THE Wire

and the Journal

February 1999



The Royal Corps of Signals

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TA TERRITORIAL ARMY

BE THE BEST

The Royal Signals Magazine

February 1999 Vol. 53 No: 1

The Wire

(Incorporating the Journal of the Royal Signals Institution)

All correspondence and matter for publication in **The Wire** should be addressed to **The Head of Publications, The Wire,** RHQ Royal Signals, Blandford Camp, Blandford Forum, DT11 8RH Dorset. Tel No: Blandford mil 2079 STD 01258 48 2079

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Remittances should be made payable to Royal Signals Benevolent Fund

Editor Lt Col (Retd) P. Valder
Assistant Editor Mrs J. A. Herring

The Wire **is a member of the Association of Service Newspapers**

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FRONT COVER–35 Sig Regt has long been associated with the Birmingham Children's Hospital. On the opening of the new hospital, now renamed 'Diana, Princess of Wales Children's Hospital', the Regiment was invited to provide escorts and stewards for the official opening by **Her Majesty The Queen** and **His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh**. During the visit His Royal Highness took the opportunity to chat with the RSM, **WO1 Kev Winkles** and **SSgt Ed Perry**.

BACK COVER–Exercise Lion's Sun. A dawn beach landing by 1 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (215)

FROM THE EDITOR

I expected a hefty postbag as a result of the flyer included with the December issue of *THE WIRE*.

Your response has substantially exceeded my expectations. Supportive and constructive is the first impression - with many ideas that will influence future copies of *THE WIRE*. How to play *The Journal* is now subject to detailed analysis of your comments. We will keep you informed and in the meantime, many thanks for your encouraging responses.

ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP

Part of the Royal Signals Association's charter is to help in the reunion of former friends. This task is made more difficult by the numerous soldiers who do not stay in contact with the Association after discharge. It is a proven fact that, later on in life, when family, job and home are more secure, memories of life in the Corps are often rekindled and an interest is taken in possible reunions with former pals.

When you are contacted by the Association upon discharge, please be sure to return the relevant card and stay in touch – believe us, one day you will be glad you did!

Authors alone are responsible for the contents of their articles. The opinions expressed in the articles of this publication are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy and views, official or otherwise, of the Royal Signals or the Ministry of Defence. This publication should be treated with discretion by the recipient.

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IMPORTANT DATES

1999

10 April	- RSA Branch Reps meeting and AGM – Duke of York's HQ, London
11 May	- Corps Dinner – Café Royal, London
3 June	- Morrison Cup – Blandford Morrison Cup – Germany
26/27 June	- RSA Reunion Weekend – Blandford
26 June	- Corps Luncheon – Blandford.
28 June	- Princess Royal Day
5 September	- Corps Luncheon – Catterick
29 October	- Scottish Dinner
16 December	- Corps Carol Service – London

RSA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Royal Signals Association's Annual General Meeting will be held in Mercury House, the Duke of York's HQ, Kings Road, London on Saturday 10 April 1999, starting at 1030hrs. All Life Members of the Association are eligible and welcome to attend. For security reasons, any vehicle details should be given to RHQ at Blandford by 30 March 1999.

CORPS DINNER

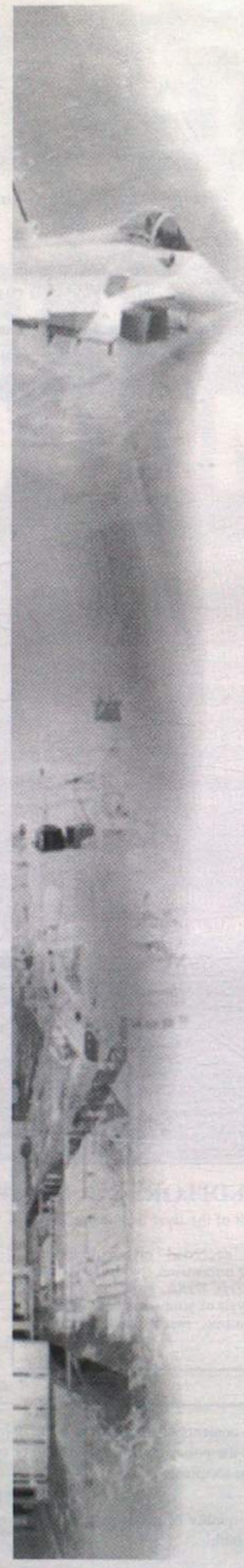
1999

1. Tuesday 11 May 1999, 1900hrs for 1930hrs.
2. Café Royal, London.
3. Attendance:
   a. All Royal Signals Officers, Regular or TA, serving or retired.
   b. Former WRAC Officers who served with the Corps.
4. Black Tie.
5. Cost:
   a. £ 32 – for those who subscribe to Corps Funds.
   b. £ 61 – for those who do not subscribe.
6. Seating requirements and cheques made payable to: **'The Royal Signals Benevolent Fund'** to RHQ Royal Signals, Blandford Camp, Blandford, DORSET DT11 8RH.

DRESS UNIFORMS FOR SALE

Service Dress complete –	Jacket, trousers, Sam Browne belt, brown shoes (size 11) Service Cap (Field Officer – size 7⅛)	£200
Mess Kit –	Jacket, waistcoat, trousers Mess Wellington Boots (size 11)/spurs	£300

Sizes – 44 inch chest, 38 inch waist, 32 inch leg. Both uniforms rarely worn since their purchase in November 1993. For further information phone **Martin Ramshaw** on 01258 459265.



