and possibly get ourselves outside for go-karting or paintballing when the weather improves. Finally, I hope of course to deploy in the near future, and replace wet and windy York with the skin-melting heat of Afghanistan.

REAR OPERATIONS GROUP - by Sig Rajan Thapa

The majority of 2 Sig Regt is on Op HERRICK 17 with the Rear Operations Group holding the fort in York. In addition to PT 3 times a week, Lanyard Trophy training is being held under the command of SSgt Lord. Although the competition is in June, the Regiment has started its training now with a serious ambition to win this year having come 4th last year.

There are also lots of courses available in the Troop; any available personnel are taking Falcon courses in preparation for the British Army's newest trunk communications system's arrival later this year. There is also a Royals Signals Shooting Competition coming up during the month of April.

In recent extracurricular news, a small group of soldiers were able to join another Regt's AT activity, Ex TIGER ACES, a skiing trip run during the first week of February in Trento, Italy. The coach left from 21 Sig Regt (AS) on 1 February. It took us four hours to get to Dover where we boarded the ferry to France. After that came a 16 hour journey to Trento. Skiing started from Sunday at 0800 hours. We had our all-Italian breakfast at the hotel before departing to our skiing location. The first two days were purely time for us to learn how to ski. After just these two days, everyone was all over skiing. There were three types of route: blue, red and black, with the black route being the hardest. On the last day of skiing everyone had to do a black route as part of a test. It goes without saying that everyone passed. The evenings were never dull, with the nearby town hosting a carnival and several pubs; there was even the option to get a much-needed massage in the hotel. In summary, a good time was had by all!

There are a couple of upcoming events to keep the Regiment occupied. First is a planned Mountain Biking trip at the end of February, and slightly later in the year is a sailing training week, Ex MERCURY WINDY TRAILS, in early April. All this adventure training will surely develop and improve the qualities of teamwork, leadership, discipline and initiative among the soldiers. This is also an opportunity for the soldiers to have some time off work.

As well as the day-to-day running of the camp, elements of the ROG are tasked with upcoming deployments, responding to trawls and teardown requests. This keeps everyone busy and ensures we all remain current with our training and preparation for any eventuality.





3rd (UNITED KINGDOM) DIVISION HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL REGIMENT BULFORD



CO
RSM

Lt Col P R Griffiths
WO1 (RSM) R J B Luke

Like most of the Army, 3DSR enjoyed a three week Christmas break allowing us to relax after a busy year supporting Op Olympics, Op ESCALIN and MST. We were able to spend quality time with our families before the separation of tour and take one final deep breath in before the rigours of what will be a very hectic year kicked in.

We were wise to use the leave this way for no sooner were we back in work than we were supporting Div HQ and HQ 1 Mech Bde on Ex PASHTUN HORIZON, deploying on a Regtl training exercise, Ex RED TRICORN, and continuing our pre deployment training on Ex PASHTUN DAWN.

202 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC
SSM

Maj Dixon
WO2 (SSM) Brown

EXERCISE PASHTUN DAWN, 1 MECH BDE FTX - by LCpl 'Hellboy' Crane

During February the majority of 202 Signal Squadron were given the responsibility of providing the communications infrastructure for Ex PASHTUN DAWN, the 1 Mech Brigade FTX. This so far has involved a lengthy build phase with late nights and early mornings.



The Kestral Mast at FOB ITIFAQ

The first week on the exercise we were required to rebuild all the comms sites then try to get them connected. When it looked like we were having some problems, **Sgt 'Guru'**

Hallums, LCpl 'Moobs' Scott and LCpl 'Hawk Eye' Lloyd arrived and with the Dream Team assembled, amazingly everything started to work.



Check out the swimming pool at PB KEZGET

At this point we were pretty much ready to deploy. The operators managed to establish most of the links and some sites began to deploy out to their exercise locations. As with all plans, things never run smoothly. As my turn came to deploy, a severe weather warning was announced and after a short delay we were out on the ground in all elements. The build, like with any large high profile exercise, is always the busiest for us. We can't wait until the exercise starts when we get a bit of time to relax and focus on maintaining the comms, but for the time being we will continue our fight!

CORPS TRAINING, 3 (UK) DSR TO 21 SIG REGT

- by LCpl Hayley Latusek, LCpl Matt Thompson, LCpl Danny Scott and LCpl Dave Meakin

On the first week after Christmas we found out that we were going to instruct 21 Signal Regiment (AS) on the use of OTES (Overtask Emulation System). The Corps training team deployed on 6 Jan 13 and consisted of three different parts: the 'DLOS' team; **LCpl Hayley 'Ginge' Latusek, LCpl Aaron 'Griff' Griffiths and LCpl Scott 'Scotty' Hymas**. The second part was the 'Routed Architecture' team; **LCpl Neil 'Jaffar' Shelley and LCpl Matt 'Tomo' Thompson**. The third was the 'Data' team; **LCpl Danny 'Moobs' Scott, LCpl Dave 'Meaks' Meakin and LCpl Joseph 'Moxy' Moxon**. Overseeing all three of the teams was **Sgt Colin 'Col' Jowett and FofS (IS) Mark 'Scratch' Record**.





The Corps Training Team

The first two weeks we deployed out in order to prep all of the kit and rehearse in location to ensure everything ran smoothly. The third week on the 'DLOS' front was all classroom based, apart from the erection of the Cormorant mast, which in the snow and ice on the airfield was well... let's say emotional for the students on the course! We got through the third week without too many dramas on the teaching front but one instructor in particular caused a drama on returning from a brief in London. **LCpl 'Meaks' Meakin** got himself stuck in the snow while trying to get up the largest, steepest and generally most disastrous hill in Colerne village. So after notifying the correct people, **FofS (IS) 'Scratch' Record** and **Sgt 'Col' Jowett** mounted "Op Certain Death" to go and rescue him. After three hours of digging and shovelling the Op was labelled a success and **LCpl Meakin** showed his gratitude by making brews all day.

The Routed Architecture team had an equally funny time, **LCpl 'Jaffar' Shelley** for example thought that the network was down but turns out he was 'pinging' the wrong IP address, so no matter how hard he tried, a problem quickly resolved with a little help from **LCpl 'Tomo' Thompson**. As the week went on the students got to grips with everything and we started to take more of a backseat and let them do things for themselves. The rest of that week ran quite smoothly.

The fourth week kicked off even better than the last as we gagged **LCpl 'Moobs' Scott** and handed the kit over to the students to do their confirmation exercise. They had to deploy a star topology network using the eight masts to provide four different links with only four members on the course. They were still making a few errors here and there and we would step in and tell them where they went wrong and then eventually they were flying through the setup process. Overall the final week of training went really well and we deployed the 4 sites onto the airfield on a lovely rainy Tuesday afternoon. After a few dramas we finally had the network up and running by 0800hrs Wednesday morning. This was a suitable time in the training for the trainers to step back and wait for something, if anything, to go wrong, which given the extreme weather was inevitably going to happen. But the 'young' and enthusiastic students were more than capable by this point to adapt and overcome anything thrown at them. All in all it was a good month of training that ran smoothly and helps to prepare 21SR(AS) for their deployment.

206 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj D Spencer**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) A Bedward**

206 Signal Squadron, the Divisional Support Element of 3 DSR, has undergone much change in the past few months, in both manpower and equipment.

FALCON TRAINING - by LCpl Burgon

206 Signal Squadron finished a busy year with the arrival of FALCON into Mons Troop. On 3 Dec 12 a small team from the Troop supported by the QM and MT departments deployed to Ashchurch to start the HOTO of the Falcon detachments. Meanwhile back in the garages the rest of the Troop had a mammoth task of packing the remainder of the Cormorant vehicles up ready to place into storage.

In Ashchurch the guys had the luxury of completing full CES on 9 Falcon vehicles, a palletised detachment and a lot of pooled items! Fortunately this wasn't like any normal deployment which meant we had the privilege of staying in 4 star hotel accommodation, time a in the hotel spa and gym was much appreciated. The week was a success with all the vehicles and equipment accounted for and put to bed in Mons Tp garages ready to continue the hard work in the New Year.

The Squadron started the New Year with a re-orbat of the Squadron, everyone parading at SHQ to find out which troop they would be assigned to. Mons Troop was reformed with old and new faces with **2Lt Eaton** in the Troop Commander's chair and **SSgt Allen** as the new Troop Staff Sergeant. The troop swiftly got down to the garages to commence work for a busy fortnight ahead. The guys were straight to work to get the garages up to scratch for a visit from the Royal Signals Inspection Team, where our hard work paid off getting a Green overall rating.

BOEING PORTAL VISIT - by 2Lt Eaton

2013 started well for the Officers of 3 DSR, with a conceptual development day as soon as we returned from Christmas leave. The unit was given the opportunity to visit the Boeing Portal, which included the opportunity for immersive training in VBS, the new battle simulation software.

The day started with an introductory brief about why the Boeing Portal was created and what it can offer the military in terms of research and project design. Various examples were used, conveniently all based around airframes! Prior to lunch was the initial training session on the battle simulation software, which included some 'testing' of the capabilities of the system, mainly involving some surprising variations in voice procedure standards.

After lunch we launched with vigour into the scenario, a patrol into a village to request use of a building for an antenna. **Lt Jonny 'Sniper' Leigh** seemed to be able to spot the enemy from almost any distance and racked up a number of confirmed kills. However the rest of the team were not so lucky. Besides attempting to get to grips with the controls, **Lt Andrew 'Limpy' Hutchings** got himself shot in the leg and spent the remainder of the time limping around the town after being told it was 'just a flesh wound'.

Once the scenario was over we had a chance to do an After Action Review, which gives a birds eye view of the scenario as it unfolds, which appears to be a very useful tool in helping learn from mistakes. While it will never match real training, the system allows basic skills to be practised in a controlled environment. Overall the day was a great success, with positive reviews all round.

EXERCISE RED TRICORN 2013 - by Sig Corrigan

On Sunday 20 January 2013 206 Signal Squadron deployed on EX RED TRICORN, the Regimental battle camp for a 12 day exercise. It consisted of a 3 day field training exercise (FTX), a 3 day range package, a 3 day MATTS package and then culminated in a 2 day mill skills competition. On arriving at Bodney Camp we collected our kit from the coaches; however



LCpl Sampson was left standing there without any kit as he had left it back on the parade square at Bulford – never get separated from your kit! The next morning 206 deployed onto the FTX where we faced up to a foot of snow and temperatures of -8 degrees. The FTX took us back to the basics of soldiering out in the field. We patrolled out and occupied our harbour area and got into routine, as we went into night routine... getting up for stag with frozen boots was emotional. The next day we covered the basics of the 6 section battle drills, judging distance and target indication, followed by a Section final attack. The results of the training and improvement was clearly visible in all sections.

We then moved onto the 3 day range package going from basic grouping and zeroing to ACMT. Following that we went onto a live fire section in defence range. The abilities of the section commanders and 2ic's were tested under pressure to keep the enemy suppressed by giving clear target indication and fire control orders. We then moved onto the IBSR range where as an individual you were challenged to fire and manoeuvre from different cover positions at targets from different distances, whilst having flanking fire from the GPMG gunner. The final part of the package tested pairs fire and manoeuvre up a live fire range where you had to have a lot of confidence and aggression, this was overall the most rewarding range day. Throughout the range package **Cpl Nex** gave 3 lessons on survival where he demonstrated his ability and knowledge of surviving on barely anything.



Sig Tovell and Sig Rodger testing insulation layers as part of Survival Training for the SERE MATT

Finally we moved onto the 2 day mill skills competition. Day 1 consisted of sections navigating around Bodney training area to different stands, including BCDT, observation, military skills quiz and a section attack stand where we were required to patrol through a flooded field to reach the enemy location. We then moved onto the night nav, collecting rations from different check points around the area. On the final day each section set off at different times on a 2 mile march and shoot. The best sections from 206 were Section 11 commanded by **LCpl Hennis** who came 2nd and Section 14 commanded by **LCpl Chinn** who came 5th in the Regiment. **Sig Black** was awarded best shot of the day by hitting 14 out of 15 targets, despite having an iron sight.

EXERCISE SPARTAN HIKE - by 2Lt Banting

On 12 January 2013, 4 members of 3 (UK) DSR headed out for Ex SPARTAN HIKE the UK Ski Championships. After a last minute substitution to the team we managed to pull together a team of 4 mixed of abilities, two seasoned racers and two complete novices to the racing world.

The journey started well, a rarely seen empty M25 meant we made good time and even managed to sneak our way onto an earlier ferry. However after such a great start we then had out first hiccup, the earlier ferry actually ended up leaving later than the ferry which we were originally booked onto. Nonetheless, we only ended up arriving in Calais slightly later than planned and after a very long and absorbing game of top trumps we hardly even noticed the time.

After one day to get our ski legs back we were straight into the competition, starting off with Giant Slalom. We didn't have the best start to the team events as only 2 members of the team managed to get down to the bottom of the course without losing skis on route, resulting in us being disqualified. The individual results were, however, more successful for some members of the team, in particular **LCpl Harper** who came 25th.

Super G went slightly better as a team as all 4 of us managed to complete the race without any tumbles on route, so no disqualification this time. As individuals **LCpl Harper** again did well finishing 25th with **LCpl Duggins** only 5 seconds behind placing him in 48th position.

Following a huge dump of snow the race officials had to do a bit of a rethink with the schedule so the third event of the competition was the Slalom. Despite the freezing conditions of -20 we had our most successful event as a team we came 7th, proving that technically our skiing was superior to those who had beaten us on the speed events. The real challenge on the slalom was the freezing temperature and extremely poor visibility, making it very difficult to navigate your way round the correct side of the poles.



LCpl Harper demonstrating the perfect start

On the penultimate day of the exercise, after a lot of side slipping off the piste and after they finally opened all the lifts, we managed to get our first Downhill training run done. There were a few rather spectacular falls but thankfully all the team survived. The second training run the following day we were not so fortunate. After completing my run I came down to a slightly spaced out **LCpl Duggins** who half way down the course had managed to end up in the fence on the side of the piste, but had no recollection of how he had got there. The



mountain rescue team were called and I followed as he was CASEVAC'd off the mountain. Unfortunately this meant we were unable to compete in the Downhill race leaving just **LCpl Harper** and **LCpl Rouke** representing 3(UK)DSR. They did, however, with just the two of them competing, manage to get us to 9th place. Most importantly **LCpl Duggins** managed not to do any serious damage and was left with just a bit of a sore head for the rest of the day.



LCpl Duggins on the Slalom

It was a thoroughly enjoyable 10 days even though sadly there were no prizes won by the team. But that just gives us a great excuse to go back next year when our experience will ensure we will not come back empty handed! For **LCpl Harper** and **LCpl Duggins** it was not the end of the racing season as they both went on to qualify for the Army Championships.

258 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj A Senneck**
SSM **WO2(SSM) E Watson**

EXERCISE DRAGON DRAKENSBERG BEAR - by Sig Mulcrone

From 24 Nov – 8 Dec 12 members of 258 Signal Squadron deployed to the Republic of South Africa on Adventure Training. The aim of the expedition was to reach the peak of the Mafadi Mountain within the Drakensberg Mountain range and visit the battlefield of Rorke's Drift.



All smiles at the start

The expedition started with a few hitches as **Sig Foy's** luggage was lost by the airline on the way to Durban. It was soon recovered and we settled for the night, taking in the Durban nightlife. We were all pleased to discover we could enjoy an 18oz steak with all the trimmings for £10 and at 75p per beer we had no complaints.



Taking the plunge

We spent the next couple of days collecting stores for the impending trek and then moved to Injisuthi camp. This was to be our base for the night before we set off on our trek. We spent the next 6 days trekking to various bivi sites in the area, unfortunately we didn't reach the peak of the Mafadi Mountain but we did manage to complete 6 quality days in the mountain range.

Our next destination was St Lucia wetland reserve for a few days R&R with a stop at Rorke's Drift on the way. The Safari was one of the highlights of the trip, taking in some of the amazing sights South Africa has to offer. We returned to the UK to face the cold and reflected on what a quality trip it had been.

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj A N McKenna MBE**
SSM **WO2(SSM) K Law**

FOREWORD – by Capt P Reynolds

3 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt (3 DSR), based in Bulford, currently enjoys two formal chains of command: 11 Sig Bde for those elements of the Regt deploying on Op HERRICK 18 and 3 (UK) Div HQ for those elements committed to the Div support piece. The Regt effectively is therefore a Campaign Signal Regt with the additional mission to support the Div HQ. The Regt is to reorganise as a Multi Role Sig Regt under A2020, this work scheduled to commence on return from operations.

Unsurprisingly therefore 3DSR LAD is a busy place to be. One of our squadrons is remotely located at Bramcote and to that end we have a Fitter Section embedded within 30 Sig Regt LAD; we routinely have soldiers deployed to Kenya, Canada and the Falklands, and since Sept 12 have had personnel away training for the Souter Force Protection task in Kabul. We have one of our Fitter Sections preparing to deploy, also to Kabul, in May. Brigaded within the LAD are the Royal Signals Electricians of the RGB.

REGIMENTAL GENERATOR BAY - by Sgt Potts

I arrived into 3 DSR in mid September, taking over the RGB in Sp Sqn. It's a sizeable RGB, with a significant amount of tasks.



Along with pre tour training supporting 202 Sig Sqn, there are also many other tasks on a daily basis, ranging from support to the Regt and Garrison to assisting with other outside agencies.

The RGB, like most these days, is in close support of the LAD and form a pretty formidable bond. When I first arrived into the unit the Squadron were in preparation for supporting a large staff college exercise which took up a great amount of time to build and prepare for the visit. From an electrician's point of view, until the build was up it was pretty much impossible to start planning and implementing the plan, this in itself took a great deal of time. However the calibre of the electricians within the RGB meant that once the build was up, it was easy enough to follow the plan laid down by the Class 1. It was then his responsibility to check and sign off the layout as fully electrically safe, a huge responsibility for a JNCO. Within the RGB, the junior electricians get a lot of hands on experience due to the vast amount of exercises that we get involved in; it also gives them enough opportunities to complete power set ups as a Class 2 for when they eventually become Class 1 electricians.

It was the first time that I'd been back in a field Regt as an electrician since being in 3 DSR in 1998, and it hasn't changed! The busy regimental life, the fast balls that are inevitable make the job interesting and extremely hard at times, but the calibre of the soldiers that we have coming through these days makes the job a lot easier.



Members of the RGB out for a stroll

The life of an electrician within a field unit is not only busy and arduous, but the opportunity for learning most aspects of their job is also top notch, and the junior soldiers should look to be completing their 3 year tour and either be leaving a LCpl moving on to complete their Class 1 course or completing this before they complete their posting. All new electricians who are posted into 3 Div know that they will receive the best possible chance to gain the best qualifications and be the best electricians within the Corps.

PAINTBALLING - by Cfn Enirayetan

Two 'legends' from Sp Sqn were leaving, so it was decided to organise a memorable leaving do for **Cpl Penhaligan** and **Cpl Langton**. **LCpl Marshall**, who was to organise the do, wasn't sure what to do, so he asked each member of the LAD to think of a great way to say goodbye to 'two of their finest'.

So on the set day we all met up at the LAD. After the leaving speeches and words of encouragement to send them off to their new units, we headed up to Andover for the final

showdown. On arrival it wasn't what I was expecting, as the location was like a ghost town in the middle of nowhere, I didn't know they had such a place in Andover! After a moment of questioning whether **LCpl Marshall** had taken us to the right place we got off the bus to enjoy the day.



After we received a safety brief followed by do's and don'ts of the range, coveralls and safety equipment issued and paintball rounds purchased, it was time for the mayhem to begin! We were divided into 2 teams of 6, with 5 different scenarios which ranged from taking over a tower from the enemy, to a siege of a FOB covered in smoke with the use of shields for protection - paintballs flying throughout and bruising people everywhere!

It was a fun filled day, with an epic grand finale! The two unfortunate leavers were lined up against a wall while the rest of us used up our remaining (purposefully saved) paintballs on them! They were covered in paint and bruises afterwards. Then it was back to the LAD to joke about the events of the day and enjoy a few beverages.

EXERCISE RED RESOLVE - by LCpl Marshall

The LAD deployed 50% of their manpower to supplement Ex RED RESOLVE. For some it was going to be removing the cobwebs, for others back to basics and for the remainder (Seniors) they were to be removed from the office for a couple of days. The good news being that we were to be living in the biggest campsite in the world, (better known to you and me as Salisbury Plain Training Area), all at the tax payers' expense.



The week started off with Sqn training in a round-robin affair, with several stands seemingly prepared for the amusement of the DS. They were to involve a Land Rover rebuild; Equipment Care in the Field; vehicle self-recovery and a 'blood





OC Sp Sqn, deep in thought on the ranges

and guts' Bayonet Lane. The irony of the latter was, that it was arranged by **SSgt Blacklock** who was on resettlement at the time, so could not attend himself...

To the misery of the soldiers, it rained all day, justifying the role of the goretex clothing in the British Army. However they attacked it with a good attitude and retaining their senses of humour, which was commendable. We can all sleep easier, knowing that when rounds run out, the bayonets are tried and tested.

The second part of the exercise was based around living, administering and skills in the field, again at Sqn level. **CSgt Maloney** 1 R WELSH (Sp Sqn SQMS) was on hand to deliver excellent field craft lessons with numerous humorous stories in his arsenal. The rank slides were off and the seniors were reduced to rifleman for a couple of days.

The exercise was of great benefit to the soldiers that took part, it allowed people to be put out of their comfort zone and at the same time revisit the basic soldiering skills, which we all love! The Sqn would like to thank **CSgt Maloney** for an interesting and educational few days!



10th SIGNAL REGIMENT CORSHAM



CO
RSM

Lt Col EA Dallyn MBE
WO1 (RSM) MJ Nowosielski

The past few months have seen significant changes in the structure of 10 Sig Regt. We welcome 81 Sig Sqn (V) into the Regtl fold and have now made the full transition to come under command of 11 Sig Bde. The inclusion of 81 Sig Sqn (V) provides the ideal opportunity to enable closer integration of the Regular Army and the Reserves; we look forward to the variety and opportunities this will present, and the structural change will cement what was already a close working relationship. The move to 11 Signal Brigade has also helped promote a wider awareness of the breadth of operational capabilities provided by the Regiment, be it ECM(FP) to Op HERRICK, deployment of Installation Technicians to both Op HERRICK and various PJOBS, support to AHQ Applications, Information Assurance, UK Ops and State Ceremonials.

On a more personal note, we say farewell to **WO1 'Ski' Nowosielski**, who by the time of publication will have reinvented himself as **Capt Mark Nowosielski** and have been posted to 1(UK) ADSR as the Welfare Officer. We also welcome **WO1 Garner** to the team as the new RSM. We also have the pleasure of congratulating **SSgt Casey** for being awarded the Chief of the General Staff's Certificate for outstanding service while serving in the British Army.

Despite the ongoing demands of the 'day job' sporting and adventurous training remains a core part of Regimental life, which over the last 2 months has included a very successful Alpine Skiing season.

THE DINING OUT OF WO1 (RSM) MARK NOWOSIELSKI
– by Sgt Grounds

On the evening of Saturday 9 February 2013, Corsham WO's & Sgts' Mess saw seniors from across 10 Signal Regiment and honoured guests gather for the dine out of **WO1 (RSM) Nowosielski**. This was also a celebration as the RSM has been selected for promotion to Captain, and so this would be his final mess function in the WO's & SGT's Mess.

The evening began well with the social lubrication flowing freely and the meal, as was to be expected, of the highest standard. The after dinner speaker, **WO1 (YofS) Rudd**, gave a colourful and articulate tale of the RSM's career to this point.

The RSM thanked his Regt, his wife and his family for his success to date. Just before leaving the table **WO1 (RSM) Nowosielski** took the opportunity to pass on his pace stick to **SSgt Cansfield**, who himself had just received notice that he had been selected for promotion to WO2.

After a short interlude by Mr Vice, the celebrations carried on with dancing and a demonstration by **SSgt (FofS) Cadogen**, on how to do it in style.

243 SIGNAL SQUADRON

This period has once again seen the Sqn continuing at a busy tempo meeting the needs of the Army HQ. A special mention must go to **SSgt Paul Casey** who has provided a resilient and robust service despite being under resourced for the task. His breadth and depth of responsibilities have meant he continually works extensive hours, often at short notice. Despite his own extensive load, he is also always willing to support any other department within the Squadron when required. He is the consummate professional; his firm but fair approach has earned him the respect from all members of the Squadron, the Regiment and external agencies such as Microsoft who welcome his thoughts and considerable expertise and experience. He can also be relied upon to take the time to both manage and develop his team. He ensures that they have the depth of knowledge to gain confidence in their role, whilst being conscious that the consequence and profile of any mistakes are high, thus striking the perfect balance between delegation, trust and support. For these efforts, **SSgt Casey** has received a CGS commendation for outstanding service from this year's Queen's New Year Honours list as well as a Master of Signals Commendation.

Welcome to **SSgt Offord**, **Sgt Higgins**, **LCpl Pugh**, **LCpl Nelson** and **LCpl Rolfe**. Congratulations go to **Sgt Durnell** and his



wife **Nicky** on the arrival of their baby daughter **Amelia-Grace** and **Cpl Haines** and his wife **Sarah** on the of their baby son **Dexter**.

EXERCISE HORSESHOE FINALE – by Sgt Poole and Sgt Tweed

Ex HORSESHOE FINALE was the transportation of 2 Signal Brigade's pennant around the country, visiting the Brigade units before its disbandment on the 24 November. The rules were few but specific, there was to be no use of motorised transport and it was to be as varied as possible. 243 Signal Squadron were to receive the pennant from 251 Signal Squadron and transport it from Aldershot Garrison to Army HQ, Andover, a total of 70 miles which the team had given themselves 7 hours to complete using as many different apparatus as possible. The route was broken down into six legs as well as a charity spinning event in Basingstoke town centre to raise money for the "ABF the Soldiers Charity".

The team was made up of the OC, SSM, **WO2 FofS(IS) Chris Crompton**, **SSgt FofS(IS) Dave Shilton**, **Sgt Chris Durnell**, **Sgt Andy Poole**, **Cpl Rich Danby** and **LCpl Andy Fraser**.



The team smiling not realising what lay ahead

At 0930hrs, on a relatively sunny day, **WO2 FofS(IS) Chris Crompton** and **SSgt FofS(IS) Dave Shilton** received the Brigade pennant and began leg 1 which was a run along the Basingstoke canal. This was to last for 2 ½ miles before they handed it over to leg 2 which was a canoe along the canal to Church Crookham, some 6 miles away. **WO2 (SSM) Attwell** and **Sgt Chris Durnell** were in boat 1 and **SSgt (SQMS) 'LA LA' Lawson** and **Sgt Andy Poole** were in boat 2. It soon became apparent that the **SSM** and **Sgt Durnell** had been stitched up with no paddling experience between them and what can only be described as a floating bath tub. **SSgt (SQMS) Lawson** and **Sgt Poole** powered away into the distance in their K2, stopping every now and then to relax while the bath tub, complete with whinging occupants, caught up. At the end of leg 2 it was estimated that the **SSM** and **Sgt Durnell** had probably covered closer to 7 miles due to their inability to keep the canoe in a straight line. Leg 3 saw the road bikers take over and the **SSM, WO2 FofS (IS) Crompton** and **SSgt FofS (IS) Shilton** began the 12 miles to Basingstoke. It was, however, at this point that Mother Nature decided to play her part and the heavens opened. Undeterred, the threesome pushed on making good time, however the ever considerate motorists of Hampshire decided the trio needed a good soak and very little of the road, resulting in many close calls and profanities being bounded around.

Leg 4 saw five members of the Squadron tab into Basingstoke town centre to collect money enroute and meet up with the

spinners who had commenced their event earlier that morning. A well earned break saw pasties and coffee consumed as well as the **SSM, WO2 FofS (IS) Crompton** and **SSgt FofS (IS) Shilton** changing into dry clothes and contemplating leg 5 which was the off road mountain bike phase consisting of 13 miles of varying terrain. After setting off the threesome were once again quickly soaked to the bone but pushed on regardless until after 5 miles the blue lights of the local constabulary and a road closure forced them back into the admin minibus to try and find a way around the obstacle. After some quick map reading by **LCpl 'Pathfinder' Fraser** and some truly terrifying driving by **Sgt 'Get out of my way' Poole**, the dejected threesome climbed back onto their road bikes in order to make up lost time and begin leg 6 which would take them the final 17 miles into Army HQ. Upon arrival, **SSgt FofS (IS) Shilton** handed the pennant over to the youngest member of the Sqn, **Sig 'Baby Face' Newton** who was piped into Army HQ to complete the ceremony, handing over to the Sqn OC, **Maj Hughes**.



Sig Newton Hands over the 2 Signal Brigade pennant to Maj Hughes

The team performed well in difficult conditions and everyone involved agreed never to do it again. However, most are now looking to compete in their first Triathlon in April volunteering to get wet prior to getting on their bikes!

Upon arrival at Festival Place, Basingstoke, even the grim weather and spinning bike push through the puddles couldn't dampen our spirits. We arrived, and identified the best place for maximum public viewing. The stand was set up, and just as the biceps and pecs were displayed by the ABF vests, the Shopping police came and tried to swiftly move us on. After deliberations, **Cpl 'Jay' Oakley** found out that there would be some sort of filming going on within the square, but we convinced the shopping police we could only benefit the filming and were allowed to stay.

So upon the bikes, **Sgt 'Guns' Tweed**, **Cpl 'attract any age/sex' McGrath** and **LCpl 'I'll pay a pound to watch!' Fraser** got and proceeded to spin. The fund raising got off to a cracking start with 'silent' money flowing freely. **Cpl 'I'll blag the shirt off your back' Oakley** went about sweet talking gifts off the local stores and managed to come back at least twice, arms loaded with freebies! After about an hour, a film crew arrived and started to set up, which we soon found out to be a Dom Jolly Xmas sketch show of the ASBO vicar. This resulted in us not only getting free phys for the day, but we also got to watch an extremely amusing 'vicar' smash a carol singers guitar up and kick their collection and presents everywhere... 3 times.

As the day progressed, we all had our fair share of proud grannies, ex-paras and snipers relaying their stories to us. We continued to spin, mostly standing up by now as the bums



were starting to pinch a little. A much needed break was taken so we could use the 20p loos, when **Cpl 'Jay' Oakley** returned to spin, and **Cpl Pete Whitton** arrived with the OC. Our high morale was brought to new levels when three broken men turned up in the form of **SSM Attwell**, **WO2 FofS (IS) Crompton** and **SSgt FofS (IS) Shilton** munching pasties and drinking coffee. Their exploits truly put our sore bums and chilly arms into perspective!

The day went really well and all the public were extremely generous, managing to raise £450 for the "ABF the Soldiers Charity"



The Squadron spinners putting Dom Joly through his paces

243 CROSS COUNTRY – CO'S CUP WINNERS – by SSgt FofS (IS) Shilton

On 16 January the 243 Sig Sqn cross country team consisting of; **Capt (TOT (IS)) Nicky Coombs**, **WO2 (FofS (IS)) Chris Crompton**, **SSgt (FofS (IS)) Shilton**, resident PTIs **Sgt Dave Jarvis** and **LCpls Ingleby** and **Downey** left Andover at 0500hrs for the trip to compete in the 10 Sig Regt CO's cup cross country competition hosted by 225 Sig Sqn in Northern Ireland. While the exterior of the team consisted of good looks and the spritely nature of a finely tuned athletic unit, with months of quality training under the belt, the average age and scent of Deep Heat told a different story.

The athletes, transport swung by Aldershot to pick up the 251 Sig Sqn team and then rendezvous with the 241 Sig Sqn team at Gatwick. Following the surprisingly smooth trip through the check in desk and security there was not much else to do than search out a suitable establishment for a pre-race breakfast. The 243 team settled down at Armadillos, a South American style restaurant, where porridge could be picked up for as little as a fiver and bacon and eggs at just over a tenner. After breakfast the flight was delayed for long enough to cast what was mostly concern, but in some cases hope that we may not make it across in time.

Landing at Belfast the athletes were met and transported to Thiepval Barracks to meet up with the 225 competitors, change and head off for the event. The event itself was set within the picturesque backdrop of Crawfordsburn Country Park and was said to comprise of undulating tracks and forest trails. It would transpire that undulating was somewhat an understatement and in fact contained hills of a gradient sufficient to make all but the bravest mountain bikers get off and push. It was unfortunately not possible to enjoy the fantastic scenery when reaching the summit as thoughts of resisting the urge to walk and ensuring that the investment of the Gatwick breakfast did not make an unanticipated return.

The results would be calculated with the first female and first three male runners from each team. **Sgt 'I need something from Duty Free' Tweed** led the Regiment's female runners in by a not inconsiderable distance, much to the dismay of one of the regular league runners who 'always finished second'. The Regiment's male runners were led in by **SSgt FofS (IS) Dave 'Why am I still doing this' Shilton**, with **Sgt Dave 'I don't do comms' Jarvis** coming 3rd and **WO2 Chris 'new shoes' Crompton** finishing 6th for a more than respectable 243 performance. **Capt Nicky Coombs** and **LCpl 'built for MMA not cross country' Ingleby** both did themselves proud finishing in the middle of their respective fields.

Unfortunately it wasn't all stories of success for the Sqn team, with one of the unit's PTIs, **LCpl 'I bought my indoor PT trainers to a cross country race and now they are dirty and rubbing a bit so I'm stopping' Downey** having to pull out with what may have been a serious injury. Suffice to say any form of quitting or incomplete job in the Sqn is now affectionately known as doing a "Downey".

EXERCISE ALPINE TIGER 26 JAN – 16 FEB 13 – by WO2 FofS (IS) Crompton

On 26 Jan 13 the Sqn's skiers gathered at 0200 in Army HQ ready to catch the bus that would set us on our way to Gatwick to catch our sleazy jet flight to Grenoble. Things were going well, or so we thought. However, after being diverted to Lyon due to poor visibility, which made me question the pilots' ability, we finally made our destination 5400ft up at the base of the les Deux Alps. A magnificent sight met us with the snow and the blue sky looking inviting, but we would not hit the slopes until the following morning when **SSgt 'Magic Mike' Joyce** would turn up.

The morning arrived and so did 140 university medical students all waiting to collect their ski equipment. It took a few hours but the lads didn't seem to mind the company. After a health and safety brief from **SSgt Joyce** we were off to the slopes for an afternoon where we quickly discovered "dangerous" **SSgt (FofS (IS)) Dave Shilton** and his robotic pose. He truly was a sight to behold, that said he never gave up regardless how often he ate the snow.

Everyone seemed to take the tuition on board and apply it as the week went on, however **LCpl 'Buckfast' Lafferty** seemed to be going backwards and by Friday he was going down the slope shouting "I can't stop". This was not a phrase we had wanted to hear as he headed straight past **SSgt Joyce** and towards a red slope.

As the skill level progressed, the dress sense did not and **LCpl Lafferty** deployed the owl hat in a vain hope to attract the



LCpl Lafferty's Owl Hat.....enough said



opposite sex. It didn't seem to work on euro babes, but it did give the rest of the group a good laugh.

By Tuesday the trip was in full swing and so was the name calling. **Sig 'Sensible Greg' Howarth** was the main joking point, however come the evening, and a few drinks, **'Sensible Greg'** transformed into the amazing dancing penguin!

During our time at the UCPA we could not fault the slopes or the food that was on offer during breakfast, lunch and dinner as **WO2 (FoS(IS)) 'two meals' Crompton** often discovered.

After all the preparation and tuition from **SSgt Joyce** and regardless what the weather threw at us, whether it was blue skies or 30mph winds at 9000ft limiting the visibility to 30ft, everyone's skills came into play and we were able to make it down safely. This included **LCpl 'snow plough' Lafferty**, so I would have to say this was an achievement in its own right.

Overall we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves on this AT and would recommend the slopes of Les Deux Alps to anyone whether they be complete novices or experienced skiers.



The Sqns intrepid Skiers on day one of an excellent week

241 SIGNAL SQUADRON

INSTALLATION TECHNICIANS IN BRUNEI – by Sgt Gorthy

241 Signal Squadron currently has half a troop deployed on Op HERRICK, four soldiers in the Falklands and two on Op DARKLE, all installing ICS infrastructure, having had double that number deployed just before Christmas. However, when the task came in for a team to spend two weeks installing ICS infrastructure in Brunei, there was no shortage of volunteers! I therefore magnanimously feigned disappointment when I was chosen to lead the team, as we all told our loved ones that we didn't really want to go, but had been ordered to and had no choice! Our mission (which we clearly did choose to accept!), was to install the CIS that supported the Brunei Garrison estate development plan.

The small group of extremely competent, high calibre, knowledgeable and very modest Installation Technicians set forth to discover Brunei. What we found was one of the last remnants of an empire that once included all of Borneo and the southwest Philippines; Brunei is now one of the smallest countries on earth, lodged in the northern coast of Sarawak. As the team were only in Brunei for two weeks work started immediately. This was no easy feat. When we left the UK it was a nice 4°C, but we arrived to find a truly awful 32°C with 80% humidity. However, this clearly had its benefits, especially those who had eaten a few too many turkey roasts over the Christmas break!

The main task was to replace underground cables in the garrison, and to install the ICS infrastructure in the new 7 Flight Operations Room. 'Confined spaces' are not dirty words in Brunei, as **Sig 'The Mole' Snookes** found out, much to his delight. Not only did the cable pulls provide a good post-Christmas physical work-out, but it also allowed the team to 'become one' with nature, especially the snakes, lizards and frogs. But it was the frogs that gave the most entertainment, as one member of the team, **LCpl Burns**, was like a child in a candy shop every time he saw one. He was almost caught kissing one, presumably hoping that it would turn into a handsome prince!

Cable pulling can always be interesting for 'Mechs', either it be pulling cable pulling in Kosovo in 'the good old days' or in Afghanistan with the soaring heat and dust. Brunei brought its own challenges. Lucky for the team we had water pumps, as the image of emptying completely full pits with buckets would have been a challenge, as the water never stopped pouring into the pits. The newer Installation Technicians in the team discovered the full extent of the damage that water ingress could do to a cable, as the 100-pair cables we were replacing looked more like a 500-pair cable. But with this little challenge, the team soon smashed out the task.

7 Flight Ops Room was a small Cat5e and Fibre installation. It was to provide the Army Air Corps with a substantially larger space to work in, but the main effort was to provide them with new communication infrastructure so that they could work from a proper Ops Room. This task presented an excellent opportunity for the more junior members of the team to brush up on their key installation skills.

The team worked hard to complete the projects as quickly as possible. Having been completed to the highest possible standards with a few days to spare, we were left with the opportunity to explore the local area to expand our cultural awareness before returning home. The older and wiser members of the team (**SSgt Giz 'Jason Donovan' Carr**, **SSgt Peck 'Kylie Minogue' Ramsden**, **LCpl Price** and I) took in the delights of the capital, Bandar Seri Begawan. Its soaring mosques and picturesque water villages definitely need to be seen. Unlike many other major cities, Bandar Seri Begawan was very quiet. We did, however, find a supporters' club for a nearby football team (Manchester United) in the middle of the water village. After all, Manchester is only a mere 7,020 miles away! The younger members decided to go further afield and travelled to Labuan. The team visited several attractions and places of interest on Labuan. One place was the Labuan War Cemetery, which contains 3,908 war graves and memorials to the fallen of World War II.

After all the work and sightseeing was completed it was time to return home, confident in the knowledge of a 'job well done'. It was a fantastic experience for all of the team, particularly as it was the first visit to Brunei for all. Not only did we expand our cultural awareness, but we tested trade skills in a different environment, just in time for the Sqn's busy year of increased operational support to Op HERRICK!

MEN'S HEALTH MAGAZINE – SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

– by Cpl B Rushworth

On 17 Nov 12 a team from 251 Sqn took part in Men's Health Survival of the Fittest race in London. The Team was organised by **Capt Neil Taylor**, who managed to convince, myself, **Cpl Chris Rees**, **Cpl Dan Skingley**, **SSgt Brian Saxton**, **Lt McGraw** and **Capt Mike Rose** that parting with £45 of our hard earned cash to take part in a gruelling six mile assault course was in fact a good idea. As it turned out, it was, but that's hard to appreciate on a cold November afternoon whilst staring at a twelve foot tall pile of hay bales that was the first obstacle.



At around lunchtime we set off for Battersea Power Station to register our arrival. The race had been going on all day, with competitors setting off in waves and looking at the state of some of the people who had just finished enthusiasm started to dwindle...

At 1500 we took part in the obligatory warm-up and then set off amongst a mass of bodies towards the first obstacle, the hay bales. These were negotiated without issue, and as we warmed into it, we realised we might actually enjoy it.

The obstacles ranged from skips full of mud, to burnt out cars to devious water slides you had to scramble up. There were a lot of them, but if you have ever done Brecon or a similarly challenging course, there was nothing too daunting. So we scrambled, crawled and slid our way through to the last obstacle - an eight foot wall. Turns out this is quite challenging after six miles of obstacles, and **SSgt Brian Saxton**, ever the professional, gentleman... and machine... stopped at the top to help a few young ladies!

The team acquitted themselves well; we were all around the 1000 mark, out of some 8000 competitors. It is a good, quick and often challenging course round the power station, which is an impressive venue. I could not recommend this day more to anyone!

ALPINE SKI SEASON 2012/13

This season has been another strong one for 10 Signal Regiment, the only regiment in the Corps to participate and qualify for the Corps, Divisional and Army Level Competitions, a feat achieved for 2 years running.

On the morning of 17 Nov 12, six members of the Regiment, including one novice, set off on the 14 hour trip to Zell am See, Austria for the start of Ex ALPINE MERCURY GLACER 12. Three weeks of training followed, building and honing the race skills needed to compete during Race Week.

During the down time, we took the opportunity to immerse ourselves in the rich culture of the surrounding area, with several trips to Salzburg to visit to ever impressive Hohensalzburg Fortress, where we learned everything from its construction through the ages to torture and imprisonment techniques.

Before long, Race Week was upon us and we worked as a solid team, warming up together and encouraging each other every step of the way. Some fantastic results followed with the Regt scooping 1st in Slalom, 2nd in Giant Slalom and 2nd Overall. **Capt Dave Pirt** put in a sterling performance on the slalom course, coming 4th, **Sig Brad Avery** put in a great effort to place as 3rd Overall Novice and **Capt Tom Collins** went on to win the Corps Individual Championship.

With the New Year came higher level competition and 10 Signal Regiment set off for Serre Chevalier, France for the Divisional Championships, our sights firmly set on qualifying for the Army level competition.



LCpl Lowery, Sig Avery and LCpl Daws being sent to the Guardroom!

The competition was, as expected, fierce and the degree of difficulty higher than that of the Corps Championships.

We set our sights high and were not disappointed when, come the final day, we had qualified for the Army level competition, with **Capt Tom Collins** placing 7th in the Individual competition. As we moved on, the competition got even fiercer and the difficulty level escalated again.

As the Army competition moved on, the Royal Signal Corps Team, captained by our own **Capt Tom Collins**, who finished 10th in the Individual Competition and won the Michael Pearce Trophy for the top Royal Signals Racer for the 2nd year running, was pulling out some fantastic results and went on to finish 4th in the Corps Competition, an unprecedented result for the Royal Signals in recent memory.

By the final few races, the 10 Signal Regiment team wasn't in good shape, with **LCpl Mark Lowery** breaking a bone in his leg, **Lt Sam Marsden** aggravating an old rugby injury and **Capt Dave Pirt** breaking a bone in his hand... that's racing for you!

A special thank you to all those from the Regiment who took part in Alpine Skiing this year. Anyone even remotely interested should give it a go this year as there really is no greater feeling than throwing yourself down the infamous Luc al Fond downhill course at over 70mph... it literally takes the breath away!



10 Signal Regiment bringing home the silverware!





14th SIGNAL REGIMENT (ELECTRONIC WARFARE) HAVERFORDWEST



CO Lt Col M Purves
RSM WO1 (RSM) M Taylor

223 SIGNAL SQUADRON (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)

OC Maj C Elesmore
SSM WO2 (SSM) D Corcoran

SQUADRON ADVENTURE TRAINING - by LCpl Lloyd

After some hard earned post tour leave, 223 Sig Sqn (EW) went on to complete a fantastic package of Adventure Training in Newquay. After a very long drive down, we all headed straight to the bar for a briefing on the week's activities (and to begin the more social activities of course!). The Squadron was divided into groups corresponding to which activities we had on for each day; mountain biking, kayaking, hill walking, surfing (my favourite) and coasteering.

The first day was mountain biking which was really good, but quite daunting at times. Those hills were pretty steep and sometimes you could pick up serious speed and struggle to slow down! A few members of my group did some spectacular dismounts into bushes; LCpl 'Smokey' Luxton's being particularly ungraceful. Fortunately nobody sustained any serious injuries.

Day two was kayaking which I thought would be my favourite activity as I really enjoyed a course I did when I was younger. However, compared to the fast pace of mountain biking, it felt relatively tame. We were taught how to paddle and steer the kayaks, and eventually got into small games of racing and the classic "British Bulldog". The day ended with the inevitable capsizes, just to make sure we were completely wet.



gt Denman decided to make it a bit more difficult and kayak without a paddle!

Next up was hillwalking. We were led by the superhero SAC 'Mild' McCarthy who inspired us with his manly physique to conquer the hills. Newquay does have really nice landscape although it is not quite the hills we are used to in Wales. It was a slightly more relaxed day and the bracing Cornish wind was definitely a good way to clear the head.

All I can say about the surfing is it is amazing. I had never tried it before, and considering our Regiment is situated right

next to the sea, I now regret not doing it sooner. It's quite a difficult activity, but once you catch a wave, the feeling is incredible! Definitely something I would recommend to anyone who hasn't tried it out before.

The final activity for our group was coasteering. If you have a fear of heights, then this one is not for you. Not only do you have to climb the rock faces, you then have to jump off them! The feeling of throwing yourself into the water was awesome and LCpl 'Technically challenged' Redmond took a waterproof video camera so there is proof of all our terrible diving techniques. We also ventured into caves where we would be thrown about by whirlpools, always a great laugh.

We were down in Newquay during the off season period but despite it being quiet we kept ourselves entertained. We only had one fancy dress night mid-week, but this didn't deter Cpl Sidney who managed to go out every night, wearing a different dress each time. It was probably a good job there weren't many people around to be scared by his hairy legs.

Overall, the time spent in Newquay was fantastic and I look forward to the future adventure training packages that we have planned. 223 Signal Squadron (EW), forever and always!

226 SIGNAL SQUADRON (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)

OC Maj B Davenport
SSM WO2 (SSM) M Witham

EXERCISE DRAGONS HORIZON – by LCpl Wood

The week before Christmas leave and the Regiment was winding down and looking forward to a thoroughly well-earned break. Well, most of the Regiment. On Monday 3 December, 226 Squadron (EW) deployed on Ex DRAGONS HORIZON, a week long exercise held on the airfield at Cawdor Barracks, Brawdy. The exercise was designed mainly as a refresher but also for those with less experience to get hands on the kit and to give an idea of what working conditions will be like on the Squadron's upcoming tour.

The Squadron deployed 6 LEWTs in varying locations around the airfield. LEWTs 1, 2 and 3 made up NDA with LEWTs 4, 5 and 6 forming NSR. The Sqn also deployed a BEWCC which ran the exercise, updated the Troops with a daily DOWNREP and provided useful feedback on the intercept and 1st line analysis that the LEWTs had been producing.

The main aim of the LEWTs was to deliver a timely intelligence product. On the whole, this massively improved as the week went on, proving the value of the exercise. Communications and morale were also very well maintained, which considering the treacherous winds and persistent rain, a hallmark of Brawdy camp, was no mean feat. Although the majority of the enemy spoke surprisingly good English for a foreign enemy, a clever twist by the Squadron was to introduce Welsh speakers into the exercise. The Squadron had 3 Welsh speakers at its disposal and utilised two as enemy, holding conversations over the net within the AO and one interpreter floating around the LEWTs. This was to give an idea of the extra element of difficulty that foreign languages will provide.

While the LEWT's main effort was to produce immediate intelligence, another area of focus was building up and maintaining situational awareness. This was important as the



Squadron OC and Seniors visited the LEWTs and requested regular briefs, an element of the exercise in which **LCpl Hinchey** excelled (in some way making up for his glaring lack of voice procedure as he ended a conversation on the net with 'bye') and **LCpls Dhalai** and **Mackay** did not, delivering a brief with their backs to the OC.

All in all, the exercise was a big success with the majority of the aims being met and in most cases surpassed. Everyone departed for Christmas with that little bit more experience and knowledge of their job and the Squadron can now look forward to putting this all into practice on Op HERRICK 18.

236 SIGNAL SQUADRON (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)

OC **Maj K Rhodes**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) G Lawson**

EXERCISE MERCURY GLACIER – by LCpl Dunne

From 17 November 2012, six members of 14 Signal Regiment (EW) took part in the Corps annual alpine skiing race camp in Zell am See, Austria. The team was from 236 Signal Squadron and consisted of **Lt Downing**, **LCpl Dunne**, **LCpl Gibson**, **LCpl Catten**, **LCpl Rutherford** and **Sig Ball**.

We made the 22 hour road trip across Europe to take part in three weeks of race training, followed by a week of racing on grand slalom (GS) and slalom courses. This was something that was very new to all of us, and our skiing ability at first was far from expert.

Day one, week one was a ski off; a chance to show off our skills, or just make it down the run in one piece would have been sufficient. Here the instructors looked at our skiing ability and put us into our relevant groups for the first three weeks of training. The overall ability of the camp varied from absolute beginner to Jedi. The training helped perfect our skiing style, and despite the fact that it had been a few years since most of the team had skied, we progressed quickly and increased in confidence. The daily falls, crashes and collisions boosting the already high moral, (and also providing excellent pictures and camera footage!). As we sharpened our technique our focus shifted more onto race training. Skiing through gates takes some getting used to. Skiing through the jump park was a favourite for most of the teams, trying to get more and more air under the skis and pushing our ability to stay on both skis! The training was predominately carried out on the Kitzsteinhorn glacier that is open for most of the year though as the snow started to fall it opened up new slopes and more runs for us to explore. **LCpl Gibson** was always on the look out for the next black run to open.

As our days were pretty hectic with skiing and trying to get on the first gondola in the morning, we only managed to try out the local hospitality and après ski on a few occasions. We did however find the locals very hospitable and enjoyed a couple of mulled wines and some of the local culture. The *Krampusrummel* evening was a particular highlight!

Once we had perfected our parallel turns and carves, it was time for race week and time to put our skills to the test. We were fortunate enough to be on the Schmittenhöhe for race week as it was quieter than the glacier and everyone was grateful for the fresh snow which gave us some good race conditions for the final week.

The first two days of race week was the GS individual and team, followed by slalom. At the end of the week we had an award ceremony, and although we did come away empty handed (this time) it was a great experience and all of our skiing improved dramatically.

237 SIGNAL SQUADRON (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)

OC **Maj C Wootten**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) R Bird**

A DAY IN LIFE OF A COLLECTOR – by Cpl Turiccki

The day starts at 0545 when the oncoming shift opens up the WROTE Operating Cell (Forward) in Camp Bastion and gets the office ready for the interpreters to arrive. As the shift lead in the collector role for the WOC (F) I am responsible for managing the shift rotation of personnel as well as the individual collectors. This can range from assigning specific people to individual sensors depending on the priorities of the day, to producing and filling out all the appropriate paper work associated with running the collectors' room. This is all done whilst managing to keep on top of my own platform and collect for the day.

Interaction with the locally employed interpreters is also a key to the running of the collection, making sure they have everything they need to carry out their job effectively and timely. There is also a need to ensure there is sufficient time for them to pray, eat and have breaks. Another main function of shift lead/collector is interacting with the Yeoman (EW) on a daily basis to try and effectively manage incoming priorities and then disseminating this information out to the relevant platform and collector to ensure a timely and accurate response. The day then ends at 2145 when the collectors' room is shut down and cleaned ready for the next day. The appropriate paperwork is then filled out and the interpreters are escorted back to their accommodation.

There are days when collect is not just high but also the intelligence value of the collect is high. This can then, in turn, help shape events within TFH when caught in time. Although the hours are long and the days are busy, this gives us a sense of job satisfaction knowing that what we have collected plays a vital part in the J2 picture.

245 SIGNAL SQUADRON (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)

OC **Maj J Barber**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) M Parkinson**

EXERCISE BAD KHOLEI - by Sig Harding

I had only recently joined 245 Signal Squadron when I was told that I would be deploying on Ex BAD KHOLEI and as it was my first exercise outside of training, I was quite anxious to find out what it would be like. In the weeks building up quite a lot of preparation had to be done which provided a good learning curve as there was plenty of equipment I had never seen before.

On the morning of the exercise four LEWTs deployed to Sennybridge. We were all a little concerned about the 12km insertion tab carrying SEER and it certainly proved harder than we all expected with several people struggling. Eventually, we all made it to our locations but dusk had beaten us and we were left setting up in the dark. As this was the first time I had deployed with SEER it was a challenging experience to set up quickly and correctly.

As the exercise progressed everyone was starting to feel the effects of the tabbing with more weight than we would usually carry – it highlighted that we had areas to work on. Throughout the exercise we practised military skills whilst intercepting communications and reporting our findings back to HQ. On the final night we patrolled into our last location and were ambushed. We extracted and ended up setting up in a trench, it was only later that night we realised it was full of frogs!



Our exercise culminated in a patrol during which we came under contact, a challenging last push as everyone was physically and mentally drained. I learned a vast amount under pressure on this exercise and it has definitely reinforced and made me more confident in my trade skills, while also realising that exercises are more challenging in the Field Army than they are in training.

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj K Sturman**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) J Jenkins**

MTO **Capt Ken Smith**
MTWO **WO2 Gaz Welch**

It has been a busy end to the year as the festivities commenced across the Regiment. As always there have been a few arrivals **Sgt Rick Steel**, **Sgt 'Coco' Fairbank** and **Sgt Leigh Alderson** are getting to grips with the Brawdy way of life. There have also been a few departures too; **Cpl Pete Kirkman** who is off to ATR Winchester, and **Cpl Burman** and **LCpl Dunn** all leaving on promotion. We also have to say farewell to **Sigs Earles**, **Mills**, **Walford** and **Burrows** who have opted for life in Civvy Street.

LIVERPOOL 2012 5k RUN – by Sig Cannon

Six of the best highly tuned athletes from 14 Signal Regiment (EW), Regimental MT took on the challenge to complete the 5k Santa Dash 2012 in Liverpool. It began at the Pier Head, Liverpool to various locations around the city centre. Full Santa suits were supplied by the hosts; however, the team decided that PCS trousers and boots would enable each other to identify the team more easily. Santa beards were optional, although **Sig 'Maximus' Heeley** loved her 'Mo' so much she refused to take it off.

The day started off well until **LCpl 'Grandad' Mayes** got lost in the sea of 8500 Santas. It was a real nightmare trying to find him in his Santa jacket, in the end we found him towards the rear, so situation no change! The run started off slow due to the amount of people trying to run through Liverpool City centre but the pace soon picked up. The streets were lined with supporters cheering and giving all the runners support which was great too see and we were able to get some much needed funding for H4H.

In the end the team all crossed the finish line to received a Liverpool Santa dash medal and a well deserved bottle of water. It was an enjoyable weekend which was finished off with a well deserved pit stop at "Nandos" Swweeett! (with military discount of course!!). All in all a great way to mark the start of the Festive Season which was worthwhile, rewarding and caused a few laughs on the way. Not to mention the team raised a total of £270 for H4H.

The team were accommodated at 33 Signal Squadron (TA) and would like to pass on there appreciation and gratitude to the staff at the TAC in Huyton.



L - R: The "TEAM" **LCpl 'Grandad' Mayes**, **LCpl 'White Fleet' Geggie**, **Sig 'Wannabe' Allwood**, **Sig 'Not so Rusty' Ruston**, **Sig 'Maximus' Heeley**, **Sig 'I Can Pass it' Cannon**



15th SIGNAL REGIMENT (INFORMATION SUPPORT) BLANDFORD



CO **Lt Col P Pearce**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) LIDDLE LD**

GLOBAL INFORMATION SERVICES SQUADRON

OC **Maj A Williams RA**
SSM **WO2 A Humes RA**

Global Information Services (GIS) Squadron provides level 3 technical support across a number of in service systems and deployed UORs. Predominantly based in Blandford, the Squadron also has teams based in Sennelager, in direct support of Germany based Brigades, and at Larkhill, in support of the Artillery Centre's tactical communications which include GBAD, FC BISA and FCA.

GIS Squadron has spent last few months supporting MST events, TNG Sp and Training,



BOWMAN sp to the Falklands and 1 (UK) Armoured Division OSG exercise. The Sqn has now formed up in Babbage building, Blandford, in its new orbat with a Sqn HQ and three support Tps. On the social front, the Sqn has visited Portsmouth Naval base and had a Sqn

Dinner on HMS Victory that was excellent. The next event is the Sqn Valentines dinner, once again on HMS Victory, and cultural visit to Colditz Castle at the end of Apr 13.

INFORMATION SUPPORT TEAM (GERMANY)

OC **Mr M Shenton**
Ops Offr **WO1 (FofS) C Ferguson**

IST(G) spent the lead up to the Christmas stand down period hosting Regimental and Squadron personalities. The CO and RSM were the first to visit and the CO provided an insight into the way forward for the Regiment and how we fitted into the future plans for the Corps and Army in general. A second



delegation arrived the following week consisting of the OC Sqn, QM and the SSM. More detail was provided on the team's role and tasks and how we will provide support in the future. It wasn't all work however, and our Blandford based colleagues got to sample some of the seasonal activities of Paderborn, such as the Christmas markets (including the odd cup of Gluhwien).

The team's work continued around the visits with personnel either leaving for or returning from deployments. **SSgt Billy Forrest** flew back from BATUK after an extended stay providing support to Ex ASKARI THUNDER. **SSgt Daz Powell** handed over his Housekeeper support duties on Op HERRICK and returned in time to spend Christmas with his family. Going the other way was **WO2 (FofS) Dave Wood** who deployed as the SO3 System Support Team for JFCIS(A). **SSgt John Paterson** and **Sgt Tom Fyvie** are completing the remainder of their pre-deployment training before they also deploy on Op HERRICK to provide BCIP support.



AWO1 (FofS) Wood digging into Santa's sack in Bastion

As we move forward into a new year our team strength continues to reduce as people leave and replacements get posted to positions in the UK. **SSgt (YofS) Mick Sutton** left on posting and made the relatively short journey up the road to Herford and 1 (UK) ADSR. **Sgt Karly Bond** stayed with the Regiment but relocated to Blandford and **Sgt Dave Milner** departed for a sunshine posting to Northern Ireland. We also said farewell to **SSgt Alf Everist** who leaves the Army after 26 years of service and wish him well as he settles into civilian life here in Germany. The only new arrival has been **Sgt Jim Bartlett**, who joins us from the Infantry Support Team attached to 1 PWRR in Paderborn.

The team look forward to busy few months of training ahead in preparation for the roll out of BCIP 5.5. In addition to our continued support to Op HERRICK and BATUK, this will be the major focus for our support tasks this year, particularly with 7 and 20 Armoured Brigades being among the first to receive the uplift. There will however be some time set aside for other activities with a cultural trip to Berlin topping the list of forthcoming events.

GLOBAL COMMUNICATION NETWORKS (GCN) SQUADRON

OC **Maj (TOT) RJ Wymer**

600 SIGNAL TROOP

OC **Capt (TOT) RJ Pace**
SSgt **SSgt M Beckett**

EXERCISE MERCURY GLACIER XVI – by Sgt Shepherd

Ex MERCURY GLACIER XVI (The Royal Corps of Signal Alpine Ski Championship and Training Camp) took place in Zell am See between the dates 17 Nov – 15 Dec 12. Unfortunately, only two members of the Regiment were able to attend due to work commitments, **Sgt Aitchison** and **Sgt Damian Shepherd**. The Exercise started out with a nice 15 hour drive from Corsham to Zell am See, Austria over 900 miles away. We had Sunday to sort out our skis and other equipment.

With both **Sgt Aitchison** and **Sgt Shepherd** holding their JSSI qualification, they were to instruct for the first three weeks. Then **Sgt Aitchison** was to compete in the final week of racing and **Sgt Shepherd**, as part of the race committee, had the enduring stressful task of the start judge. The first week comprised of a ski off for the competitors where each instructor would be given their groups. **Sgt Aitchison** was tasked with a group of beginners and **Sgt Shepherd** was given a group of intermediate skiers. As the weeks progressed all students improved their skiing skills dramatically, especially the beginners, who were starting to move around the mountain with confidence, speed and some control...

The start of race week crept up on everyone very quickly. The competitive heads then started to become apparent. **Sgt Aitchison** started his race week with bib No 26 and stayed around this position throughout, but ending up 3rd in the Overall Veterans Competition. The 4 week Corps training/championships proved to be arduous, as there were a few skiing injuries such as twisted knees, dislocated shoulders and broken femurs, showing that Alpine skiing is a demanding physical activity. Overall the ex was a great success with all competitors and officials enjoying themselves; including a fantastic prize giving ceremony, final drinks and farewells.

GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS MOUSTACHIOS

During the latter days of October, 2012, a band of like-minded Communicators from the Global Communications Network Squadron of the fighting 15 Signal Regiment (IS), formed a manly allegiance. This allegiance was firstly to raise money for Male Cancer and secondly to restore the dwindling amount of testosterone within the locality of Corsham.

The executive decision was made, to support the Movember Charity whom directly support Prostate Cancer UK and the Institute of Cancer Research, and the Global Communication's Moustachios were formed.

These heroes were formed of military and civilian staff, named as **Sgt Andy Cunnington** (Team), **Mr Paul Leslie Ladle**, **LCpl William Darby**, **Sgt Alan Gaw**, **LCpl Derek Hunter**, **Cpl Jonathon Liddell**, **SSgt Steven Baulch**, **SSgt Geoffrey Overend**, **WO2 (YofS) David Howie** and **Mr Gareth Scott**.

Supporting this worthwhile cause is more than a donation of funds, it is a life-style change. Since the late 1970's men have restricted the growth over the top lip as it is seen as a slightly dated way of expressing manly dominance within society. By growing a moustache each for the month of Movember, these levels have been restored.

Monies have been donated by family members, friends, work-colleagues and from the WOs' & Sgts' Mess of the MOD Corsham, to give an approximate total of £300. A photograph was taken on the 30th of Movember to commemorate these beautiful facial growths:-



Knowledge is Power – Moustache is King.



NETWORKS TROOP

OIC **WO1 (FoS) P Wright**

CORMORANT SECTION

With the almost mythical foretelling of the scaling down of Cormorant now that Falcon has finally arrived, the Cormorant Strategic Management Cell was looking forward to a quiet and undisturbed Christmas leave; unfortunately 90 SU had other ideas!

Ex MAGIC CARPET and Ex SHAHEEN STAR were both due to deploy early January 2013. IBDP was conducted the week running up to leave, with both plans built, and deployed early to allow the troops on the detachments plenty of time to configure and test over the satellite link. All was going smoothly; that is until five minutes after 15 Sig Regt (IS) CO's Christmas knock off speech when the dreaded sound of the SMC phone started ringing furiously.

With telephony faults at Op KIPION that defied all logic, to a satellite link that passed every loop test but still could not pass any data, the SMC team were recalled from leave for over a week of late nights with much gnashing of teeth and pulling of hair until every trick in the book had been exhausted.

Faults in 3 separate enclosures had to be discovered and rectified to resolve the telephony issues out at Op KIPION. Additionally, two members of the team deployed out to Corsham and discovered to their dismay that as initially suspected and denied vehemently that the fault lay firmly on the Sat link.

With the whole team still working plenty of unsociable hours, 90SU personnel deployed to Theatre. With plans to expand the amount of assisted deployments to Op KIPION, the demand on the team shows no sign of abating. With 24 hour callout support, 7 days a week every week, it would seem that the wind down of the Level 3 Cormorant support is as real as Santa Claus.

ROYAL SIGNALS INSPECTION TEAM (RSIT)

OIC **WO2 (FoS) P Whitehead**

INFORMATION SERVICES ASSURANCE TEAM (ISAT)

- by WO2 (FoS) Phil Whitehead

After a well received extended Christmas leave nine intrepid engineers of the highest calibre departed a cold and wet UK winter destined for the glorious sun of a Kenyan summer. The aim was two-fold: to give the brave troops in BATUK some much needed support with their Housekeeper nodes and to give their 106 FFR strong Bowman fleet a good going over with an RSIT based inspection.

Whilst the concept of these tasks seems simple enough, there were many obstacles to their successful completion, not least the fact that Kenya is still a developing nation and a simple contracted leased line is about as reliable as a twisted pair of black and tan running across a tank park! Local issues aside, the team cracked on, some moving north to the Nanyuki showground and the remainder staying in Nairobi to work their magic.

Now, everyone knows that a small and dedicated Royal Signals Troop can usually be relied upon to perform several miracles a week, but recovering an enormous Bowman fleet from the devastating effect of British Infantry on exercise was a bit much for BATUK CIS Troop (having next to no spares and about 10 working days to complete their task!). So, in the

spirit of being helpful **Maj (TOT) Bob Wymer** decided that the inspection of the Bowman fleet would probably be best put on hold whilst we put the Bowman back together again. After a long hot week, **Sgt Al Gaw**, **Sgt Greig Taylor** and **Sgt Si Kidd**, along with significant assistance from BATUK CIS Tp, got 60 FFRs back to an operable state, with only a few minor miracles still needed to recover the remainder.

The HOUSEKEEPER team, led by **SSgt Matt Davis** and **SSgt 'Frankie Snr' Franklin** ably assisted by **Cpl Kirsty Wint** and **Cpl Frankie 'Jnr' Ndegwa**, managed to overcome some of the local infrastructure to get a decent rear link working back to the UK (which is always a good starting point). The north south link between Nanyuki and Nairobi was a different story and no amount of technical wizardry could get it up and running.



A typical Nairobi marketplace



One of the worst, but a good example of a BATUK FFR post Exercise

And so a hard week in the January sun on the equator over and done with, the team returned to their sub zero peace time locations with some unseasonal squaddie tans and a few souvenirs from the quaint little markets of Nairobi.



LOGISTICS SYSTEM SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj M Osborne** AGC (ETS)
SSM **WO1 I Cochrane** RLC

From small beginnings blooms a great little organisation. The Logistic Systems Support Squadron (LSSS) is at the forefront of all specialist support to deployed Logistic Information Systems (Log IS). A Tri-service team made up of Royal Logistic Corps (RLC) Systems Analysts (SA), Royal Air Force Logistic and Communications Personnel, and in the near future Fleet personnel (possibly). The Squadron has grown over time to become an essential hub in assisting, solving and completing a varied range of tasks within the Log IS world. But how did this organisation come about, how has it changed over the years and in what direction are we heading?

The Early Years

Originally Log IS support was provided by the Logistic Information Systems Agency (LISA) based at MOD Bicester. As part of the restructuring of the Defence Logistics Organisation (DLO) on 1 Apr 01, LISA was replaced and became part of the Logistics Applications Integrated Project Team (LAIPT). This brought together the IS organisations from the DLO Headquarters and the 3 single Service support organisations into a single through life cluster project team hosted within the Defence Communication Service Agency (DCSA). The LAIPT became responsible for managing the delivery of all Log IS services to support the DLO, with an annual spend of £120M.

In 2007 the deployed support element of the LAIPT reformed under the Unified System Support Organisation (USSO) and became the Logistic Systems Support Team (LSST), with administration support provided by USSO located at Blandford Camp.

Tri-Service (Almost)

In Dec 11 a further restructure began, with the intention to transfer the responsibility for specialist support to deployed Log IS from the current Application Service Providers to the USSO. This would include a re-badging under 15th Signal Regiment (Information Support) and would fold Log IS support into the whole IS support piece under one central

focal point. LSSS then subsumed the RAF support team from RAF Stanbridge, on 01 Nov 11. This unit, the Field Support Deployed (FSD) to Deployed Management of the Joint Deployed Inventory (DMJDI) moved to Bicester, which increased LSSS manning to 3 Officers, 21 RLC SAs, 1 FEMIS Support, 8 RAF Personnel, 4 RLC Suppliers and 1 Civilian Clerk.

Fleet are yet to fill their commitment to LSSS, but this will be revisited once the Implementation Order (IO) has been formally signed off.

What do we support?

At present LSSS provide specialist support to 14 Logistic Applications (LogApps). Each application requires a different level of support, which can be; support to the application, support to the network, or support to both network and application. The main effort for support is not only to UK and overseas Operations, but also the rest of the world, including the Falklands, Cyprus, Kenya (BATUK) and Canada (BATUS). All Tri-Service logistic units have the ability to request the assistance of the LSSS. Units are able to request support, be it, equipment, manpower or both to assist with initial set up of their Unit's requirements. Once the Unit is up and running the team will then relocate back to Bicester where they are able to provide Reach Back cover 24 hours a day 7 days a week for the duration of the Unit's deployment.

The Way Ahead

It has been just under two year since LSSS came into existence, but in that short space of time support requirements have increased on a monthly basis with the main focus aimed at the rollout of DMJDI to UK Land Units and Theatre and the impending JAMES rollout. The Future will only see this trend develop as the LSSS will see an increase in LogApps with both Air and Fleet applications being added to the portfolio. As the responsibility for these applications moves to sit within the remit of LSSS, the total amount of LogApps could rise to over 30. However, LSSS do not stand alone with this support and work closely with Boeing Defence UK (BDUK). Together both LSSS and BDUK form a partnership to support each application globally.

Finally what makes a good SA?

It's not all about IT... as an SA you need to be resourceful and

Application Short Name	Notes	Application Long Name
GLOBAL	2nd Line Deployable Inventory Management System	GLOBAL
VITAL	Part of Consignment Tracking Visibility Suite	Visibility In Transit Asset Logging
TAV- Client Tools	Part of Consignment Tracking Visibility Suite	Total Asset Visibility - Client Tools
TAV- SAAVI Manager	Part of Consignment Tracking Visibility Suite	Total Asset Visibility - SAAVI Manager
SEESUPS2	Replacement for CSUPS	Combat Supplies
FEMIS	Vehicle repair/management system	Field Force Equipment Management Information System
MMARS	Troop Movement system	Movement Management and Air Reservations System
GOLDesp	Engineering & Asset Management (Rotary Wing)	GOLD Engineering and Asset
LITS	Legacy System RAF Management Information System	Logistics Information Technology Strategy
MJDI	POC Deployable Inventory Management System	Management of the Joint Deployed Inventory
UOOB	1st Line accounting system for QM Depts	UNICOM Out Of Barracks
MMIT	Capability to view materiel in transit in the Forward and Reverse Supply Chains across all three services	Management of Materiel in Transit
OLIVER	Provides Stores System 3 Interrogation capability	Online Issues Validation Enquires Routine
JAMES	Vehicle repair/management system/Vehicle Availability	Joint Asset Management and Engineering Solutions

Example of IS Systems supported by LSSS



self-motivated, able to think on your feet, to work individually and as part of unique team. We enjoy a demanding and rewarding career with Log IS deployed worldwide on Op HERRICK and locations such as Canada, Kenya and Brunei, working remotely or via on-site visits. SAs have the opportunity to gain civilian IT qualifications such as Microsoft Certified IT Professional and Cisco Certified Network Associate.

If you would like more information, please visit our website by typing in 25.162.127.111 into your web browser, or just arrange a visit to see us, where we will be more than happy to help.



21st SIGNAL REGIMENT (AIR SUPPORT) COLERNE



CO
RSM

Lt Col A R Aitken
WO₁ (RSM) S B Brown

The tragic death of **Signaller Nick Guya** of 214 Signal Squadron on 1st February 2013 was a huge blow for the Regiment. Our thoughts and prayers are with his widow **Carolynne** and daughter **Nicole**. We mourn his loss, whilst also remembering his friendship and positive influence. He is sorely missed.

214 Signal Squadron

OC
SSM

Maj S Bennett
WO₂ (SSM) G Lancaster

This has been a very busy period for the Sqn. We have continued to provide the best training we can as well as ensuring the burden of STA training is taken as squarely on the Sqn's shoulders as it can be. It has also been a sad time as we lost one of our soldiers, **Sig Nick Guya**, who unfortunately collapsed and died during the Sqn range package. He will be sorely missed and the thoughts of all those in the Sqn go out to his family.

SQUADRON RANGE PACKAGE

From 29 – 31 Jan 2013 the Sqn deployed to Warcop training area to conduct a range training package. The first day consisted of a G&Z/ACMT range before the soldiers moved onto the afternoon's training during which they rotated between a section in defence shoot and an IBSR range. This was followed in the evening by a section in defence shoot at night. The following day they took part in a pistol range, a GPMG sanger shoot and a pairs Fire and Manoeuvre range. The following morning after an excellent breakfast those who were physically able took part in a fire team falling plate range



After the GPMG sanger shoot there was just enough time for an atmospheric photograph

which was preceded by a one mile march. As we move further into the Sqn's pre training prior to deploying on Op HERRICK 19 the training conducted this week and the training conducted in the future will prove vital in ensuring the soldiers are prepared for the challenges that await them as it is possible to be.

EXERCISE SAXON SHAKEOUT - by Sgt Norton

On Monday 23 Nov members of 214 Sig Sqn, made up mainly from Saxon Tp, with some manning from Roman and Support Tps, got ready to deploy on Ex SAXON SHAKEOUT. This was going to be an infantry based exercise on Catterick TA as part of the Sqn's pre deployment training. Monday morning started with a set of Orders given by Saxon Tp OC, or should I say **SSgt Andy Carr** who was double hatting for the duration of exercise playing the Troop OC and Troop SSgt. After the Orders were delivered to the platoon of 3 sections we were given some admin time to go through things with the section IC and 2IC. We were then issued with section stores, VHF and PRR radios. There was a full kit inspection where there were a few amusing things discovered. **LCpl Gaz Lawrence** had brought a family sized tub of body butter moisturiser.

On the morning of Tue 24 we got weapons and took the coach to Catterick TA. The day started with ammunition and pyrotechnics being issued to the 3 section 2IC's, and then a two mile insertion tab to the FOB that was going to be our home for the next 48 hours. We were then tasked by the platoon Sgt, **Sgt Jonny Howells**, to get the FOB ready. Each section was given a job. 1 section was FOB defence, 2 Section was setting up tents and setting up the ops room, and 3 section was sent on a clearance patrol. **Cpl Jay Herbert** then came to see if there were any radio problems. Once we got these jobs done we were put on 8 hour rotations from FOB defence, work and sleep which soon turned out to be not much of sleep and a lot of FOB defence and patrols/scenarios.

Orders were given for every Scenario to the section IC and a runner. The first scenario was to go and see a village elder at a specified grid to gain intelligence to build up a J2 picture. This was successfully achieved by 1 Section and 3 Section, but 2 Section managed to lose some of their Section because of the point man, **Sig Iain Macgregor** and IC, **LCpl Casey Allsopp** patrolled across the minefield.

The next scenario was to assault an enemy position, which went without many problems. From time to time the FOB was attacked with random shoot and scoot to an hour long attacks from all directions from the enemy, which was an experience for some of the members of the Squadron like **Sig**



Chris Novak. The evening task was an OP task to go and get some more intelligence for the J2 picture for the final day's activities. The challenge was to get to the objective, but the surprising black ice made the night more interesting! Orders were given very early on the last morning and the final task was a fighting patrol on 2 different objectives to destroy the enemy. When it came to the last bound on the first position **LCpl Stephan Williams** managed to give a perfect demonstration of A over T due to the ice when he crossed the road to move towards the enemy. This made the whole section and the OC and SSM morale go through the roof.

After the section had finished there was the usual picking up the brass, and tidying up the FOB before the coach arrived to take us back to York.

214 BOWLING DAY OUT - by LCpl Haslem



214 Signal Squadron organised a day out 10 Pin Bowling in York and it wasn't long before it turned into a competitive outing between its two troops, Roman and Saxon. With an even split of MT and Support Troop we had two teams for the day. A number of standout performers including **Lt Collins**, **LCpl Pepperell**, **LCpl 'Satnav' Davies** and **LCpl Haslem** (all from Roman Troop) were not enough to stop Saxon taking an early lead as the first round of games concluded. Saxon Troop were in a confident mood which ensured that there was some good banter flying around the Bowling alley. With two games remaining the fantastic turnout increased with the arrival of a few stragglers to see which Troop would prevail. Roman stood up to be counted, despite valiant performances from **LCpl Barker**, **Sig Carson** and **Sig Saynor**, they were unable to stop the Roman Troop onslaught with **Sig Mee** and **Sig Dickens** managing to score the final points. Saxon Troop were inconsolable as they came second best once again.

220 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj Parkinson**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Robertson**

EXERCISE SCORPION WARRIOR 3 – by 2Lt Griffiths

On Monday 28 January 2013, members of 220 Signal Squadron began their third gruelling military-skills exercise. The aim was to build on the skills developed on the two previous

teaching exercises. The troops quickly settled into their new homes inside the ISOs within FOB Thorpe on Blandford training area. Top of the list of tasks after the FOB was set up was the creation of a model, around which to base Orders Groups for the rest of the week's patrols. As the model came close to completion, the rainfall became heavier – which set the tone for the week – and swiftly flooded the model. After a quick rethink, and re-position, it was ready.

Next a section was deployed on a Standing Patrol to reassure the local population, (the role of which was given to the drama queens of the Squadron) whilst the other section were in the sangars or sat waiting, poised, as QRF. This continued for most of the exercise, as the locals became even more aggressive and abusive than usual. Attacks on the FOB became frequent and although the enemy appeared invulnerable, they were beaten off under the courageous leadership of **Lt McLelland**, ably assisted by **Sgt Rotherforth**.

The exercise culminated in a night platoon attack to defeat the remnants of the enemy clinging on to their now loose foothold in the area. With the enemy defeated the Platoon returned to the FOB and the exercise concluded.

The exercise helped to affirm the skills developed, ready for Ex SCORPION KING, a live firing package, the following week, as well as being a refresher of more conventional training.

EXERCISE SCORPION KING – by 2Lt Wray

On Sunday 3 February 30 members of 220 Sqn in addition to DS deployed to West Tofts Camp to conduct LFTT at STANTA as part of pre- deployment training. The troops were a mix of experience and new arrivals to the Sqn. After conducting weapon handling tests on the Sunday, the party deployed to the ranges to conduct their ACMT. After zeroing weapons, it was established that despite having not been in a Field Unit for several postings, that the OC was one of the top shots of the group. Following successful completion of the ACMT, the fire and movement test followed. For some it was the first time in a while they had conducted such drills with live ammunition. That evening saw the delivery by **Lt McLelland** of MATT 8 and preparation for the following day's activities. Day 2 brought clear skies, sun, and a bitterly cold wind.

The IBSR range tested the troops' ability to fire from different positions in combat situations and at times provided some very loud encouragement from the range safety staff! The troops seemed to relish the experience and many improvements were seen. The evening saw **Cpl Peters** continue with BLS and MATT 3 training. Day 3 was pairs fire and manoeuvre, seeing the troops practice the movements, utilising the good ground. The concurrent activity was the culmination of MATT 3 training where **LCpl Gruby** sported a open lower leg break, **2Lt Wray** an airway burn, and rather foolishly for the weather conditions (cold, wet and windy) **2Lt Griffiths** decided to opt for a sucking chest wound. Everyone successfully passed their MATT 3 and the last activity of the camp was to conduct fire team attacks on the final day.

The final day bought a challenging range. In 8 fire teams the troops went through the scenario, under the watchful eye of **SSgt Miller**. At the end of the day, all fire teams had achieved the pass mark, and that concluded a successful range camp from which members of the Squadron can build on when they attend the forthcoming Regimental Battle Camp

BEAUFIGHTER BOXER – by Cpl Nikki Silvera

To think this chance had come around again; to be honest, I never thought I'd be competing again. It had been 5 years since I had my last bout and at my age, I had figured I would only use boxing for fitness purposes.



The Unit had recently started boxing training so I decided to take part. Then I heard about Corps training. A few comments here and there and a few words of encouragement and I decided to go to the Corps camp.

The only female to turn up, I was more than disappointed. No disrespect to the men, I just wasn't looking forward to a sound beating after no training. However, things went really well. I'd managed to maintain most of my previous skills and I picked up new skills fairly quickly. The coach, however, saw more in me than I did. He mentioned the Army team and asked why I had not put myself forward. To be honest, I didn't think it was just something you turned up to. I thought you had to be seen and selected. He suggested I try out.

One Wednesday he took me down to Aldershot. I didn't know what to expect but I was impressed. The head coach told me to get changed and warmed up as he was going to take me on a pad session. The rest of the Army team went through their training first and then I was called into the ring. Feeling more than nervous, I entered.

Coach told me just to relax and take it as any other session, easy enough for him to say, as he was not the one on trial! A few punches here and there, a few breaks followed by a few words of direction and it was all over. "I've seen enough; you can go and get changed".

"What, was that it? Was he impressed, disappointed, what?" I went and showered and as I was getting dressed the females walked in. We got chatting and they mentioned the coach wanted a word.