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LSC Group is a dynamic IT/Logistics company based in the Midlands. The company has contracts with a number of Blue Chip Organisations throughout the UK and abroad. Due to ongoing business success LSC is expanding and looking to recruit a number of consultants with varying skills to work at various locations throughout the UK. The positions will suit people seeking a long term career with opportunities for involvement in leading edge projects.

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ROYAL SIGNALS MUSEUM ACQUIRES SIGNALMAN KENNETH SMITH'S GEORGE CROSS

*by **Colonel C. J. Walters**, Regimental Colonel*

The George Cross of **Signalman Kenneth Smith GC** has recently been acquired by the Royal Signals Museum, Blandford. The medal was recently auctioned by Spink who describe it as, 'A superb clandestine operations posthumous GC'. The *London Gazette* of 19 October 1945 describes the background to this posthumous award that became the subject of one of the official Royal Corps of Signals paintings.

*'On the night of 10 January 1945, on the Island of Ist in the Adriatic (off the coast of Yugoslavia), **Signalman Smith** was a member of a patrol of the Long Range Desert Group, which was attacked by saboteurs, who laid time-bombs in the vital houses of the Island. After hearing some shots, **Signalman Smith** entered the Wireless Room and found one such bomb on the table. Realising that there were a number of partisans in the room and young children elsewhere in the house, **Signalman Smith** immediately picked up the bomb, which was ticking. He intended to move it to a place of safety behind a nearby wall, but he had only gone a few yards outside the house when the bomb exploded and he was blown to pieces. There is no doubt that **Signalman Smith**'s action certainly saved the lives of many of his comrades, partisans and civilians, and that he showed superb courage and complete disregard for personal safety in lifting a time-bomb which was already ticking when he knew that it might explode at any minute'.*

The George Cross is very rarely awarded and is, for instance, much rarer than the VC. **King George VI** originally instituted it on 24 September 1940 for, *'acts of the greatest heroism or of the most conspicuous courage in circumstances of extreme danger'*. The Cross is intended primarily for civilians and is only awarded to members of the Armed Forces for actions for which purely military honours are not normally granted. In the first 59 years of its existence only 154 were awarded directly which include the one conferred upon the Island of Malta. A further 244 were awarded to replace eligible Empire Gallantry, Albert and Edward Medals that ceased; as such only 398 have ever been awarded.

Originally, the posthumously awarded GC of **Signalman Smith** became the property of his mother along with his five campaign medals. She in turn eventually gave her second son the GC and her third son **Michael** the campaign medals to safeguard.

Michael was only three years old when **Kenneth** won the GC so he did not know him but, '…..had always wanted to know more about the circumstances in which my brother had given his life. Then, in 1985 my sister saw an article by the Louth Branch of the British Legion in the Lincoln press. They were seeking information about my brother on behalf of the Council of Ist (pronounced EAST) who wished to erect a memorial to him. As a result we sent them a copy of the citation and a photograph of him.'

This incident further increased **Michael**'s interest in his brother's award and was closely followed by a programme by **Sir Fitzroy Maclean** on the TV programme Pebble Mill, to whom they wrote. Following a number of other contacts it was eventually arranged with the Ist council that **Michael**, his wife and his son should visit the small Island in July 1988. They flew to Split, drove to Zedar and sailed to the Island. On the Island the few hundred Islanders treated them extremely kindly. They attended a reception, met locals who had known **Kenneth** and most important met **Vjeko Smoljan** and a friend **Maria. Vjeko** had befriended **Kenneth** and **Maria**, as a young girl, had been in the house at the time of the original fatal incident. She stated that Kenneth had saved her life. The visitors saw the original house, the original radio room and **Kenneth**'s initial burial place. After visiting the Island, **Michael** and his family went on to the British Military Cemetery in Belgrade where **Signalman Kenneth Smith GC** was finally laid to rest after the War. The whole visit was an extremely rewarding and moving family occasion.

But the story does not end there because when **Michael** and **Kenneth**'s brother died the GC could not be found; it was assumed to have been lost or sold. It was not until about two years after his death that his wife declared that the medal had been sold only six months after being put into his care. Armed with this knowledge **Michael** and his son **Jamie** set out to determine the medal's whereabouts. They had made no headway until **Jamie**, a computer specialist, tried the Internet. Within a short period he received an e-mail from a South African 'surfee' advising that the medal was in the hands of SPINK and would soon appear for auction. He made contact with them who advised him that the Royal Signals Museum had also sought information about the medal. **Michael** made contact with the Royal Signals Museum Trustees and was present when the medal was acquired.



Mr Michael Smith and his son Jamie, holding the George Cross

The medal will now reside in the home of the Royal Signals and as **Michael** stated, 'I am delighted that the medal has finally found a safe home where it will be respected and treasured. I think it would have been a great pity for such a national treasure to have gone overseas or to a private collector. I am a very happy man. It will now be on show as a permanent reminder to the nation of those who gave their lives so courageously that we may live in freedom.'