"I've seen all I need to see, I'll see you back here on Monday." I'd done it, I had made the team! Still in shock, I don't think I even managed to smile.

I turned up for training the Monday and my 3 weeks of hard work commenced. The other females had months to get prepared, I had just 3 weeks, in which time the National championship heats would be commencing. Three weeks until the national finals and if I wanted to make it that far I had to train hard to make sure I made it there.

This was it. The day of the national championships had arrived. It was time to see if the weeks of non-stop eating, weight lifting and beatings would pay off.

Things were looking good. We had already broken previous records by getting 5 females into the finals. Unfortunately we had one defeat in the semi finals, it was a shame really because **Tammy** put up a real good fight.

We arrived at Cannock with plenty of time to spare, weighed in and were seen by the doctor. What followed was then more painful hours of waiting. The first bout was due to start at 12.30, I was bout number six. I managed to watch the first couple of bouts, however as time went on, nerves began to sink in. It was now bout number 3 and still no sign of the family. I think I was more worried of them missing my fight than I was about the bout itself.

Bout 4 had now started, I figured I had enough time to watch **Nikki's** bout before I had to start warming up. Then the call, my family had finally arrived. A rush to get everyone out the car and into the hall with enough time for me to get myself changed and warmed up. Stress averted and all fun and games over, it was time to warm up. I put my boots on, protectors and then my wraps. Ear phones in, I start to warm up without the distraction of the rest of the changing room.

Warm up session on the pads with the coach. "Remember, move from side to side, keep moving, and remain relaxed".

Wait, what was this, a delay. The female from bout 3 had been knocked out and her face was in need of medical attention. Bout 5 had been postponed due to the doctor having to work his magic. Finally, after what seemed to be hours of waiting, the remaining bouts could continue.

It was both a nervous and exciting time, I mean it was the first time my family would watch me compete in boxing. It would be the first time my husband would see what I was capable of. The event is a lot different to unit boxing. The atmosphere isn't the same and the only people to cheer you on are the crowd you bring. Unsure if this adds to pressure but it doesn't change the need to win nor the adrenaline rush.

I started to walk from the changing room to the hall, still all smiles and giggles, trying to remain focused while not getting to tense. Bout number 5 was still going on, so a short wait. The coaches kept me distracted, kept me smiling. Finally it was time. I walked into the ring on the red corner and listened to the last few words of direction from the coach. "In and out, pick your shots, I don't want to see a brawl just good boxing". Head guard on, confirmation of name, check of complete guards then the introduction to the audience. Gum shield in and into the centre of the ring to touch gloves.

With all the daily hours of training I had struggled to remain at the top end of my weight category. I had been dreading a tall lean muscular opponent with a long reach. Luckily for me, my opponent was slightly shorter than I and even better for me, stockier. It meant I should be able to chase her around the ring if she tried to run. Better than that, it meant I wouldn't have to try and get in close to battle her long reach. If I could take control of the centre of the ring I could win this bout.

It was weird. As we reached the centre of the ring, we smiled at each other. When we touched gloves, it was as if we knew each other and meant no harm. Would we both be smiling at the end of the bout? Previous bouts had seen a number of unfortunate losers leave the ring in a flood of tears. Would one of us be overwhelmed with emotions?

Round one, 'nice and easy, pick your shots' that's all I kept thinking to myself. 'Relax, don't tense up, and defend your face. In and out, just keep on moving'. I tried to figure out my opponent; she was a ducker. Every time I went to throw a punch she would duck out the way. 'Ok, change the attack, follow her head, just try to follow her head'. The bell rings.

Back to my corner, "Just relax, deep breathing, relax your arms and your legs. Work the body, keep doing what you're doing. Remember to follow up with the back hand, work on your second phase and just relax" my coach told me.

"Seconds out", I stand ready for the next round. The bell rings, round 2. I go for the head, she ducks again, I go for the head and try following up but she ducks and gets too close, I punch the air. This starts to get annoying, "WORK THE BODY!" someone cries from the crowd, so I try to work the body. It works for a while but then she changes her tactics too. Ok, let's try and work the angles. Does this work, I don't know.

Everything begins to blur into one. Oh no, I failed to eat enough before the bout. Ok, concentrate on not blacking out. Keep my face covered up and just keep moving. I wait for her to attack but she does the same. Ok, I have to work hard if I want to win this.

End of round 2. This is it, the last round. I can't be beaten, I won't be beaten! I didn't have my family drive all this way to watch me be defeated. I had to step it up. The bell rings, round 3. I go in hard, I try to follow her head, I try to find an opening. I get over excited and tense up to much. No



worries, just try and stay strong, not long to go. 'Last 30 seconds' I hear my brother shout. I go back in but she heard the call too so she gives all she can.

I corner her, I try to find a way through her guard. The referee shouts "break!" what did I do this time. He sends me to the corner and starts an 8 count. This is good, I can do this, just keep the pressure on and maybe she'll drop her guard. I go back in hard, but the bell rings. "STOP!", the crowd cheers, it's over. Back to my corner, my coach smiles. He removes my head guard, my gloves and I take out my gum shield.



'How did you find that?' my coach asks. 'For a big girl she can really move!'

Then we were called over by the referee. Quick check of wraps and then the short wait. "The winner of the 71kg weight category, on points, is the red corner." My hand gets thrown up and I smile. I shake hands and hug my opponent and head over to her corner where I'm congratulated and head back over to my corner. I leave the ring to the cheers and applause of the crowd and head over to the stand to receive my medal.

My son then runs over to the stand and asks to be picked up. He manages to sneak in for a cheeky picture.

The day was one I won't forget in a hurry and an achievement I will treasure for even longer.

244 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj P Stowell MBE**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) J Bonney**

Quarter four of 2012 culminated in concurrent deployments to California and Jordan alongside the enduring deployment of A Tp on HERRICK. As we settle into 2013, the Squadron looks forward to its next turn of the handle with the deployment of B Tp to Afghanistan who are in their final throws of MST, currently deployed on the MRX. As the draw-down of HERRICK takes its initial effects on the shape of 244's TF JAG Sig Tp, so the rest of the Squadron prepares to take on its new role, be it Contingency or Training Support to JHC. As always, 2013 is shaping up to be a busy year.

CHRISTMAS 2012 FOR A TP – OP HERRICK
- by Capt Tony Turner

Alpha Troop, 244 Signal Squadron, 21 Signal Regiment (AS) are currently serving as the Task Force Jaguar (Joint Aviation Group) Signal Troop. The Troop provides vital communications for all UK rotary wing assets within Theatre

including the MERT and VHR. Fifteen of us were in Afghanistan during the festive period with three of the Troop back in the UK to spend Christmas with their families.

There was plenty of entertainment during Christmas and, at times, there was almost a sense of normality until you realised you were eating Christmas dinner with 300 hundred other soldiers, sailors and airmen. An excellent Christmas dinner was provided by the catering staff in Bastion main kitchen which was packed to the rafters and open for over 3 hours. It was filled with decorations and crackers and there was a brilliant choice on the hotplate. The maintenance shift came in and relieved the main shift so they could also get a Christmas dinner. It's fair to say everybody was stuffed.

In the evening there was a well attended carol service living up to the traditional military fashion of shouting as loud as possible to drown out the people who can actually sing. We also took time to remember those who would not make it home from their tour of duty which brought home the importance of the job the Troop does here.

The Troop had a Secret Santa which went down well with only a few minor hitches due to the postal system, I was lucky enough to receive a hairbrush even though I've had no hair for the last 8 years! For some members of the Troop we had a VTC with the CO, **Lt Col Aitken**, Sqn OC, **Maj Stowell MBE** and the RSM, **WO1 (RSM) Brown**. It was nice to see some familiar faces and hear how people were getting on in the UK.

All in all the Christmas period provided a welcome distraction from the tempo of life in TF JAG and the efforts of all those who contributed to the output was immense. For those of us who spent Christmas 2012 in Bastion we were treated extremely well and certainly won't forget our Christmas Dinner with 300 other people.

EXERCISE PASHTUN VORTEX – C TP - by Cpl Hulse

Upon arrival in Jordan we were whisked away to the five star hotel that would be our accommodation for the next six weeks. Initially though, there was little opportunity to enjoy our enviable living arrangements, with much work to be done before flying commenced in five days time.

In addition to the tasks of checking and testing equipment, setting up the Ops Room in the airport's cargo terminal, deploying a rebro to the Chinook training area and establishing communications, low level background training was carried out.

Led by **SSgt (Yofs) Mcleish**, training included familiarisation on the Chinook variant of the Bowman VHF radio, making and breaking a rebro, HF revision, and familiarisation in the use of tacsat. As if we weren't busy enough with all that going on, the arrival of a rare thunderstorm interrupted the sunshine and brought some torrential rain for us to contend with. Once the rain came, our priority quickly shifted to flood management, as the flat roofs drainage system struggled to deal with the copious volume of water. It wasn't too long before the sun came back out and everything was running smoothly again.

Unfortunately, all did not run smoothly when the time came for the first rebro to deploy out onto the training area, with the terrain proving too difficult for the FFR. A second rebro was deployed to a slightly less remote location and we were back on track. The 117F training came in useful when engineering HF communications which were intermittent and difficult at best. Although the 117F was reliable, using it back at the Ops Room meant having someone stand on the roof of the building using it with a field phone to communicate with the Ops Room itself. This was obviously less than ideal, so the



rebro crew had to work hard to engineer HF. Ultimately communications proved too weak from this location and a better site was sought. **LCpl Jamie Kingston**, **LCpl Tom Daniel** and **Sig Aaron Britnell** deployed with rebro one this time, and a HF link was successfully established using an NVIS antenna.

Once communications were fully in and working and a shift rota had been established, the opportunity presented itself for personnel to take the occasional day off, giving them a chance to enjoy the hotel's amenities. These included a private beach, four swimming pools, gym, sauna and the hottest Jacuzzi in the world. There was also free transport to a sister hotel in the area that offered snorkelling, scuba diving, jet skiing and banana boat rides, all for a reasonable price. In addition, trips to Petra and the Dead Sea were also available to be booked through J1.

Each rebro crew spent five days at a time deployed to the rebro site, before returning to work in the Ops Room. Having settled into a routine, **SSgt Sophie Morris** decided to share her love of running with the Troop by having compulsory organised PT every morning. Having marginally less enthusiasm for running, **LCpl 'Drip Tray' Harvey** eagerly volunteered to take the Troop for the occasional circuit for PT. Other PT sessions included swimming and football.

We also hosted **WO1 (RSM) Brown** and **Capt Brinkworth**, 244 Sqn 2IC during the exercise. Their visit involved a number of briefs with the highlight being a day's visit around the exercise area via Chinook.

When the exercise was entering its final stages, advantage was taken of the opportunity to carry out some long range HF training back to the UK. This would benefit both the exercise personnel, and the FE@R R2 crew back at Colerne. The training turned out to be very successful with significant benefit to all involved. At the time of writing, preparations are underway by **SSgt Morris** for a fancy dress fun run and carol service, and a Christmas function in the evening is being headed up by **LCpl Clark**. It is fully expected that a great time will be had by all involved.

COLD WEATHER SURVIVAL COURSE – D TP - by Lt Swatridge

We arrived in Bardafoss, Norway around 1400 local time, to our surprise it was pitch black already! It turned out there was only around 2 ½ hours of daylight during that time of the year, making it difficult to adjust. Once we had put our kit into the accommodation we received our welcome brief.

The second and third days were entirely classroom based. Before we could go onto the exercise phase of the training, we were mandated to attend a series of briefs to ensure we understood the dangers of working and living in such a hazardous environment. The lectures included the principles of layering clothing and eating in such a cold environment; we were informed that we had to eat the full 6500 calories in each ration box. We were then issued our tents and snow shoes or 'tennis rackets with sharp blades'.

Day four was the first day of the deployment into the field. After a final kit check we were loaded on to the transport and moved to the training area ready for our 'survival'. On arrival, we were quickly being shouted at by the Mountain Leaders (MLs), getting people to get ready quicker so that we can get moving and thus get warmer. Walking in that environment is slow and hard work, even with just the Bergan on. Moving at around 1Km/Hour can get very tedious, especially when the final RV point is so close but yet taking so long to get there.

At the RV we were given a demonstration of how to erect the tents and then given a site and told to get on with it. It started with a couple of hour's worth of digging the tracks

and pits for the tents. Digging to around the depth of 3-4 feet for the tent pits was exhausting but before we could have a break, the tent needed to be pitched and holes needed to be cut in order to store the equipment. All groups were slow as it was the first time for everyone, but eventually we were put into the evening routine and food was ready for all.

During the evening we were led on a night snow march, covering no more than 2km cross country, yet still taking a couple of hours to complete. On the snow march, we were shown how to navigate using the stars, and were lucky to see the Northern lights in action during the return journey.

Day five started with 'Pull Pole' which is the routine where all the equipment is packed away into what is known as a pulk, a sledge which carries the group's tents and equipment from place to place. The pulk, dragged by up to two people from each group, is very heavy, but is so vital in carrying the equipment around the difficult terrain. Thankfully before we set off to the next survival location, we were able to swap the extremely heavy 10 man tents with fractionally lighter 4 man tents.

In order for the groups to get to the next location, the 3 group leaders were given grid references and had to try and navigate the party to each location. The route was uphill and the terrain was arduous to say the least. Navigating in the terrain is very difficult, due to the thick snow, tracks, streams and even hills which can get camouflaged. Again the distance was short, but the duration felt like a lifetime when dragging the extremely heavy pulk up the hills and across the difficult woodblocks, but finally after a few flared tempers from a couple of the party, we arrived at the next site.



For the penultimate day we went through the 'survival phase' and this was the phase which was enjoyed by most, because each group was left to their own devices, having to build their shelters and fires from scratch, with a few survival techniques taught in the morning.

Once we had packed up the kit from the 4 man tent sites, we packed the pulks and bergans into the transport and were told we were only to live out of the packing kit that was in the daysacks. This meant no sleeping bag, and only a few articles of warm kit and clothing, emphasising the importance of producing a warm shelter to survive the cold night due to temperatures of -25C. We were driven to the survival location where we were shown a number of shelters which we could choose to build, as well as vital skills in how to successfully light a fire and maintain the fire throughout the night. If the fires go out at night, it can be very difficult to restart quickly and this drops the temperature in the shelter rapidly. Although most of the groups got little sleep due to the extreme cold temperatures, even with the fires burning, it



was still seen to be the most beneficial and fun part of the week.

The final day, spirits were high, even though we were all freezing cold, all that stood in the way now was the ice breaking drills. This had been playing on all our minds all morning. We were shown how to conduct the drills correctly, and then told to get straight into it. Wearing nothing but the thermal underwear, trainers and a pair of gloves, we were pushed through like lemmings, carrying Bergan and ski poles. Each person was to stand on a pair of skis and shuffle into the hole in the ice. On hitting the water, the body goes into shock, making it difficult to speak and breathe at first. The first item to lose is the Bergan, which is pushed onto the ice. Then each person needs to drag themselves out of the hole using the ski poles. This was difficult, especially when the energy is being used to keep the core warm.

Once out of the pit we were then to run 20m and roll in the powdered snow before having a shot of rum and changing back into our warm kit. It was an experience which most would not do voluntarily, but one which made them proud of their achievements.

SUPPORT SQUADRON

REGIMENTAL MT - FORMULA "21" - by Sig Elston

It was a cold winter's day at 21 Signal Regiment (AS), however morale was high as the MT lads of Support Squadron were just about to embark on a fun filled Go Karting extravaganza.

The lads were split down into teams of three, to ensure everyone would have ample time on the rubber infused race track. As the race went on, the sound of the engines were drowned out by the cheers and supportive shouts of the fellow teammates standing eagerly, on the sidelines. The driver changes were very quick, and the sin bin which was the race track's equivalent to the naughty stool was used very rarely throughout the entire race. At one point it was used when **Cpl Reffin**, a welcomed new addition to the Unit, got frustrated as he bumped into **SSgt Cleghorn's** Go Kart to gain position. A record was also set by **Cpl Lomax** who drove away with the fastest lap of the day.

As in any competition, there had to be an end. With the top three teams literally neck and neck, it was truly a close race. However through very good driving skills and sheer determination, one team were victorious. The positions and the drivers are as follows:

First: Team 12 - **Cpl Reffin, Cpl Lomax, LCpl Powell**
Second: Team 2 - **Capt Dunbar, WO2 Green, SSgt Cleghorn**
Third: Team 9 - **Sgt Card, Sgt Mark, Sgt Cairns**

All the other teams did very well, but it was the top three teams who stood on the podium and were awarded with the prestigious trophies at the end.

Everyone truly enjoyed the day and were very grateful to **Sig Allen** for arranging a day such as this, and look forward to the next event in the foreseeable future.



22nd SIGNAL REGIMENT STAFFORD



CO Lt Col L Westerman
RSM WO1 (RSM) A Fraser

217 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC Maj N Schurmann
SSM WO2 (SSM) Stephenson

SQUADRON OVERVIEW - by Lt Owens

217 Signal Squadron has started what will undoubtedly be a very busy year. The Regiment has taken over NRF 19, having returned from a successful exercise at the end of last year, and 217 Signal Squadron has spent the interim preparing for both RSIT and Ex JOINT WARRIOR. The latter being a tri-service multinational exercise in which the Squadron are providing ICS assets to several different sites across the country. This exercise will be a great opportunity to gain experience working with other units outside of the ARRC environment; and with different pieces of equipment thrown into the mix it may prove to be a challenging experience.

The majority of the past few weeks have been spent in planning and ensuring that our equipment is ready to deploy, whilst also training personnel to operate the incumbent FALCON system which has just arrived in the Regiment. The Squadron has also managed to deploy on a military skills exercise to a cold Swynnerton Training Area just prior to Christmas leave. This allowed some of the junior soldiers a chance to command a section and to practise their 'green skills' ahead of PNCO. The Squadron is looking forward to a challenging year and the challenges of introducing a new piece of equipment.

ARRIVING IN UNIT - by Sig McDonald

Having recently completed Phase 2 training at Blandford in September 2012, I joined my first working unit in December 2012 as a Communications Systems Operator posted to 217 Signal Squadron.

My job role within C Troop is a 'floorwalker'. This job involves fault finding and basic IT support to all ranks within an ARRC HQ, from corporals to officers when on exercise. The IS side of the Corps is new to me; and a long way from exercising with Bowman on the Craddock at Blandford. The majority of the past month has been spent ensuring that all the equipment is ready for the upcoming Ex JOINT WARRIOR. This will be my first exercise in my new unit and will undoubtedly be a learning curve, but is something which I am sure will be worthwhile, giving me good experience for future deployments. This will be a chance to properly get to grips with an unfamiliar piece of equipment and to experience my new role as a floorwalker in a real staff environment.

On the sports side, as a Corps football player, I have also been selected to play for the Regimental team. We are looking to win the Army and Signal cup with the Regiment to cap off a good season so far.

On a whole I have settled into the unit well and hope the next 3 years at Stafford will be successful and challenging.

222 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC Maj O Dinnis
SSM WO2 (SSM) King



CORPS CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS - by Sig Fearn

On 13 February 2013 the Royal Signals cross country championships were held at Pickton Barracks, Bulford. After an early start the Regimental team travelled from Stafford and Innsworth and arrived in good time for the race brief. As usual we all gathered together and had a bit of banter before the race, and not for the first time **Sgt Mark Millns** was giving it the big one saying he was going to beat everyone and offered **Sig George Crossett** a £10 bet that he would finish before him. **Sig Crossett** jumped at the opportunity and made it a deal! Bearing in mind that **Sgt Millns** had lost £10 the two previous weeks to myself, **Sig Fearn**, it didn't look good for him.

At 1145 hours and the race brief started; the women's race would be around 4 miles and the men's would be just over 6 miles. Due to a small part of the original route being under water the route changed slightly and it seemed to have included more hills too! The women's race started promptly on 1230 hours and off they went. Due to the limited numbers, the Regiment's female runners entered as individuals but **Sgt Hoynes** and **Sig Abreu** did themselves proud, running strong races and finishing in good positions.

The time was approaching 1300 hours and the males were all warming up in the cold conditions on a miserable winter's day! The moment had arrived and everyone lined up at the start line raring to go. The race began. The first stretch was around a rugby pitch so everyone could spread out slightly ready for a tight uphill stretch ahead. As usual **Sgt 'Cookie' Cooke** was straight to the front bundle of runners followed closely by **Sig Kiran** and **Cpl Withers**. The race brief didn't disappoint as the first mile looked to be all uphill and when we reached the top our ears popped. The next stretch was on more even terrain but the ground was very boggy and it was hard to run naturally without slipping. That was followed with a fast downhill on awkward ground. Another hill was then on the horizon which seemed to be as long as the first one!

After reaching the top we headed back onto the boggy ground for another lap around half of the course. On this lap it didn't go well for me; as I went to overtake someone on the boggy ground my feet slipped from beneath me and put me on my back and sliding me into a freezing cold puddle soaking 80% of my body. I got back up and just as I thought it couldn't get any worse snow starting smashing me in the face and the blizzard began. The final part of the race was once again on another hill which was the longest of all! This was then followed by a steep down hill and approached the finish line.

The team finished in the following order: **Sgt Cooke**, **Sig Kiran**, **Cpl Withers**, **Sig Crossett**, **Sig Fearn**, **SSgt Peake**, **Lt Triddon**, **Sig Bikram**, **Sgt Millns** and **Sig Pratikhda**. The team finished well as a pack and with our first 8 scoring runners



Corps Major Units Cross Country champions!

finishing in the top 39 out of 180 runners, we knew we were in with a chance of winning! More importantly **Sgt Millns** lost another tenner!

After stretching off and a shower and food, we waited for the results. The results were finalised and we were revealed as the Royal Signals major units cross country champions!

248 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj S Jones**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Khagendra**

TIHAR 2013 (DEEPAWALI) - by Capt McEvoy

Nepal is a multi-religious country with elements of Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity, with followers of Hinduism as the largest number. More than 100 ethnic peoples live in Nepal and around 70 languages are spoken, with the religious festivals helping to bring these people together. The biggest festival in Nepal is Dashain which commemorates the victories of the god and goddesses over the demons. It is followed by the second biggest festival named Tihar.

Tihar, also known as Deepwali, is a five day long Hindu and Buddhist festival. The first day is called Kag Tihar (worshipping of the crows). The cawing of the crows symbolises sadness and grief in the Hindu mythology, so the devotees offer the crows food to avert grief and deaths in their homes. The second day is called Kukur Tihar (worshipping of the dogs). The dog is believed to be the messenger of Lord Yamaraj (the god of death). Thus, they are offered delicious food cherishing the relationship between humans and dogs. The morning of the third day is Gai Tihar (worshipping of the cow). The cow symbolises prosperity and wealth in the Hindu community. The people garland the cows and feed them with the best grass. In the evening Laxmi (the goddess of wealth) is worshipped by lighting oil lamps or candles on doorways. This night onwards, Tihar is especially famous for Deusi and Bhailo, light and fireworks. They gather around houses, sing songs, dance and then collect sweets and money to share amongst themselves. Deusi is sung by boys while Bhailo is sung by girls. The fourth day is Goru Puja (worshipping of the oxen) and the last is known as Bhai Tika



Capt Dhir asks himself if he feels lucky



where sisters give their blessing to their brothers. The brothers in return offer gifts and money.

Tihar in Stafford, took place on November 12. The day started with the worshipping of the Goddess Laxmi followed by rolling of the dice. The CO of 22 Sig Regt was given the privilege of starting the event. Even the RSM, Tp OCs, SSMs took part in the game. Then the commencement of other games occurred. Although gambling's not a good way to start the day that's how Tihar is celebrated! We gambled through the day and in the evening we had a great dinner which was provided by the married members where we also celebrated **Cpl Raj's** recent promotion. Then the ladies gathered around with the Squadron 2IC's wife leading the singing as part of the celebration. The same routine went for about 3 days. We lost, we won but at the end we all enjoyed Tihar. On the fourth day, most of us started heading towards our relatives' houses in order to celebrate Bhai Tika and that was a fantastic end to the celebration.



Members of the Regt try their luck

252 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Capt A Taft**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) A Williams**

EXERCISE HONG KONG CAPITAL - by Sig Clare

On the morning of Mon 04 Feb 13, a handful of hardy types from 252 (Hong Kong) Signal Squadron were up at sparrows pump to enjoy a hearty breakfast before settling down in the transport for the 2 hour journey into the centre of London.

We arrived at our destination, City of Westminster School, a little after 0900hrs. After parking the minibus, we set off on



Sqn members outside the Houses of Parliament

foot for the Houses of Parliament. We arrived and were greeted by a policeman who gave us a lanyard. Our photo was taken and we went through security. When we walked into the entrance of Parliament we were welcomed by the tour guide who began speaking about the history of Parliament and its grand architecture; the building in itself was very impressive with its classical layout. Moving through each room and its history we encountered pictures of kings and queens, great leaders, legendary battles and statues of our famous prime ministers such as Winston Churchill and Margaret Thatcher. The chambers of The House of Lords and Commons were very grand although surprisingly very small.

After the tour was over we headed over to McDonalds as **LCpl 'Sonny' Assoun** had managed to get us all free meals - what a LEGEND!



Lt Darling enjoys his courtesy meal at McDonalds

The next activity planned was visiting the Science Museum. We hopped on the underground and made our way to South Kensington. We were running ahead of time so **WO2 (SSM) Williams** granted us one hour to roam around London. Myself, **Sig 'Matty' Clare**, and **Sig Liam Fearn** decided to hire a Barclays bike. We returned with 20 minutes to spare to find out all the loading bays were full. Panic stations! The closest one free was Harrods which was 10 minutes away, Bradley Wiggins eat your heart out!

Inside the Science Museum we wandered through the exhibition which was huge and hosted a lot of interesting material. We boarded the minibus and made our way back to Imjin Barracks.

The exercise was extremely worthwhile, informative and enlightening. We consider ourselves lucky in that we live in a democracy so rich in history, which is available for all to see.

ENGLAND Vs BRAZIL FLAG BEARING - by Sig Narey

I was very lucky to have the opportunity to flag bear on the night that England played Brazil. I knew that it was a great chance for a good day out so was very happy when informed I could go. The majority of the volunteers were RAF, Royal Navy and the REME and I was the only one representing the Royal Signals.

When we first arrived at Wembley stadium there was a lot of waiting about before we got our passes to enter the ground. We met our bearing instructors who had been teaching people like me for over ten years. To practice the routine we had to use a car park just outside the stadium as the grounds keeper was very strict with people stepping on the pitch. We only practiced for about ten minutes but the little things like making sure the flag was folded correctly were essential before going on.



Before I knew it I was walking onto the pitch in front of over 75,000 people and being only metres away from the likes of **Wayne Rooney, Jack Wilshire** and **Ronaldinho**. Even though I was on the pitch for a good ten minutes it felt like thirty seconds before I was going off again, but it was still a memorable experience. Even though sadly I didn't get to meet any of the players I did get a thumbs up from **Joe Hart**, which was good enough for me. I enjoyed the day and recommend that if anyone gets the opportunity to do any flag bearing like I did they take it as they will not regret it.

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj J Renshaw**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) N Marshall**

SUPPORT SQUADRON FAN DANCE - by Sig Devaney

On Tuesday 4 December 2012, a group of volunteers from Support Sqn headed to sunny south Wales to the Brecon Beacons under the instruction of **Cpl Mitford** from the LAD. The aim of the day was to conquer Pen y Fan; unfortunately the day had to begin at the unearthly time of 0600hrs, where 24 people headed down in two mini busses to Brecon National Park. Once there we all had a quick admin check and distributed the maps and compasses. All of a sudden a booming Northern Irish accent with the words "Right! I'm off!" came from the Squadron 2IC, **Capt Townley**, who'd managed to be half a mile ahead by the time people had looked around to see where the voice had come from, then everybody started making their way behind him in an individual best effort attempt.

Cpl Mitford and I were "Sweepers", so we set off a few minutes after everybody else. (Really just to give them all a head start). On reaching the top of the first hill, we were notified that 2 of the lads had decided to make their own special way round the fan. Unfortunately for them **Cpl Mitford** did not agree. I was sent to retrieve / drag them back and put them onto the right track again. I must add the two that went missing actually had compasses and maps, but I guess that's what happens when a REME Craftsman and Lance Corporal are let loose with a map and compass.

After finally reaching the top, we all volunteered/instructed to take our tops off and have a photo taken next to the spot height as proof that we had done it. To say it was cold is certainly the understatement of the whole day. Then from there we all cracked on down Jacobs Ladder to a turn around point, where a few minutes rest was in order for the gruesome trip back up Jacobs Ladder and back down to the "Butty Van" where a well deserved bacon sandwich was welcomed.

REGIMENTAL MT by Sig Anthony

The past 3 months have been extremely busy for the Regimental MT with the majority of the Troop dispersed around the country on Op OLYMPIC or exercise in support of the ARRC. Most of the MT hasn't been in the same place at the same time since May. This is especially the case for **Sig 'UST' Devaney** who I don't think has worked a full week this year without being pulled away for exercise, course or detail.

We bid a sad farewell to **Sgt Alderson** who has moved to 14 Signal Regiment (EW) and **Sig Lyth** to 21 Signal Regiment (AS), but wish them and their families all the best in the future. On the flip side we have some new faces to welcome. **SSgt Kennaugh** joins us armed with his balaclava of fun as the new MTWO and **Sgt Daf Evans** has joined us to take charge of Green Fleet. **Cpl Jay Bates** has also joined the MT team in the driver training section and has already picked up the nickname of Lord Lucan due to his football commitments. Big

congratulations go to **LCpl Wilson, Sig Davies** and **Sig Palik** on their selection for promotion. We would also like to congratulate **Sgt Parry** on his marriage to **Julie** and to **LCpl Ricky Mechan** on the birth of his first child.

Ex NOBLE LEDGER and Ex STEADFAST JUNCTURE saw the MT working out of Command Post 22 in sunny St Mawgan working alongside the ARRC. In CP22 the MT were working with the CO, RSM, OC and various members from the G4 fraternity. During the exercise we were responsible for the husbandry and tracking of all vehicles. There was also the duty of the milk runs from St Mawgan to Stafford to contend with, making sure all personnel were where they should be at the right times with the right kit. This meant that the troops back in Stafford were just as busy as the guys on exercise, although looking at the brew kit lately you wouldn't have thought it!

So all in all the past 3 months have been pretty challenging and everyone in the MT will be the first to admit that we have relished these challenges and can't wait for more.

EXERCISE NOBLE LEDGER/ STEADFAST JUNCTURE

- by Sig Scullion

In early August this year, 22 Signal Regiment deployed on Ex NOBLE LEDGER / STEADFAST JUNCTURE to conduct the necessary preparatory work prior to the ARRC staff arriving, a deployment that was to last 3 months for some. Support Squadron's role was to establish a Command Post (CP) where the CO could give direction, outside of the G6 arena, to all the deployed regimental elements. The Sqn, as you would expect, also provided the traditional RLS to the Exercise in the form of Chefs, Technicians, LAD Fitter Section, G1 Clerks and G4 QM's and MT. The aim of the exercise was to gain accreditation for the NATO Response Force (NRF), a role the Regiment will fill for 12 months from January 13. The Exercise allowed us to show the Unit's capabilities to the ARRC staff, having had an uplift of CIS equipment not long before the start of the Exercise it was vital that we hit the ground running from the start.

After an epic 8 hour journey we had arrived at RAF St Mawgan, keen to get our teeth into the build. Once established the CP quickly became a hive of activity and the envy of all who visited. This was either down to the constant tropical temperature within or the never ending brews, which steadily improved as the weeks passed resulting in all of the junior ranks being signed off as proficient brew makers.

The CP got very busy, very quickly with soldiers and equipment arriving. The G1 Clerks had the unenviable task of tracking the deployed elements which changed on what seemed like an hourly basis. Coupled with this was the need to develop the junior clerks and all the usual JPA move and track functions for the Regt, no mean feat to conquer, but managed with relative ease. Meanwhile the G4 cell was split on two fronts with the SQMS, **Sgt 'Carp' Cullip**, squeezing members of the Regt into every nook and cranny in order to accommodate all 22 Signal Regiment Personnel - at its peak this reached around 280 soldiers. He worked closely with ARRC Sp Bn forging relationships with the right people to enable him to pull it out the bag when it counted most. The other half of the G4 cell were at the coal face dealing with demands and transport requirements thick and fast.

The night shift for the CP was somewhat more sombre. After each of the cells died down for the night the shift set about making up a morale quiz for the following morning. This however sometimes had the opposite effect as the quiz master **Sig 'Fags' Fagan** was clearly operating at a different level, which is probably why he came off the LCpl board. **Sig Fagan** would like to congratulate the OC, **Maj Rennie**



Renshaw, on becoming the quiz champion of NOBLE LEDGER / STEADFAST JUNCTURE 2012, apparently nothing to do with a slip of paper he handed the OC every morning with all the answers on! Another factor in why he was successful on the Sig to LCpl Board.

In the last week of the exercise the Corps Colonel, **Col Norton**, visited CP22. He seemed impressed with the setup and the evolution that has taken place since the Regiment took on the role from 7 Sigs. We look forward to welcoming the Corps Colonel on his next visit to the unit, this time back at Stafford.

On Thursday 8 November, Endex was called - all kit was packed on vehicles in record breaking time as you would expect and procedures put in place to receive the unit back to MOD Stafford. All that was left to do was to pay our respects to the fallen, which we did by holding a service conducted by **Padre Vince** - We will remember them!

St ELIGIUS DAY CELEBRATIONS

St. Eligius is the patron saint of blacksmiths, coin collectors and horses to name but a few, but more significantly to those of us in the LAD, he is the patron saint of the REME. Each year, on 1 December, the Corps takes the opportunity to celebrate his life. This year was to be no exception, once again 22 Signal Regiment LAD invited a number of members of the local REME Associations to join us in a church service and lunch at MOD Stafford. This year, we were pleased to have the company of the Potteries and District, Coventry and Shropshire Branches.

The day began with the obligatory tea and biscuits in the workshop (which, thanks to numerous repairs to the heating, was considerably warmer than last year!). **Sgt Chris Taylor**, our resident Armourer, introduced the day and this was swiftly followed by a couple of presentations on the latest equipment. Members of our Corps are often intrigued by the latest developments in technology and this year was no exception. The LAD's recovery gurus, **Cpl Stu Baker** and **Cpl Chris Addis**, spent a little time explaining the nuances and capabilities of the latest Recovery Truck and in particular the

process of diagnosing faults with the assistance on a computer that is now used on all MAN SVs. This fascinated some and puzzled others but it was generally agreed that technology had most definitely moved on! **Cpl Davey Poole** also demonstrated (without the use of rounds) the capabilities of both the SA80 A2 and GPMG which provided much conversation over lunch with many comparisons being made to the old SLR.

From here we moved across to the station church for the formal St Eligius service conducted by **Padre Vince**, the resident Padre for both 22 SR and 30 SR with the assistance of a willing Association Volunteer. The service ran well though and hymns were sung with vigour though **Cfn Daniels**, the latest recruit the LAD, may not have appreciated the last minute allocation of the reading! The day was not to end there however! We all made our way to Fraggers where several hours were then spent wolfing down a curry and chatting to our Corps "Old Boys". It is always a great opportunity to hear some fascinating stories, we all thoroughly enjoying chatting to them once again and hope that they are able to make it back next year!



St Eligius Day



30th SIGNAL REGIMENT BRAMCOTE



CO
RSM

**Lt Col R J Watts MBE
WO1 (RSM) Setchfield**

250 (GURKHA) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC
SSM

**Maj J Malcolm
WO2 (SSM) Tirtha**

EXERCISE LONG LEASH - by Sig Sagar Gurung

After a long well deserved Christmas and New Year's break, 250 Gurkha Signal Squadron were involved in Ex LONG LEASH, which was held from 7 to the 24 January. One of the main objectives of this exercise was to connect and test the ICS equipment over FALCON. As an ICS Tp X-Ray Tp, led by Tp OC sahib **Capt Tope** and **SSgt Gyanendra**, were to play an important part in this exercise along with the detachment commanders. With a week for Pacex and the remaining weeks for the main exercise,



the members of X-Ray Tp got involved in preparing and testing our equipment while the other Troops were testing

FALCON. After successful testing, we deployed to our exercise location and set up both AATF and JHF(C) ICS Dets. Despite the limited manpower and the freezing weather, were able to set up both detachments. Though that was a challenging task, our professionalism and hard work paid off in completing it within the expected time.

After the headquarters were set up, we managed to get the FALCON and ICS equipment up and running. While the FALCON detachments were setting up the local link and we waited for permission to connect the ICS equipment, we busied ourselves by conducting cross training and tested the equipment within the detachment. It was a good opportunity to brush up on our skills. The cross training proved to be fruitful as we were able to co-ordinate and help each



other with connecting the equipment and fault finding. As the exercise progressed towards the end, we were finally given permission to connect and test JOCS over FALCON. The test was indeed a success as we were able to link up with minimum difficulty. Setting up the link wouldn't have been successful without the joint effort of the FALCON and JOCS SME's.



Unfortunately, we were not able to test all of the ICS kit due to time constraints, although one of the main aims of the exercise was achieved. On 24 January ENDEX was called. With high morale we packed all our equipment which concluded the exercise and finally we recovered safely back to camp. Ex LONG LEASH offered an opportunity to learn and boost our trade knowledge also to gain exposure on FALCON, which we were not involved in directly with as a Troop. After the final Sqn OC's inspection and followed by Tp OC's exercise debrief which was full of encouraging words, we all dispersed for a well-deserved weekend.

EXERCISE PONY EXPRESS - by Sig Kailash Gurung

Ex PONY EXPRESS took place in Mailly-le-Camp, in the Champagne-Ardennes region of France over the period of 16-24 January 2013. 16 (UK) Air Assault Brigade's Staff Officers, 216 (Para) Signal Squadron, 9 AAC including **Sig Yuwaraj Pun** and **Sig Kailash Gurung** participated in the exercise. The aim of the exercise was to provide an ICJEF element to 11 French Para Brigade's CAST in order to achieve ICJEF terms of services. Our role in the exercise was to provide secure voice/data services to the Staff Officers via Dial Up JOCS.

We travelled all the way from Merville Barracks, Colchester, to the Mailly-Le-Camp via Euro Tunnel. It took us nearly nine hours by car to arrive in camp, however this does include half an hour rest at a service station. On arriving we were issued passes for the camp and our accommodation keys. We all were tired due to long journey so we headed straight towards our accommodation to get our heads down. Early next morning we met 216 Sig Sqn personnel who had deployed two days prior to us. We then setup our equipment next to the 216 detachment. We also had French soldiers with their own equipment setup inside same building. Even though we were working with French soldiers, we were not allowed to use their equipment, and the same applied to them as well, for security reasons.

Since it was an overseas exercise, we all had to deal with the language barrier, food and culture issues. The weather was getting worse and the roads were icy and slippery. Since in France they drive on the right hand side, we also had to be really careful while driving. It wasn't all work and we were able to go down into town a couple of times in the evening for a few pints and refreshments.

This was my first overseas exercise so I was very excited to participate and it went very smoothly, with nobody having any issues with their equipment. The French soldiers were very helpful and friendly and the biggest challenge in the exercise was to cope with the different culture and lifestyle. For me it was not only exercise but also an opportunity to work in a different environment with different people and I look forward to go again on such exercises in the future.



TRAILWALKER CANARY WHARF PROMOTION - by Capt D Tope

January is not only cold and wet but is also the start of the Trailwalker build up which will become an ever bigger part of Squadron life between now and the event date on 27-28 July. This particular task was to drive down to Canary Wharf in London and, with the assistance of Oxfam, increase awareness of the event in the hope of attracting new teams to take part and raise lots of money for the Gurkha Welfare Trust. This called for 4 soldiers from the squadron to take part, however spying the opportunity to spend a night at home I selflessly volunteered myself to go down with them and provide some valuable moral support. It was only after reading the TaskO that I was reminded of two very important phrases: 1, never volunteer for anything and 2, always read the small print. The TaskO called for us to arrive in London for an 0500 start and after a few basic time/distance/speed calculations, which I managed without the help of the FoFS, I realised that I would be required to leave camp at 0230, not quite the good night's sleep at home I had imagined.

After arriving in location and after being allowed entrance by the local security guards, we were able to set up outside Canary Wharf Tube Station. It turned out to be a very warm and pleasant day, only after we had suffered torrential rain and gale force winds trying to build a 12x12 tent in a wind tunnel. Once everything was in place we could start talking to the public, it was a very interesting day with loads of members of public speaking to us about the event. Just as everyone was starting to lag at around midday, we were surprised when someone came up and started talking to everyone in Nepalese. It turned out that this was **David Hitchcock** Saheb, a trustee of the Gurkha Welfare Trust, former officer in 6GR and numbaree of the Regt Col, **Maj Gen Pope** Saheb.

After **Hitchcock** Saheb had left, leaving the guys suitably impressed with his Nepali language skills, I thought it would be my time to wow them with my ability to count to 10 and give directions in Nepali, however I don't think that I had the same impact. At 2030 ENDEX was called and we were able to pack up and start the drive home, the guys from the Troop: **LCpl Santa**, **LCpl Ridesh**, **Sig Brindan** and **Sig Uttam** were excellent all day long and travelled home to a well deserved day off the next day.



Originating in Hong Kong in 1981, when the Queens Gurkha Signals relocated in 1997, Trailwalker moved with them and is now held on the South Downs. It is a 100km race which is open to both military and civilian teams, as the current champions the QGS are always happy to see more teams enter and try to take their crown!



250 GSS END OF YEAR FUNCTION - by 2Lt J Fraser

To celebrate the end of an extremely busy year and to mark the festive season, 250 GSS held an end of year function on 11 December. Although many members of the Squadron were already away on leave in Nepal it still proved to be a memorable and thoroughly enjoyable night. It started in a calm and civilised manner with polite conversation and a few glasses of mulled wine. Shortly after dinner however, things really started to liven up. A special performance of the Nativity Story, by the British members of the Squadron, certainly provided a lot of amusement.

With zero rehearsals and below par costumes (the exception being **LCpl Woosey's** hessian donkey) the Oscar winning performances of the Brits somehow managed to deliver a hilarious insight to the origins of the Christmas story and why it is celebrated every year. Each of the Troops then delivered their own Christmas performances. While X-Tp and V-Tp sang Christmas Carols, rather badly, W-Tp decided to take a slightly different approach and introduced 'Dance Factor'. This provided some very questionable, yet amusing, dance moves from all the participants. The night continued until the early hours with a live rock band providing some exceptional music, which the young QGS trainees seemed to especially enjoy, and plenty of festive drinks. The night also provided the perfect opportunity to formally welcome the new OC **Maj Jon Malcolm** to the Squadron as well as saying farewell to **Sgt Dipendra**. The function proved to be a huge success which was enjoyed by all and it is only a matter of time before the 250GSS UKTAP Nativity Story will be showing on Broadway.



56 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj A Aylward**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Lane**

EXERCISE LONG LEASH - by LCpl Payne and LCpl Leighton

On 14 Jan 2013 256 Sig Sqn deployed on Ex LONG LEASH within Bramcote station. The aim of the exercise was to connect Dii over Falcon. Charlie Troop were given the task of erecting the JTFHQ tent complex. The added challenge was then presented as the heavens opened and the snow fell. Once this was complete 250 Sig Sqn then installed the Falcon Detachments. A team of eight people were then tasked to set up the new DII LD node. It was the first time these two pieces of equipment had been deployed along side each other.

JTFHQ normally deploys JOCS and Cormorant as the legacy systems that form the WAN in which our staff officers can conduct all off the war fighting planning. With the transition from old to new about to take place with our systems, we had to first ensure that the new kit was able to fit into the original HQ simply because it is a lot bigger than JOCS and Cormorant. Unfortunately this did not happen and the HQ had to be extended, meaning Charlie Troop had to fight the horrendous conditions again to build extra tents to accommodate the extra equipment. With the HQ being extended the equipment was finally able to be installed. As with all new kit that is brought into service there were a few speed bumps that slowed us down, the biggest of which was that we did not receive the authority to plug Dii into Falcon. Even though this was our main aim that we had to achieve, we still managed to get a lot of training benefits out of the exercise.

Once ENDEX had been called all of the comms kit was stripped out of the tents in preparation for taking the HQ down. This simple and routine task was then made more difficult by the ever worsening conditions and relentless snow. Morale remained high within the Troop and several snowball fights took place midway through the taking down of the tents. Collectively we all thought that it surely couldn't get any worse. But we were wrong! Whilst dismantling one of the tents, **LCpl Stan Turner** slipped on the ice and broke his elbow. We never thought that **Stan** would want to get off an exercise so much. Although this happened, the taking down of the HQ was soon complete. After a few weeks' hard work and graft it was time for the Troop to finally enjoy a weekend away from tents and work.



BRAVO TROOP

On return from Christmas leave Bravo Troop completed pre deployment training for Ex GLOBAL VINE. This consisted of one week's training on vehicle ambush drills, recce lessons, map reading and presentations.



On 14 January 2013 we deployed from Gamecock Barracks in Warwickshire to RAF Brize Norton where we flew with Monarch Airlines into RAF Akrotiri. We were met by **YofS Williams** who showed us the sun tan he had been working on and his return tickets from his holiday.

Driving around Cyprus in vehicles with tourist number plates did not prove too popular with the locals who tended to greet us with two fingers. Although we were “undercover” seeing **Sig Jenks** with a camera during school hours was going to provoke a reaction and arouse suspicion.

We conducted recces on various objectives and gave both written and oral briefs on return to Ops. Drills and skills were polished on the exercise and the Troop gained confidence on their roles as OLRT commanders and crew.

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC
SSM

Maj S Lockwood
WO2 (SSM) J Womble

CHARITY BAG PACK EVENT - by Sgt C Thomas AGC (SPS)

The CO, **Lt Col Watts MBE**, incorporated a two day charity bag pack event to be held from 4 – 5 Dec 12 at our local supermarkets as part of his annual Christmas Challenge. The aim of the Challenge was to bring the Squadrons of the Regiment together prior to Christmas stand down to compete in one final physical, mental and charitable event to see which Squadron can put in the best all round performance.

The charities that we selected to support were the Mayor’s charity, the Army Benevolent Fund and the Bramcote Community fund. We decided to support the Mayor’s charity, Zoe’s Place Baby Hospice, because as a diverse organisation we can relate to the care and support that they provide for families going through a difficult period in their lives. The bag pack event gave us an opportunity to not only support this worthwhile cause, but also continue to foster a strong bond within the community of which we have been a part of since the Regiment moved to Bramcote in 1993. Funds raised will also be donated equally to the “The Soldiers’ Charity” which

began as the Army Benevolent Fund (ABF) in 1944 and the Bramcote Community fund which helps to pay for events such as the Station Open Day which raises the profile of the Regiment within the local civilian community by putting on a military display, sporting competitions and entertainment.

Each Squadron had an endurance-testing bag packing marathon at Sainsbury’s and Asda in Nuneaton and Tesco in Bedworth and also took to the saddle and cycled on spin bikes and rowing machines at the stores to boost coffers further. We went the extra mile, travelling the distance of Nuneaton to Lapland, 2,700km.

We started at 0800 hrs at all three supermarkets on the 4th and concluded at 1300 hrs on the 5th and over the two days the rivalry between the Squadrons was intense because they all wanted to raise more funds than the other and also be the first to reach the Lapland target. As a Regiment we were all winners because we managed to raise £6000. Sp Sqn £2600, 250 GSS £1750 and 256 Sqn £1650.

The CO and I visited the baby hospice with the Mayor and Mayoress to present the cheque and were given a tour to find out how the money would be spent. The staff there were very thankful, you could see that they really appreciated what we had done and the positive affect it would have. The £2000 we donated didn’t seem much to me because the facilities and the high tech equipment to keep the hospice running are very expensive, but I was assured by their fund raising manager that it would still go a long way, and even if the money helps just one child everything we did was very much worth it.

The two day charity event passed off much better than I anticipated and the generosity from the general public was amazing; to achieve the amount that we did was really astonishing especially considering the tough economic climate that we are currently in. The entire event from beginning to end was very challenging, labour intensive and time consuming, but in the end, I have realised that the work we have done and the funds raised will touch so many lives and will certainly make a difference to them and that’s the most rewarding feeling of all.



32nd SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS) GLASGOW



CO
RSM

Lt Col P R Rennie-Smith
WO1 (RSM) J Love

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS

Christmas has come and gone in a flash it seems! In the lead up to the festivities four willing volunteers took the long drive from Glasgow to Austria in December to take part in the Corps Ski Camp in Zell Am See, Ex MERCURY GLACIER. Organised by **SSgt Jackie Smith**, who also attended the Camp as an Instructor and Race Official, the team comprised of the **Capt Nathan Streetley**, **Capt Si Pierson**, **SSgt Iain Munro** and **Sgt Neil Malloy**. Following a crash course week of getting the ski legs up to speed the team dove straight into race week with gusto, with some great displays of commitment, controlled aggression and skill (as well as the ability to bounce well, in the case of the Adjtl!). Although the team came away with no silverware it was a good indication that there is ski talent within the Regiment that can now be built on for next year! A big thank you to **SSgt Smith** for her work in getting the team together and out to Austria.

As one ski group returned another set off, this time in the form of the Regimental Ski Camp to France in January. Organised and led by **SSgt Iain Munro**, this annual camp aims to introduce both alpine and cross-country skiing to newcomers, as well as developing the skills of those with a some experience already. A superb time was had by all involved, and they even had the chance to conjure up a chalet Burns Dinner whilst they were out there!

Talking of Burns, as February arrived the Regimental Officers gathered in the newly refurbished Officers’ Mess at Jardine Street TAC in Glasgow for the annual Burns Dinner. Following some significant investment by RFCA into the building post-Christmas, the rooms have been stripped, cleaned and painted and now look bright, rejuvenated and ready for the next 100 years of Mess life! Organised by PMC **Maj Iain Davidson**, this year’s Burns Dinner was also an opportunity to say farewell to **Maj Helen Jephcote** who has come to the end of her tenure as OC 51 Sig Sqn, leaving the Regiment to take up a Staff post with 51 (Sc) Brigade – we thank her for her long and dedicated service to 32 Signal Regiment over many, many years and



wish her all the best for her new job. The dinner was also an opportunity to welcome **Helen's** successor, **Maj Penny Mel**, who arrives from 2 Sig Bde to command our Edinburgh Sqn.

Further goodbyes this period include the Regtl FofS **WO2 Kev Eaves**, who leaves us for the glittering lights of Civvie Street as does **LCpl Alex Lillie**, who trades his role as CO's Driver for employment in the world of offshore oil. We wish them both the best of luck in their future endeavours.

2013 has started with a bang and we have a feeling that for 32 Signal Regiment it's going to be 12 months jam-packed full of activities and opportunities!

33 (LANCASHIRE) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj R Paterson**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) S Joliffe**

PROJECT NOEL - 7 DECEMBER 2012

Project Noel is the Royal Signals Association's Northern Carol Service organised by **David Barnes** and Southport RSA. Since 2010 it has been held in Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral where the acoustics and the Corps Band proved to be a great success. Proceeds from the event go to support the RSA Benevolent Fund.

On Friday 7 December the Officers' and Sergeants' Messes attended Project Noel for Nine Carols and Lessons in the Anglican Cathedral followed by dinner in the city's Adelphi Hotel. **Col Meadows** (Honoury Colonel), **Maj Paterson** and **Capt Bowdler** attended the service in the afternoon. **Brig Wood** led the Act of Remembrance, **Col Meadows** read the Seventh Lesson and **Maj Paterson** read the Ninth Lesson while the Corps band provided musical accompaniment.

In the evening, seventeen members of the Offrs' and Sgts' Messes and their guests joined with several branches of the RSA at an excellent dinner at the Adelphi Hotel, with the Corps Band again providing an entertaining program. The Corps Colonel, **Col Norton**, addressed the diners and a fine evening was had by all. As we departed into the night, clad in scarlet, medalled and with clicking spurs, we received a lot of surprised, but complimentary, comments from the more regular clientele of Liverpool on a Friday night!

Both messes are planning to attend the same event this year which promises to be even bigger.



Nine Lessons and Carols: L to R Capt Tony Adams, Director of Music; Merseyside ACF; Col Norton, the Corps Colonel; Maj Paterson, OC 33 Sig Sqn; Capt Bowdler, 2IC 33 Sig Sqn; Col Thompson TD, North West County Chairman RSA; Brig Hargreaves MBE, RSA Chairman Designate

PROMOTIONS

The Squadron was pleased to announce a number of well deserved promotions: **Sgt Greaves** was promoted to SSgt and took over as Tp SSgt at 893 Troop from **SSgt Jolliffe** who had previously promoted to WO2 into the post of SSM. **Sigs Guymner** and **Tavaloki-Kesh** were both promoted to LCpl, and **LCpl McGarry** was promoted to Cpl.

40 (NORTH IRISH HORSE) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)

OC **Maj Sam Burgess**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Glenn Campbell**

EXERCISE NORTHERN TROT (SEPT 2012) – by Sgt Robertson

On Fri evening the Sqn deployed to JHS Aldergrove where they were briefed by **Cpl Andy Bradshaw** on the range of events for the weekend.

At 0800 sharp on Saturday morning the training began with all the Bowman Dets deploying to the training area and the remaining two CSTs setting up in classrooms. There were a few teething problems erecting the masts but with some practical guidance from **SSgt Ricky George** it was all sorted and comms were soon established. Back in the classrooms the CST equipment was set up and operating... with some minor glitches as expected – hence why we train! After lunch a testing phase started with the Ops team initiating a VP scenario for the Bowman Dets and formal message handling work for the CSTs. It was not too long before the exercising troops slipped into good VP practice, given it had been a while since their last opportunity! In the background CST messages were being efficiently processed and delivered via the correct piece of communication equipment.

At 1600 all the equipment was packed away in time for a bit of physical training in accordance with the OC's policy on keeping up fitness levels. A run commenced around 1645 with two groups – the 'fast' and the 'just a bit slower' groups. With the knowledge that dinner was starting very soon it gave people the incentive to get moving around the course!

After a shower and dinner it was back to the classroom for Equality and Diversity with **Capt Ian Wolfe**. When **Capt Wolfe** posed the question "what do you believe Diversity is?" and got the reply "didn't they win X Factor" he knew he had his work cut out! On a serious note everyone did learn a great deal about E&D during the discussion; we found out a lot more about the views and opinions across the Sqn. Anyone requiring further guidance is more than welcome to visit **Capt Wolfe** and sit in his comfy chair for a chat.

On Sunday morning it was back into training with a CBRN lesson from **Cpl Johnny Booth**, which refreshed our memories of what to do when it all goes horribly wrong! This was followed by BCDT with **Sgt Debbie Wolfe**, **LCpl Jason Clarke** and **Sig Melissa Owen**. With the casualties in full makeup and troops organised into four man teams the scenario began. It would be fair to say all those involved will remember how to deal with a battle shock casualty for a long time! Following a debrief session from **Sgt Wolfe** and her team everyone appeared content with what they had practiced. After lunch, and with the accommodation turned around, the Sqn returned to their respective TAC locations

A word of thanks goes to **Capt Ian Wolfe** and his Ops team: knowledge was clearly gained and put into use by all the exercising troops. Thanks also to **Sgt Debbie Wolfe** and her team, plus **Cpl Johnny Booth**, for delivering high value MATTs training.

Another successful training weekend for the Sqn!



SOMME NURSING HOME VISIT (NOV 2012) – by WO2 Campbell

In Sept the SSM was sold a ballot ticket for a charity in his home town in NI. To his amazement he received a phone call a day later to inform him that he had scooped a prize and was now the proud owner of a very large cake! It was no ordinary cake either – being well decorated with a picture commemorating the signing of the Ulster covenant 1912.

“What the heck am I going to do with this?” was the SSM’s first thought. After some pondering he decided it would be very much appreciated by the residents in the Somme Nursing Home in Belfast. The Sqn like to maintain links with the Nursing Home having previously donated a handsome cheque for around £900 as a result of fund raising events. The Nursing Home is a charity established in 1914 to provide treatment and quality care for service and ex-service personnel.

The SSM made contact with the Staff Activity Co-ordinator, **Kim Boyd**, who said that everyone there would be delighted to have a visit from the Sqn. It was important to get our new SPSI along, **SSgt Drew McMahon**, as he is keen to organise a Battlefield Tour for 32SR in the near future and this visit may prove inspiring (not to mention informative as one never knows what stories can be picked up from talking to veterans!). **LCpl Jason Clarke**, an ex-serving soldier with the Royal Irish, also took part in the visit.

The individuals from the Sqn were introduced to several staff members and one of the first residents to make his warm introduction was **Sgt Thomas ‘Wee Tommy’ Addley** of the Parachute Regiment. **Wee Tommy** served in the Second World War and has seen his fair share of action. **Tommy** took the visit team down to his room and gave them a very interesting insight to his past. He had a map of the world on his wall, marked with all the places he had served. He has an eye for detail, he spotted the poppy in **SSgt McMahon’s** beret and quizzed him what this was about. **SSM Campbell** explained to him that this is what serving members do around Remembrance Day to remember our fallen. **Tommy** asked **SSgt McMahon** “could you do my beret also?” So, the new SPSI lost his poppy!



Another interesting Lady was **Capt Noel Murray** who served in the UDR (Ulster Defence Regiment). She also told the visitors some interesting stories about her past and service in NI. Her daughter married into the military, just proving it must be in the blood. In the accompanying photo you can see the visit team (with the cake!) below a very well-known picture depicting the famous bloody battle of the Somme of 1 July 1916, where many thousands of Ulster men laid down their lives for Britain.

EXERCISE MERCURY KNOWLEDGE (NOV 2012)

Ex MERCURY KNOWLEDGE is an annual event that HQ Royal Corps of Signals conducts to bring together Regular and Reserve members of the WOs’ & Sgts’ Mess, from across the Corps, to discuss Royal Signals business.

This year 11 Sig Regt organised the event with **SSgt Stuart Reid**, TPSI 51 Sqn, given the task of lead man for 32SR. He made sure all 32SR Sqns were informed about the event early in 2012. **WO2 (SSM) Glenn Campbell** had been at the conference the year prior and knew the important value of attending such an event, given so many changes happening within our Corps.

Knowing the educational value for the Sqn SNCOs the SSM quickly secured around fifteen volunteers; thinking that this may allow him to successfully gain three to four slots within the Regt. As luck would have it the Sqn got eleven places and in Nov the band of eleven from 40 Sqn headed off, with **SSgt Reid**, to the Corps HQ in Blandford.

The convention was kicked off for the first time by **Col GR Norton** (Corps Col). His opening address was about atmospheric and changes to the Corps. Also highlighted were matters around Army 2020 in addition to the disbandment of 7 Sig Regt, 2 Sig Bde and 19 Lt Bde. He reminded everyone that the main effort is still with HERRICK but we must also be prepared for the difficult and fast changes of our future structure going forward.

There were many other speakers one of whom was **Maj Mel McCory** who served with Echo Troop; part of the disbanded 40 Ulster Signal Regt (V). He has been tasked with the huge responsibility of restructuring of the Corps and working on Op ENTIRETY. **Maj McCory** happened to recognise **Sgt Wendy Cush** in the audience (clearly she has made her mark!) and he warmly greeted her.

A key event over the weekend was the Corps photo and dinner; which is performed with much style and grace. This allows all new SNCOs to see why it is such a privilege to be a member of the WOs’ & Sgts’ Mess. This year the standard was every bit as high and we had the pleasure of being joined by **Col Norton** and the Corps RSM, **WO1 (CRSM) Mark McMullen**. Afterwards it is good to network and catch up with friends from former service in our unit and also those from Operational tours.

It was equally important to make our mark at the event. The SNCOs from 40 (NIH) Sig Sqn clearly stood out with our unique NIH collar dogs on our Mess Kit; it certainly gets the conversation going. **Col Norton** took time to join us and the discussion quickly came around to life under 32SR and our new reformed Sqn in NI. We also networked with our Regular



counterparts in NI, 225 (ECM) Sqn based in Lisburn station; they also had a good representation at the event. We have been successful in forging links with them and plan to seek areas of mutual support in future training and possibly on Ops.

It was a great weekend with many educational topics debated and discussed. The event was attended by **WO2 Glenn Campbell, WO2 Colin Ritchie, SSgt Stuart Reid, SSgt Dave Thomas, SSgt Ricky Dennison, SSgt Ricky George, SSgt Ian Palmer, Sgt Glenn Adair, Sgt Wendy Cush, Sgt Margaret Robertson, Sgt Stephen Black and Sgt Ricky Lindsay**. All agreed it was both informative and rewarding.

Many thanks to **SSgt Stuart Reid** for all his hard work and planning!

50 (NORTHERN) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj B Hogg**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Standing**

11 BRIGADE POTENTIAL NON COMMISSIONED OFFICER COURSE

January not only heralded the start of a new year but also another 32 Signal Regiment run Potential Non Commissioned Officers Course (PNCO). Christmas felt like a distant memory when the first of two weekends came along on the 18-20 Jan 13. Wathgill Training Camp was the Regiment's chosen (and preferred) location to deliver the classroom phase of the PNCO Course. A constant weather watch was in place on the lead up to the weekend as news reports predicted heavy snow in all areas which could potentially impact on attendance and require changes to the plan!

The course reception was in place and occupied by **LCpls Greatbatch and Anderson** who drew straws for the expected late night as students for the course made their way from far and wide through rain, then sleet, then snow to get to Wathgill. The last attendee arrived at 0230hrs and was quickly briefed and sent off to bed.

After a night of constant snowfall reveille revealed a crisp 4" blanket of snow across the area. The Wathgill tractor with snow plough attached was already at work clearing the roads on camp as slumbering soldiers came to across the accommodation. The course paraded on time, some students looking a little more bleary eyed than others due to their late arrival but all seemed in good spirits. The subsequent inspection was dominated by, "There is snow on your boots!"

The students were introduced to the course instructors, which included the Morecombe and Wise of **SSgts Ross and Mulvaney, Sgt Elsdon**, 50 Sig Sqn Ops Officer **Capt 'Ch... Airborne' Pierson**, OC 50 Sig Sqn, **Maj Hogg** and course co-ordinator **WO2 (SSM) Standing**.

The OC drew the first shift to teach Fighting Power. After multiple refresh air breaks the baton was passed to **SSgt Ross** to begin the Leadership lectures closely followed by **SSgt Mulvaney**. After a well deserved lunch the SSM put the students' staying power to the test with 90 minutes on the military discipline system, assisted by **WO1(RSM) Love**. **Sgt Elsdon** took the students through reports, returns and unit procedures.

A number of the students were PTIs and it was obvious that they were experiencing withdrawal symptoms not going to the gym, however, the next period contributed to curing them. Due to the adverse winter conditions **SSgt Gaz Cambridge** came up with an inside circuit. Evening meal was followed by the Ice breaker session, the students had 2 minutes to talk about themselves and list 3 interesting facts at the end, and needless to say there were a myriad of different backgrounds, jobs, hobbies and of course interesting facts; some of which generated a few laughs from the audience.

Day Two thankfully was a little more physical. **Capt Pierson, Sgt Mulvaney** and **Cpl Sowden** provided an opportunity for the students to demonstrate their logical thinking in the command tasks. **Lt Jolley** ensured that the students didn't miss the classroom learning too much and provided a comprehensive Orders and 7 Questions lesson. With Weekend One validation sheets filled in and a "look forward to weekend 2" brief given, the course jumped back into their respective transport and scattered to the winds.

Weekend 2 on the 8-10 February saw 50 and 40 Sig Sqn join forces to deliver both PNCO and Pre-CLM training. **SPSI 40 Sig Sqn, SSgt Drew McMahon**, headed up the training for Pre-CLM students who would later be merged with the PNCO troops on their confirmation field exercise. **SSgt Taff Langley** from 39SR joined the DS team to assist in the field phase. After a long day of practice the troops moved in to their patrol base on Catterick Training Area. As the light faded gradually to black the students had time to prepare for a night navigation phase. Recce tasks were issued and executed: the amount of information that the students reported back significantly reinforced the 7 Questions lesson that they had previously been taught. A night ambush was also mounted, giving some of the students their first experience in this element of surprise on the battlefield.



32 Sig Regt PJNCO Cadre



An early start on day two guaranteed that all of the planned serials could be included on the exercise. The sections nervously entered the briefing room where **Lt Jolley** was to deliver a full set of Orders. Final battle prep and rehearsals were being feverishly carried out to ensure that everyone knew their drills. When the troops crossed the start line it took a little time to shake out but pretty soon movement was fluid and reactions to situations became faster and more instinctive. There were five minor positions and the traditional 'big push finale'. By the time the troops had reached the final objective the fire teams were working well together, they maintained their grasp on team work and mutual support was also clear to see.

In summary the course has set the signallers of today on the road to becoming the Junior and Senior NCOs of tomorrow. We asked for effort, grit and determination at the start of the course and that's what we got...well done everyone!

52 SUPPORT SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

OC **Maj J McNaught**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Swan**

EX WINTER WARMER 13 - ADVENTUROUS TRAINING IN AVIEMORE

52 Sp Sqn Winter Adventurous Training took place at Aviemore, Scotland over the weekend 8-10 February, comprising of both walking and skiing in the Highlands.

The seven skiers involved, **Capt Williams, WO2 (AQMS) Davidson, WO2 (MTWO) Heaney, LCpls Grice and Williams, and Sigs Bingham and Thompson**, collected all their equipment and made their way up to the Cairngorm for a good day on the piste. All the skiers had previous experience on the slopes but it had been a while for some.



After a few photo opportunities the group split into two with **LCpl Grice** leading the ladies and **Capt Williams** leading the lads. After a couple of runs down the Ptarmigan bowl everybody was happy that they could still snow plough and parallel turn so it was time to get up a bit of speed. Most of the group had an iPhone 4 or 5 with the app Ski Tracks installed. This shows the skier things like max altitude (3760 feet in case anyone was wondering!), the total distance skied on that particular run, the degree of steepness of the slope, the duration of the run and most importantly the maximum speed of the run. The MTWO clearly thought that his skis were fitted with a Trimble speed limiting device so he had to keep below the speed limit! **Capt Williams'** and **LCpl Williams'** skis however were not! **Capt Williams** took the top speed of the day with a run that reached 36mph!

After a break for refreshments, we went for the full run down "Ptarmigan". This was an option for the video function of the iPhone to be tried out. They all kicked off and the MTWO



Capt Williams and WO2 Heaney pose

went streaking away at a rapid rate of knots. There was talk he had disabled the Trimble device on his skis. Seeing his subject matter disappearing into the mist, **Capt Williams** tucked his poles in and gave chase with iPhone in hand. Visible on the screen was the AQMS swishing from left to right across the slope in front. **Capt Williams** flew past him but this was clearly unknown to the AQMS who cut back to the left and took out **Capt Williams**, who turned into a human snowball cartwheeling down the slope, luckily without injury!

The second element of the exercise was winter walking, led by **SSgt Forbes** and **Sgt Tinney**. Due to the heightened level of avalanche warnings it became clear that the plan of gaining some altitude was out and the alternative plan was used: a gruelling 24km low level trek using tracks that are apparently on the maps, however when you have snow on the ground the tracks are difficult to see and therefore navigation was carried out by use of features. We were split down into two groups and then in pairs with a junior member of the Squadron paired with a senior member to gain the best navigational experience.



As we set off it wasn't long until we realised that this was not going to be easy, tracks that were supposed to be there were covered in snow and almost invisible! Using the skills previously taught throughout the training year and under the keen eye of our instructor we managed to navigate using the ground features that could be identified through the mist, each of us taking turns on different legs of the route and at the same time gaining valuable experience in map reading in these difficult conditions.

After a good few hours on the hill we managed to get a break and catch up with the other group, exchanging the stories of our arduous day, with most trying to outdo each other with who had the hardest route and most difficult challenges: That discussion is still ongoing!

The day wasn't quite over yet as in the evening all personnel gathered together to say a sad farewell to four members of the Sqn who have come to the end of their TA Service: **WO2 (AQMS) Davidson, SSgt Lawler, Sgt Gilmour and Sgt Flook.**

The evening was set up with a Burns theme: prepared by a small admin party led by **WO2 (SSM) Parke** their achievements would have put any Regimental Mess to shame. It was a fantastic setting to say farewell to our members who between them had over 150 years military service. The evening started with the piping in of the haggis by **SSgt Mackenzie**, followed by an address to the beast by **SSgt**



OC 52 Sp Sqn, Maj Jim McNaught, dishes the dirt on those leaving the Sqn

(SQMS) Gillan. We were then entertained with some very well prepared Burns poems from **WO2 (RQMS) Brown, WO2 (SSM) Park, Sgts Sliman and Tinney, LCpl Grice and Sigs Thompson, Porter, Ramsey, Walker and Bingham.** It was a great end to the weekend's activities, and thoroughly enjoyed by all who took part.



37th SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS) REDDITCH



CO
RSM

Lt Col Cairns TD
WO1 (RSM) Maguire

The Regiment would like to say farewell to **Capt Bruce Scott** (Adjt) and **WO1 (RSM) Maguire** who are leaving the Army; they are wished every success for their civilian careers that lie ahead. **WO2 (FoS) Walker, SSgt Smith** (SPSI 48 Sqn) and **Sgt Hine** (PSI Tech) who leave the Regt to deploy on Operational Tours, before moving on to pastures new. We wish them all the best for the future and thank them all for their contributions to the Regt.

Congratulations to **SSgt Ali Nash** on his award of the MBE for considerable support to charity work, **Cfn Jones** on his Certificate of Commendation, for his outstanding work in Afghanistan on H16; awarded by Commander Equipment Capability, HQ Joint Force Support, and **Maj Riley and Sgt Watson**, awarded GOC Theatre Troops Commendations for contributions to Op Olympic.

OPERATION HERRICK 16 - by Capt Steve Cherry

Late November 12 on a freezing foggy parade in Elmpt, marked the last act in a long year for some of 37 Signal Regiment (V) as they were presented the OSM for service on Op Herrick 16; by either the Master of Signals, **Gen Baxter**, or Comd 11 Sig Bde, **Brig Cole**.

It was back on 2 Jan 12 when 13 members of the Regt reported for mobilisation at Chilwell. This was followed by 2 weeks of both physical and mental testing, before being deemed fit for mobilisation and joining 16 Signal Regiment in the last throes of their preparation for deployment to Afghanistan and Op Herrick 16. It very quickly became evident that 16 Signal Regiment (our paired Campaign Signal Regiment) had put considerable effort into ensuring that the TA augmentees became quickly integrated and valued

members of the team. It also dawned on individuals that the preparation and deployment would be a challenging period for all. Preparation included provision of ICS for 12 Mech Brigade's FTX on Salisbury Plain, Reacher, FOB WiFi and Theatre specific Applications courses, as well as the obligatory range work, further exercises and briefings before deployment time arrived in early May.



Herrick 16 Mercury Lines



The majority of the 37 Signal Regiment cohort were deployed with 230 Signal Squadron, forming HICSSS based in Helmand Province, with others spread widely across the whole Theatre.

Capt Steve Cherry joined the HICSSS Ops team in the role of SO3 Plans and Projects, whilst **LCpl 'Tanfastic' Beasley-Woods**, **Sigs Wayne Harris** and **Luke Meiklem** provided half of the manning for the extremely busy ComCen BASTION. Also Bastion based, **Sgt Zoe Trimm** took on the role of JFCIS(A) Night Watchkeeper, latterly moving onto HICSSS Service Desk where she actually got to see the sun, meet people and develop a skill set that will be put to good advantage when she returns to the REEBOK.

Cpl Marcus Ratcliffe, as the sole reservist RSE deployed with 16 Sig Regt, was tested in all aspects from MT management to PB power assurance and FRT tasks that were put his way; and throughout the tour managed to develop a local national tan and skilfully avoid implication in the plunge pool fiasco that proved the highlight of the power section tour.



Cpl Ratcliffe carries out electrical repairs

LCpl Lee Robinson quickly established himself as a most proficient engineer, producing some of the most comprehensive, some may say long winded, technical updates ever witnessed. He provided first class incident response all over BASTION and the Helmand AO.

Cpl Matt Weston provided very welcome Sharepoint expertise in support of all formations from the JFCIS(A) App Spec section, and on more than one occasion solved critical data conundrums that meant the difference between success or disaster. He also found time to instruct "Spinning Classes" to a predominantly female audience, and complete a football coaching course.

Down in LKG **LCpl 'Chilly' Chalcraft** and **Sig Tom Harrison** added some colour to the LKG ICS Troop, working the not so busy LKG ComCen, adding some REACHER expertise and generally avoiding BASTION other than to pass through for R&R and EOT travel. Both managed some support deployments away from LKG, even if only to escort insurgents off the premises.

Deployed with 255 Sig Sqn was **LCpl Karen Butler** who joined the small team providing UK ICS to the UK element of HQ RC(SW) in Camp Leatherneck. Notable was her completion of the Camp Bastion Marathon and DANCOM Marches; testament to much dedicated and determined pounding of the many miles of roads and tracks of the Bastion area.

LCpl Keith Hercus deployed to Comcen Kabul, and was nearly as scarce a sight as **LCpl Jason Gardner** who refuses to talk about his Kandahar based tour, hence nobody actually knows

what he did for 6 months, only that it involved the collection of many, many air-miles, without reward!

Deployed at the same time were **Capt Lucy Sewell** who found herself with the LKG based PMAG, with the task of mentoring and developing Afghan Police units in all their guises, as well as trying to get the Welsh Guards to think blue rather than green!

Cfn Jones and **ONEil** deployed with the Theatre ES Bn in Bastion, providing support to the vast array of Theatre specific vehicles, whilst **SSgt Jeff Farnes** and **Capt Susi Wallis**, who had both been an integral part of the preparation of all augmentees for deployment; also found themselves a mentoring role in Kabul.

We return to the Regiment to find that 2012 has apparently been an extremely busy year; dominated by a UK based sporting event that needed some assistance, exercise deployments to Jordan and the ongoing Op TOSCA deployment. We also return after what seems only a short leave period, to our ever supportive civilian employers, as we try to re-establish the old normality after what has been a most positive experience for all involved.

36 (EASTERN) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC
SSM

Maj K Humphries
WO2 (SSM) Tara Pun

The Squadron welcomes **Capt Raj Sherchan MBE** who has joined us and will be taking over command of 854 Troop at Cambridge. Also **Capt Sarah Earl** has returned after completing her maternity leave. **Sgts Bailey** (ex RMP) and **Wright** (ex Royal Signals) have recently joined and will be taking up posts as Tp Sgts at 854 and 845 Tps at Cambridge and Colchester respectively.

After the Christmas break, the Sqn commenced training and deployed on the first of many exercises, Ex SQN TROT, in early January. This was the Sqn's first comms ex since Annual Deployment in September 12 and sought to brush up the skills of the more experienced operators and introduce the newer members of the Sqn to BOWMAN and CST deployment and operation. The ex was planned and executed by the Sqn Ops team, with **WO2 (YofS) Clarke** taking the lead. Initially the dets deployed to Colchester, Braintree and Cambridge to carry out an 'OUTREACH' recruiting activity before they re-deployed to Friday Woods, Colchester. Under the tutelage of **Capt Harry Monk** and **WO2 Clarke**, the dets went through deployment and operation drills before deploying to RAF Woodbridge and Wattisham in order to put this into practice.

SSgt Rob Aldridge provided the RADCON element of the exercise and deployed to RAF Woodbridge with the CST from Cambridge and a BOWMAN detachment manned by **LCpl Hughes** and **Cpl Wright**. Having deployed and set up, the various detachments started passing traffic until close down late Saturday evening. An early start on Sunday morning saw the detachments deploy out again for further training; prior to recovery to Colchester and Cambridge TACs. All in all, a good ex in preparation for the Regt TestEx in February.

48 (CITY OF BIRMINGHAM) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC
SSM

Maj L Mayell
WO2 (SSM) Potts

VISIT FROM THE LORD MAYOR OF BIRMINGHAM
- by Sig Khatun

There is no better way to settle back into Squadron routine after leave than to give a presentation to the Lord Mayor of



Birmingham! The Lord Mayor was welcomed into the Squadron by the CO, **Lt D Cairns TD**, and the Sqn OC **Maj Lyn Mayell**, and after some formal introductions the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress were led to the Sergeants' and Officers' mess for a presentation by some members of the Sqn who had deployed on Op Olympic.

Myself, **Sig Hathaway**, **LCpl Willets** and **Sgt Monahan** gave a brief PowerPoint presentation to the Lord Mayor about our summer spent on Op Olympic. The presentations covered the various roles carried out by Sqn members, including my role on the Venue Security Force (VSF), which I enjoyed considerably. I was on the public lanes working with 2 Mercians, which is completely different to my role within the TA as a Bowman Operator. **Sig Hathaway** had the privilege to drive one of the Lt Cols around following the Olympic Torch, before being based in Shorncliffe for the remainder. **LCpl Willets** was working at Blandford, assisting the MT Dept and **Sgt Monahan** had a very busy summer running Netcen39.

The Lord Mayor was very impressed at the TA's commitment, hard work and dedication; although he did comment that some of us had more play time than work time, we wish!!!! After the presentation the Lord Mayor was given a tour of the Squadron followed by an excellent demonstration of a PT session. He then spent some considerable time talking to Squadron members about being in the Territorial Army and why we do it.

To conclude the evening we were all led to the bar to for a medals presentation. The CO was proud to present the Op Olympic (JFCIS) Coins (40 were allocated across all the Signal Regiments, with 37 Signal Regiment receiving 11). Those receiving the coins on this occasion were **Sig Hathaway**, **LCpl Willets**, **Sgt Monaghan**, **Sgt Watson** and **Sgt Montague** who was also presented with his VRSM. To our surprise, the Lord Mayor had a few gifts of his own to present to the Regt and Sqn, before giving a personal invitation (for those returning from Op Herrick) to a special lunch and tour of the Chambers at the Council House.

EXERCISE PASHTUN LINKS - by Sig Jennings

We set off on 16 November 12, heading down to South Cerney, to be checked in before being transported across to Brize Norton for our flight. After landing safely in Jordan we were transported across to the MOB, where we were shown the tents that we would live in for the next month; we had scoff and slept well after a long day of travelling.

The next day we were paired up with our DS who we would be driving for the next month and after getting acquainted we went out to recce the task sites and prepare them for the



Petra

EOD teams arrival. Utilising my communications training, I provided the comms between my DS and the MOB, keeping an all informed net.

Midway through the exercise we were given a cultural day to go to Petra, which was a welcome break from the routine. This gave me the opportunity to see one of the Seven Wonders of the World which was fascinating.

The final week was spent out in the training area, living in abandoned buildings, driving my DS about, as well as playing the roles of both enemy and civilian population. The exercise had helped with my understanding of the EOD aspect of the military, furthering my understanding of drills to be carried out in relation to IED's and potential IED's, as well as the importance of communications required throughout the military environment.



I would recommend to anyone that has the opportunity to go out on the next Exercise Pashtun Links, to jump at it. It offers a month of working with Regular soldiers in an environment that helps develop yourself and bring back valuable knowledge to your unit.

53 (Wales & Western) Signal Squadron

OC **Maj M Longcake**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Cash**

MATTS WEEKEND - by Sgt Jones

Over the weekend of 23-25 November 12, 53 (W&W) Signal Squadron deployed to deepest darkest west Wales to carry out their MATTS weekend; the chance for everyone to complete their annual tests and qualify for their all important coconut covered chocolate bar.

Leaving the warmth and comfort of Cardiff early on Saturday morning to make the journey down to wet and windy 14 Sig Regt at Brawdy, we all knew we were in for a cold one! The PFA was first; with the necessary press ups and sit ups in the gym before a snake of runners made their way around the windswept edge of camp! After a warm shower we split into 2 syndicates; one trying out their new GSRs for the first time, under the watchful eye of **Cpl Tony Shakespeare** and the others shooting on the ranges under command of the SSM, **WO2 'Jonny' Cash**. Sure enough, when the time came to swap groups, in came the sweeping west Wales, side-ways rain.... Those on CBRN actually didn't want to leave the chamber and those shooting, were gortexed up to the max.

Lunch was eaten in The Hub restaurant, where we were given a vast selection of choices, much more acceptable than our usual single choice of mystery meat range stew. After lunch



the groups were split again, to undertake their assessments on map reading and BCD. Resusi Anne was well kissed, lots of legs were bandaged and tourniquets applied in the camp church, where we also enjoyed a Norwegian of the sweetest tea known to man!

After a brief teasing at the beginning of the Wales v All Blacks match over dinner, we were back in the classroom for MATTS 6 & 7. With Wales' terrible performance, no-one was that upset at not getting to see the rest of the rugby!

After experiencing the delights of Haverfordwest night life, we all went to bed early, so we would be bright eyed and bushy tailed for MATT 9 the following morning..... (Honest!)

On Sunday morning everyone was up early and **Sgt Carys Jones** had the unenviable task of having to keep everyone awake and interested for 90 minutes; before we could go and enjoy Sunday Brunch in the cookhouse. Some more lessons followed before the 2 hour journey back to Cardiff, but before we knew it, we were all qualified for the year and ready to carry on fighting the good fight.