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* Source: Financial Times September '97

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MOVEMENTS

OFFICERS

DECEMBER 1998

Name & Rank	*Unit to which Posted*
Col R. J. Evans OBE	BDILS (W)
Col K. J. Hadfield	Royal School of Signals
Lt Col J. R. S. Amberton	Royal School of Signals
Lt Col M. A. Rough	HQ Northern Ireland
A/Lt Col A. N. Morphet	R Sigs/Intel Div
Maj B. P. Avison	21 Signal Regiment (Air Sp)
Maj R. J. Carter MBE	HQ AFCENT
Maj M. S. Coleman	Royal School of Signals
Maj P. J. Holliday	249 Sig Sqn (AMF(L))
Maj P. M. Kelly	2 Signal Brigade
Maj G. L. Owen	14 Signal Regiment (EW)
Maj R. G. Thomas	Comms Training Wing
A/Maj G. L. Hegarty	14 Signal Regiment (EW)
Capt S. J. Boyne	HQ 1 Signal Brigade
Capt D. J. Foulkes	249 Sig Sqn (AMF(L))
Capt F. E. Hargreaves	3 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt
Capt K. McKenzie	14 Signal Regiment (EW)
Capt R. G. Nixon	3 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt
Capt I. G. Woodcock	2 Signal Regiment
Lt P. C. Young	2 Royal Anglian

JANUARY 1999

Name and Rank	*Unit to which posted*
Col C. L. le Gallais OBE	RCDS
Lt Col P. A. R. Rouse	DI (SI)
Maj G. N. Addley	HQ 11 Signal Brigade
Maj A. J. Allman	HQ DCSA
Maj B. Bosher	7 Sig Regt (Corps Main HQ)
Maj B. A. Coram	AD POL
Maj B. T. Dearman	HQ Royal Signals
Maj I. L. Dudding	32 Signal Regiment (V)
Maj M. J. M. Emslie	HQ 15 (NE) Signal Brigade
Maj S. C. Green	RMCS Shrivenham
Maj D. A. Gruncell	ACOS J6 PJHQ (UK)
Maj D. A. O. Holmes	37 Signal Regiment (V)
Maj S. A. Leigh	15 Signal Regiment
Maj R. T. O'Hara	HQ ARRC
Maj T. W. Pender-Johns	HQ London District
Maj P. Stephenson	HQ SCOTLAND
Maj D. A. Sullivan	30 Signal Regiment
Maj K. Whitehead	Combined Arms Trg Ctr
Maj P. W. J. Whitehead	DISC Support Unit
A/Maj H. F. M. Hughes	9 Signal Regiment (Radio)
Capt D. J. Duggan	15 Signal Regiment
Capt J. Howell-Walmsley	19 Mech Bde & SigSqn (209)
Capt J. M. Norris	ATR Bassingbourn
Lt B. H. Lambert BSc(Hons)	Royal School of Signals
Lt I. F. K. Bates	ATR Bassingbourn

WOs and SNCOs

DECEMBER 1998

Rank and Name	*Unit to which posted*
WO1 F.G. Waters	The Royal School of Signals
WO2 FofS R.H. Batley	SSSU
WO2 R.A. Clubb	38 Signal Regiment (V)
WO2 A.M. Maxted	Glasgow UOTC
WO2 P.R. Sandford	JSSU Digby
WO2 A.D. Young	30 Signal Regiment
SSgt R.L. Bayliss	16 Signal Regiment
SSgt R.A. Clubb	38 Signal Regiment (V)
SSgt D.P. Coleman	16 Signal Regiment
SSgt A.B. Dixon	16 Signal Regiment
SSgt I.E. Evans	8 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (218)
SSgt C.N. Hughes	14 Signal Regiment (EW)
SSgt P.A. Moore	Royal School of Signals
SSgt N.S. Roberts	21 Signal Regiment
SSgt J.T.T. Seymor	CIS Eng Gp
SSgt S. Taylor	SHAPE ACE COMMSEC
SSgt P.R. Watson	1 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (215)
A/SSgt M.J.B. Cameron	16 Signal Regiment
Sgt C.N. Bentley	8 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (218)
Sgt P. Binns	249 Signal Squadron (AMF(L))
Sgt J. Cameron	16 Signal Regiment
Sgt A. Davidson	14 Signal Regiment (EW)
Sgt M.G.D. Ebanks	CIS Eng Gp
Sgt P.W. Elgenia	2 Signal Regiment
Sgt L.S. Ford	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt P.J. Gruncell	CIS Eng Gp
Sgt A.P. Mapstone	7 Signal Regiment
Sgt F. McGuiness	24 Airmob Bde & Sig Sqn (210)
Sgt A.P. Miller	JSSU FI
Sgt A.J. Sparling	HQNI & 15 Signal Regiment
Sgt P.B. Szeremeta	259 Signal Squadron
Sgt A.M. Thomson	Project CASH
Sgt A.J. Wyatt	2 Signal Regiment
A/Sgt T. Lees	7 Signal Regiment