54 SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj C Quincey**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) M Evans**

Following an excellent Christmas function and a long Christmas break, the Squadron returned to training with typical Support Squadron vigour. We have welcomed back a number of soldiers after successful tours of Afghanistan and we are doing our best to introduce them to the many new Squadron members who have arrived in the last 12 months.

The recruiting drive is in full swing. Squadron members have been encouraged to participate in the recruiting effort at all levels and are shepherding friends and acquaintances into the Recruiting Team at an accelerated rate. This month we see 4 new recruits start Phase 1 training and in the coming weeks expect to see a few more pass-out to join the rest of us.

Squadron PT returned to Thursday nights and is continuing to draw in those soldiers with a masochistic streak! Many, including the PTIs, have been working hard to burn off Christmas dinners and sweat out New Year's drinks.

Ex GLOBAL TROT was the first training weekend in January. The Squadron participated in a wide range of events, including lessons in equipment maintenance and risk assessments, command tasks and appreciations, and a brutal but enjoyable and beneficial circuit session in the Arrow Valley swimming pool. Members of the Squadron travelled to local gyms, shopping centres and fast food restaurants to put up

the new recruiting posters. Saturday night gave us the chance to fill up the coffers of the Squadron bar and participate in a challenging quiz set by **SSgt Jeff Farnes**.

EXERCISE BRUNO ROCK - GOURMET FOOD IN GIBRALTAR!

Two chefs from 54 Support Squadron took part in Ex BRUNO ROCK with 10 Signal Regiment in Gibraltar. The exercise was due to be a month long and although the original trawl was actually for one chef; staff who understood restrictions placed on TA personnel due to civilian employment paid for a civilian flight so that 2 chefs could each spend 2 weeks on the exercise. 10 Sigs were incredibly welcoming to our chefs and after helping them settle in left them to help run the kitchen. Both soldiers gained considerable management and catering experience from the exercise.

Sgt Tracy Fleming, who was first to arrive, said "I loved it, we were left to our own devices. It was long shifts but rewarding work. I got to run a BBQ for the lads and had a chance to work alongside UK civilian chefs and Gibraltar nationals. I'd love to do it again."

LCpl Becky Selvey took over the kitchen half way through the exercise. She said "We flew in by Hercules and had a chance to see the sights before taking up work in the kitchen. I also managed to get in some warm weather running training on the beaches, before returning to a very British winter!"

Both chefs have returned to the Squadron and have been putting their refined gourmet skills to good use, cooking for the Christmas function and Ex GLOBAL TROT.



LCpl Becky Selvey and Sgt Tracey Fleming holding a photograph presented to them by Chefs from the Royal Gibraltar Regiment



39th (SKINNERS) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS) BRISTOL



CO **Lt Col M Cosgrove MBE**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) W Scarrott**

Having returned from a well deserved period of Christmas leave, the Regiment began 2013 with a bang in the form of a weekend in the FOB at Longmoor Camp on Ex COLD START. This mil skills exercise was designed to be a 'shake out' after Christmas and it tested our field soldiering skills to the limit. We also enjoyed the company of the Corps Colonel during the weekend who, after watching an arrest serial in the wind and rain, understood why the Exercise was called 'COLD START!'

Within RHQ we recently said farewell to our RAO, **Maj Rick Lock**, who retires after some 40 years serving Queen and Country. We wish him and **Sue** all the best for a peaceful retirement. **Maj Lock** is succeeded as RAO by **Maj Dave Manners**, fresh from a Recruiting SO2 post – the ROSO will have to stop bluffing now!

Finally all ranks of the Regiment would like to congratulate **SSgt Sonja McCoy** who was awarded the QVRM on the New Year's Honours List.



93 (NSY) SUPPORT SQUADRON - BRISTOL

OC **Maj P J Smith**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) K Butcher**

The Squadron has continued its hectic pace of life over the past period; with detailed planning of the programme for the coming training year taking centre stage alongside conclusion of the current year's MATTs objectives. We have also been given the lead for planning and delivery of a Regimental MATTs field based concentration during February. We have recently deployed seven of our soldiers to Canada in support of the BATUS REME Workshop's annual maintenance programme and participated in the Regimental level deployment on Ex COLD START during January.

We are pleased to announce that **Capt Karen Hanlon** has given birth to **Lucy Evie Nancy**, both mother and daughter are doing well. We sadly have to say farewell to **SSgt Sean Vogt** who has transferred to 4 LANCS in Preston after a short tenure with the Squadron and to **LCpl Marc May** who has left the TA and emigrated to warmer climes in Singapore.

EXERCISE DARK HORSE – by Cpl Marie Perry

The not so Magnificent 7 from 93 Support Squadron set off on their grand trip to the Canadian Prairies with 103 Bn REME leaving a damp UK on 16 November. On arriving in Canada for Ex DARK HORSE we went on an orientation of the camp and were introduced to our production teams for the next two weeks. We started early on the Monday morning getting familiarised with our work areas and the skills mix of the teams. The facilities ranged from standard workshops to hangers with no tools or equipment, but the tasking remained the same wherever you were, to inspect, service and fix as many vehicles as possible to get them task worthy and back on the park ready for the next season of MEDMan exercises.

The Winter Repair teams were to arrive soon but it was key that 103 Bn and its many attachments did as much work as possible in the 2 weeks as the fleet was in a very sorry state. The Support Squadron LAD attachments worked on many different vehicles including CVR(T), the 430 series, Warriors, Panthers, MAN SV, Landrovers, Pinzgauers, Quad Bikes, Foden Drops and Drops Racking, in fact if it was in BATUS, one of us worked on it. The hours were long and conditions were very cold (-30° was a bit on the chilly side) but the snow and the continuous stream of challenging but rewarding work kept us warm and entertained. Tasks were wide and varied, to name a few we undertook: engine and transmission changes, track bashing, 2 yearly servicing, re-wiring looms,



LCpl Jones tackles the MAN SV

changing axles, panel work, inspections and clutch changes. As well as powering through 1000's of production hours we managed to get many sections of the Class 3 training and development books signed off.

After the long 12 hour days we had some well deserved R&R in the evenings in the form of 5 a side football, hockey, and a quiz in the Longhorn club, in which the 39 team came 2nd after taking the event to a final deciding round. At the weekend we ventured out of camp and visited Medicine Hat and Calgary. We went to the military museum in Calgary and then ventured into town to ascend the famous tower to see the picturesque Rocky Mountains in the distance. Calgary was full of life as it was the night of the Canadian Superbowl! After a tiring 2 weeks and many hours spent on a coach watching the plains roll by we flew back to the UK and arrived back in the TA centres in time for the final parade. We shall definitely return again with reinforcements to crack through some more BATUS winter repair hours.

MEDALS PRESENTATION – by Capt Bob Nixon

The Squadron held a Medals Presentations Parade at Horfield TA Centre on 22 Jan 13 to present well deserved ACSM and VRSM medals to six of its members. The Presenting Officer was the Squadron Honorary Colonel, **Brig T H Lang QVRM, RD*, DL**. Unfortunately, the Tuesday evening in question was beset by a blizzard and the Honorary Colonel, medal recipients and their guests all had to battle through heavy snow in order to attend the presentation, much to their credit the majority made it!

The Regimental 2IC, **Maj Bill Ruthven**, and **SSgt Mick Wall** received the ACSM. **Sgt Kerri Hill** received a second clasp to her VRSM and **Sgt Kenneth McNally**, **Cpl Marie Perry** and **LCpl Tom Watson** all received the VRSM.



Squadron Honorary Colonel, Brig T H Lang and medal recipients

56 SIGNAL SQUADRON - EASTBOURNE

OC **Maj K M Francis**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) R Vincent**

The Squadron Awards ceremony at the end of the year saw **Sig Chris Platt** named 'Soldier of the Year'. **Sig Platt** has been with the Sqn for some time and has excelled himself in all areas: completing trade Class 2, deploying on Op OLYMPICS where he received outstanding reports from his receiving unit, completing the PNCO cadre as well as working at the Sqn. **Sigs Warren Goddard** and **James Pritchett** both received 'Shot of the Year' for excellent marksmanship scores. **Sigs Kerrie Edmonds** and **Kirstie Jackson** received 'Best Physical Achievement'. Between them they have completed the



Bristol Half Marathon, the London Marathon, the London to Brighton Charity March (for the ABF), the Ski Championships and Race for Life. Two PTIs in the making for certain. **Sig Matt Morley** was given the new award 'Spirit of 56' for his unwavering dedication to the Sqn and his enthusiasm for all that is involved. The 'Troop of the Year' went to 858 Troop who in the past year have not only supported the Sqn in all events but also provide the majority of the instructors. The award for 'Best Sqn Asset' (aka the 'we can't do without you' award) went to **Sgt Pete Paine** without whom many driving duties would go uncovered and the REME would cease to run.

Sigs Jake Cole and **Ian Sussex** gained their CMCQ qualifications. **Sigs Paul Gendre, Matt Morley, James Pritchett** and **Chester Sage** all completed their PNCO cadre, held at Catterick. An emotional two weekends that saw them fight through snow, ice and a major traffic jam on the M1.



On the PJNCO course

Ten Sqn members assisted 299 Sig Sqn (SC) by playing the civilian population on their training exercise in Lydd. The soldiers incited bar fights, threw insults as well as punches and generally did the best they could to create havoc for the soldiers for 229 Sig Sqn. All in all a fun but tiring five days of taking soldiers through their skills and drills of dealing with mobs and casualties in volatile situations.



Ready to have a go at 299

With several Sqn members vying for a place with 21SR deploying at the end of the year, additional training has had to move up a notch. **Cpl Carter** and **Sig Cole** now run PT every Thursday and **WO2 Tim Still** and **Sgt Justin Hewett** have started additional trade training on available weekends to assist our soldiers wanting to deploy.

It is a testimony to the enthusiasm for the soldiers that many of them chose to attend additional training for this Exercise a week before the Sqn was due to parade back after Christmas. **SPSI SSgt Mark Langley** and **Cpl Linford Millen** took the soldiers through their military skills and all soldiers were grateful for the extra tuition.

57 (CITY AND COUNTY OF BRISTOL) SIGNAL SQUADRON – BRISTOL

OC
SSM

Capt B J Newby
WO2 (SSM) R Vise

The six weeks since the Christmas break have been as busy as ever for the Squadron. There has been a temporary change at the top as **Capt Ben Newby** has taken over as acting OC while **Maj Paul Rodenhurst** is out of the country on business. In another move **WO2 'Marv' Dyer** has taken over as Tp Comd at W Tp in Gloucester. **Lt Martin Crilly** has arrived, transferring from 37SR and taking up the critical post of leading recruiting efforts. On that subject, **Sigs Aduachie, Martin** and **Taylor** have been attested and are now in the Phase 1 pipeline. Congratulations are due to **Sgt Ray Card** from the Gloucester Troop on his well deserved promotion and to **SSgt Del Richards** for his success on the supervisor board. As well as sending a section on Ex COLD START (reported below), the main activity of this period has been various individuals attending courses. **PSI(T) SSgt Bev Bevan, Cpl Haynes, Sig Howie** and **Sig MacDonald** have now completed "Baseband in a Box" training. **Sgt Hyde** qualified as an ETL. **Sigs Friday, Flagg** and **Huckle** completed BSS and **Sigs Bowe** and **Camm** completed Pot JNCO CLM. The Squadron also supplied two of the instructors for the Regimental ski expedition, Ex LYNX GLACIER: **Cpl Haynes** and **Sig Morris**.

EXERCISE COLD START - A SOLDIER'S PERSPECTIVE

- by Sig Beard

The exercise started on Friday night at Longmoor Camp. We tabbed a quick 300m or so into the FOB where we had a pleasant surprise of a heated and lit up ISO Container! This was quite the morale boost throughout the weekend as it was very cold day and night.

Most of Saturday was lessons, section battle drills, building clearing and mine clearance. Some of this I hadn't covered before so it was interesting to learn. The sense of humour of the staff taking the lessons was very good, which made the lessons more enjoyable and the staff were all experienced and knowledgeable. On Saturday night we conducted an arrest operation - this was very nerve racking being my first tactical military exercise since Phase 1 training. I had the added frustration that my weapon kept jamming when we came under fire - turned out to be my gas plug was incorrectly fitted! Lesson learnt!



Counter IED training

The camp was attacked early Sunday morning. Dazed and confused, my section was very sleepy but we got out quick - for me it was like something out of a movie. People running



around, weapons firing, flares, it was an incredible experience. At 4am Sunday morning we ambushed the enemy town. However we were seen before getting too close and it all kicked off! I entered a house behind Section 1 (I was Section 3). I was ordered to clear the next room and that the door way in front was clear and open. It wasn't. I only found out after I threw a grenade at the closed door and it bounced back! I effectively wiped out a few of our guys. But another important lesson learnt. Better to happen in training than real situation. After recovering my eye sight from the grenade flash we charged on, took a female prisoner, cleared the next house and the mission was over.

It was a massive morale boost to be told that we did a good job and that the grenade incident wasn't my fault. Daylight was on us; we tabbed back to the FOB and wrapped up the weekend. Only downside for me was the weather, cold and wet but overall one of the most exhilarating experiences of my life.

EXERCISE LYNX GLACIER – by Capt Andy Morris

39 Signal Regiment's Adventure Training Exercise took place in the Alpendorf region of Austria between 26 Jan and 2 Feb. Twenty four Regimental personnel took part with seventeen of them Cpls or below. As is typical with AT we had to work out the best fit for a group of disparate skiers of different ability levels and more importantly different levels of Army ski qualifications with only 3 instructors at our disposal. We therefore ended up with four groups and here is how they got on:

- Ski Foundation 3

We were lucky to once again benefit from the talents of **WO1 Bob Wilkins** RE one of the few Ski Leader 3 instructors in the Army who joined us for the Exercise. There were only four participants for SF3 and **LCpl Mikey Sheard** and **Sig Ollie Camm** must have wished they were beginners again when they realised that they were in the same group as the Adjutant, **Capt Andy Rea** and me, OC LAD **Capt Andy Morris**. They needn't have worried, the **Andies** behaved perfectly and didn't embarrass the kids in public.

The course was excellent. We learned about weather, avalanches, testing and identifying types of snow and digging holes of different shapes and sizes. We spent most of the course on touring skis going uphill as well as down, skiing off piste in deep snow and generally enjoying and understanding more about the mountains. We improved our transponder work (finding people in avalanches) and all four participants



Sig Twomey from the SF1 group explores the SF3 snow cave

really enjoyed the course; even if we were eating snow for NAFFI break instead of heading indoors for a hot chocolate!

- Ski Foundation 1 - Beginners

Cpl 'Ginge' Haynes took on the challenge of teaching a group of six virgin skiers for the week. The group had an excellent attitude, all willing to learn and confront their fears and doubts. As an entity they made great progress which was in no part thanks to **Cpl Haynes'** patience and good humour.

Sig Kerry Edmonds took to skis really well and we can safely say that **LCpl Sol Tunuku** was the best Fijian skier in the resort. **Sig Beckly Tackley** never shut up despite suffering from what turned out to be pneumonia and **Sig Rosie Twomney** proved that you don't necessarily bounce very well when you fall. Other members of the beginners group were **Sig Warren Goddard** and **LCpl 'Racing Snowplough' Simpson**; a guest from 43 (Wx) Sig Sqn.



The SF1 beginner group

- Ski Foundation 1 – Skiers

There is always an issue when we have people who have done some skiing but have no Army qualifications and this group was formed to overcome this problem. Under the tutoring of Instructor **Sig Aimee Morris** (full time ski bum) her group of four benefited from her local knowledge as she had spent the previous ski season teaching in the area. The three aims of



The SF1 skier group



this group were to ski, ski and ski. With lots of instruction, correcting of bad habits and development of advanced ski techniques such as carving off piste techniques the group made really good progress. They are now ideally suited to complete SF2 and SF3 in the next couple of years.

Congratulations to **Pte Emily Palmer** RAMC who progressed really well away from her snowboard. The group also wishes to thank **Sig James Gray** who also joined us from 43 (Wx) Sig Sqn who for some reason picked up the reputation as being an admin vortex – thanks for keeping the pressure off everyone else! The other skiers making up this group were **LCpl 'Bazsil' Heanes** and **Sig Matt Palmer**.

- Continuation Group – SF3 qualified

We also had a group of skiers who had already qualified with SF3 and they were under the watchful eye of ski veteran **Maj Paul Rodenhurst**. Any thoughts of a week of 'la la skiing' were kicked into touch and the remit for this group was to work towards becoming instructors. Therefore, each member



How not to do it

of the group took it in turns to plan a route and take control and lead the group. They also had to introduce and practice an element of ski technique.

The vocal members of the group namely **Sgt 'Queenie' Palfry** and **LCpl 'Princess' Tier** were always on hand to make helpful constructive comments and keep the group informed of their latest thoughts. **Capt Andy Peters** with his helmet cam kept a record of slips trips and falls and **WO2 Chris Stockwell** as the MTWO(V) converted driver's hours into skier's hours to ensure the group never missed a break which kept **Cpl 'Taity' Tait** happy so he could keep up his nicotine habit. Overall the Exercise was a great success. Fourteen of the group gained a qualification, we used two of our own instructors and the continuation group should produce at least another instructor for next year. We hopefully generate some more skiers for next year's Regimental race team for the Corps Championships and overall skiing in 39 Signal Regiment is in good health.



The Continuation Group lost again



Ex LYNX GLACIER



EXERCISE SPARTAN HIKE AND LIONS CHALLENGE

– by 2Lt Fergus Anderson

After competing at Ex MERCURY GLACIER XVI, the Corps ski camp and championships, 2Lt Anderson, winner of the individual giant slalom, slalom and coming a narrow runner up for the combination prize and Sig Jackson, one of the top females in the corps even after having a few arguments with some of the racing gates, were invited to represent the Regiment at the Divisional championships (Ex SPARTAN HIKE) in Serre Chevalier, France.

This proved to be a huge step up from the Corps slopes in Austria, with World Cup level courses run very efficiently by the French ESF setting very testing courses, professional start huts, timing gear and finish areas all made for a challenging championships. This was the first year racing for both Sig Jackson and 2Lt Anderson and having never been on skis longer than 165cm they were thrown in the deep end racing on ex GB skis and ‘FIS’ world cup regulation skis ranging up to 210cm!



This challenge initially proved too much causing 2Lt Anderson to fall in the giant slalom and slalom causing him to drop down the seeding to 82nd. Next on the agenda were the speed events (super G and downhill), in which neither had competed before. This proved a real test of bottle and the



make or break point for us to qualify for the Army championships. 2Lt Anderson had two descent races bringing him back down the seeding into the thirties and thus qualifying for the Armies. Sig Jackson thrived under the added pressure and fierce female

competition to win first TA lady for the slalom and super G events. Unfortunately on the downhill event with the extreme pressure she was forcing through her skis, one of her skis flew off causing her to crash out. She flew through qualifications coming overall fifth female. This meant both members of 39 Sig Regt were heading down the valley to Chantemerle for the Army Alpine Championships 2013. Unfortunately a trip to A&E the following day with Sig Jackson’s extremely swollen leg showed she had damaged the ligaments in her knee and had to withdraw from racing, having to spend the remaining time on crutches as ‘assistant coach’ or ‘video analyst’!

The Army Championships proved yet another step up with even more technical and faster courses. Now representing the Corps team 2Lt Anderson had to step up his game, especially on the team events. He had an unfortunate GS result, catching an edge and flying through a bank of snow, but for the rest of the racing gained more confidence and places, proving a secure 3rd counter for the Corps team after Cpl Nick Penn and Capt Tom Collins. Overall the Corps finished 4th, the best result for several years.



**71st (CITY OF LONDON) YEOMANRY SIGNAL REGIMENT
BEXLEYHEATH**



CO
RSM

Lt Col J Picton
WO₁ (RSM) D Graham

All Ranks of the Regt would like to take this opportunity to welcome Lt Col Picton who took over as CO in January 2013.



Lt Col Sutherland (L) handing over the Regt to Lt Col Picton

We say farewell to Lt Col Sutherland who has deployed to Afghanistan. The Regiment would like to thank him for his hard work and leadership, guiding us through the busiest period in Regimental history, encompassing Op ESCALIN, continued support to operations in Afghanistan and of course our main effort for such a prolonged period, Op OLYMPICS. We wish him all the best for the future.

OPS OVERVIEW – by SSgt Jase Nicholls

Christmas and New Year leave over it was back to grind, with the Board of Officers followed by the planning of the first Regimental Exercise of the year PHOENIX GALLOP.

The exercise was a military skills exercise preparing the volunteers for the up and coming CO’s Challenge in March 2013. Five members of the Regt have bid farewell to their civilian jobs and have begun their pre-deployment training before embarking on Herrick 18 as part of 3 DSR.

The Ops Team would like to say farewell to SSgt (FofS) Nik Savchenko and his wife Sally as he leaves for Civvy Street and a job at Disney.



47 (MIDDLESEX YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

OC **Maj Mike Curtis-Rouse**
SSM **SSgt Claire Goodwin**
SPSI **SSgt Paul Tinsley**

SQUADRON OVERVIEW – By Capt Alex Orr

Once again, it has been a busy time for the Squadron with a range of highlights including the provision of soldiers to support the Regimental Charity Boxing Night, “The Dog Fight”, held in the gym at Wellington Barracks. The event was to raise money for the charity “Hounds for Heroes” and the founder, **Allen Parton**, gave an emotional and memorable speech which underlined the need for events like this. A number of Squadron members attended the event along with their partners and enjoyed a scrumptious meal whilst observing some very fine boxing between the British Army and a community Police Force team.

In other activities, the Squadron took the lead in organising the Regimental Shooting Team. **Capt Alex Orr** and **SSgt Paul Tinsley** combined their considerable knowledge and experience to provide some excellent training in preparation for the London District Operational Shooting Competition which was held in December 2012 at Ash Ranges.

As with all TA units, recruiting is one of the core activities necessary to ensure that new life blood is added and that morale and momentum is maintained. **LCpl Jay Hennigan** and his team continue to “pound the pavements” of Hayes and Uxbridge in search of new recruits. Their efforts have been rewarded with steady stream of new candidates arriving at the TAC ensuring that the pipeline remains filled.

Early February, saw a change of command of the Squadron with **Maj Mike Curtis-Rouse** assuming command from **Capt Alex Orr** who has been acting as Squadron OC for the last seven months. **Maj Curtis-Rouse** previously had been in the G7 SO2 post at 2 Sig Gp. The Sqn welcomed his return, with many member of the Sqn remembering him from his days as the Sqn 2IC.

REGIMENTAL SHOOTING TEAM – by Sig Loren Swatton

The Regimental Shooting Team got back together in November in preparation for the London District Shooting Competition which was held in December. In the first of two build-up weekends to the event, the team commenced with standard zeroing and practice firing at Pirbright Ranges. This gave the chance for the team to familiarise themselves with the various firing positions and receive some excellent coaching from **SSgt Sophie Spittle** and **SSgt Paul Tinsley**, resulting in a good level of progression from **Signs Loren Swatton**, **Brune Mato Santos** and “**Mac**” **Macfarlane**.

The second training weekend took place at Longmoor where the range was more like a lake and the firing points looked like small islands. The weekend was the final opportunity for a zeroing check and for ACMTs to be shot, whilst in the best tradition of the Squadron, **Capt Alex Orr** ensured that the local drinking holes of Uxbridge were fully appreciated by all.

On the weekend of the competition, the team paraded at Uxbridge TAC for some last minute dry training. The following morning saw departure from Uxbridge for Ash Ranges. The first shoot of the day was the Advance-to-Combat; this shoot starts with a 1.5 mile run in full CBA and a weight of 11 kilograms. The run must be completed in less than 18 minutes and this was managed by five members of the team. However, perhaps the highlight of the event was when **Sig John Barr** made the executive decision not to

remove any of his warm kit prior to commencing the run – a decision that he regretted quickly whilst providing much amusement for the team!

The second shoot of the day was the Combat-Snap. This shoot was enjoyed thoroughly by the entire team, once the newer members of the team figured out what they had to do!



Sigs Matos Santos, Barr, Swatton and Macfarlane firing in the kneeling unsupported position

Sunday saw an early rise with the team competing in the Section-in-Defence Shoot at 0830hrs. Despite the team competing admirably, we didn't manage to achieve our desired place in the top three, however, the event provided a superb opportunity for operational shooting for both experienced and novice team soldiers and much opportunity for team building in a military environment.

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

A/OC **Maj Dave Cornick**
SSM **WO2 James Paton**
SPSI **SSgt Jay Beattie**

UNCOVERING REGIMENTAL HISTORY - by Capt Sean Olohan

The Squadron has recently been involved in an archaeological project led by The Chiltern Society in Berkhamstead who are excavating the WW1 trench system built by our forebears of The Inns of Court Regiment (who trained over 12,000 officer cadets for service in The Great War).

Conservation experts are aiming to map out the route of a network of trenches dug at Berkhamsted and Northchurch Common used to train First World War soldiers. Originally they stretched for about eight miles, but now only about 500 metres of them remain in Berkhamsted. They were filled in after hostilities ended in 1918.

The Berkhamsted trenches were used by more than 14,000 troops from the Inns of Court Officers Training Corps, nicknamed ‘The Devil’s Own’. The unit was based nearby at what became known as Kitchener’s Field – named after the 1914 war secretary. By 1918, a total of 2,147 of its men had died in France and three were awarded the Victoria Cross.



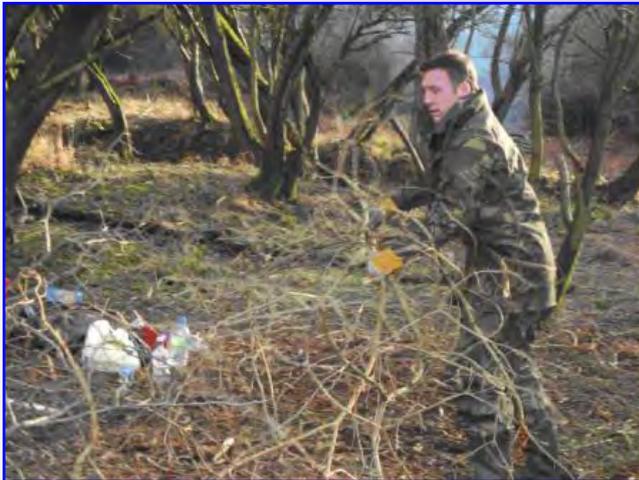
Officer Cadets digging - circa 1916

A good sized contingent of the Squadron, including the OC **Maj David Cornick**, turned up on a wet and cold Saturday morning to lend a much needed hand in clearing about 2 acres



of trees and bushes. This was so that the archaeological survey of the area could proceed unimpeded and focus on the mapping and recording of trench nomenclature. The Chiltern Society was extremely grateful for this assistance and is very keen to have the Squadron on future weekends throughout this year!

The next project for the Squadron is to clean and renovate The Inns of Court Regiment's memorial ready for the country's WW1 anniversary next year. Watch this space.



SSM James Paton on site

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

OC **Maj Keith Wrate**
 SSM **SSgt Leigh Griffiths**
 SPSI **SSgt Carl Shackleton**

SQUADRON OVERVIEW

The Squadron has been particularly busy with various key weekends and events, including MATTS catch up weekend in Longmoor, PJNCO cadre run by 32 Sig Regt (V) in sunny Catterick and a shake out exercise after Christmas to get rid of those embedded "cob webs". **SSgt 'Shacks' Shackleton** organised an excellent MATTS weekend which was very well attended by all TA personnel, in order to qualify for their annual bounty. Five members of the Sqn found themselves on their way to a not so sunny Catterick to complete a two weekend PJNCO cadre cse run by 32 Sig Regt (V). Driven by **Sig 'Booty' Harrild** in the Sqn "combi" and accompanied by **Pte Chrissy Markham**, **Sig 'Robbo' Roberts**, **Pte Sylvia Hirst** and **Sig 'Gezza' Sutton**, all did very well and completed a thoroughly enjoyable, but testing course.

OP HERRICK

The squadron also has two of their members mobilised and preparing to join 3 DSR, 202 Sig Sqn on Op HERRICK 18 in the very near future. **WO2 (SSM) Ade Keeble** and **Sgt 'Caz' Castro** are currently in Chillwell being processed through the mobilisation "sausage factory" and shortly after that will be attending OPTAG down in Lydd and Hythe. We wish them both a safe and enjoyable tour and look forward to their safe return and the inevitable war stories over a couple of pints of "shandy and lime".

PROMOTIONS

Late December saw some well deserved promotions in the Sqn, Log Sp Cmdr **Lt 'Khush' Cooper** finally being promoted to Capt and **Cpl 'Caz' Castro** on picking up his Sgt. Well done to

both of you, the Sqn look forward to your Champagne and Port fines, courtesy of *The Wire*.

VRSM MEDAL PRESENTATION



Sgt 'Caz' Castro receiving his VRSM from Maj David Hewer OBE



Cpl Bob Myers receiving his VRSM Bar from Maj David Hewer OBE

The Sqn was also proud to receive the Deputy Lieutenant of the London Borough of Bexley, **Maj David Hewer OBE** who kindly volunteered to present Volunteer Reserve Service Medals (VRSMs) and Bars to members of the Sqn. Amongst the medal recipients was **Sgt 'Caz' Castro**, **Sgt Kate Lonergan**,



OC Maj Keith Wrate with Mrs Penny O'Hare from the KSY Benevolent Association



Sgt Stevie Wise and **Cpl ‘Bomber’ Harris** and Bar recipients were REME’s **Sgt ‘Skid’ Pearce**, **Sgt ‘Royster’ Carpenter** and from the Sqn, **Cpl Bob Myers**. An excellent traditional curry was provided to seal the evening’s frolics by **Pte Sylvia Hirst**. A presentation was made to the Kent Sharpshooter Association in the form of a cheque by **Maj Wrate**.

SQUADRON AWARDS

Prior to the sqn breaking up for the Christmas holidays a Sqn function was organised by **WO2 (SSM) Ade Keeble** and **SSgt Paul Thwaite** and the presentation of awards was made by the OC, **Maj Wrate**. The Soldier of the year award, the Bracho-Cooke Shield, and best male soldier, the Lucy Trophy, were awarded to **LCpl ‘Crazy’ Crane**, the best female soldier, the Moore Trophy, was awarded to **Pte Sylvia Hirst**, the best tradesman, the Appleby Cup, was awarded to **Sig ‘Simmo’ Simpson**, best recruit, the Lushington Cup, was awarded to **Cfn ‘Wait out’ Auguste-Ryan** and finally a favourite with the Sqn, the SSM Shield was awarded to **Cpl ‘Pykey’ Porter**. All were thoroughly deserved and well received in the Sqn.

LOOK FORWARD

The Sqn is now preparing for Annual Bounty and the final testing exercise of the training year, EX PHOENIX CHALLENGE. This is the Commanding Officers’ MATT testing exercise, being held in STANTA. Here members of the Regiment will be tested on various arduous military stands including a march and shoot competition followed by a falling plate competition, and additionally the Ops Major stand. Good luck to all members of the Sqn taking part.

OLYMPIC RECEPTION AT CITY HALL - 7 FEBRUARY 2013

From a cast of hundreds five hard working members of the Regiment were selected to attend the Olympic reception held



L-R: Cpl Paul Broadbent, Pte Chrissy Markham, Capt John Donaldson, Capt Kerry Corrigan and Capt Steve Slaney

at the City Hall in London hosted by the London Assembly. Invitations went out to **Capt’s Steve Slaney**, **Kerry Corrigan** and **John Donaldson**, **Cpl Paul Broadbent** and **Pte Chrissy Markham** as a mark of their outstanding individual efforts during OP OLYMPICS. **Cpl Paul Broadbent** was mobilised for the whole period of the Olympics and spent the majority of his time at the LMOC as a watch keeper, where **Pte Chrissy Markham** spent a couple of weeks as a medic based at Bexleyheath TAC (NETCEN 71) and later volunteered to be mobilised with the Venue Security Force (VSF) based in London. The evening was very pleasant, with light refreshment and nibbles, with over 200 Territorial soldiers and officers in attendance it was a very enjoyable event. The food and wine was excellent and the 2 hour reception seemed to fly past. A very well deserved thank you goes out to all five members of the Regiment, well done

Royal Signals Benevolent Fund

Marketing and Communication Officer

Part Time – £20,000 p.a.

The Royal Signals Benevolent Fund is the Corps’ Charity and provides financial assistance to past and present members of the Royal Signals in need, as well as supporting the morale and efficiency of the serving Corps.

We seek, at the earliest opportunity, a Marketing and Communication Officer to join our small Regimental Headquarters team. This is a new post and will work to the Regimental Secretary, who is the charity’s chief executive, as the focus for and co-ordinator of RSBF fundraising through Royal Signals Units and RSA Branches or by former members of the Corps. The successful candidate will identify opportunities for and then develop fundraising campaigns (both within the serving and retired Corps) based on an annual plan which he/she will design and implement. Other responsibilities include ensuring that the need for funds for the RSBF receives the widest publicity across the serving and retired Corps, the preparation of regular reports on fundraising to the charity’s directors/trustees and the provision of regular feedback on the work of the RSBF to Corps personnel through *The Wire* and other media. It is intended that the Marketing and Communication Officer will become the RSBF Authority on Charity Commission, Institute of Fundraisers and other legal guidance on charity fundraising. The post is to be part time for 3 days (24 hours) a week and on a one year trial basis in the first instance.

As well as standard Microsoft Office applications, the ideal successful candidate should be familiar with the role and structure of Royal Signals (preferably from serving in the Corps) and must be practised in the use of modern internet technologies including websites and social media. The applicant should be enthusiastic, self-motivated and innovative and have the desire and interest to employ appropriate emerging technologies to support his/her aims. He/she must have good presentation skills and should be prepared to travel and to work flexible hours as necessary in support of the charity’s aims. The closing date for applications is 19 April 2013.

For a Job Description, more information or for an application form, please contact **Colonel (Retired) Terry Canham** on 01258 482081 or email terry.canham566@mod.uk.



NEWS FROM SQUADRONS



20 ARMOURED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (200) PADERBORN



OC
RSM

Maj H J Stoy
WO1 (RSM) P W McLeish

The pace of life at 20 Armoured Brigade Headquarters and Signal Squadron (200) remains as relentless as ever. In the past two months the unit has seen individuals deploy to BATUS on Winter Repair and to BATUK as RLDs supporting Battlegroups on Ex ASKARI THUNDER. Back in barracks individuals have been familiarising themselves with the Squadron's new Bulldogs, completing driver, commander and marshalling courses. This is all in preparation for the Squadron's up-coming deployment on Ex IRON RHINO, the Brigade CAST. In addition the unit has managed to squeeze in MATTs, range packages and two skiing expeditions.

EXERCISE ALPINE GLACIER – by Sig Perry

After missing last year due to Op HERRICK 15, the senior Signal Squadron was fortunately able to participate in Ex ALPINE GLACIER, the Corps Ski Championships in Austria. Of the individuals selected to form part of the elite squad **WO2 (FofS) Gordon**, **LCpl Inman** and **LCpl Smith** were the only members who had previous experience. The remainder of the team included **LCpl Draper**, **Cpl Simms**, **Sig Wilson** and **Sig Brown**, all lead by the Team Captain and complete novice skier **Lt Thorburn**.

The first two weeks of training prior to the competition phase went well, with individuals placed into ability groups based on their level of experience. Some beginners progressed from snow plough to competitive race standard in 2 weeks as a result of the intense training. For others the progression remained slow, with the basics of staying upright a struggle. Regardless of this everyone enjoyed the beautiful surroundings; weather and snow conditions; the clear skies made visibility great all day and took the edge off the cold too. However it was not to last and half way through the second week the weather changed and the snow came in hard, reducing visibility to a few meters and dragging temperatures down dramatically. As the weather got worse



The 20 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn team prior to competition

the effect on our training and the list of injuries got worse to the point where nearly every group was snowed off on one day. It was amazing the consequences the poor conditions had on morale, with some individuals even resorting to thoughts that they would have been better off in camp.

While the ski training was intense the group managed to visit the Christmas market in Salzburg and experience Krampus, a local Christmas ceremony like no other, with monsters prowling the streets and plenty of warm Gluwein.

For the competition phase of Ex ALPINE GLACIER the ski conditions drastically improved and everyone felt ready and motivated to give it their all. As a small team we had our backs against the wall trying to compete with the bigger units, but we punched well above our weight. **LCpl Inman** did brilliantly achieving top female, whilst others in the group improved dramatically over the championships.

An altogether fantastic exercise where individuals were seen to develop their general skiing technique whilst also gaining valuable insight and advice from a range of quality coaches.



LCpl Inman, the 'Top Female' in action

EXERCISE GAUNTLET MARKSMAN – by Lt Simpson

Ex GAUNTLET MARKSMAN signified an abrupt end to the festivities of Christmas and New Year for the potential JNCOs of 20 Armoured Brigade Headquarters and Signal Squadron (200) and some of their compatriots from 1 (UK) Armoured



Division Signal Regiment. This exercise had been designed to prepare potential JNCOs for their PNCO Cadre with an exciting array of MATTs, Live Fire Tactical Training (LFTT) and Section Battle Drills training. The conditions could not have been better for testing the key leadership qualities of self discipline and perseverance, the freezing cold, snow covered ranges added to the physical demands on each individual.

The exercise ran over two weeks between 14-25 Jan 13, the first week consisted of MATTs training and static ranges on Sennelager Training Area. Concurrent activities undertaken during the static ranges concentrated on revision and development of infantry skills and drills such as lifesaver drills and the issuing of target indications and fire control orders.

In the second week the PNCOs underwent LFTT. This provided an opportunity for them to develop their leadership abilities and tactical decision making whilst putting into practice the fundamentals of soldiering at an individual level. The exercising troops were split into two groups for the shoots with each section containing a commander and 2IC chosen by the DS. Both groups were tentative at first, but by the end of each shoot the troops had increased in confidence, giving rise to an improvement in their target indication and fire control orders. Those in command appointments were able to have their first real taste of what it takes to control a body of soldiers, with the results initially raw but encouraging.

While enthusiasm and development was shown during the first day's training the final shoot came as a relief for the troops who could finally retire to the warmth of the troop shelter. The time spent out of the elements was used for battle preparation and rest, which was somewhat disturbed by **Sig Heaps** snoring, much to everyone's annoyance. That is everyone apart from **Sgt Shone**, who made the decision to basher up alone in a freezing, snowy wood line as a self imposed man test.

The following day, once the troops had completed their morning routine, and **Sgt Shone** had defrosted his boots, it was time for the first LFTT shoot in the form of a Pairs Fire and Manoeuvre Lane. Having conducted the walk through talk through it was clear to the DS that the weather conditions would add an extra challenge for the troops; they would be wading through five inches of snow throughout. The skills demonstrated by the troops varied immensely throughout the morning. The focus of the debriefs centred around communication and movement between the pairs and by the end of the morning all had stepped up a gear and were addressing the scenario with levels of aggression and enthusiasm that any training team would be delighted to see.

As the day progressed the temperatures dropped even further and the area chosen for the fire team exercise seemed to form a perfect channel for the icy breeze to navigate through. The adverse weather conditions may have had an influence on the disappointing start to the afternoon as the first fire teams took to the range. The scenario involved a patrol on patrol engagement which was intended to end in a fighting withdrawal. Unfortunately some of the *encouraging* drills and tactics demonstrated in the morning seemed to be forgotten when the extra command responsibility was imposed. The results were varied; one section, seemingly stunned, spent all their ammunition in a static engagement and the other section attempted to assault the enemy patrol head on in what appeared to be an all or nothing bayonet charge led by **Sig Smith**. Thankfully the final section of the day had absorbed the debrief points from the morning range and they were able to make the transition from pairs to a fire team grouping effectively. It was a relief to the DS to see a baseline forming after the initial contact and a measured, well coordinated fighting withdrawal following on after a period of rapid fire.

Darkness brought with it members of the MT with a warming range stew and some time for extensive battle preparation prior to a night shoot. The scenario for this was a clearance patrol, the section would come under heavy contact about 400m from their trench positions which would hopefully trigger effective IA drills and a fighting withdrawal to enable a defensive shoot to take place. **Sig Richardson-Sherratt** volunteered himself for the position of fire team commander and received his orders from the training staff. He made a plan and briefed his men after which the patrol set off. Having cleared 400m of ground the team came under enemy fire, life saver drills were applied and the commander screamed for a baseline. The withdrawal was conducted with the same aggression and enthusiasm that was present in the earlier daylight range. As the para illum lit up swathes of the snow covered ground and the flank firing gun spat tracer down range it would have been impossible for even the most seasoned members of the training wing not to get excited. The individual Signallers had undertaken their basic drills effectively all week but what was most impressive was the teamwork and communication skills that were displayed during the withdrawal back to the trenches. Once the enemy had effectively withdrawn the manner in which PACESDO was executed was yet another indicator of how the PNCOs were developing over the course of the range package. The remainder of the week saw continual progression for the exercising troops and excellent examples of command and leadership. Feedback from the troops that took part was all positive and those who left for the PNCO cadre returned with their heads held high having all passed.



LCpl Richardson-Sherratt conducting a fighting withdrawal with Lt Simpson as range safety

EXERCISE DIAMOND ROYAL - by Sig Leonidas

Just two days back from Christmas leave and I was lucky enough to be selected to deploy on Ex DIAMOND ROYAL, a skiing expedition to Bavaria. With a surprisingly sociable start to an exercise, we met outside the LAD at 0830hrs to make the 7 hour drive south to Bavaria. We all piled into the minibuses keen to get started and make it to the lodge in good time. After a few briefs on the day ahead of us, we settled in for the night in the bar to enjoy a beer or two before hitting the slopes early the next day.

Sig Buckley had talked the talk previously, and we were all looking forward to seeing what he had to offer with his expansive skiing experience. Unfortunately, he was the first victim of the slopes, and within just 30 minutes of starting the day he had been put back on the easy group to the even easier group. After this humorous start we began with the basics: staying on your skis. For those who had previous



experience this was a simple task, for others, moving with 5ft planks on your feet is quite the challenge. I fell foul of **Sig Buckley's** fate getting up close and personal with the snow via a fence, fortunately no injuries were sustained but my pride was certainly bruised.

Kanzelwand resort provided us with a great array of slopes, the conditions were far from perfect on the first day due to the lack of fresh snow, but the slopes were empty allowing for those with less control and co-ordination to really go all out. This was particularly useful when trying to master the art of stopping. Those who had already skied made it look easy as they glided to a halt at the side of the slope, the rest of us however were lucky if we remained standing after our attempts. It was a brilliant first day learning the basics; we limped back to the warmth of the lodge to prepare for another day on the slopes.

The second day started quite abruptly as we were awoken to the sound of a snow plough trundling along the roads, this meant one thing: fresh snow. With a buzz in the air we rushed down our breakfast to get back onto the slopes and experience the fresh powder. The conditions were perfect, clear skies and a really decent layering of fresh snow. This created ideal ski conditions for going off-piste however lead to poles, skis and even people disappearing in the soft fresh snow. By the end of the day nearly everyone had their fair share of wipe outs.

The next two days were much the same, experiencing different slopes and resorts and even different styles of crashing and piling in. Some even managed to ski backwards, though I doubt that this was done intentionally. Most of us by now had somewhat mastered off-piste skiing which forms part of the Level 1 Ski Foundation qualification. Upon returning to the lodge in the evenings we waxed our skis and

received lessons on avalanches, which also made up part of the qualification.

By the final day our legs were really beginning to feel the effect from all of the snow-ploughing and parallel turns. But still, it was the last day, and with the prospect of some solo skiing we dragged ourselves out onto the slopes to consolidate what we had learnt over the past week. With less tumbles and more racing, the morning flew past and we were finally unleashed onto the slopes on our own. Luckily they were empty which allowed for hard fast skiing and a chance to really push ourselves.

This has been a week of firsts for many; I look forward to putting my new found skiing skills to the test in the future and building on my new qualification.



The rare occasion where all members of Ex DIAMOND ROYAL were standing up



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



OC
RSM

Maj CEJ Davies
WO1 (RSM) JP Gronn

As the pace ramps up at the Brigade, we now look forward to the challenges of MST. Trade training, STA courses and of course the operational fitness side of life combine to make this another very busy period at the Squadron. As expected, the troops are taking this in their stride and maintaining their positive attitude throughout.

Also, on behalf of the Squadron, I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate **SSgt McMullen** who has been presented with the Meritorious Service Medal (MSM). This is a great achievement and acknowledges his excellent commitment and service to the Corps over the past 22 years.

SUPPORT TROOP DAY OUT – by *LCpl Willis*

With yet another busy year for 207 and many of Support Troop returning from various Squadron commitments it was time for all departments to get together and head out for an afternoon of indoor go-karting in Celle. Some members of the group claiming to have never raced before and others bringing their own balaclavas, it was clear that we would have a good day's racing.

Racers first had to sign in and have pictures taken to make grid and cart allocation easier. It wasn't until later that people

noticed a cheesy faced **LCpl Andy Willis** in the background of almost everyone's photos.

After a short safety brief the first group of racers were given a ten minute practice period to get used to the carts and the track however with cold tyres this meant that **SSgt Caplis** and **Sig 'TB' Jones** spent most of the time in the barriers or facing the wrong way. It was also after the first few laps that everyone decided it would have been a good idea to bring gloves due to the onset of frostbite caused by the fact the building was freezing cold.

It was next time for the semi-finals to put everyone into grid positions for the final. The positions would be decided on individual fastest lap times from the race. This brought out the competitive streak in all drivers to the point where **WO2 (RQMS) 'Glass Boned' Williams** was taken out and acquired yet another injury to add to his portfolio.

Time for the finals and this time we would be starting from the grid rather than the pits, this meant some strong driving from the moment the green light was lit and also some very dodgy overtaking on the corners. With **Capt Middleton** coming in first and **Cfn 'Cookie' Ncube** coming last by a good 50 seconds, it was clear that the Signals are better drivers than the REME.

The end of the evening saw **Sgt Neil Haggar** lose his wallet,



while **Cpl Hunt**, who had been a spectator from the bar, continue the night by taking **Sig Normand** (who is the only person that drives faster on the roads than the track) in to town to enjoy the Christmas market in Celle. All things considered it was a fun end to a hard year and a good start to our Christmas leave.

Finally, Support Troop would like to say farewell and thank you to **Sgt Haggar**, **Sgt Simpson** and **Cpl Kolikata** and welcome into the Squadron **Sgt Tait**, **Cpl Flannigan**, **Cpl Somerville** and **Sig McLoughlin**.

EXERCISE PASHTUN TEMPEST - by LCpl Ramsahye

Ex PASHTUN TEMPEST was an exercise to support battle groups during live firing in preparation for Op HERRICK 18.

Leaving Germany on a typically cold winter's day we flew to Birmingham airport before making our way to Tidworth camp navigating a number of well maintained and finely lit country roads, upon arriving at the camp we were greeted with 5 star accommodation in the way of the back room of the guard house and some camp cots.

The next few days were spent organising a loan of vehicles and equipment from 215 Signal Squadron and the evenings in the local watching bad TV. Finally after a few days we were ready to make our way down to sunny Castle Martin.

Upon our arrival we set up comms across four locations, mainly for testing purposes as we were waiting for our own vehicles to arrive from Germany. Once they'd made it to Wales and had been swapped around with 215's vehicles it was time to get started for real.

Unfortunately there were a few teething issues to begin with, the main one being the inexplicable loss of data through the HCDRs that would occur sporadically throughout the next five weeks as well as the failure of a number of generators. Annoying as these issues were, they did provide an invaluable learning experience.

The first week of exercise was extremely busy with a number of issues around the four locations; however these were expertly resolved under the direction of **Cpl Mills**. After this hectic week we decided to make our way to Haverfordwest to relax and somehow managed to convince **Sgt Graham** to sit through Les Miserables, although it was more constant fidgeting rather than sitting.

Luckily for us the next three weeks would run rather smoother than the first and with many of the bugs in our comms system ironed out we would spend most of our time in and around High Con supporting them (playing cards and watching films), although somehow during this easy period **LCpl Cresswell** still managed to get crated for what was a self-described inability to think while sadly amongst other things **LCpl Daly** showed a distinct lack of ability when it comes to refuelling a vehicle; breaking down on the way home earning the same punishment and a lot of abuse.

TROOP DAY OUT TO BISPINGEN SNOW DOME – by Cpl Brogan

On a wet and blustery Thursday morning; members of Alpha Troop, 207 Signal Squadron boarded the Sqn Minibus and various personal cars to drive the thirty minutes to the Ski Dome. Most participants managed to find the location and arrive in about 30 mins, however for reasons known only to them, **Sigs Rabar**, **Roberts** and **James** ended up arriving a half hour after everyone else (yet they set off first!).

The rest of the day consisted of Tp members snowboarding, skiing and sledging mixed with a much needed free lunch.



Some key personnel who should get a mention are **Sig Lucy 'Eddie the Eagle' Chadwick** for her amusing attempts at falling, sorry skiing down the slopes all day. Also, **Lt 'Its like being hit by a freight train' Leary** for inventing his own version of skittles that involved placing himself at the top of the slope on a sledge and then trying to knock as many people down on his way to the bottom.

The most memorable moment of the day came towards the end (at which point time was called due to the potential for serious injury!) when, led by our illustrious leader **Lt Leary**, several members of the Troop sledged to the bottom of the slope and one after the other "creamed" into the wall ending in what only can be described as a huge pile up. After everyone got up and dusted themselves off and checked all were alive, it was noted that a young German girl had somehow managed to land herself at the bottom of the pile!

All that remains is to thank **Cpl Spooner** and **Sig French** for organising such a fantastic day.

MY TIME AT 207 SIGNAL SQUADRON – by 2Lt Dale

Upon commissioning, each Royal Signals officer completes a six week attachment to a Royal Signals unit. The idea behind this attachment is to shake Sandhurst out of our system, and to introduce us to the "big wide Army". We then go on to complete our Troop Commanders course, and eventually go to our own units to meet our troops. I commissioned in December 2012, and was attached to 7 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (207) for the months of January and February 2013.

I arrived at the Squadron to be told that my timing could not have been worse. Before Christmas leave everyone had been involved in multiple exercises in multiple countries. Now however the Squadron was enjoying a brief quiet period prior to starting MST for Op HERRICK 19. However, during this time they have found things for me to do.



Caught in a snow storm - Ex PASHTUN TEMPEST



My first week at 207 consisted largely of finding my way around a Signal Squadron. This included meeting all of the Squadron personalities, the people who keep the unit running. After wrapping my head around the difference between a Foreman and a Yeoman, and noting down the 1001 tips for a young troop commander that I picked up that week, I was whisked back to England for a quick exercise.

207 were providing the communications for Ex PASHTUN TEMPEST. This required four Land Rovers full of kit to be driven across the breadth of Germany, Holland, England and Wales. To give me a brief idea of how the Corps operated on exercise I was allowed to tag along. I added little value to the journey, other than the occasional nav check for **Sig Wright**, and whatever my poor taste in music could bring to our entertainment on route. None the less, I enjoyed the opportunity to get off camp and spend some time with some Royal Signals soldiers.



Ski Touring - Ex SNOW WARRIOR

learn how to ski. It takes skiers of all abilities and gets them their Ski Foundation (SF) qualifications. A lot of people never think to try skiing due to large costs often associated with it, but Ex SNOW WARRIOR is free of charge and so it allows people to approach it with an open mind. Upon completing the 10 days I left with my SF3 qualification.

For the last few weeks of my attachment I remained in Hohne and observed the day to day routine of the Troop Commanders. This allowed me to experience the running of the Squadron and the troops within it. The time on camp also gave me a chance to experience life in the Officers' Mess for the first time. The mess hosted some functions whilst I was there including Burns Night, a Roman themed dinner, and an Après Ski party. One weekend a small group of us got together and went to Berlin; this is an advantage Germany has over England as it is not so easy for everyone to disappear off home each weekend. All of these events were great fun, and made for an interesting change from day to day life in the Mess.



Karaoke in Berlin

Pretty much the second I walked into the office after returning, I was offered the opportunity to go on Ex SNOW WARRIOR. This is a fantastic programme. Ten days long in Bavaria, its aim is to get people away from their units and

All in all I have had a fantastic time on my attachment. After my Troop Commanders course I am getting posted to 21 Signal Regiment (AS) and I cannot wait until I get there and meet my own Troop.



1 MECHANISED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (215) TIDWORTH



OC
RSM

Maj EA Byfield
WO1 (RSM) L Starr

ALL RANKS BRIEF – PRE DEPLOYMENT TRAINING
- by Sig Daniel Gill

The All Ranks Brief was split into two days with the first day consisting of lectures broken down into information ranging from the Afghan people and how the Taliban operate, to IED threats and how to counter them. This will be my first tour having left Phase 2 early 2012, I have a lot to learn. The brief on the basics and threats with living in Afghanistan gave me confidence and knowledge of what is to come. We were also shown the aftermath of not following basic safety instructions from not wearing a seat belt to having metallic or explosive objects attached to the front of your body armour.

The second day was broken down into multiple stands that involved actually seeing IED props and how to spot them,



Members of the Squadron being taught CIED



ECM equipment, basic first aid and the usual topics you would find for exercise or tour. I found the brief on the Afghan people and how they live and what they believe in very interesting and it confirmed my views on how we need to know, respect and understand them to gain their hearts and minds. The stand which had my utmost attention was the ECM lesson showing us how the counter RCIED equipment has evolved to become more effective and lighter and how it saves so many lives. The rolla-tube that was shown to us blew me away with how bizarre it was at being a lightweight DPM tube at one stage and then being flipped and unraveled in milliseconds into a mast!

Overall I fully enjoyed the two day programme and my knowledge of what is to come on tour is now greater and I feel even more prepared.

AI COMPANY – FTX - by Sig David 'Peter' Kay

On Sunday 9 Dec 12 **Sig Daniel Gill** and I deployed on the AI Coy FTX with Z Coy 1RRF. It was a very early start getting to their cookhouse for 0500. After a "Full English" we were taken to where their Warrior Vehicles were getting prepared. We were shown to the vehicle that we would be travelling in and after a very bumpy ride we arrived at Westdown Camp for the pre exercise brief and to get the TES kit fitted to the vehicles and issued out to the infantry soldiers.

After the brief we mounted back up and drove to New Zealand Farm on Salisbury Plain which was the location of the FOB where our Ops would be mounted from. As Royal Signals Soldiers our first job was to get the Ops room in place. We were working with Z Coy's 3 signals trained personnel that had a good knowledge of what to do. After finding out that some of the dismounting cables didn't work, we had to take them out of the land rover and use them as man packs on the desk. This wasn't ideal as we had to regularly change batteries but we made do. Once we had comms and the exercise started, we had call signs going out on the ground regularly. We had one man stagg on the nets and after the first day the serials were coming thick and fast.

On the last two days all three platoons were deployed out on a mission and stayed at a location outside the FOB overnight, so there were only 3 men to stag on the nets. This was when the serials picked up a lot with all call signs out on the ground, but by this point we had adapted quite well to working in an Ops room. Comms were pretty poor as a lot of the ground was undulating so there were quite a few black spots. We found that we were relaying messages a lot, which did make our job harder as we had to wait longer to get information for ATMISTs and 9 liners. The operators on the ground were highly trained and experienced which helped a lot.

Once the mission was complete and the call signs were back in all that was left to do was clean and pack up and head back to Westdown camp for the de-brief and hand the TES kit back in. Aside from the temperature almost permanently being freezing it was an invaluable exercise.

SQUADRON FIELD EXERCISE

- by Sig Lawrence 'Of Arabia' Bullett

215 Sig Sqn were deployed to Copehill Down Village on Salisbury Plain, for the Squadron Field Exercise which was a confirmation of what we had learnt during pre-deployment training. The exercise was broken down into 3 parts, each of which were 24 hours long. The three parts were mounted patrols, dismounted patrols and FOB security. The squadron was split into three troops, each consisting of two multiples.

We arrived at Copehill Down around lunchtime and carried out administration until 14:00 when the exercise began. Our

multiple was on dismounted patrols first so we picked up our kit and moved into the houses we were living in for the next 24 hours. A couple of hours later we went on our first patrol. The aim of the patrol was to clear the route ensuring there were no sign of IEDs. We began by making sure the ECM, Vallons and radios were all operating correctly and ensuring everyone was in the ECM bubble. The patrol lasted around 2 hours and we found no IEDs or groundsigns suggesting insurgent activity. Following this we were informed to return to our accommodation and carry out necessary administration such as checking batteries on all the equipment, rifle cleaning and personal administration.

The next procedure we were to carry out was mounted patrols. We were split up into three vehicles and had to halt vehicles at any VAs or VPs, where we dismounted and used the Vallons around the vehicles followed by carrying out a full OP BARMA 360 looking for any command wires or command pulls. This procedure consisted of the 2IC, **LCpl Kyle Jamieson**, **Sig Nathan 'Grace' Kelly** sweeping with the Vallon and the three ECM members, **Sig Jordan 'Michael' Lindsay**, **Sig Matthew Carter** and **Sig Lesley 'Dennis' Rhodes**. Our final day and night was on FOB security which was broken down into a four part shift rotation consisting of ops room stag, QRF, sangar duty and rest period.

Reflecting back on the exercise I feel I have vastly developed my military skills over the last few months and now look forward to further mission specific training and the challenges that the forthcoming tour in Afghanistan will present.



In Copehill Down village getting debriefed by Cpl Neil 'Ollie' Edwards

THE EXPERIENCE OF PRE-DEPLOYMENT TRAINING

- by Sig Daniel Gill

The last few months have been very busy for 215 Signal Squadron with exercises varying from LFTT, FOB security and communications. The first exercise was Squadron cascade training which took place in Copehill Down village and consisted of mounted patrols, dismounted patrols and FOB security. The exercise was broken down into three parts, all of which were 24 hours long. We learnt how to use ECM equipment correctly and how to carry out BARMA drills using a Vallon. Two weeks following Squadron Cascade training, the Squadron was deployed for a confirmation exercise. The weeks following on from this included a trip to Brecon for LFTT and Lydd, Kent for a dynamic range package! LFTT in Wales we were taught different types of fire and maneuver, both individual and paired, as well as ROE and lessons on the grenade using the L111 practice version.



The Lydd range package was fantastic and included firing live rounds from the GPMG, SA80, Sig Saur and using the L109 live grenade. Previous to this I had only fired 20 rounds on the GPMG and this time we were hitting targets up to 500 metres away with approximately 200 rounds. It made me realise just how good a gunner you need to be when using this massive piece of equipment. Sig Saur pairs fire and manoeuvre was an exhilarating experience where we patrolled down a makeshift Afghan street, fired at targets with the SA80 and then switched to the Sig Saur once all the rounds had run out. At the end of the week we got to throw a live grenade and this was the icing on the cake after an immense and interesting week!



Soldiers from the Sqn on LFTT

Further lessons over the year included using and filling radios that we will use in Theatre - the AN/PRC-152 Handheld Radio and the AN/PRC-117 man pack radio. My job role for OP HERRICK 18 is a Communications System Operator working in an RLD. I am attached to Z Company 1 RRF and will be a radio operator providing communication support. In the weeks approaching Christmas leave I was to deploy with them for their CFX to get used to operating with 1RRF and I will deploy on further exercises before the tour.

Being a Signaller fresh out of Phase 2 training, when you are first informed your unit is going on operations it is slightly unnerving. Yet reflecting back all the way from the first brief

we were given regarding deployment, I feel I have massively developed in both military and trade skills and I am confident to go to Theatre and be the best soldier I can be and perform to the best of my abilities.

THE BRIGADE ADVISORY GROUP CFX - by Sig James Burrill

On a freezing cold morning in late November, the elite few member of 215 Sig Sqn that had been selected to be on the BAG arrived at 4 RIFLES keen to deploy on the CFX. Our role was to provide communications in support of the soldiers on the ground. We enthusiastically grabbed our 'horror' bags and set off on a four hour journey to STANTA.

During the exercise phase our talents were split between the BG HQ and various companies within 4 RIFLES. The first thing we did was attend an exciting weapons demonstration, viewing the weapons currently used in Afghanistan. This incorporated an exercise to identify firing points, which was much more difficult than it sounded.

The aim of the CFX was for all soldiers to confirm the skills they had been taught over the past few months. For us working in the Ops room this gave us real confidence in our abilities. The exercise was the first time we have met up with 4 RIFLES and they were very welcoming and keen to integrate us. We are very much looking forward to deploying with them and spending 6 months or so together!



Members of the Squadron dealing with the cold weather!



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



OC
RSM

Maj M Fayers
WO1 (RSM) P Watson

After recharging our batteries over an extended Christmas break, the Squadron has resumed normal service by deploying on a number of exercises, both in support of the wider Brigade and to conduct our own Troop level training. A rear link detachment commanded by **Cpl Martin** deployed to a snowy Otterburn in support of 2 PARA on Ex EAGLES NEST. **WO2 (Yofs) Port** took a contingent from the Brigade Tac HQ to France to exercise with 11 (Fr) Parachute Brigade, our partners in the Combined Joint Expeditionary Force. In the meantime the Troops have conducted their CT1 level training



LCpl Baker with 2 PARA Patrols Platoon on Ex EAGLES NEST



prior to moving to Catterick later this month to conduct a Squadron level training exercise. A Mini CAST has been conducted to iron out any teething problems prior to the Brigade CAST at the end of this month. The Squadron has also continued on its run of sporting success with the fledgling basketball team winning the Divisional Championships under the Stewardship of **LCpl Hartland**.

Go to it!

EXERCISE PONY EXPRESS – by *Sig Richards*

On Monday, 14 January, nine Members of 216 (Para) Sig Sqn set off for France on Ex PONY EXPRESS, an interoperability exercise between us and the French Parachute Brigade. Those who went were **YofS ‘technically we’re in a good place’ Port**, **SSgt Atkinson**, **Cpl ‘Tommy’ Tucker**, **Cpl ‘Good egg’ Rankin**, **Cpl ‘John’ Mauger**, **LCpl ‘Archie’ Gemmel**, **Sig ‘my mate in 12 Mech’ Chick**, **Sig ‘Rocky’ Lee** and myself.

As I wasn’t initially tasked with being on the exercise until the last minute, I had not been involved with the testing of the kit back in the UK. Not knowing what to expect, I packed my bag and prepared myself for a long drive down to Malley Camp in a small town not far from Reims.

The next few days were spent setting up and testing our equipment ready for the Staff Officers to come in and use it. We even got some time to check out the local town and were glad to find a supermarket, chip shop and several bars. We were also joined by two Ghurkha Signallers from 30 Signal Regiment who provided Dial-up JOCS and also gave us some training on the kit. By Wednesday everything was in place and working and the Staff Officers came in and started their exercise with the French. They were pleased with the new services provided by the kit and the days went by with only minor problems to deal with. This was the most relaxed part of the exercise for us, mostly taking it in turns to man the helpdesk we set up and general troubleshooting for the Staff.

Unfortunately, due to French troops deploying to Mali, the exercise got cut short on the Saturday – six days early. After a meal out and looking forward to Sunday off, we got the call to come back and tear down; ready to return to the UK the following day. Aside from losing a day off, I was enjoying my time in France (and the pay that came with it) and, along with others, was disappointed to come back so early.

CT1 TRAINING – by *2Lt Johnston*

After returning from an enjoyable three week Christmas break Bravo Troop deployed straight into a five day Troop level training exercise, organised by **SSgt Weir**. We left Merville Barracks for STANTA, operating in two teams; the MPR (Manpack Rebro) and the HQ. The MPR team, which I was part of, navigated to the harbour area giving us the opportunity to refresh our navigation skills and on arrival we established communications with the HQ.

The concept of the exercise was simple. From our harbour position the HQ sent us tasks and the first couple were to conduct reconnaissance patrols on the enemy location with the aim of launching a dawn attack and setting an ambush. After a full day’s patrolling we finally got our heads down, but it was a 2am start in order to conduct our meticulously planned attack on the enemy FOB. We launched the attack on the ‘known’ enemy position that was situated in an abandoned barn by conducting a right flanking manoeuvre and those enemy who fled were caught in the ambush set by **Sig Hale-Mullen**.

Our attack a success, we now switched roles. The HQ became the MPR and the MPR the HQ, and the whole exercise started



LCpl Rose with the Quad Pack Rebro

again. Before we started Phase 2 our reward for a job well done was a night’s sleep. However, the following morning we woke up to ice moustaches and frozen water bottles! Despite the cold we started setting up the Ops room while the other team prepared their move to their new location on the ground. The day got off to a slow start but progressed quickly with a cheeky CBRN phase. **Cpl Kev Lister** delivered a CBRN lesson after which we conducted a series of clearance patrols and rehearsed ambush drills.

Early evening we came under chemical attack and immediately donned our CBRN kit. Surprisingly this turn of events raised morale as we were grateful for the extra warmth. The MPR team attacked us at 0300hrs, we reacted by performing defensive drills and pushing out a clearance patrol in vehicles. On the final vehicle patrol we were attacked. We went straight into vehicle anti-ambush drills - firing and manoeuvring out of the situation. This was the final serial before the sweet words of “ENDEX” rang in our ears.

All in all a good exercise that blew away the post Christmas cobwebs and rehearsed us in our low level skills and drills. We look forward to heading to Catterick next month for Squadron level training.

BASKETBALL – by *LCpl Hartland*

On Wednesday 30 Jan 2013 216 (Para) Sig Sqn went to Prince William of Gloucester Barracks, Grantham for the Support Command (Midlands) Basketball Championships. On arrival we were informed that we would be competing against JSSU Cheltenham.

From the offset our defence was outstanding, keeping a constant pressure on the opposition and making all of their offensive actions crumble. We kept stopping them in their tracks which led to JSSU getting frustrated and unable to get into the game. As the time progressed we kept scoring baskets and **LCpl Hartland**, feeling sorry for JSSU, even scored a basket for the opposition! **Sig Lonorgan** was truly on form, making 3 pointers look easy. **Sig Minett** was the play maker, instructing us on what play to make next which aided us in our success. **LCpl Keighley** grafted every second he was on the court, if 216 won the steal there would always be a race down the court in competition for the layup. With some great defensive and support play, **Sig Farmer** led from the front throughout the game. He was a constant thorn in the side of the opposition, harassing the JSSU players on defence. After 24 minutes of a very one sided game the final score was 39-14.

A sterling performance by the whole team, everyone gave it their all from the start. The day almost went without incident until we had to collect our awards. As **Sig Minett** was presented the trophy, he turned and tripped over a bench! Luckily his cat like reactions kicked in and the trophy remained



intact. An outstanding performance saw **Sig Lonorgan** voted MVP (Most Valued Player). This was the first basketball trophy the Squadron has ever won.



Basketball – Div Champions

CROSS COUNTRY - by *Sig Olukutukei*

This year's Army Cross Country Championships was different! Even though it was chilly it was a relatively bright day, no snow and ice – a big change from the last time we were at RMAS. Despite having little time to prepare for the race (some of the participants had just come off duty that morning), the team was feeling confident and after **Capt Coomb** reminded **Sig Halle-Mullen** to properly 'admin' himself before the race starts, we were ready for the off.

With about 400 men at the start line it felt like there was going to be a stampede. All the training contenders had done would be summed up by a 45 minute first past the post. The course was tough as bits of the terrain were undulating for miles on end and the narrow paths in the woods meant that we had to jostle for front; **Sig Tranter** (the driver) had only volunteered that morning to run, thought it was a long and muddy affair! Most of us expressed similar sentiments at different times with some contestants finding themselves literally running out of steam either as a result of being new to this game or inappropriate planning. It was not uncommon seeing competitors either walking back looking crest fallen or on occasion feigning an injury to get in the ambulance... Even **Sig Driver**, who is known for his great will power, said that on this particular occasion he felt his lungs were going to explode because the field was awash with talent and no matter how hard you thought you are running someone would just run past you like you were pace setting for them.

Unfortunately, we missed a slot in the podium as a unit thanks to the temporary downgrading of 16 Sig Reg – somehow they were a minor unit for the race – but despite this setback 216 (Para) Sig Sqn will be back next year and looking to get back on the podium.

ALPHA TROOP – by *Lt Cotterill*

OC **Lt A Cotterill**
SSgt **SSgt Porter**

The post Christmas leave period has seen members of the Troop deploy on several exercises. **Sigs Maynard** and **Billingham** deployed to the Arctic conditions of Otterburn as

part of the 2 PARA RLD. **Cpls 'Tommy' Tucker** and **Rankin** headed up the Brigade Tac HQ deployment to France on Ex PONY EXPRESS, while the remainder of the Troop headed off to STANTA for a Troop exercise. **LCpl Keighley** and **Sig Wood** completed the quad bike course and **Sig 'Jar jar' Binks** claims to be pretty much fluent in Arabic after his five day language course. **Sig Pike** is still going strong on P Company and is due to begin test week at the time of writing – good luck – stay on the log!!!!

Sgt 'Rigid Dave' McGhee has been posted on promotion to head up the 3 MERCIAN RSIST on Op HERRICK 19. A real stalwart of the Troop he leaves with the best wishes from the Troop and we hope to see him return to the Squadron in the not too distant future. **Sgt 'Trigger' Hensby** is posted to the SASC after successfully completing the selection cadre, whilst **Sig 'Oli' Olukutukei** heads to 22 SR. Congratulations go to **SSgt Steel** after he became a father for the first time.

BRAVO TROOP - by *Sig Driver*

OC **Lt S Mapplebeck**
SSgt **SSgt J Wear**

Since returning from the Christmas break, Bravo Troop has been busy with CT01 training, a Mini CAST and preparation for the Squadron exercise due to take place in Catterick. The Troop hosted two Officers on attachment - **Lt Maas** and **2Lt Johnston**, who gave the Troop some valuable support in preparation for CAST. **Lt Maas** now returns to France to complete his Officer Training and Bravo Troop wishes him the best of luck in his future career; no doubt we will be working with him again in the not too distant future.

Lt Mapplebeck returned to us from his Basic Parachuting Course, but still requires one more parachute jump to be a qualified British Military Parachutist, much to his disappointment! The Troop also welcomes new arrivals; **LCpl Hack**, **LCpl Howe**, **LCpl Gray** and **LCpl Stark**, all of whom arrived in the New Year and are already in the thick of things. Congratulations to **LCpl Rose** who, having successfully completed his PTI Course is now Bravo Troop's own PTI and has been making his presence known on Squadron PT already.

Having spent the period before Christmas confirming Bravo Troop's High Readiness capability, the Troop look forward to a chance to deploy on exercise in the coming months in order to run out and test 16 Air Assault Brigades Main HQ.

MT TROOP

OC **Capt Jordan**
SSGT **SSgt Dunn**

The Troop have hit the ground running from the very beginning of 2013, providing continuous support for the various Exercises that we have been involved in.

LCpl 'The Commander' Kibiru provided LAD support on Ex PASHTUN PANTHER in STANTA. **'Sick Chit' (Sig Chick)** deployed to France on Ex PONY EXPRESS with the French. **Cpl 'Moe Szylack' Bradshaw** deployed with 2 PARA on Ex EAGLES PREY in Otterburn where he was supposed to do a 50 mile tab, but due to wearing jungle boots in the snow he picked up a "cold injury" and fettle out.

Even though it's been very busy since the start of this year, we still try to get away to do sports. **LCpl Jowers** and **Sig 'No Banter' Tranter** have competed in Cross Country events finishing in respectable positions (we'd expect no less) and **LCpl 'Mmmboop' Hanson** has been selected to play Water Polo for the Army against Basingstoke.



We've had some new faces in the Troop and said some fond farewells. Posted in we have the new pint sized Tiffy **SSgt Beaman**, **Sgt 'Bucky' Buchan**, **Sgt 'Simmo' Sim**, **Cpl 'Wally' Wallis**, **Cfn 'Factory' Rogers**. A fond farewell to **Sgt 'Big Dog' Thompson**, **Cpl 'The Colonel' O'Callaghan** and **Cpl 'Grenade' Entwistle**.

Finally all the guys in the MT/LAD would like to congratulate **SSgt 'The BFG' Dunn** on being selected for promotion to WO2, get the beers in!!

SUPPORT TROOP - by *LCpl 'Cakes' Eccles*

OC **Capt A Fensom**
SSGT **SSgt Springett**

Since returning from our extended 3 weeks Christmas leave, Support Troop has had quite a few events take place, most of

these being in the form of exercises and courses. In only the second week back **Cpl 'NSN John' Mauger** was sent on EX PONY EXPRESS in France, while the remainder of the Troop took part in CT1 training. **LCpl 'The 'racken' McCoy** deployed on Ex EAGLES NEST with 2 PARA RLD and after a very cold 2 weeks in a very snowy Otterburn training area, he was certainly glad to be back in Colchester.

We have also had people away from the Squadron on various courses; **LCpl O'Brien** was away on a military quad biking course and **LCpl Gledhill** went away to RAF Brize Norton to undertake his British Military parachuting course to join the ranks of the British Airborne Soldiers. Also **LCpl Tyson** has travelled to Brecon to attempt SF selection, best of luck!

The Troop would like to welcome to **LCpl 'Nikki' Gray** and **Sgt 'Sarah' Smyth** and bid farewell to **LCpl Jones**, who leaves us to undertake the role of CSE within the 3 MERCIAN RSIST.

	12 MECHANIZED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (228) BULFORD	
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OC **Maj S Irwin**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) D Windsor**

EXERCISE ACE BUILD - by *Sig Mortimer*

This was my first exercise with 228 Signal Squadron so I was keen to make a good first impression. The exercise itself was an introduction to building the Bde HQ to complete CT1. This consisted of a four day exercise where we would practice the build until we all knew what we were doing.

Each day consisted of a different part of the HQ build. The first day was hard and my expectations of the week ahead weren't too positive. The temperature was freezing and there was snow everywhere. To make matters worse we all had to be in the Main Troop garage at 0630hrs. Once every one was ready we moved to Old Carter Barracks where the exercise was held.



Members of Main Tp erecting the Bde Main HQ Ae field

Once we arrived we all had to clear the ground of snow, only then were we ready to build. As soon as this build was complete we tore down the HQ and went again, completing four builds in as many days. Throughout the week more and more responsibility was given to us and we did not need any guidance on what we were doing. When ENDEX was called

we all knew our responsibilities and just how to build all aspects of the HQ.



The Bde Main HQ set up and working

For most of us that went on this exercise it was our first time of setting up the HQ and by the end we all knew exactly what we had to do and when it needed doing. Not only did we complete our goal of getting ourselves ready for CT1 but we had managed to pull off the perfect build in the freezing cold snow, which makes me proud to be with every one at this unit.

FRESH BLOOD - by *Sig MacDonald*

Right where do I begin? Well I guess the best place is my name. I am **Sig Shane MacDonald** and I am posted to 12 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (228) at Bulford. I have been asked to write this article about my experience of being the new guy posted in fresh from Blandford.

Well I am not long back from Christmas leave and its work, work, work, whether it is photocopying printouts, timetables or making **Sgt Al Jordan** a brew. The other great opportunity here is the fact that the Dets have just come back from Op REMUS and because of that it means all the radios and other equipment needs refitting and testing. It is a great opportunity to get hands on and actually see how the



equipment connects and works together. I believe it is a better process of learning as its hands on not just “death by PowerPoint”. It also means I have the chance to get a decent chunk of my 3-2 work booklet signed off and with future exercises I will hopefully have it all signed off.

The biggest concern I had when I came to the unit in August 2012 was that there would be a big divide between me and the guys who recently got back from tour - you know the “I have done Afghan and you haven’t,” sort of thing, but there wasn’t. The lads here are great and it has never once felt like I have been left out of anything. Yes, there were periods where I felt uneasy but that was only in the first few days until I got to know them and then banter started.



Sig MacDonald working hard on his detachment

First off it was small jokes and jibes made as I never really knew them but now having been here for a while and worked with them, it can be an all-out war to see who will break. It will start with locking someone in a cage and walking off with the key to poking someone with a whip.

Last of all I have learned a good way to get someone crated, so I would like to take this time to thank, **Cpl Shelly Pardoe, Cpl Simon Cox, LCpl Nathe Carter, Sig ‘Fergie’ Firman, Sig ‘Ducky’ Duckett** and a very big thank you to the loudest one of all **LCpl Ed ‘I have no inside voice’ Whittaker** for helping me settle in so well.

BOWMAN TRIALS - by LCpl Plummer

On 1 Feb 13, nine personnel along with three detachments from Forward Troop, 228 Signal Squadron deployed to Blandford to assist the Bowman Trials Team in improving the HCDR. The new EHCDR is faster and more efficient in the field. If the testing is deemed successful, it will deploy to Afghanistan in the future.



One of the detachments testing the new EHCDR

The trials were the final stages of testing and the new EHCDR was pushed to its limits. With the likes of 1 (UK) ADSR, 2 Sigs, 16 Sigs and 7 Armd Bde at hand, any faults were fixed.

Fwd Tp were tasked with handling a few vehicles from a fleet of twenty Land Rovers. **Cpl Parham** and **Sig Cole** took control of C10 which in turn would be tested on BCIP, TIGR and VoIP, with test serials lasting approximately thirty minutes at a time. The crew of C10 definitely drew the short straw as this detachment turned out to be one of the busier ones.

B10 saw **LCpl Smart** and **LCpl Attwood** on the mobile trials in which the EHCDR would be put through its paces. Mobile serials would take up to two hours, with the system being overloaded with data every minute. The connectivity of the EHCDR and the Land Rovers brakes would be put to the test with **LCpl Attwood** behind the wheel.

LCpls ‘Bongos’ Mahady-Iddins, Plummer and Stannard took three static wagons alongside **Sigs O’Shea, ‘BBQ’ Johnson-Ashby** and **‘Home Wrecker’ Firman**. The three Dets were to be static in separate locations and throughout the EHCDR trials would be passing data over the network every minute.



Sig O’Shea getting to grips with the myriad of communications equipment at his disposal

The serials got longer and longer over the days, but the EHCDR upgrade was able to pass data faster, at greater size and more reliably. Operations and future exercises will prove to be easier and quicker, making a smooth battlefield data network possible.

SUPPORT TROOP - by Cpl Read

For 228 Sig Sqn the New Year started later than normal, as fortunately we were treated to an extra week of Christmas leave. Well rested, we were ready to get the fleet of vehicles and generators out of Short Term Storage and back on the road. Hitting the ground running we started off with



undisguised enthusiasm and even fast balls couldn't put us off track. Despite days spent on redundancy briefs, E&D workshops, CDT, SF briefs, White Helmet briefs and then some bloke called JAMES, we managed to get most of the fleet task worthy.

The New Year has brought many departures and arrivals to the Troop. We have said goodbye to the following people over the past couple of weeks; **LCpl 'Bilbo' Bilton** who has departed for 18 Sig Regt; whenever we see photos of his face it's all blurry. **Cpl 'Kemz' Whittlesea** hasn't travelled far, just across the road to 3 UK Div for a change of scenery, so we still see him from time to time, normally when he wants something. **Sig 'Jamanda' Holmes** has departed in search of love across the water to 16 Sig Regt, Germany and **Sig 'T' Tovey** is off to wear civvies for the next couple of years at his new posting and **Sig 'C' Cargill** will be departing soon to become part of an RSIST team. Arrivals in the New Year brought fresh blood to the Troop with the arrival of our new QM, **Capt Watt** taking over from **Capt Littlefield** who leaves us for RSS Blandford and the arrival of **Sgt Paul Appleby** jumping into the role of MT Dvr Trg/Admin SNCO. Normally he would be in charge of a Gene Bay, so he has a lot to learn taking over the role from **Sgt Billy Bedford** who is due to leave later in the year, affording a long HO/TO. **LCpl 'Monty' Learmonth** has arrived from across the road and is now back in trade with this fast paced signals unit. We are also expecting a further 2 new arrivals in February, **Sig Logan** and **Sig Turay**. These two guys will join us from Blandford after completing their trade training

The Generator bay deployed out on exercise to support Main Troop with all their power requirements as they built the HQ Complex for the first time in years. This was an ideal time to test the knowledge of the newer additions to the bay. The build wasn't made any easier with the arrival of the 2 inches of snow and cold weather at the weekend, which brought the country to a halt; but not 228 Sig Sqn who bravely battled on. The exercise finished off with an inspection by the OC Sqn and a quick test of the operators reactions when mains power was switched off. The next few weeks and months are filled with various tasks to support the upcoming H18 deployment and hopefully several opportunities to take part in some arduous, but not too arduous, Adv Trg.

EXERCISE TIGER ACE - by Sig Furfaro

Ex TIGER ACE was an adventure training skiing expedition to the Dolomites in Italy, participated in by a mixed group of Signallers from 228 Signal Squadron, 21 Signal Regiment (AS), 2 Signal Regiment and 11 (RSS) Signal Regiment. We departed for Italy on 1 Feb by coach; no one was looking forward to the 24hr all-round drive, but at the same time couldn't wait to get there. Once we arrived we checked into our hotel in Trentino. The hotel itself was very nice, the food was exceptional, it varied from a wide range of Italian cuisine. There was a much needed bar for the evenings and even a spa which most people took full advantage of after a hard days skiing to recuperate. After we had all settled into our chosen rooms we rushed off to the local ski hire shop where we were all given everything we would need for the week ahead. The intense speculation on who would be the first to fall over and crash on the ski trip was settled by **LCpl Tom Thayne**, who obligingly piled in while attempting to get his boots on.