JANUARY 1999

Rank and Name	*Unit to which posted*
WO1 RSM A.B. Hilborn	32 Signal Regiment (V)
WO1 RSM C.G. McGinley	40 Signal Regiment (V)
WO1 RSM S.P. Mitchell	19 Mech Bde & Sig Sqn (209)
WO1 RSM N.C. Yarwood	34 Signal Regiment (V)
WO2 N. Fisher	Royal School of Signals
WO2 P.V. McGarry	2 Signal Regiment
WO2 K. Shelmerdine	Edinburgh UOTC
WO2 D. Thornton	9 Signal Regiment (R)
WO2 K. Weaver	7 Signal Regiment
SSgt K. Carter	34 Signal Regiment (V)
SSgt J.M. Hamill	608 Signal Troop
SSgt S.J. Nickless	19 Mech Bde & Sig Sqn (209)
SSgt K. Stewart	Royal School of Signals
SSgt G. Sullivan	36 Signal Regiment (V)
SSgt M.G. Swain	MAPSTONE
SSgt D.J. Williams	UNICOM
Sgt P.S. Amies	94 Signal Squadron
Sgt M.C. Aver	6 CTT
Sgt A.C. Bates	CIS Eng Gp
Sgt K.D. Bremner	Balado Bridge
Sgt A.B. Burns	3 (UK) Div Signal Regiment
Sgt D.A. Catlett	39 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (213)
Sgt S.E. Colbeck	16 Signal Regiment
Sgt S. Colledge	35 Signal Regiment (V)
Sgt M.A. Concepcion	SHAPE Regional Signal Group
Sgt I. Davis	Royal School of Signals
Sgt I. Davis	11 Signal Regiment
Sgt R. Deegan	220 Signal Squadron
Sgt H. Dunlop	9 Signal Regiment (Radio)
Sgt H. Glean	16 Signal Regiment
Sgt P.J. Graham	ATR Bassingbourn
Sgt M.S. Knowles	34 Signal Regiment (V)
Sgt T.C. Lever	CIS Eng Gp
Sgt R.D. Long	Royal School of Signals
Sgt S. MacLaren	249 Sig Sqn (AMF(L))
Sgt T.B. Mayner	600 Signal Troop
Sgt L.H. Northeast	20 Armd Bde & Sig Sqn (200)
Sgt R.J. O'Connor	14 Signal Regiment (EW)
Sgt S.P. Oliver	4 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (204)
Sgt J. Saunders	7 Para RHA
Sgt D.S. Scragg	SSSU
Sgt A.R. Simms	1 (UK) Div Signal Regiment
Sgt C.A.S. Smith	16 Signal Regiment
Sgt I.J. Taylor	3 (UK) Div Signal Regiment
Sgt S. Welch	11 Signal Regiment
A/Sgt N.G. Hunt	14 Signal Regiment (EW)
A/Sgt G.D. Owen	32 RA
A/Sgt F.M. Poulson	21 Signal Regiment
A/Sgt J.P. Roberts	14 Signal Regiment (EW)
A/Sgt J.C. Ward	14 Signal Regiment (EW)
A/Sgt S.J. Lyne	JSSU Digby

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The Wire

The Editor is always pleased to receive interesting articles

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NEWS FROM HEADQUARTERS

HEADQUARTERS
ROYAL CORPS OF SIGNALS

EXERCISE IRON LIZARD 11-14 SEPTEMBER 1998
SPONSORED WALK IN AID OF THE JOSEPH WELD HOSPICE
SSgt Harding AGC (SPS), Chief Clerk - Exercise organiser
Maj Stuart R Signals - SO2 Doc/Eqpt
Maj Leigh R Signals - SO2 Trg Pol
Capt Bosley R Signals - SORLs
Capt Wright-Jones R Signals - PSO
LCpl Morgan RAMC - team medic
LCpl Savage - R Signals - 11 Sig Regt - team driver
Sig Lloyd R Signals - 11 Sig Regt - team driver
Sig Smith R Signals - 11 Sig Regt
Sig Newman R Signals - 11 Sig Regt
Mr Parker - Civil Servant - HQ R Signals
Miss S. Mills - Civil Servant - HQ R Signals
Miss F. McDougall - Civil Servant- HQ R Signals

THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 1998

On Thursday 10 September 1998, the adventure was about to begin. I was outside the Headquarters Royal Signals, at Blandford ready with the advance party of five people to travel down to Cornwall for the start of Ex Iron Lizard. An Adventurous Training Exercise which would involve walking 60 miles around the Cornish Coastal Path and raise money in the form of individual sponsorship for the Joseph Weld Hospice Trust. Despite the fact that six walkers had dropped out we still had enough walkers to make a difference. The start would be at the Lizard Point and all being well, would finish four days later at St Ives.

The journey down was without incident and within five hours we had arrived at the first campsite. Boscrege campsite was owned by **Chris** and **Peter Trevett** who had loaned us their facilities for free. The rest of the afternoon was spent setting up the tents ready for the arrival of the main party, which was due to arrive later that evening, and making a recce of the start and finish points for each day. By 2230hrs, the main party had arrived at the site. After a camp safety and exercise brief everyone was tucked up early ready for the start of Stage 1 the following day.

FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 1998

After a rain soaked night - where the rain was so heavy we thought we were going to get washed away, the start of Day 1 had arrived. After getting washed and dressed, it was down to Safeway Supermarket in Penzance for breakfast. I had arranged earlier with the manager that for every three breakfasts I purchased, the fourth would be free. This would be a great help as a good full English breakfast was appreciated by everybody who would be walking and burning the calories. After breakfast and a quick read of the morning papers, we set off for the 30mins trip to the Lizard Point to finally get under way.