We got to the slopes at 0930hrs on day 3 to then be sectioned off into separate groups depending on experience. There were two beginner groups, which both started off on the nursery slope, one intermediate group and one expert group which went straight onto a red slope as a warm up. The tuition that was given by the instructors was second to none. They constantly pushed everyone forward, teaching new methods and techniques as soon as the last had been

mastered, no matter what your skill level was everyone progressed. The remainder of the week developed our skills to a good standard before the final day of the expedition.

Day 8 was 'race day'. All the groups joined together for the morning to do a joint warm up. We all went down the short course slalom, getting a feel for it and learning the course because later that day everyone would be timed. After the warm up all the groups split off under their instructors for some last minute training, with some healthy competition amongst the instructors for whose students would be the best.

The intermediate and expert group went down a rather special black slope. This slope had a speed trap part way down, with the fastest speed clocked at 70km/h. Then the moment everyone was waiting for, the race. **Sig Matt Ingold** and **Lt Rich Simpson** had a bet going on who would be faster, which was rapidly building into a titanic struggle. Everyone had their times taken to be later announced in the evening. After lunch everyone was released to do whatever they wanted, all groups mixed up, many chose to film each other showing off their new found skills.



Sig Ingold leads the race to who will be the quickest!

After a brilliant end to the day skiing was sadly over. We begrudgingly returned all the hired items and continued to our last supper at the hotel, where there was a small awards ceremony for the top 3 fastest in every group. Then to what everyone was waiting for... who had won the bet? It was very close but **Sig Ingold** had just got faster and **Lt Simpson** duly coughed up the champagne and the celebrations began. After a few hours in the bar everyone returned to their rooms for a well earned sleep before setting off on another epic 24hr drive back to England, fuelled by a steady stream of snacks and 80s war films.



The participants of Ex TIGER ACE



OTHER UNITS



HQ 101 LOGISTICS BRIGADE & SIGNAL TROOP (661) ALDERSHOT



OC
RQMS

Capt J Alger
WO₂ (RQMS) M Turner

With the Troop preparing to disband later this year the focus has been on scaling down our holdings and manpower. The only new arrival has been **Sig Harrison**. Welcome to the Troop but don't bother unpacking! **LCpl Sutherland** has decided to leave the Army and go to university. Good luck to you in the future. **LCpl Purja** and **Sig Dawes** are still away on deployment. Many congratulations to **Sig Quintero** who recently passed the AA PTI Course and has been enjoying his newly acquired power and vest.

All ranks enjoyed an afternoon in the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess to celebrate **Cpl Shiner** receiving his Long Service and Good Conduct medal. The Commander, **Brig McNeil** was the presenting officer. This was followed by a curry buffet and drinks, followed by more drinks.



Cpl Shiner enjoying his LS&GC



DE&S ISS ISP SAI



OC
Tech Adjnt
USM

Maj H Cairns
Capt P Carpenter
WO₂ P Smith

- by SAC Alex Gibson

Whilst their fellow Signallers were away enjoying Christmas leave, ISS SAI, based at Mount Pleasant Complex, arranged various activities for its personnel to ensure that Christmas and the New Year were memorable.

On Christmas Day, the Junior Ranks were served their dinner by some extremely jealous and hungry looking seniors. The Tech Adjnt, **Capt Paul Carpenter** and **FoFS 'Paddy' Partington** proved to be excellent waiters; obviously they had learned a thing or two from their respective Mess staff. After a much needed afternoon nap the Unit regrouped at the ISS Bar, 'Sharkies', for a Christmas BBQ and Party. This included a raffle draw, organised by **Cpl Lauren McPherson** and various games played throughout the night which was kindly put

together by **AB Tasha Hill**. The barmen; **Cpl Matt Cryer** and **Cpl Andy Greenhalgh**, did an excellent job of keeping the beverages flowing throughout the night. There was even snow to be had during the afternoon.

On Boxing Day the Unit had planned to go down to the 100th Stanley Boxing Day Races. Everyone turned up excited about the trip, only to be told that it had been called off due to gale force winds, in the middle of summer! Thanks go to **Cpl Matt Cryer** anyway for what would have been an excellent day.

New Year's Day kicked off with playing paintball. Throughout the day rivalries were fierce between teams, most notably the IT Cell and Syscon Teams, who battled it out in the final game. There were no surprises that the Seniors team came out on top, no doubt due to some intrepid leadership from the Team Captain! All in all the events over both Christmas and New Years helped everyone at ISS SAI to enjoy the holiday period just as much as they would do at home, if not more so!



Enjoying the snow on Christmas Day



The victorious Seniors team, from left to right: Sgt Brown, Lt Easton, Sgt Kervell, PO Daglish and Sgt Shankar





BRUNEI SIGNAL TROOP



TOKYO MARATHON 2013 - by Cpl Tolokbahadur Gurung

The Tokyo Marathon is an annual sporting event held in the capital city of Japan. It is now the sixth biggest event in the world marathon major series; joining Boston, London, Berlin, Chicago and New York. This year the event was held on Sun 24 Feb 2013 in which more than 36,000 participants took part; amongst them were four members from Brunei Signal Troop with the aim of not only completing the race for personal achievement but also raising money for the Gurkha Welfare Trust, ABF Soldiers' Charity and the Gurkha Museum UK.

After four months of hard training, I along with **Capt Shankar Gurung**, **Sgt Tarjan Pun**, **Cpl Bishnu Gurung** and **Cpl Prem Gurung** as a support crew, flew to Tokyo on 20 Feb 2013. The weather was different to what we were accustomed to with the average temperature of 40 C. The next few days saw us register for the race and explore the local culture and sight seeing including participating in the international friendship run, a minor event designed for participants to meet and greet all international runners on 23 Feb 13.



At the registration having collected our bib numbers inside Tokyo Big Sight

With the wind chill, the big day, Sun 24 Feb 13, finally came. Despite sunny and clear blue sky, the icy wind assaulted from all directions and there was nowhere to hide but it seemed the enormous crowd of runners were not affected. At 8:30 am, the Mayor of Tokyo gave his speech and soon the wheel chair participants were flagged off. Half an hour waiting was harder to endure than I thought; if they hadn't started the event any sooner, I would have suffered hypothermia. The moment of truth finally arrived, at 9:10 am and both the 10km and full marathon participants were flagged off, with an awesome display of cherry blossom in spring effect in the air at the starting point. As I made my way across the start line, the only thought I had in my mind was focusing on the run and to complete the race as comfortably as I could, and I promised myself to complete the race within my individual target time of four hours.

The start of the race was a battle of keeping a clear passage while avoiding oneself from tripping over or bumping into other runners. After zigzagging for the first two kilometres, the run finally took its form. The selection of the route was fantastic because of the number of U-turns that enabled us to see the world's top male and female marathon runners in action as they looped their way. As an ordinary runner,



At the Start Point before the race. We lost Sgt Tarjan in a massive crowd

witnessing world class runners passing close by was an amazing experience. In fact, this was one of the reasons I took part in the Tokyo Marathon. Coming back to the race, the initial half way was completed quite comfortably but the whole run was far from over and the toughest part was yet to come. Everybody knew that it would still require a good fight to finish with a respectable time.

After the 35km point, my pace slowed significantly. Physically I was so tired but the spectators support immensely helped me to complete the distance and I am sure the other members of the BST felt the same. Yelling, clapping, whistling like a cowbell boosted our morale and kept us going on up to the finishing line. Despite our target time being under 4hrs, on the day we had to settle with the time frame of 4 - 4 ½ hrs, which we are fairly content with. The supporters were fantastic all the way from the start to the finish line.

Finally, it has been a successful marathon for all the team; the hard work was paid off when the race was completed and the medals were presented. Furthermore, we have raised in excess of BND5000.00 in support of those charities that are very close to all our hearts. We would like to thank all the sponsors for their generosity and good will. Without forgetting, we would like to thank our team companion, **Cpl Prembahadur Gurung**, for his dedicated support through the training sessions and on the actual day of the event.

Jai BST!, Jai Queens Gurkha Signals!!



At the podium with our medals. Sgt Tarjan is still missing!



1 NEW ZEALAND SIGNAL REGIMENT



CO
RSM

Lt Col Paul Dragicevich
WO2 Dale Wetere

KIA ORA - by SSgt Nige Brewin

Another busy 6 months has passed at 1 NZ Sig Regt, not least due to Ex ALAM HALFA and Ex KIWI KORU, both major Brigade exercises. 2013 is scheduled to be another busy year, even with the drawdown of troops from Afghanistan, Timore Leste and the Solomon Islands. Looking ahead we expect 2013 will be a continuing year of high activity, moving more into complex exercises and working closer with other services and allies on several fronts and not least a visible change for all is that in March, like the UK; we are breaking away from DPM and moving to a new multi terrain pattern uniform.

AIRBORNE FORCES COMPETITION - by SSgt Nige Brewin

In August I headed the NZ Airborne team to Rhode Island, USA to compete in the US Airborne Forces Competition. This was a precision manoeuvre exercise with a competitive slant. The event consisted of jumping military MC1-B round canopies from CH47 "Chinook" helicopters. Each team consisted of 5 men, the aim was simple, land as close to the DZ panel as possible and reach it in the fastest time. The clock started ticking as soon as your feet touched the ground and stopped when you ran over the centre of the panel. All kit, including harness, had to remain fitted and had to be taken with you so if you landed down wind the run back to the panel would be pretty difficult.

We had one familiarisation jump then it was into the event. Out of 63 teams we came in at a respectable 20th. Most of the US teams had jumped the Drop Zone before and some had even been practicing on the Drop Zone in the weeks prior to the event. We had one drama when Cpl 'Mouse' Dowall did his count and looked up at his canopy expecting to find a steerable MC1-B only to find an errant non-steerable T10 had found its way there

instead. Luckily, on his para course he had trained on the T10 so used his experience wisely and landed about 9ft from the panel. He was offered an extra jump with an MC1-B but decided that 9ft was a good result so declined, just hoping that his next scheduled jump in the afternoon would reveal an MC1-B as was expected.

The obstacle course part of the event, which included a length of pairs stretcher carry, was won by 1 NZ Sig Regt. We didn't just win it, we smashed it, all the more impressive in that a number of the US teams were special forces.

1 NZ Sig Regt personnel were treated amazingly by the US forces, we had drivers and vehicles available to us on all down time and they took us wherever we wanted to go. We thought of pushing our luck and ask for a road trip to Vegas but in the end hired a Mercedes and did a battlefield tour of Gettysburg instead. Well worth the trip and a great battlefield tour.



SSgt Brewin off the ramp on the familiarisation jump, Rhode Island below



Team NZ, L-R Cpl Dowall, WO2 Forsyth, SSgt Brewin, Cpl Matehaere and Cpl Hayward

EXERCISE CRETE III - by LCpl Robertson

Over the weekend of the 30 Nov to 2 Dec 12 3 Auckland North Regiment ran a leadership exercise for JNCO's and senior privates on Ponui Island in the Hauraki Gulf. This year 5 members of 1 Sig Sqn along with SSgt Brewin from RHQ (he is the Regt AS3 but is also our TF Cadre) went along to provide communications support for the infantry sections. By all accounts the soldiers from 3 ANR were very appreciative of the support as well as having the opportunity to use the communications equipment.

3 ANR operated two sections on the island over the weekend and each section was accompanied by a Sig. Sig Van Koningsveld with section 1 and myself with section 2. We also operated a RETRANS (RRB) det (manned by LCpl Wheatcroft and SSgt Brewin) at the highest point on the island to help provide effective comms back to the CP at Kawakawa Bay.

We deployed into the field first thing on Saturday morning and those of us attached to the sections spent most of Saturday pack marching around the



SSgt Brewin engineering the dismantled Retrans





The slope down to Nora Bay

island. Each member of the infantry section took turns as section commander and had the task of navigating their team from one point on the island to another. At the same time I also provided hands on training with the AN/PRC119 giving the infantry personnel the opportunity to prepare and transmit LOCSTAT reports, SITREPS and RESUP demands back to the CP.

Sunday started with some quick navigation taskings followed by a trek to the RETRANS site to help dismantle and transport the equipment down to the beach.



Swimming to the RHIB

When we got to our pickup point at Nora Bay we had to quickly waterproof our packs as the Navy RHIB's were told to deliberately hold off shore a distance, forcing us to go for a little swim! Once on board the RHIB's it was a rather bumpy ride back to Kawakawa Bay courtesy of the Navy.

Overall it was an enjoyable weekend and a great opportunity to get some practical experience on both the AN/PRC 119 and AN/PRC 48. Personally, as I was attached to one of the infantry sections, it was also a good opportunity to refresh my all arms field skills.

THE BASSETT VC MEMORIAL TROPHY - by Capt Jimmy Kerr

It's a long-standing truth that no plan survives first contact with the enemy. The corollary of this is the need for someone close to the action who understands the objective to be able to react to the situation and implement any changes in the plan that become necessary. Very often this person is the first level of command, the Corporal. This was clearly the case on 7 August 1915, when **Cpl Cyril Bassett** was laying line to the Wellington Regiment on Chunuk Bair in Gallipoli. The original plan was for two parties each to lay a line from Brigade to Battalion HQ. But when **Bassett** saw that there was insufficient cable, he quickly consolidated the available men and assets to complete one solid line, and to maintain that vital link in the face of destructive artillery fire. For this, he became the only signaller in any army to win the Victoria Cross.

And so it is, that in recognition of the heavy responsibility carried in their Corps by the rank of Corporal, Royal New Zealand Signals has The Bassett VC Memorial Trophy. This is awarded annually to their top Corporal who, throughout the calendar year, by performance in his/her trade, by display of soldier and leadership skills, and by acceptability to his/her superiors, peers and subordinates, is judged by the Regimental Colonel, to be the most outstanding Corporal in the Corps.

This entitles the winner not only to hold the trophy for one year, but also to wear on his or her uniform a special version of the Crossed Flags badge that has a maroon coloured background, representing the colour of the ribbon of the Victoria Cross. On 3 September 2012 it was my honour, on behalf of the CO, to present **Cpl Hemi Mather** with the Bassett VC Memorial Trophy for 2011.

Cpl Mather has held the rank of substantive Corporal since 21 August 2009. He has been a serving regular soldier with RNZ Sigs since 10 September 2003. He was posted to 4 Sig Sqn in December 2010 after a 5 year posting to 1 NZ SAS Sig Tp. He received excellent reporting throughout the 5 years of this previous post, including his deployment on WAATEA 1.

Cpl Mather has been awarded the following:

- In 2011, the APTI of the year trophy for Burnham Military Camp;
- In 2009, Top Student on the RNZ Sigs Det Comds course; and
- In 2008, the Regimental Award on his AA JNCO course.

Cpl Mather held the position of Forward Information Systems Team Commander during 2011. He constantly displays the key attributes that commanders desire in their JNCOs. He is a committed, honest JNCO, who consistently exceeds in the areas of dress and bearing, problem-solving decision making, and inspiring others. His maturity and professionalism makes him an exemplary role model for other soldiers and JNCOs within 4 Sig Sqn, 1 NZ Sig Regt, and the wider NZDF. **Cpl Mather** is a worthy recipient of the Bassett VC Memorial Trophy.



The Bassett VC Memorial Trophy



Cpl Mather proudly displays the Bassett VC Memorial Trophy



SPORT

THE ARMY ANGLING ASSOCIATION (GAME) AND THE ROYAL CORPS OF SIGNALS!

The Army Angling Federation Game (AAF (G)) represents the fly fishing discipline of Army Angling. The Soldier Palmers Team is the name of the competition squad which supplies anglers to compete in most Loch Style Competitions in the UK; these include the highly respected Association of Major Fly Fishing Clubs (AMFC). We also compete in the Anglian Water AIRFLO International (AWFMI) and LEXUS competitions each year.

The Royal Corps of Signals has had an extremely successful 2012 season. The current Army Champion is **WO2 (YofS) Paul Calvert** (204 Signal Sqn) who has been pivotal in the continued development of the Soldier Palmers Team. The Inter-Services Fly Fishing Championship was held at Rutland Water and **SSgt Del Spry** (formerly 2 Sig Regt) managed to achieve top rod across all three Services.



SSgt Spry being presented the Inter-services Individual Champion trophy by the AAF(G) Chairman Lt Col Thorpe REME

The 2012 Army Inter-Services Team had three other Royal Corps of Signals anglers, **WO1 (YofS) Dean Rudd**, **WO2 (YofS) Paul Calvert** (204 Sig Sqn) and **Sgt Jim Wright** (10 Sig Regt), who all contributed to the Army winning the Inter-services Fly Fishing Championship for the first time since 2006.

These anglers also competed at an extremely high level within the AMFC competition calendar throughout the season, helping to secure League 1 promotion. We continue to develop a strong position in League 4 which is a fantastic training platform for the more junior or less experienced anglers within the Federation.



WO2 (YofS) Paul Calvert being presented the Army Individual Champion's trophy by Mr Steve Lawes of Deloitte

From a fly fisherman who only took up the sport 3 years ago you could say I am hooked (please pardon the pun). The AAF(G) is one of the best kept secrets in the British Army and only has 4 Royal Signals members. The AAF(G) is suffering from lack of fresh blood particularly at the more junior ranks. It would be fantastic to start the 2013 season with more soldiers from the Corps. The Federation is dominated by Royal Engineers and quite frankly that just won't do! So I appeal to all those across the Corps to dust off your fly rods and let us know who you are. The AAF(G) is an extremely welcoming and inclusive group of anglers and there are always people on hand who are happy to provide assistance and advice as necessary, even if you are a novice.

AAF(G) Detail

The aim of the AAF(G) is to promote and foster game angling in the Army for serving and ex-serving members and their dependants. The standard of our top echelon of anglers is a match for any within the UK and Europe and we regularly have Soldier Palmers Team members who represent the Army, competing at international level.

Membership: Membership of the Federation is open to:

Full Members: All serving ranks of the Regular Army.

Associate Membership: Dependants of serving members of the Regular Army, members of the TA, NRPS and Regular Reserve and also MOD(A) civilian staff.

Associate membership is limited up to a maximum of one third of the total membership. The number is limited so as to preserve the charitable status of the



WO1(YofS) Rudd with a cracking Brown Trout of 4lb 8oz caught during an AMFC match at Chew Valley Lake near Bristol



Federation. The Federation through our Chairman, reserves the right to authorise or decline associate membership, each application will be looked at individually.

Subscriptions

The annual subscription of £40.00 is payable by all members and runs from 1st January to 31st December; the cost of subscription is to be reviewed for the 2014 season. If new applicants wish to join they are not required to pay annual subscriptions until after they have attended either the Spring Match or Army Championships (a 'try before you buy' scheme).

Benefits

The opportunity to participate in a wide range of annual events and competitions organised by both the Federation and national fishing bodies. These include qualifying rounds for both team and individual finals; in some cases providing the opportunity to fish national qualification matches which in turn could lead to international selection.

Receive subsidized fishing fees when representing the Army on both practice and match days.

Become eligible to be selected for representative teams to compete in the Inter-service competitions, and thus qualify for Army Colours.

Be covered by third party liability insurance arranged by the Federation for all fishing during Federation and Federation representative events.

Opportunity to purchase angling equipment at discount prices through various angling trade deals.
Free access to Anglian Water season tickets purchased by the Federation.

Coaching and training from qualified and highly experienced instructors, including fly tying.

Finally, as an individual new to the AAF(G) for the 2013 season, we will provide you free of charge, with a fly line of a weight of your choice, that normally retails for £39.99. All the above for the equivalent of a penny!

For more information please e-mail the club Secretary at www.36ENGR-QMT-QMT@mod.uk, or from the 3 Jun 13 101ENGR-221-OC@mod.uk.



Army Inter-Service Team 2012

CORPS X-COUNTRY

By Sig Harrison

On 13 February 2013 the Corps X-Country competition was held at 3 (UK) ADSR. 661 Sig Troop entered as a Minor Unit with 2 teams comprising of pretty much the entire Troop. The A team was **WO2 (YofS) Tucker, SSgt Hetherington, Cpl Saruwaka, Sig Taylor and Sig Quintero**. The B team was **SSgt Johnston, LCpl Shone, Sig Giles, Sig Baker-Magowan and Sig Harrison**. The route was 6 miles long including going up the infamous Kiwi Hill 3 times, which is horrible at the best of times. The weather by the time the male race started was atrocious. The wind had picked up, it had started snowing sideways and visibility was poor.

The teams arrived at the start line 20 minutes early and instead of warming up like many teams were already doing, we decided to turn the heating up in the mini bus until 10 minutes before the race. The race started with a lap of the sports pitches to separate the men from the boys, the majority of our Troop found themselves in the boys section. Due to this being, in the YofS words, one of the worse routes he had ever run, many of the lads ended up falling over on the way round. In particular **Sig Harrison** came in un-recognition due to him being covered head to toe in mud.

661 was by far the smallest Minor Unit to enter the competition, therefore, great credit is due to the Unit that we entered 2 teams and did not embarrass ourselves.



CORPS ALPINE RACE

Divisional Championships

The 2013 season has been another successful season for the Royal Signals Alpine race team. Between the two Divisional Championships (Ex SPARTAN HIKE the UK Divisional Championships in Serre Chevalier, France and Ex PIPEDOWN, the German Divisional Championships in Les Contamines, France) we had three units (3DSR, 10 Sig Regt, and 30 Sig Regt) and five individuals (from 39 Sig Regt (V), HQ ARRC, 1 R Welsh RSIST and 16 Sig Regt) entered.

The Div Championships were a good chance to shake out, after a month away from snow at the Corps Championships back in December, and get our snow legs back. Over the 10 day championships we raced in the 4 Alpine disciplines of Slalom, Giant Slalom, Super G and Downhill. The weather was not on our side for the entire competition and while the sun did mostly shine on us we did have around 75cm of heavy snow one night that stopped us downhill training. It did however give us a chance to build a 7ft snowman! With the temperatures staying low throughout, the snow conditions were good for racing and the Corps had some good results. Over the downhill training **Brig Richardson**, as President Royal Signals Winter Sports, visited the Corps teams to cheer us on and even braved our cooking one night in our apartment. There was a mix of experience and newcomers this season, with some taking to racing better than others. Once **2Lt Fergus Anderson** learnt how to stay on his feet, he was flying and finished an impressive 20th in his first downhill race. Although we did have a couple of casualties from the speed events, which meant unfortunately that **LCpl Mark Lowery** and **Sig Kirstie Jackson** couldn't continue skiing at the Army Championships, overall the Corps achieved the aim of qualifying as many as possible to the Army Championships.

In the overall Alpine Combination the Corps did particularly well with **Cpl Nick Penn** 3rd at the German Divs and **Capt Tom Collins** 7th at the UK Divs. **Capt Katie Lea** was 2nd female at the German Divs and **LCpl Kirsty Abel** was 2nd and **Capt Jo Dawson** was 3rd female at the UK Divs.

Army Championships

For the second year running the Corps has managed to qualify 12 people to the Army Championships, which was certainly one of the largest Corps representations. We are developing a solid base of race expertise within the Corps and building on our success slowly but surely. The next step will be to gain financial support, and chain of command willingness, to conduct an elite training camp prior to the Div Championships for our best Corps racers.

The Army competition is a jump up from the Div level, with longer and more technical courses set to challenge us. The first two days of giant slalom racing went well for most of us, with the exception of **Capt Dave Pirt** who decided that showing off cart-wheeling over the finish line and breaking his hand was a good idea. After GS we switched straight to slalom for some long thigh burning courses that challenged our technique. Here **LCpl Kirsty Abel** put in a great performance finishing comfortably in 5th. After slalom the short skis were switched for longer downhill ones, ready for 2 days of training before the race.

The Army Downhill is run on the Luc Alphond piste (named after the famous French downhill racer) from halfway up the mountain to the very bottom. It is a 2.1km course with a vertical drop of 580m with two big jumps to negotiate. With average speeds of around 100kph, it takes courage just to push out of the start gate. The first day a chance to inspect the course, check your line and start taking the jumps at close to race pace, with the second day being closer to full pelt to ensure you are used to the speed. Unfortunately **LCpl Kirsty Abel** took a nasty fall on the final wall on the first training run and fractured her leg. Particularly disappointing for her as she was going to make the Army Ladies team, thanks to her improved self-belief and excellent performance throughout the competition. She will have to return next season to win her 'red jumper' Army colours.



Capt Dawson in

LCpl Abel on Army Slalom



TEAM SEASON 2013



LCpl Harper from 3DSR with GOC 3 Div

At prize-giving the Corps saw several trophies awarded. This included the Michael Pearce Memorial Trophy for the top Royal Signals Skier which was awarded to **Capt Tom Collins** who finished in an impressive 10th place overall. This season saw changes in the Army rules, which has ended the female Inter-Corps competition but allows males and females to compete in a single Corps team. As a Corps team we have been finishing in last place for the last three seasons but this year saw a massive improvement and we finished a very credible 4th Corps overall.

Thanks must go to the Corps coach **Mr Andy Dawson** for all his hard work and assistance in course inspections and team advice and to the Royal Signals Games Club Committee for the generous grant that allows us to purchase the expensive speed skis and safety equipment.

Corps Team 2013: **Capt Tom Collins**, **Cpl Nick Penn**, **LCpl Neil Harper**, **2Lt Fergus Anderson**, **LCpl Aaron Rouget**, **LCpl Kirsty Abel**, **Capt Jo Dawson** and **LCpl Ian Duggins**



ROYAL SIGNALS



If you enjoyed Kayaking on unit adventure training and wish to progress you can take two directions, expeditions or competition/racing. The Royal Signals Canoe Club's (RSCC) aim is to provide personnel with an opportunity to experience competition paddling and select Corps personnel to represent the Royal Signals in Army competition.

Upcoming Royal Signals combined novice training camps and Championships.

Sprint/Marathon - Bradford Upon Avon (Nr Bath) - 29th Apr- 03 Jun 13.

Slalom- L Landsul (SW Wales) - 20th-25 May 13.



Sprint and Marathon - Last year's Royal Signals domination of the Inter Corps Championships has been mirrored and further developed; **Maj James King**, **SSgt Iain Lawson** and **Sig Tom Diaper** have continued to fill the Corps trophy cabinet with Army and Inter-service silverware.

Of particular note in season 2012 was **Capt Sandy Hennis** who led from the front throughout the Women's Army championship events. During the inter-services she consistently placed in the top three tipping the points balance to allow the Army to wrest the team trophy from the RAF.

Further Royal Signals team development was reinforced by a novice focused training camp and championship held at sunny Bradford upon Avon during May. This activity incorporated external instruction and coaching by a number of ex international athletes from Team GB and Team S Africa culminating in 10SR winning the team trophy and **Sig Marshall** 3DSR achieving individual glory.



S CANOE CLUB

By SSgt Iain Lawson



Slalom/White water - Army Inter Corps and Land Forces Canoe Slalom Championships took place at Llandysul, Wales from 11 – 17 June. The River Teifi was flowing well providing perfect conditions for 22SR who had brought some new talent along to try out the sport. Despite a couple of swims the team delivered strong performances with the two novice paddlers **LCpl Clifford** and **Sig Coleman** overshadowing the competition and **LCpl Steve Bartlett** of 22SR winning the Intermediate Men's K1 event.

The Army Championships immediately followed, by which time the constant rain had raised river levels and significantly increased the strength of flow. Conditions stopped all bar the advanced competition with the die hard's like **Sgt Mick Richardson** 21SR(AS) throwing themselves down the course.



Inter-Services Canoe Slalom Championships took place in October. Royal Signals paddlers in the Army team contributed to the Armys overall dominance with **Capt Sandy Hennis**, **Sgt Mick Richardson**, **LCpl Steve Bartlett** and **Sig Owen Collins** all selected for the Army team. The River Teifi was once again in full flow and conditions were pretty tough. **Capt Sandy Hennis** put in two good runs on the first day of the competition to win the Ladies K1 event. Overall it was a strong effort from all team members which resulted in the Army winning by a large margin.

Devizes to Westminster canoe race - This world famous 125 mile, 77 portage race (Portage: run with Kayak around locks) took place on the Kennet and Avon Canal and River Thames over the Easter weekend 2012. Results included **Maj James King** winning the overall event for the third year running and **Sig Tom Diaper** winning the services trophy as the first Armed forces crew.

Currently personnel from 14SR, 10SR, 21SR(AS) and 3DSR are in training for DW 2013.



HOW TO ORGANISE ADVENTUROUS TRAINING

Introduction

There has been a lot written elsewhere recently about the importance of Adventurous Training (adv trg), as senior officers recognise the value of adv trg in developing the individual, building unit cohesion and morale. With one of my roles being to help plan and then authorise such trg I recognise it is not from a lack of will or effort from soldiers of all ranks that adv trg does not happen; rather the mess of countless acronyms, procedures and obscure JSPs and DINs that can bamboozle the uninitiated.

The aim of this article is to provide a list of many of the steps needed for most adv trg exercises, to explain some of the acronyms and signpost readers to some of the sources of information required.

A health warning: This is based on my recent experience of Regimental expeditions and the sort of adv trg I have most experience of, I can only apologise for other omissions. Unfortunately there are differences in some procedures if you are based in Germany and depending which formation your unit sits in.

Do find the Regimental Adventurous Training Officer (RATO) for your unit, get their help and also seek advice from Support Command (Sp Comd) AT Staff if based in UK or ATG(G) if based in Germany.

Sources of information

The sites and documents shown below are frequently needed to organise adv trg. All sit on the internet or Defence Intranet and should be findable:

- a. Adventurous Training Group (Army) (ATG(A) internet website with details of courses for individuals, a noticeboard to advertise for instructors to assist and much of the paperwork needed to help organise adv trg (N.B. an internet site and accessed via Forces Gateway / ArmyNet login) : www.atga.mod.uk
- b. ATG(A) Intranet website: Access to Post Exercise Reports (PXR), Adv Trg System (ATSYS) (the on-line ex authorisation application, planning tool), various forms and publications including country specific clearance procedures). It is through ATSYS that you complete a Joint Service Adventurous Training Form Alpha (JSATFA), the form used to plan and authorise your adv trg.
- c. Joint Service Publication (JSP) 419 contains all the details of adv trg for the military, what activities are adv trg, types of adv trg, qualifications available and limits for instructors (e.g. instructor to student ratios). An **ESSENTIAL** read.
- d. AGAI Vol 1 Chapter 11 are Army rules for conduct of adv trg and also shows the format of adv trg PXR. This includes information about what is often called the "48 hour rule" for short duration adv trg in the UK.
- e. On the Defence Learning Portal (DLP) the RATO trg course is an open course, accessible to all. Although very dated it provides an overview of organising adv trg, PXR etc. It provides good background for all those organising expeditions. Note completion of course does NOT allow you to authorise an ex for the unit, this can only be done by the Regtl appointed RATO.
- f. JSP 907 – Catalogue of Defence Training facilities. Details of all training areas including lodges, transit camps and other locations that can be booked in UK for your adv trg. This can be supplemented by looking at the "Directory Of Adventurous Training Facilities" on the ATG(A) website which shows lodges and service charity owned locations (e.g. Rothiemurchus Lodge in the Highlands, the Nuffield Centre on Anglesey) which are very useful.
- g. JSP 456 Volume 2, Chapter 7 contains the rules and regulations surrounding the use of Cash In Lieu of Rations (CILOR) which can be provided when an ex is in a location where military cookhouses etc are not available.

How do you pay for it?

Funding for adv trg can come from a variety of sources. To apply for and manage this money correctly it is important to understand whether it is Public or Non Public funds

- a. **Public Funds.** Public funds are official funds from the MOD budget. These include:
 - (1) **Enhanced Commanding Officers' Public Fund (eCOPF).** Issued to every unit on basis of unit strength. Typically held at RHQ or delegated down to Sqns.



ORGANISE US TRAINING

By Ben White

- (2) **CILOR.** To pay for the cost of your uncooked food during the ex (N.B. no entitlement to CILOR for first and last day of ex when travelling). See JSP 456 for detailed rules and application form.
 - (3) **Sp Comd grant.** It is allocated on receipt of your JSATFA through ATSYS.
 - (4) **Garrison grants.** Some garrisons have funds to allocate to adv trg.
 - (5) **Unit Budget.** Units may have an allocation they are allowed to use to support adv trg to subsidise costs of events or it may be confined to use of military vehs.
- b. **Non Public Funds.** Non public funds are those that are donated by charitable trusts and other organisations. You may want to approach:
- (1) The unit **PRI.**
 - (2) **Royal Corps of Signals Fund.** Applied for via your unit in Mar and Sep for biannual allocations board and only for Type 3 / overseas adv trg. See Royal Signals Policy Directive 153 for more information.
 - (3) **Sqn Funds.** Many Sqns have a fund which may support individuals or contribute towards ex costs.
 - (4) **Berlin Infantry Brigade Memorial Trust Fund (BIBMTF).** Allocated by Sp Comd on receipt of JSATFA if requested. Typically only for overseas expeditions.
 - (5) Army Mountaineering Association or other **Service 'club' or organisation grants.** Usually worth investigating for other benefits and grants that may be made but usually will have to join.
 - (6) **Joint Service Expeditions Trust (JSET)** can provide grants for overseas expeditions meeting certain pre-requisites. A DIN is published annually about this.
 - (7) Some Territorial Army (TA) / Army Reserve specific funds also exist (e.g. **Ulysses trust**).
 - (8) Adv trg can be conducted at no cost to the individual but **Personal contributions** are typical for some adv trg exs (e.g. overseas trips). There is no upper or lower limit on how much this contribution can be. It is to be encouraged to start collecting this early rather than requiring whole sum from individual just prior to departure; this also helps build commitment to the ex. Note individuals will not receive LSA or LOA for adv trg though instructors may be eligible. Guidance should be sought from JSP 754 / Regtl HR staff on detailed rules for this.

Some of these non-public funds will be offered to you prior to the ex but will only be paid to you once it is completed and a PXR completed showing final costs. Your Pay Office and PRI may help by loaning you the money ("an advance") but ask early about what support may be available to limit the outgoings from your pocket. Whoever runs the PRI may help you by acting as a bank where you can pay in contributions and they pay out a single cheque for large bills etc.



An Adv Trg Ex from Start to Finish

Below is a lengthy list of possible steps from the start through to successful conclusion. Of course not every ex will require all these steps and it is only a guide for personnel at different stages and to prompt further research. Lead in times do often vary depending on many factors (e.g. location of ex) and so must be borne in mind. Plan early and research the details that apply for your ex.



Planning

- What is your idea for an exercise? What do you want to do? Your **aim**.
- Clear your proposal with the chain of command. Confirm it is adv trg, there is space in the programme and planning lead in times are realistic.
- Ensure the RATO is content with your outline plan and dates and get it onto the unit Forecast of Events.
- Research your proposal and look at Lessons Identified on PXR's etc (available on ATG(A) website).
- Get an account on the Adventurous Training System (ATSYS) authorised and start filling in the Joint Service Adventurous Training Form Alpha (JSATFA) on line. Liaise with RATO and / or Sp Comd (who can view your JSATFA remotely) to fill in the details.
- Advertise / seek participants or direct attendance depending on Type (see JSP 419 for Types of adv trg).
- Use JSP 419 to determine what instructors are needed for your activity and how many are needed. You must have the correct instructors and the correct instructor to student ratios. Short of an instructor? Ask other Sqns / advertise outside Regt, then wider (e.g. ArmyNet, on ATG(A) internet noticeboard etc).
- Will your ex be less than 48hrs long (excluding travelling time)? You may be able to avoid completion of JSATFA and complete 'Unit Authorised Adventure Training' however you must still seek RATO approval, meet all requirements of JSP 419 (e.g. instructors and student ratios) and AGAI Vol 1 Chap11, do land clearance, risk assessments, full admin instruction and may not have access to loan pool eqpt.
- Don't forget Distributed Training (DT). DT means that participants will get a basic adv trg qualification that is often a pre-requisite for instructor courses later. DT can often be easily incorporated into an adv trg ex. Your instructor will need to register and apply for a Course Training Plan (CTP).
- Open an 'account' with Sqn or Regtl accountant if they can help to allow you to store personal contributions, received grants and to assist with paying bills centrally.
- Have participants join suitable club or association if appropriate and this may open doors for further funding and also help them nurture their new skills (e.g. Army Mountaineering Association, Army Sailing Association).
- Complete your risk assessment on your JSATFA. Seek advice as necessary (e.g. your instructors will know hazards for their activities) and consider all phases and events of the ex (e.g. travel there and back) including R&R. Agree controls and, where the residual risk is still too great, implement additional controls to make it safer. JSP 375 has a lot of risk assessment information and old JSATFAs on ATSYS are a good source of risks and suitable controls.
- Engage with RATO and Sqn 2IC / Regt 2IC about funding support that may be available and likely amounts. Don't just use the table on the JSATFA but keep a separate table / excel spreadsheet as this will be a live document that will probably change frequently.
- Submit external funding bids (some may need JSATFA to be complete first), others may have own application form.
- Is it likely to be classified 'High Risk' or 'Remote'? Details in AGA Vol 1 Chap 11 but if so you will be required to produce further information and present your plan and safety measures.
- Confirm and pass to the RATO details of your instructors qualifications and experience (logbook of experience) as the RATO must verify they are trained, current and competent to lead your activity.
- Once you think your JSATFA is complete send to the RATO. This will be signed by RATO and CO. This is your authority to complete the JSATFA to Stage 3 on ATSYS and send it formally to Sp Comd for them to start their authorisation process.
- CO will sign off JSATFA and possibly authorise field conditions so those in Single Living Accommodation won't pay accn charges during the ex.
- Loan pool stores bid? 60 days notice is always required. Your bid for Loan Pool stores must be sent via Sp Comd for them to countersign as suitable for your ex and all must be accounted for correctly using G4 chain and brought onto account after pickup from central stores (e.g. Bicester) before you depart on ex. Losses will be billed to individual / unit. Check carefully on receipt, before departing on ex and only unpack what is needed.
- Land clearance is needed for UK exs for any activities on land or water. This is applied for





via Regional Brigade where ex is taking place.

- Buy mapping (often for overseas exs) or order mapping through your unit Ops or Trg Wing.
- Speak Sqn / Regt MT about vehs. Book tpt using FMT 1000.
- Do you need insurance? For personal kit? Loan Pool kit? Travel insurance? Buy military appropriate travel insurance before you pay for expensive items (flights, accn bookings etc). Consider it to cover individuals during R&R and non adv trg activities. You are only covered by the military when you are engaged in authorised adv trg activities.
- Medical checks / vaccinations? Essential for foreign travel.
- Complete your comprehensive ex admin instruction.
- Visas? Get copies of passports and store separately for all ex participants.
- Order expense items from SQMS (e.g. suncream, insect repellent etc)
- Pack your folder to take away on ex with you to include: Sp Comd / ATG(G) authority letter, a hard copy of the JSATFA, copies of passports etc, details of any land clearances received, NOTICAS / INCREP procedures in case of an accident and various out of hours contact details for unit and local Bde (in UK) or British Embassy (overseas ex).
- Agree book in procedures with your unit (how often? If at all?) and how emergency messages can be got to you on ex in case of problems at home for overseas trips.
- Ensure up to date nominal roll sent to Sp Comd with Emergency Contact details.
- Ensure up to date nominal roll sent for Part One Orders to ensure all attendees are 'on duty'.
- Collect an advance of funds for CILOR from an Imprest account holder. Change into local currency if appropriate.

Conduct

- Assign tasks out to ex personnel (e.g. photographer, diary / journal, CILOR holder,) and have an 'SQMS': accounting for, issue, control of loan pool eqpt is very important particularly on multi activity exs where are many users for the same kit.
- Ensure instructors carry out before and after use checks of eqpt (particularly safety eqpt e.g. ropes) and that all equipment usage is logged following the direction received with that eqpt from the loan pool.
- Monitor use of CILOR to ensure all funds expended on food by the end of the ex.
- Continue to refine your risk assessment and make sure with your instructors that conditions are as you have planned for. Amend plans, update risk assessments as necessary.
- Keep a log as organiser of your activities, any injuries, all paperwork and any instructions throughout the ex in case of later issues.
- Log and report injuries during the ex back to unit.