Back Row (L-R): Matt Parker, SSgt Paul Harding, Sheridan Mills, Maj John Stuart, Maj Simon Leigh, Capt Mark Wright-Jones
Front Row (L-R): Capt Helen Bosley, LCpl Toney Morgan, Fiona McDougall, Sig Chris Newman, Sig Lindsay Smith

As everybody clambered from the minibuses the faces said it all. The clouds were gathering and the wind was picking up. Just time for a quick team photograph and we were off. No sooner had we joined the path and had walked about two miles the heavens opened and the whole group was soaked in minutes. This was not a good start. I could tell that morale would take a nosedive if the rain was to continue. But, luck was on our side and after about 10 minutes, the rain stopped, the clouds cleared and sunshine finally peeped through. The rest of the day was to continue in this fashion with a strong breeze that would dry the team out by the time we had reached Porthleven, the end of Stage 1. It was a good start to the walk and left nobody in any doubt as to what was expected from them over the next three days. Total distance covered on Stage 1 was 17 miles. After being picked up by the minibus it was back to the site for the team medic to look at any blisters. Three people had blisters, which were promptly looked at. That evening it was down to the local pub for our evening meal and a few well deserved orange juices and lemonades.

SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 1998

Yet another night of heavy rain greeted us for the start of Stage 2. Travelling down to Penzance for breakfast I could see that the mood was bleak and I think everybody would have preferred to stay in Safeway all day. I'm sorry to say that this is the Army and we had a mission to complete. So, with the group being dragged to the minibus kicking and screaming, we were off to Porthleven for the start of Stage 2. This would take us from Porthleven to St Michael's Mount and on to Penzance. The good news was no sooner had we left the minibus than the rain stopped and the sun came out. Morale of course soared to new heights and a good days walking was achieved. This part of the walk would take us over some spectacular scenery and with the added bonus of sunshine, it was enjoyed by all. Having arrived at St Michael's Mount, it was agreed that we would push on the extra three miles into Penzance. This proved to be a big mistake as it was all on tarmac. By the time we had arrived many of the team were complaining of sore feet. The medic would be busy back at the site! Total distance covered was 17 miles. Of course, during our absence on the walk the rear party had been busy. They had dismantled the site at Boscrege and moved to Higher Chellew, a superb location owned by **Pam** and **Eric Bleasdale.** Once again they had also given the use of their site for free. This site was just north of Penzance and would suit us well for the remainder of the walk.

That evening, after most of the team had limped to the minibus and the girls were awoken from their slumber, it was down to Penzance for a meal at the Branwell Meadery. Knowing we were on a sponsored walk, the Management had agreed to provide the table with free wine and mead. They treated us well and everybody was impressed with the food. The size of the portions proved so large that we made a booking for Sunday night.

SUNDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 1998

Stage 3 and no surprises, it rained again all night! But, once again, the day would be clear of rain with bright sunshine to accompany us all day. This was to be a long stage taking us from Mousehole to Lands End. But the scenery was spectacular! In the end we completed 18 miles, which was more than planned and a majority of the team were exhausted at the finish. Despite this most of the team did say it was the best days walking so far. That evening, after a short recovery, it was back down to Penzance to gatecrash the Meadery. Once again they provided a wonderful service with plenty of food to stock us up for the following day. Unfortunately, that evening we had our first casualty. One of the team who had been suffering on Sunday during the walk collapsed through exhaustion and was taken to hospital. After a night in hospital she was released the following day. She has since made a full recovery but will think twice before signing up for next years walk!



(L-R): SSgt Paul Harding, Miss Fiona McDougall, Mr Matt Parker, Maj Simon Leigh, Fund Raising Director, Caroline Nickinson

MONDAY 14 SEPTEMBER

Stage 4 and final day and most people just wanted to finish and get home. Only eight miles today and that would bring the total to 60 miles. The weather was still being kind to us so accompanied for the final stage by **Col Ewbank**, the Chief of Staff, and **Lt Col Batho**, who arrived the night before, it was off to the start of Stage 4 and the final push to St Ives. This proved to be quite a hike and most people were pushing ahead at a fast pace to get to St Ives in good time so it was full steam ahead. Even with the wind against us we got to St Ives by lunchtime. It was then back to the site to finish clearing up, and then on the minibuses for the long drive home.

Most people seemed to enjoy it and even mentioned what a good idea it would be to organise another one for next year. Of course, the walk is the easy part. Now comes the hard part of gathering in all the sponsorship money raised through this event and presenting it to the Joseph Weld Hospice.

As a footnote I would like to thank the following for their help which made it a lot easier for us to complete it:

Tescos - Blandford; Safeway Supermarket - Penzance; Hall & Woodhouse Brewery; Boscrege Camping and Caravan Park; Higher Chellew Camping and Caravan Park and all those who sponsored us . . .

HEADQUARTERS
2ND (NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS)
SIGNAL BRIGADE & COTSWOLD GARRISON

Comd **Brig S. G. Hughes CBE**
GSM **WO1 (GSM) Dubique**

Ex Purple Duster is over and the dust is now settling to be revisited in two years time. Next on the agenda is The Spring CPX that the TA Staff are busying themselves with. Time-scales may seem extended but actual planning time is obviously limited. The Autumn FTX is being examined before the Spring Exercise is even under way. Elsewhere in the Headquarters people have been prepping for the new financial year, and working on the outfall from the TA element of the SDR and on the Brigade Study period to be held once more at Longmoor. The Brigade dinner night was something of a success, as ever, with the next being planned for April.

A big hand goes to **Maj Rod Thomas** our outgoing and on going Chief of Staff. He is going on promotion to Lieutenant Colonel, where he is to serve with the Royal Engineers at Minley. He has been with the Brigade for three years and served with three Brigade Commanders over that period. With any luck he'll now have time to improve his squash (the Yeoman says he needs to). Incoming, is **Maj Paul Kelly** who is incoming from AFCENT. He is given a warm welcome and will need it during the winter if he continues to drive his TWO convertible cars that he has been seen with so far. The TA Staff have finally given their farewell to **Lt Col Keith Knowles** TD, who is to retire (again). He takes his peculiar sense of humour with him that will doubtless be missed. He is to keep himself busy with his company that he and his brother have set up (R & K Associates), though as it involves being at the beach in Rio in Brazil, its nature may be somewhat different to the Millennium Bug busting enterprise its said to be. **Maj Alisdair MacGillivray** produced some black whisky at their dinner that made the evening go with a (Highland) swing, that accompanied the Scottish theme rather well. Lastly on the ACISG side of the house, we welcome **Capt Tim Bamber** as the new SO3 ACISG. He has joined us on Full Time Reserve Service. He has served with 37 Sig Regt (V) for seven years and this included a 6-month tour with IFOR in Sarajevo . Previously working in the automotive industry, he has decided that FTRS provided a promising career alternative. It is worthy of note that of all FTRS now serving, 1 in 7 are with this Brigade.

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HEADQUARTERS
11 SIGNAL BRIGADE

BRIGADE STUDY PERIOD 24 - 25 OCTOBER 1998

This year's annual Brigade Study Period was entitled 'The Soldier'. The purpose of the weekend (yes! All you regulars, we have Study Periods at weekends in a Brigade with seven TA units) was to increase our understanding of a number of topical issues that effect our soldiers and to provide an ideal opportunity for the Brigade to meet more informally. There were a number of presentations, by individuals at the top of their respective fields, covering the topics of: 'Obtain', 'Retain' and 'Sustain'. A huge range of subject matter was covered in the one and a half days, including:

'**Setting the Scene**' - a look at the state of the Corps and some crystal-balling by **Col Hadfield** (Colonel Force Development). This was later to provide a great deal of lively debate in an Open Forum!

'**Obtain**' - recruiting our soldiers both TA and Regular. We had a brief from **Col Blake** on the National Employment Liaison Committee (NELC) who encourage civilian companies to support their TA employees. **Lt Col (Retd) Kane** of the West Midland TAVRA and **Col Walters**, Regimental Colonel, reviewed the state of TA and Regular Recruiting as well as giving plugs for the Corps' Internet Site and handing out some 'freebies'.

'**Retain**' - this became a particularly thorny topic – as the Brigadier knew it would – and included formal input from **Col Hadfield** (having just survived the onslaught of comments from 2 Signal Regiment in particular, concerning their future in his earlier presentation), and **Col McDowall** (MCM Div). The Commanding Officers of 35 and 33 (Logica) Signals Regiments (V) and their troops provided us with two very popular and amusing skits, including wolf whistles for Adjutant 35 Sig Regt, **Capt** 'Male Model' **Andy Talbot**.



Maj Mike Wise (DCOS)
proving that he can walk and chew Gum at the same time



Two slackers identified early on and called out to perform in front of the assembled Brigade – Capts Nick 'I didn't make it to bed' Range and Jason 'my head hurts' Kennedy

'**Sustain**' - having thoroughly sustained our bodies - and minds - at the Brigade Dinner Night we were all rudely awoken for a PT session of aerobics, on the Main Square, led by the local QMSI. All that is except **Maj David Sullivan** who had rather sneakily retained the role of photographer and managed to get some embarrassing pictures of everyone. The Study Period closed with an address - not sermon - from **Padre John Whitton** of Netheravon House.

The other high point of the weekend was the keynote address from **Mr Bob Purkiss**, a Commissioner from the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE). Most of us were expecting a fairly scathing attack from a civilian who could not possibly understand Army life and anyway, why were the CRE interfering when there is no racism in the forces? We were treated to a superb presentation by a very talented speaker who proved to us that he was, indeed, very much on our side, did understand us and that there were still, unfortunately, racial attacks and incidents of racism in the forces.

I believe that everyone had a profitable weekend (for the TA it was more profitable - two days pay), 33 (Logica) Signal Regiment (V) may have picked up some more recruits for the Regiment or for their 'sponsors' Logica! **Lt Col Chris Wakerley**'s 2 Sig Regt 'Gang' worked well with **Maj David Somerville** providing a few (hundred) quiet, choice interjections to all the presentations, especially those concerning the future of the 'Gang'. And finally, **Maj Mike Wise**, DCOS, who was the project officer for the whole weekend did not get a short notice posting, unlike **Maj David Sullivan**!

BRIGADE STUDY PERIOD - SUPPORT TEAM ANTICS

With the annual Brigade Study Period looming ever closer, the HQ 11 Sig Bde Sp Team closed ranks and set too with a vengeance. Working tirelessly behind the scenes they pieced together the detailed administrative support to one of the Brigade's major annual events. The highly motivated team consisting of, **Maj Phil** 'Bills' **Daisey** and **Maj Steve** 'Seating Plan' **Bellerby**, headed by **Maj Mike** '7005' **Wise** took (not) a little time in putting together a cunning plan that would stand the test of last minute amendments to unit attendance lists. **WO2 (RQMS)** 'Get on Parade' **Sadler**, (Late Grenadier Guards) with impeccable style and in the true tradition of the Household Division, ensured the finer points of detail were not overlooked. Day one of the Study Period arrived. With tea urns fully charged, cakes and buffet lunches plated, and final adjustments to the Brigade Dinner Night seating plan completed, our intrepid team looked on in awe as the plan went forward with no last minute hitches - well hundreds actually but no one seemed to notice them. Which only goes to prove the old adage that 'Prior Planning and Preparation makes for Perfect Performance', or is it 'What the eye doesn't see .....'