Recovery

- Clean and return loan pool equipment (a very high standard is required) via your G4 Dept.
- Follow up any injuries and carry out unit reporting procedures depending on severity.
- Submit trg records, return the CTP if doing Distributed Training. You will then receive cse certificates. Photocopy certificates and send to unit iHub for P files and make sure the awarded qualification is added as a JPA competency to individuals' records, issue certificates to participants through the chain of command.
- Instructors should update their logbook and encourage participants to log all activities. They may want to be instructors one day and will need a record of their experience to get on a course.
- Write a PXR using guidance in AGAI Vol 1 Chap 11.
- Clear your CILOR advance: Submit any surplus cash, receipts and/or other mandated paperwork to confirm CILOR spent correctly.
- Thank you letters to landowners and others who supported the ex, CO's of loaned instructors.
- Send notes on participants to their OCs if appropriate. You have seen personnel in different environment, working as instructors, possibly demonstrating new skills in challenging terrain.
- Gather photos and records. Produce articles for *The Wire* etc.
- Send PXR to mandated addressees and gather promised funding to clear any debt you have with the PRI etc.



EXERCISE MERCURY SLALOM 13

LOOKING FOR BALLS!

WHITE WATER KAYAK TRAINING CAMP (Inc. R SIGNALS Championships)

Dates 20 – 25 May 2013

Location: Llandysul, West Wales
Novice based approach to training
Unit or individual entry.

POC: Sgt Mick Richardson
ios-zkxenduser167@zcx.ios.mod.uk
Or

richardsonmick@hotmail.co.uk



RESETTLEMENT

JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR EX ROYAL SIGNALS SOLDIERS AND OFFICERS

HQ R SIGNALS manage a website which contains current job vacancies that may be of interest to our soldiers and officers currently in the resettlement process and those that have left the Corps in previous years. The site also contains links to other sources of useful information and resettlement services.

The page is hosted on the Royal Signals Association website.
www.royalsignalsassociation.co.uk/website/index.php/resettlement



Use this QR code to go
straight to the site



www.royalsignalsassociation.co.uk
For serving and ex members of The Royal Corps of Signals





Col (Retd) Terry Canham
Tel: 01258 482081



Maj (Retd) Mark Tivey
Tel: 01258 482082



Association Office
RHQ Royal Signals
Blandford Camp
Blandford Forum
Dorset
DT11 8RH
www.royalsignalsassociation.co.uk

Patron: HRH The Princess Royal
President: The Master of Signals
Chairman: Brig NF Wood

Welfare Secretary
Tel (mil) (9)4371 2089
Tel (civ) 01258 48 2089
Email: welfare@royalsignalsassociation.co.uk

Membership Secretary
Tel (mil) (9)4371 2090
Tel (civ) 01258 482090
Email: admin@royalsignalsassociation.co.uk



Mrs Linda Sizeland
Tel: 01258 482089



Mrs Caroline Addison
Tel: 01258 482090

General Secretary and Treasurer: Col (Retd) T Canham
Assistant General Secretary: Maj (Retd) M Tivey
Welfare Secretary: Mrs L Sizeland
Membership Secretary: Mrs C Addison



The Royal Signals Association
and
The Royal Signals Benevolent Fund

Swift and Sure Help for Signallers in Need

Royal Signals Association – ‘phone 01258 482090 or e-mail admin@royalsignalsassociation.co.uk

Your Legacy can help us

Did you ever benefit from a welfare grant from Corps Funds or maybe one of your mates received help with a welfare problem where the Royal Signals Benevolent Fund stepped in to help him or her in their time of need? There has been a long-standing saying that the “Corps looks after its own” and Royal Signals has a proud history of care for its people, supported by the one day’s pay scheme and generous donations from serving and retired Signallers.

.... help others in their time of need

That work continues today and every year we help hundreds of those who have fallen on hard times whether it be a serving Signaller who has been injured on operations, the families of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, members of the Corps who need help with specialist medical care for their children or veterans who need help in maintaining their mobility and independence.

We don’t distinguish between Regular and TA, National Service, ex-ATS or WRAC who served with the Corps, officer or soldier and their dependants; any case brought to us will be considered with expert support from SSAFA, The Royal British Legion and the Army Benevolent Fund. We will help whenever we can ... and you can help too, by leaving a legacy in your will. Its simple to do and can make all the difference to someone who has worn the same capbadge and who may not have been as lucky as you. If you would like to make a difference, please contact the Association who will tell you how to leave a legacy so that others from the Corps might benefit from your generosity.

The 2013 edition of the Newsletter, has been finalized and sent to all RHQ members and Branch secretaries. A .pdf copy is on the web page; www.royalsignalsassociation.co.uk to be downloaded or read on line. If you are a member of RHQ Branch and have not received your copy, it may be that we do not have your correct address recorded. To ensure that you do not miss our next year, please remember to keep us updated when you move.

Harrogate Branch has a new Secretary, **Jim McPhee**, and I would like to welcome him and hope he will enjoy his important role; while bidding farewell to the outgoing secretary, **Derek Fowler**, who all at RHQ thank for his hard work in the past and send best wishes for a speedy recovery.

RSA Reunion 2013. The details for the 2013 reunion (including application forms for car passes and meals etc) can be found on the RSA website (address above). However, Branch members without access to the Internet can obtain a copy either from their branch secretary or from Blandford (RSA AO) - a reminder of the date; 22 – 23 June 2013.



By the time this edition of *The Wire* is published, the AGM for 2013 will have taken place at the Victory Services Club. All life members of the Association are eligible (and encouraged) to attend. Minutes from the meeting are available and Branch representatives who attend take a report of the proceedings back to their Branches. If you were unable to attend this year, but would like to do so in 2014, the AGM will take place on 22 Mar 2014 at the Victory Services Club.

The photograph above shows the choir from the 25th (and final) Corps Carol Service to have taken place in London. The Project



Noel Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols will take place in Liverpool Cathedral on 29 Nov 2013 and it is hoped that a southern area service can also be organized. Details will be made available as this project develops.

New Life Members. A warm welcome is extended to the following members enrolled since the last issue of *The Wire*;

WO2 Peter Atkinson	1980-02	Sig Matthew Japp	1939-46	Sig John Perkins	1969-73
Sig Mark Barber	1989-97	SSgt Lee Johns	1989-date	Cpl Joseph Regan	1959-67
LCpl Joseph Bedford	1987-96	SSgt Iain Johnston	1991-date	SSgt Derek Richards	1991-date
Sgt Marvin (Billy) Bremner	1988-date	Sgt Shirley Kane	1977-87	WO2 James Richards	1991-13
LCpl Paul Brown	1989-90	Cpl Arthur Kerr	1956-67	SSgt Stuart Ridgwell	1985-09
Brig Peter Burke	1960-97	LCpl Matthew Kimber	2001-date	WO1 David Rogers	1989-date
Cpl Allan Chamberlain	1959-61	Sgt Jason Knight	1996-date	Sgt Samantha Rowley	1988-date
LCpl Catherine Chamberlain	1989-00	Sgt Issah Korimboccus	1968-77	SSgt Marion Sayiss	1977-84
Cpl Mark Chimiczewski	1977-86	Cpl Elizabeth Leitch	1996-date	Sig Raymond Smith	1945-48
Maj Peter Clarke	1962-94	LCpl Robert Lewis	1979-91	SSgt Sean Smith	1987-date
WO2 Anthony Cleworth	1970-09	Sgt Kevin Luckham	1970-82	Cpl Christopher Sneath	1957-59
Sig John Crawford	1993-04	WO2 James Lycett	1959-84	Cpl Coralie Stainthorp	1999-date
WO2 Taff Elliott	1958-83	Sig Raymond Mann	1959-64	Sgt David Stanton	1970-84
LCpl David Ennis	1998-82	WO2 Barry Martin-Pitt	1972-93	LCpl Dean Sutton	1987-98
LCpl Derek Fielding	1980-88	SSgt Mary McChesney	1989-date	Sig David Symonds	1985-92
SSgt Jonathan Giddens	1989-date	SSgt Kenny McIntosh	1987-date	Col Roger Thompson OBE	1959-97
Cpl Brian Halligan	1957-59	Sig Andreas McIver	1972-88	Cpl Andy Tiernan	1970-93
LCpl Christopher Holding	2003-date	Sig Chris Mockford	1980-93	Sgt Gwen Tipton	1982-94
SSgt John Hopwood	1975-95	LCpl Rob Moore	1984-93	Sig Robert Turner	1955-57
SSgt Kathleen House	1964-72	SSgt Steven Munro	1989-date	Cpl Clive Williams	1971-83
WO2 Robert Howe	1989-date	Cpl Ewen Murray	1964-70	LCpl Stephen Williams	1973-79
Sgt Marc Jackson	1989-date	Cpl Michael Ody	1987-99	Sig Karl Wingate	2005-date
Sig Neil Jackson	1955-57	Sgt Christopher Payne	1977-89	WO1 Paul Wright	1993-date

DONATIONS

Mr R Waldron	£ 20.00
Mr Terry Lightfoot in memory of the late Lt Col S Pavey and Maj S Bresloff	£ 20.00
Hon Lt Struan James-Robertson	£ 60.00
Blandford Garrison collection during soldiers' Christmas Lunch	£ 112.16
East Kent Branch RSA	£ 700.00
In Memory of 249 Signal Squadron (FAELF) from the remaining members of Happy Squadron	£ 40.00
Glossop and District OCA	£ 30.00
Essex Yeomanry Assn	£ 30.00
Poole Branch RSA	£ 200.00
Legacy from the estate of the Late Mrs Agnes Waters (nee Thomson)	£1,000.00
Laura Cranston in memory of the late Henry Albert Morgan	£ 40.00
In memory of the late Lt Col Robin Painter	£ 50.00
The Worshipful Company of Information Technologists	£ 50.00
In Memory of the Late Maj Raymond Banham	£ 138.00
Mr and Mrs S Freeman-Pannett	£ 20.00
Col I G Swan MBIM	£ 100.00
Mr I Korimboccus	£ 25.00
Lincoln Branch	£ 50.00
Collecting tin, Museum Café Blandford Camp	£ 38.25
Mr P A Drummond	£ 18.00
Mr G T Riddy	£ 40.00
Blandford Garrison Golf Society	£ 175.00
Huddersfield Branch	£ 125.00
Exmouth Branch	£ 100.00
Support Our Services Shop Exmouth	£ 22.00
Tayside and Fife Branch	£ 46.00
Mr Rob Lewis	£ 10.00
Mr Paul Brown	£ 10.00
In memory of the late Sgt Tony Flynn	£ 288.00
Relief Chest Scheme, The Freemasons' Grand Charity, Cito Lodge	£1,700.00

Col BF Allen	£ 200.00
Mr RW Firman	£ 100.00
Mr B P Skelton	£ 25.00
In memory of the late Lt Col Arthur Steane	£ 91.00
Just Giving December 2012	£ 47.02

BATH BRANCH

Our Branch has a large area mostly in the 'BA' and 'SN' postcodes although a few members live outside this. We have about 120 members and use e-mail to communicate to most of them. The Branch Committee is **Howard Ham**, President; **Mike Macklin**, Chairman; **Bob Vale**, Treasurer; **Steve Farrow**, Secretary; **Maurice Davies**, **Arthur Threlfall-Searson** and **Dick Hemming**.

The Branch is fortunate to have Royal Signals units and serving members of the Corps in the local area and our links with them and their support for many of the Branch functions is very much appreciated. We organise a variety of events throughout the year.

Twenty three of us met at the Pulteney Arms in Bath in March for lunch followed by a guided walk around Sydney Gardens led by **Bob Hussey** and **Mike Macklin**, who are both qualified Mayor of Bath's Guides. Fine weather helped ensure a very enjoyable day and the event finished with a visit to the recently refurbished Holburne Museum and tea in the café.

A very interesting visit to Prince Charles's gardens at Highgrove House was organised in May by **Steve Farrow**, and attended by 26 members and friends. A tour around the gardens given by an extremely well informed guide was followed by a light afternoon tea and an inevitable visit to the Highgrove shop!

Dick Hemming photographed the 21 Signal Regiment Freedom and Homecoming Parade in Bath in November 2011.



He had the pictures made into a framed compilation which he, **Richard Davis**, **Harry Hemming** and **Arthur Threlfall Searson** presented to the Regiment in May. They were made very welcome and spent a pleasant hour strengthening ties between the Regiment and the Branch.



CO Lt Col Andy Aitken, Arthur Threlfall-Searson, Dick Hemming, Richard Davis (Chairman)

In August **Howard Ham** led seven members on a 5 mile walk around the Avon Valley ending at the Cross Guns pub near the Avoncliff aqueduct. They completed the walk in good order (!) and six more joined at the pub for lunch.

Thirty two of our members attended our AGM at the American Museum in Bath. This was preceded by an informative and interesting guided tour of the American museum focussing on US history up until the civil war. It was followed by lunch, after which members were free to roam the museum and grounds.

On Remembrance Sunday **Harry Hemming** laid the wreath in Bath at the cenotaph and **Alun Stewart**, our Standard Bearer, attended this and the afternoon parade in Bath.

Later in November **Arthur Threlfall-Searson** and **Maj Carl Budding** organised a lunch for 16 members in the WOs' & Sgts' Mess, 21 Signal Regiment followed by a presentation on the Satellite Ground Station by **Glenn Lloyd** (ex Corps) of Astrium Services, and a visit to the site itself. **Maj Budding** hosted the group and ensured a hospitable and enjoyable afternoon meeting members of the Regiment.

At this event **Harry Hemming** and **Patricia Edridge** were presented with Honorary Membership awards and **Lt Col (Retd) Ernie Short** and **Maj (Retd) Jim Peck** were presented with their 50 year badges



L-R Harry Hemming, Patricia Edridge, Jim Peck and Ernie Short

Members of the Association were invited to attend the final 2 Signal Brigade Horseshoe dinner held on 24 November at Corsham prior to the closure of the Headquarters.

In December **Maurice Davies** organised a small but select and enjoyable gathering at the Crown in Wells. A light bar lunch was enjoyed by all with members able to visit the farmers market held in the town.



Jim Marten-Smith, Greta Keeling, Patricia Edridge, Mike Macklin, Christine Davies and Maurice Davies

EAST KENT BRANCH

Chairman **Trevor Allison**
Hon Sec **John Ballantyne**

Our year began as usual, in January, with a gathering at the Grange Moor Hotel in Maidstone, for our Annual General Meeting, and we were lucky enough to have secured the attendance of RHQ Association Secretary, **Caroline Addison**, accompanied by husband 'Doc'. Following the meeting **Caroline** gave a brief account of the activities of the Corps and the latest news of the Association.

During the course of the meeting, the then Chairman/person **Doreen Allison** recalled the events of the Branch throughout the previous year, including a talk by two magistrates on the complexities of passing just sentences, having borne in mind all the circumstances, and then tasking the audience with several cases inviting them to "pass judgement," the results of which were both interesting and revealing. Our weekend away was to Wales, and the quieter months included trips to Sissinghurst Castle, a private cinema performance and a concert organised by one of our members, **Maj Tom Bewsey**, who at the incredible age of 90 plus still manages to play a mean violin in the Sidcup Symphony Orchestra, of which he is a founder member. The annual garden party and "Presidents Day" were two great events enjoyed by the Branch, which heralded the end of, dare I say, summer, and preparations began in earnest for the Remembrance Day Parade and Christmas lunch. All in all, the Branch had another busy year, and is looking forward to this year's events.

Already, our Mr & Mrs Contest has passed successfully and we are looking forward to this year's away weekend to Torquay in April, with fifty one travellers eagerly waiting to test out the indoor pool and the underground bowling lanes.

The Branch continues to be well supported, and for any ex-signallers in the area who would like to join us, please contact the Hon Sec **John Ballantyne**, all the details are on the Branch website, or go to the RHQ website and follow the links to East Kent Branch, where you can download the relevant forms and information.



SOUTH LONDON BRANCH

Chairman **Peter Benstead**
Secretary **Steve Bland**

On Friday 8 February some 54 members and guests attended our annual dinner at the Croydon Bowling Club – our usual venue. Our Guest of Honour was **Mrs Caroline Addison**, accompanied by her husband 'Doc'. After a splendid meal and the usual toasts, **Caroline** replied to the toast to the Guests and gave the assembled company a run down on the state of the RSA and the Corps generally which was greatly appreciated by all.



Any ex or serving member of the Corps who lives in the vicinity of Croydon is very welcome to come along to our monthly meetings (each second Thursday) and enjoy convivial company in the relaxed atmosphere of the Croydon Bowling Club. Try it once and you're sure to join the Branch. Simply contact the Hon Sec via our web-page which hangs off the Royal Signals Association web-site.

BERGELEN VETERENS ASSOCIATION

The Birgelen Veterans Association (BVA) has over 520 members who have settled into civilian life in a broad community around the world. Regular contact is maintained through a central web site, group email and, annual re-unions.

The Association is dedicated to bringing together and sustaining contact with the professional men and women of all Corps and Agencies who served with: 1 Wireless Regiment Munster, 13 Signal Regiment, Birgelen, or any of their sub-units, and is working to uphold the family spirit of those units

Its other priority is to maintain and to sustain its nominated charity in the former Regimental areas. This is currently the 'Hilfe fur Krebskranke Kinder' (Help for children suffering from cancer) in Ophoven. Germany. This particular charity was selected to enable the Association:

- To maintain an important link to the local community.
- Foster the Anglo/German friendships formed over the 40 year life of the Regiment in Germany.
- Support a very worthy cause.

We offer a warm welcome to Regimental veterans, including wives and children, who have had the privilege of working and living at these memorable locations.

The winter season has nearly passed and our members are no doubt looking forward to a little more of a summer this year. Our annual re-union is held over a long weekend in the English Riviera coastal resort of Torquay, where some sunshine would really put the icing on the cake. If you would like to meet up and reminisce with old colleagues and friends from your Birgelen days, why not join us at the Cavendish Hotel between the 4th and 7th of October 2013. Further details are available from our Secretary or through our website .



The 2012 get together

Fund raising activities on behalf of our nominated charities have continued. **Cheri Hopkins** (wife of **Dave Hopkins**) and her friend **Sara Soinak** undertook a challenging bike tour, from Chapala out to the Pacific coast of Mexico. Cycling in Mexico is a risky undertaking. After completing hundreds of miles on our behalf, **Cheri** was struck by a bus, sustaining a broken bone in her hand and severe bruising to her leg and body. Unfortunately, the seriousness of those injuries meant that **Cheri** was unable to continue. **Sara** has continued to ride, recently passing the 200km mark, and is on track to reach her target of Cancun. The



Sara Soinak

membership is rightly proud of their heroic efforts and thanks them for their selfless dedication to raising funds

One of the detachments of 13 Signal Regiment was 3 Squadron, stationed in Berlin. The divided city along with the iconic Teufelsberg building were memorable places for those who served there. Most veterans have genuinely fond memories of working and living in the city that never slept. Families lived in well maintained quarters, received the Field Ration Issuing System (FRIS) food surpluses, enjoyed excellent travel and entertainment experiences, as well as the opportunity for involvement in a wider range of sporting pursuits. I expect that those of you who experienced it will remember travelling by car down the Berlin Corridor from Helmstadt for the first time, taking the magnificent Military Train and eating dinner while the Russian's looked on, and enjoying a luxury stay at Edinburgh House during a departure week. From the social media coverage it would appear that many ex-military colleagues venture back to Berlin to rekindle those fond memories. Many changes have occurred since the wall came down, but many of the old places and establishments are still going strong.

Contact the Secretary: **Cyril Harding**: secretary@birgelenvets.org or join via our website <http://www.birgelenvets.org> where you will be made most welcome.



LAST POST

Name	Years Served	Date of Death
Sig EJ Bond	1943/57	15-Feb-13
LCpl JM Bonney	1955/57	24-Jan-13
LCpl MJ Bradford	1953/57	05-Feb-13
SSgt JE Bradford	1954/80	09-Feb-13
Sig FE Brewer	1943/47	03-Feb-13
Sig RS Butler	1949/55	18-Feb-13
Sgt FK Campbell	1954/68	07-Feb-13
Capt RC Carnegie	2009/date	26-Jan-13
Cpl CEG Chinchin	1951/74	23-Jan-13
Cpl G Clarke	1954/57	22-Jan-13
Sgt FC Corr	1946/61	29-Jan-13
LCpl GG Cowlin	1942/46	??-Aug-12
SSgt AJ Crabbe	1946/63	15-Jan-13
Col AH Dennis	1945/80	26-Feb-13
Sgt M Egan	1950/79	??-Dec-12
Capt DW Evans	1940/46	27-Oct-10
Capt DO Fairlie	1942/59	16-Jan-13
Sgt CW Gordon	1978/88	23-Feb-13
Cpl RJ Grange	1949/52	24-Jul-12
SSgt RA Graves	1939/46	19-Jan-13
GS Greaney	1950/55	28-Jan-13
Maj JC Green	1939/62	14-Feb-13
Sig RC Grinyer	1943/47	07-Jan-13
Sig NO Guya	2011/date	01-Feb-13
WO2 K Halliwell	1954/79	14-Jan-13
Sig R Hannah	1942/47	08-Mar-13
SSgt GR Harrison	1947/69	23-Mar-12
Sgt P Hayes	1995/date	26-Jan-13
Sig ET Hearldon	1956/70	05-Feb-13
Sgt AJ Heritage	1958/83	27-Feb-13
Sig BS Jesson	1950/52	30-Sep-12
Sgt BE Keating	1941/46	27-Feb-13
LCpl M Lang	1959/61	02-Oct-12
Sgt W Lawrence	1954/77	12-Feb-13
Sig H Lee	1938/46	??-Mar-13
Sig JG Mason	1943/46	15-Jan-13
Maj PH Massie	1948/67	20-Jan-13
Sgt PJ Mosley	1961/83	02-Feb-13
Lt GH Paton	1941/46	10-Apr-10
Cpl HD Pridmore	1941/46	13-Jul-05
Sig GR Richards	1976/80	17-Jan-13
LCpl A Ricketts	1959/60	29-Jan-11
LCpl GT Roberts	1971/78	05-Feb-13
Sig JF Rollins	1951/53	24-Feb-13
WO2 PJ Roscoe	1963/85	07-Jan-13
Sig EH Ross	1948/48	19-Jan-13
Sgt AE Scott	1955/58	06-Feb-13
Sgt MD Shaw		25-Jan-13
Sig AR Shelton	1955/58	21-Nov-12
Sig M Skinner	1940/45	04-Feb-13
Maj KN Smart	1939/60	09-Feb-13
LCpl DK Springham	1947/49	24-Jan-13
Cpl MJ Taylor	1956/65	26-Jan-13
Sig PM Vass	1953/64	16-Feb-13
Sgt AL Wain	1940/48	15-Feb-13
Sig LF Winter	1942/46	30-Jan-13
Sgt JF Wood	1948/63	10-Jul-10

OBITUARIES

HUTTON – Sgt Andrew Hutton died on 25th July 2012

Andy Hutton was born in Scotland on 11 January 1935 and at that time his surname was **Fish**. He joined the Army at Richmond on 5 March 1950. He went on leave for Easter and then had to return to Beverley. It was in 6 (Boys) Training Regiment that he joined the Boxing Team. He passed his trade training at Ripon as a Driver and Despatch Rider. He was sent to Ismailia in Egypt and then Tripoli, from 1954 to 1956. After Home postings at Chester, Catterick and Lincoln, he went to Kenya in 1961 and then to Kuwait. In 1963 he was posted to 7 Sig Regt at Herford, Germany for four years and then following a period at Catterick and Blandford, he returned to 7 Sig Regt. He finally left the Royal Corps of Signals in 1975. During his time in Germany, he met and married a German girl, **Gisela**, and they settled in Vlotho, Germany.



THOMPSON - Agnes Scott Thomson died 22 August 2012

Agnes Scott Thomson joined the ATS at the age of 18. After initial training she was assigned to the Royal Corps of Signals and was trained as an OKL teleprinter operator. She was posted to the War Office in London and then at the age of 19 she went to Germany, Lunaburg Heath, and then later to Bad Oeynhausen (21 Army Group HQ). She met her future husband, **Frank Waters** (a Normandy Veteran) at Mohne Sea Rest Camp in May 1947. They were both demobbed in 1947, **Frank** on 6 June and **Agnes** in November.

They were married in Glasgow on 30th December 1947 and enjoyed nearly 65 years together until **Agnes** died on 22 August 2012. **Agnes** joined the ATS Association in Canterbury in 1985 and the RSA in 1998. She moved to Lincolnshire in 2000 and became a founder member of the Lincoln Branch of the ATS/WRAC Association and served as its President.

HARRIS – Capt Roger Harris died 27 September 2012

Roger Harris (just the one then!!!!) was born on 31 May 1944 in Caerleon (near Newport), Gwent in 'The Principality you know', as he would have said in his light Welsh accent and with a mischievous glint about him, especially when the 5 Nations (now 6 Nations) Rugby season was upon us.



Roger started his Army career at The Apprentice College, Harrogate in the term of 59C and trained to be a Telegraph Operator. It became apparent this 'quiet youth from the valleys' carried an air of respect and command about him and during his time at Harrogate, he steadily rose to become Apprentice Tradesman RSM. He finished his Apprentice Training in 1962 to start a Royal Signals career in 'long trousers'. This career was to last a further 30 years serving in UK, BAOR and the Middle East and again during this service, he mastered the art of being a person that could command respect from subordinates, peers and superiors alike which culminated in him being promoted through the ranks to RSM at only 31 years old, the youngest at that time in the Corps, before being commissioned. **Roger** finally attained the rank of Captain and finished his career back where it all started, in Harrogate, only this time as Quartermaster before his retirement in 1992.



Roger then went to work at Durham University in an administration role where he again used his communications and command skills to considerable effect, even civilians were not immune to 'The 'Arris charm' it would appear. After being made redundant, **Roger** returned to the military environment, working (supposedly part time, but often very much more) with SSAFA as Divisional Secretary, Richmondshire where his charm offensive continued to get help for military and ex military families in need of assistance. He also took on being The Assistant Secretary of the Catterick Branch RSA along with Secretary of Aldbrough St John Branch of the Royal British Legion tasks which he fully committed himself to.

Sunzi in - The Art of War wrote – *The commander stands for the virtues of wisdom, sincerity, benevolence, courage and strictness.* This statement typifies **Roger**, as during both his military and civilian careers, he was not a person to sit around 'idle' and was always willing to take responsibility, give out pearls of wisdom (word in your shell like, sir), was sincere in all he did. He was always looking for something to do or to improve for the benefit of all, be it when teaching recruits at Helles Barracks how to count i.e. one, two three, one, or when organising or convincing others that they should organise or carry out events for the benefit of others. He certainly had the courage of his convictions and was always fair when it came to being strict (many of us have had such a nice telling off!!!). **Roger** without doubt had a magical ability to communicate and get on with people in such a way that they would, without realising it, get involved in tasks or events they had not even thought about doing. Many have unknowingly but then willingly fallen under his soft charm and charisma with no argument to assist, aid and complete whatever was necessary at the time.

Words written for his Eulogy read at his Funeral Service at St Anne's Church, Catterick Village so aptly summed this up, *"Roger had that wonderful ability to be able to convince people that what he wanted them to do was actually their own idea"* ('what a good idea, I think you should arrange that' being one of his favourite sayings) and invariably people got on with it.

Whilst being loyal and conscientious to both his Military and Civilian careers, **Roger** was also a loyal and ardent fan of family life in its entirety and was a very proud and supportive husband and father. In return he was extremely appreciative of the support given to him by his beloved family, especially of the good lady indoors, **Elsie**, and his children No. 1 daughter **Christine**, No. 2 daughter **Janet**, No. 3 daughter **Carol** and lastly No. 1 son **Gareth** (**Roger** always admitted to having a problem with remembering names hence his Harrogate and Helles training with numbers held him in good stead to remember who was who within his family circle).

Those of us that have met and known **Roger** through the years will have many fond memories along with many a tale to tell as well as being the better for the knowing of him so think upon these words as you remember him.

"Many people will walk in and out of your life but only True friends will leave footprints in your heart"

HEARLTON - Edwin Terence Hearlton died 5 February 2013

The Herforder Association are saddened to report the death, suddenly, in hospital of **Terry Hearlton**, Vice Chairman of the Herforders. **Terry** leaves behind wife **Muriel**, four children, ten grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

He joined the Corps in 1956 and served for 14 years including tours in Libya (4yrs) Germany (4yrs) and Catterick, Blandford, Kidderminster and Colchester. During his service he boxed for the Corps as a Bantamweight and played Corps rugby.

After leaving the colours in 1971 he joined the TA and also gave up a great deal of his spare time supporting SSAFA. He was a member of the RSA (50yr badge holder) and Life President of MADLEA.

The funeral was held at the Church of the Transfiguration, Birchwood and committal at Walton Lea crematorium Warrington. The Association wish to extend it's sincere condolences to **Muriel** and Family for their grievous loss

GUYA - Sig Nicholas Guya died 1 February 2013

It is with great regret that the Ministry of Defence must announce the death of **Sig Nicholas Ochieng Guya** on 1 February 2013 following an incident while training on Warcop Training Area.

Sig Guya was born in Kenya on 2 April 1983. He leaves a wife **Carolynne**, and a two year old daughter, **Nicole**. He was serving with 214 Signal Squadron, part of 21 Signal Regiment (Air Support), and was based at Imphal Barracks, York.



Sig Guya was an utterly devoted and loving husband, father, brother and friend. Extremely kind hearted, he treated everyone with fairness, dignity and respect. He had a reputation for being a peacemaker, as he could quell any argument through his kind words and calming demeanour. He was relatively quiet and reserved, but his razor sharp wit and impeccable character meant he was hugely popular in the Squadron. His continuously positive attitude and humour would always raise spirits, and he was highly respected as both a man and a soldier.

Nick lived for his wife **Carolynne**, with whom he shared three blissful years of marriage, and for his daughter **Nicole**. Whilst in work he would continuously talk about **Carolynne** and **Nicole**, and looked forward to every hour that he could spend with them. In the mornings he was often seen happily walking to nursery with his daughter on his shoulders.

Nick joined the Army in October 2007, and completed basic training at the Army Training Regiment Pirbright. He then served with The Life Guards as a Mounted Dutyman for three years, which included performing ceremonial duties in London. Although doing very well in the Household Cavalry, he sought different challenges and transferred to the Royal Corps of Signals in 2011. Having retrained as a Royal Signals Installation Technician, **Nick** joined 21 Signal Regiment (Air Support) in May 2012 and had been due to deploy to Afghanistan later this year.

From the earliest stages of his Army career **Nick** was identified as a soldier with enormous potential and leadership ability. Being very mature and always willing to learn, he was often highlighted as being 'one step ahead'. Having served for five years, he was already an accomplished soldier, and was always willing to take on extra work to help his friends. He loved the Army and whether on exercise or in barracks he put his all into everything he did. In a short time with the Royal Signals, his dedication and commitment had earned him a strong reputation and much respect from all with whom he worked. Due to his impressive ability and attitude he had been looking forward to a long and successful career in the Army.

Nick will be sorely missed but happily remembered by all those fortunate enough to have known him. The thoughts of every member of the Regiment are with his family.



LOMAX – Eric Lomax died 8 October 2012

Eric Lomax, who has died aged 93, long nursed thoughts of revenge on his wartime Japanese captors then, in his dotage, finally had the chance to act when he came face to face with his principal tormentor; his choice of reconciliation over retribution inspired both those who met him and a film now being made starring Colin Firth.

British ex-prisoner of war Eric Lomax, left, and the ex-Japanese soldier Takashi Nagase stand on the bridge on the River Kwai in Kanchanaburi, Thailand, Sunday, July 12, 1998

A Signals officer captured at Singapore in 1942, **Lomax** was a prisoner at Kanchanaburi camp in Thailand when guards found a radio receiver and a map he had made of the Burma-Siam “death railway”.

He was made to stand for long hours in the burning sun. Stamped on, he had his arms broken and his ribs cracked with pickaxe handles; later he was waterboarded, with his head covered and water pumped into his nose and mouth to make him feel as if he was drowning. At night he was confined, coated in his own excrement, to a cage. A doctor who examined him later said there was not a patch of unbruised skin visible between his shoulders and his knees.

During his torture, **Lomax’s** English-speaking interpreter repeatedly demanded he confess to espionage, saying: “Lomax, you will tell us ...” and adding “Lomax, you will be killed shortly.” Knowing that an admission would seal his fate, **Lomax** remained steadfast. Such were the tortures inflicted upon him that he remembered calling out for his mother; but there were moments, too, when he was questioned about his schooling. At the last, when it became apparent he would not be executed, he was told, in a parody of English manners, to “keep your chin up”.

When the war ended **Lomax** seemed normal enough. He returned to Scotland and found that nobody was interested in “the unpleasantness” experienced by prisoners of the Far East. But he found that his mental scars refused to fade: he was woken by nightmares, and his inability to talk about his experiences contributed to the break-up of his first marriage.

When he later met a Canadian girl 17 years his junior on a long train journey, he found himself able to open up a little about his wartime experiences. He sent her letters and tape recordings which described his war, but only up to the fall of Singapore, a moment he described as “the beginning of the descent into hell”.

Lomax’s loving second marriage to **Patti Wallace** in 1983 also came under stress, as she faced his immense stubbornness, which could suddenly switch to outright hostility so that he would refuse to speak to her for a week. Eventually she wrote to a doctor studying PoWs’ psychological problems, and he read in The Daily Telegraph about the recently-formed Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture, which he started to visit.

A fellow former-prisoner then gave him a cutting from the Japan Times about an ex-Japanese soldier who had been helping the Allies to find the graves of their dead and claimed that he had earned their forgiveness. The accompanying photograph showed **Takashi Nagase**, the interpreter during **Lomax’s** interrogation, and the man with whom he most associated his ordeal.

For two years **Lomax** did nothing. Then he obtained a translation of **Nagase’s** memoir, which explained how shame had led the interpreter to create a Buddhist shrine beside the death railway. **Patti Lomax** then wrote to **Nagase**, enclosing her husband’s photograph and suggesting that perhaps the two men could correspond. She asked: “How can you feel ‘forgiven’, Mr Nagase, if this particular Far Eastern prisoner-of-war has not yet forgiven you?”

The reply she received declared: “The dagger of your letter thrust me into my heart to the bottom.” **Nagase** admitted that he still had flashbacks about torturing **Lomax** and thanked her for looking after her husband until they could meet. When **Patti Lomax** wrote back she enclosed a formal letter from her husband. Eventually the two elderly enemies arranged a meeting.

More than half a century after their previous meeting, the two men approached each other on the bridge on the river Kwai. After bowing formally, **Nagase** nervously acknowledged that the Japanese Imperial Army had treated the British appallingly. **Lomax** found himself saying: “We both survived”. Later **Nagase** said: “I think I can die safely now”. When they next met, in a Tokyo hotel room, **Lomax** carefully read out a letter he had written assuring **Nagase** of his total forgiveness.

The only son of a General Post Office manager, **Eric Sutherland Lomax** was born on 30 May 1919 at Joppa, outside Edinburgh, where he developed a burning interest in trains. He went to the Royal High School until 15, when he won a Civil Service competition to become a sorting clerk and telegraphist with the GPO. He joined a Baptist church, became engaged to marry, and enlisted in the supplementary reserve of the Royal Corps of Signals.

After the declaration of war he was sent to northern India before arriving on Singapore Island as a band played There’ll Always be an England at the quayside. He was commanding a Signals section of the 5th Field Regiment, Royal Artillery, when he heard a rumble that turned out to be the sinking of the great warships *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse*. After two confusing months when he was assured that the Japanese could never attack through the jungle, and which he spent relaying contradictory orders from headquarters, Singapore was taken and **Lomax** went into captivity along with some 80,000 other Allied troops.



He found himself first in Changi jail, where the Japanese began the systematic humiliation of their prisoners. For two months **Lomax** and several hundred others were forced to clear the jungle to make room for a Japanese war memorial. Then he endured five days in a stifling railway boxcar as he was transferred 1200 miles north to Ban Pong, 50 miles west of Bangkok in Thailand.

There he and several others built a radio receiver from scrap, huddling around it at night as it brought news of Allied progress in the war. The men kept the radio in a biscuit tin and, despite the risk of discovery, took it with them when they were transferred 100 miles north-west to Kanchanaburi.

It was there that prisoners were forced to work on the 418-mile railway line to Burma, a task that included erecting the notorious bridge on the river Kwai. **Lomax's** treatment was better than most: sent to the railway's repair shop, he was spared the physical hardship of prisoners ordered to clear the ground and lay the rails, and maintained his sanity by reading the Bible and studying Hindu and Japanese. He also began to compile his map.

An unannounced search then uncovered the radio, concealed beneath the bunk of another man in **Lomax's** hut who was immediately put on punishment duty. Shortly afterwards, **Lomax** and four other prisoners were told to gather their belongings and prepare for interrogation. **Lomax**, fearing execution, grabbed the map, reasoning that it would be essential if the men were to make a break for freedom. In the event, the men did not run, and the map was quickly discovered. Two of the five would indeed die of the injuries inflicted upon them.

Preparing for the ordeal that he knew lay ahead, **Lomax** carefully took off his glasses and watch, and thought of the Protestant martyrs. After a day forced to stand to attention in the sun, he was brought in for questioning. He could not remember how long it lasted, only that beatings were followed by more sophisticated torture by the military police. When he regained consciousness he was dragged back into the camp. There a Dutch doctor who treated **Lomax** told him that he had counted 900 blows in six hours.

Two weeks later, barely recovered from his battering, **Lomax** was taken to the headquarters of the Kempeitai, or military police. It was there that he first met **Nagase** who, as interpreter, became the focal point for **Lomax** during his torment. It was he who asked **Lomax** about the radio and map, and told him to confess that he was a spy and name fellow "conspirators" among the prison population. **Lomax**, however, replied that the map was simply an effort to make sense of his surroundings by recording a few observations. The Japanese were particularly confused by his claim to have been obsessed with railways since childhood. "You are railway mania?" he was asked.

Yet he refused to break and make a false confession. Instead he was sent to Bangkok and put on trial, charged with being a bad influence. Sentenced to five years, **Lomax** was then told that his name had been abolished and that he was now prisoner No 615.

In jail back in Changi, he deliberately starved himself in order to be transferred to the prison hospital, which proved so luxurious by comparison that, when he was discharged, he deliberately fell downstairs to have himself readmitted.

On returning home after the war with a mention-in-despatches he found that his mother had died believing he was dead. Then he married the fiancée who had waited for him since 1941 while signing on with the Army for another two years to teach young undergraduate officers about radios.

His old job at the Post Office then proved unsatisfying. He joined the Colonial Service in the Gold Coast (now Ghana), where he helped to build a huge dam across the Volta river and a harbour at Tema while also overseeing the construction of a 600-mile, 3ft 6in gauge railway. But independence was already in the air, and he spent his last year as an assistant government agent at Sekondi, enjoying the chance to run a district and lending the future President Kwame Nkrumah a pair of swimming trunks – the closest, he would later joke, that he ever got to a seat of power.

Lomax returned home to write occasional feature articles on railways for the Telegraph and work for the Scottish Gas Board before becoming a lecturer on personnel management at Strathclyde University.

The post-traumatic stress never left him, and in fact grew worse after his retirement in 1982. Then he read about the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture, and made a 600-mile journey to attend it every six weeks.

His meeting with **Nagase** was filmed for a television documentary, *Enemy, My Friend?* (1995), broadcast on ITV and in 23 countries around the world on the 50th anniversary of V-J Day. The following year **Lomax** published *The Railway Man*, a powerful memoir placing his wartime experience in the context of his whole life. It won the JR Ackerley Prize and the NCR book award, and prompted other former Japanese prisoners to write from all around the world.

In 2007 **Osamu Komai**, the son of **Mitsuo Komai**, the second-in-command at Kanchanaburi camp who was hanged after the war largely on **Lomax's** evidence, visited **Lomax** at his cottage in Berwick-upon-Tweed to apologise for his father's actions. Their conversation, conducted through an interpreter, was filmed for a Japanese television documentary. Afterwards **Komai** seemed relieved. "Apparently it was the equivalent of offering me his soul," **Lomax** said.

Disgusted by his own wartime actions, **Takashi Nagase** considered suicide after the war, but instead opened an English language school. He married, then began making pilgrimages to Kanchanaburi. Back in Japan he started making speeches promoting reconciliation between former Japanese soldiers and Allied prisoners. He persevered despite a hostile reception from many of his countrymen, and in 1976 introduced 23 ex-PoWs to 51 former Japanese soldiers at Kanchanaburi. In October 1989 **Lomax** read **Nagase's** memoir *Crosses and Tigers*, which described how the interpreter was still haunted by the brutal torture of one particular prisoner. "That prisoner was me," **Lomax** said. The film of their story, also called *The Railway Man*, is due out this year.

Eric Lomax is survived by his wife and a daughter of his first marriage. A son and a daughter predeceased him.

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