EXERCISE PURPLE SOUND - A SAILOR'S VIEW

*by **WO1 (YofS) Graham 'Popeye' Pardew***

When **Maj** 'David' **Sullivan** said to me, 'Yeoman, you are deploying on Ex Purple Sound as the Joint Task Force Headquarters Frequency Manager in November', I recalled my predecessor, **WO1 (YofS) Gary Shakespeare** telling me stories of his deployment to Gibraltar and of similar exercises in Egypt and Jamaica. I had visions of sun, sand and rolling seas - little did I realise that I would only encounter sea, more sea and the sandy beach of Kinloss! What harsh realities lay ahead for me? All augmentees to the JTFHQ arrived at South Cerney Air Mounting Centre (AMC) on the Monday evening. We received a welcome brief, before being herded off to our respective Messes for a 'joint bonding session'.

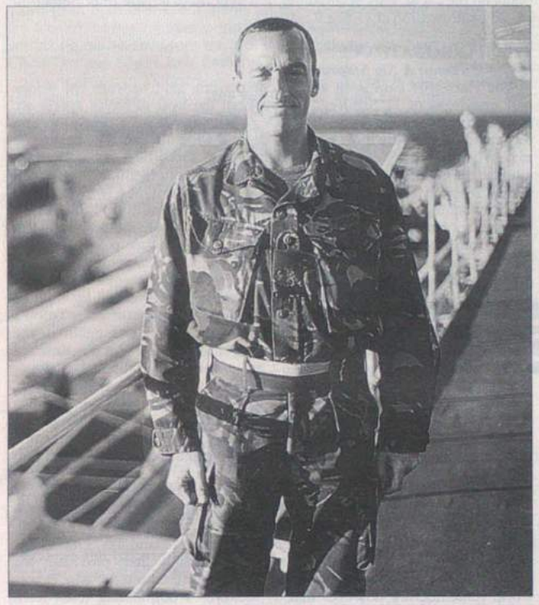
Tuesday consisted of briefings on the functions of the Headquarters, the planning process, information management, change of command procedures and on the exercise itself. Unfortunately just before **Lt Col Rimmell** was due to give his CIS briefing, he was re-called to PJHQ to assist in the planning for an Operation in Belize – all of a sudden I was the 'CIS Guru', briefing all of the augmentees on communications within the JTFHQ! Luckily there were no awkward questions and the Colonel's hand-over to me was very thorough.

Wednesday came quickly with an early reveille in order to catch that comfortable flight by C130 to Stornaway (Outer Hebrides). We were transferred onto a waiting Chinook and then onboard HMS *Invincible* (JTFHQ Afloat). Apart from living on ships in the Falkland Islands, this was to be my first experience at sea. I had overheard some 'fish-heads' saying that they always took seasickness tablets, so I took no persuading in downing my tablets in one. The only problem was that you were meant to take two tablets, six hours before you thought you were going to be ill. Work that one out!

Once on board it was like living in a different Country. They all spoke in a totally alien language, for instance, 'Bravo Zulu, go past the Galley, starboard of the Bish's, mind the deckhead or else you will end up in the Sick Bay, that is where you will find the heads.' Translated to, 'Well done, go past the cookhouse right side of the Chaplain's, mind the ceiling or else you will end up in the medical centre, that is where you will find the toilets.' We were issued a 'guide to living on board HMS *Invincible*', which made life a little easier, but the 'fish-heads' took great pleasure in seeing the 'pongos and crabs' swaying from side to side across the deck and walking around aimlessly trying to find our way around the carrier.

I must say that I would rather keep both feet on land, and I was not sad to reach the shores of RAF Kinloss after spending four days on the Atlantic Ocean and North Sea! The RAF's Tactical Communications Wing (TCW) had already been deployed for three weeks installing the various communications systems (NSTN, PJOCS, ASMA and RTTS) to name but a few, and this was also the first time that the JTFHQ had carried out a change of command from afloat to ashore. This went smoothly under the careful eye of **Lt Col** 'Tim' **Rimmell** (SO1 J6) who had returned from his Belize hot planning task. To summarise, the Exercise provided me with an ideal opportunity to work in a unique Headquarters, alongside a diverse range of communications systems. The additional benefit is that JFTHQ deployments are the most likely scenario for any future operations, and HQ 11 Sig Bde will be the lead formation in providing the communications support.

PS: 'Can I go on the next deployment to Egypt?'



WO1 (YofS) Pardew posing on HMS *Invincible*
whilst looking for the 'Heads'

EXERCISE WINTER EAGLE 1998

After months of anticipation and frantic planning by the Brigade Operations Team, **Ft Lt Farid Khan** and **WO1 (YofS) Graham Pardew**, Ex Winter Eagle 1998 finally got under way on the evening of 20 November. This was the first occasion that our TA Regiments had deployed to local training areas with the aim of producing a countrywide trunk network, utilising fixed bearers installed in key locations. The trial of the Kilostream Network was a resounding success with communications quickly established between Colchester, Altcar Training Area, Newcastle-Under-Lyme and York. The Regiments then concentrated on their own Exercise aims and objectives. Principal amongst these was to merge their own local area networks into the Kilostream Infrastructure to produce reliable communications over a large geographical area.

The Commander and Deputy Commander visited the Exercise on the Saturday evening, the highlight of which was a particularly challenging conference call. Congratulations have to go to **WO2 (YofS) Bob Jonas**, 55 Signal Squadron (V), who had to ensure his elusive OC, **Maj Nick Caleb**, was available via SCRA(T)/CNRI. The highlight of Saturday's activities in the Brigade EXCON vehicle were tea and cakes in celebration of **Capt John Hiorns** 37th birthday.

Sunday saw the Brigade Staff gracefully exit the Exercise, with the **WO1 (YofS) Graham Pardew** and **Sgt Nigel Jones** leaving Newcastle-Under-Lyme in plenty of time to get back to Donnington for sherry and mince pies, and a Brigade Headquarters photograph. Unfortunately, somebody had left the keys to the Land Rover in the 4 Tonner driven by **Sgt Nigel Jones**. A quick test of the mobile communications coverage in the area saw their prompt return to hand the keys to our RAF representative, **Flt Lt Farid Khan**, who tried to blame his passengers, **Capt John Hiorns** and **Capt Jim Sykes**, for this oversight. Being RAF he was unaware that LE Officers don't make such mistakes - he knows now. Another Winter Eagle has passed, and so to Ex Spring Eagle 1999, and a few words from the Commander. 'Now that we've got the kilobit network up and running I would like to make a few changes to Ex Spring Eagle 1999...' Over to you YofS!

BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS CHRISTMAS FUNCTION

It was that time of year again - who was going to organise the Christmas Party for the Brigade staff or should I say who will be told to take on this onerous task. Yes - you guessed it, - the Chief Clerk, **WO2 Kath Fenlon** AGC and her merry band of young NCOs. **Cpl Phil Beacall** AGC was tasked with organising some form of an activities morning; quad biking, go-karting and paint balling were a few of his more workable ideas. After much deliberation these were downgraded to the less arduous sports of golf and pitch and putt and for the more energetic horse riding. Apparently, the horse ridden by **Maj David Sullivan**'s was not as interested in jumping as **Maj Sullivan** himself, consequently the good Major ended up on his dignity.

The golfers left for the Golf Course at 0830 hrs only to find it shut due to frost - not as frosty as the golfers were on having their desire to play dashed. In a rare display of togetherness they decided to join the pitch and putt team. After a morning of lost balls and general hilarity we all returned to the Headquarters for pre lunch Christmas drinks. A request for 'approximately' three oranges to be marinated in Brandy overnight, for the orange juice punch, of course, resulted in enough punch being produced for the whole of Donnington Station. Amazingly, the entire concoction was consumed with the example being set by the Chief of Staff, **Maj Paul Hudson**, who was heard to mumble later in the afternoon, 'I think it was the seventeenth glass of Gluwein that did it'.

After our wives joined us we moved onto the coach kindly provided by '15 Regt RLC MT Tours Ltd'. We arrived at the restaurant having taken the scenic route and sat down to an excellent meal. Following lunch, trophies were presented for the Pitch and Putt champion and the best Golf (Pitch and Putt) score. **Cpl Simon Emmett**, the Commander's Driver (Fix) was the winner of the Pitch and Putt and **Maj Phil Daisey** beat the Commander to take the Golfers Trophy - **Phil** doesn't want to be promoted anyway. There was no trophy for the horse riders - liniment might have been welcome.

The Commander, **Brig Jonathan Cook**, bade a fond farewell to **Maj David Sullivan** and his wife, **Maria**. **David** is posted to 30 Sig Regt as the Operations Officer early in the New Year. **Flt Lt Farid Khan**, thinking he was inconspicuous in his casual outfit, was left in no doubt that his dress had been noted when loud comments about not dipping his tie in his soup were hailed across the Restaurant. We returned to the HQ 'Local', the Clock Tower, to continue the festivities. At 0130 hours, feeling socially disorientated, the Signal Brigade's Christmas Party for another year came to an end.

LUCKY SIGNALLER

by Michael Hancock

Foreword by Admiral of the Fleet
The Lord Hill-Norton

Forthright, critical, entertaining – **Lucky Signaller** is the highly readable autobiography of Major-General Michael Hancock whose military career began before the Second World War and took him all over the world. Michael Hancock joined the Royal Signals because of boyhood interest in wireless. After an abortive trip to France in 1940, he went on to America, Canada, North Africa, Norway and India. His post-war jobs were in England, Germany and Singapore, as well as with NATO in Paris, Washington and Brussels. **Lucky Signaller** records an unusually varied military career. From taking potshots at German planes in the desert to sitting on NATO committees, Major-General Hancock describes his many diverse appointments and travels with modesty and humour. With emphasis on the lighter side of military life, this is also a book to be taken seriously for its appraisal of the way our peace is defended and for its frank comments about former colleagues and the workings of NATO. **Lucky Signaller** is revealing for the layman and riveting for the professional.

Major-General Michael Hancock, CB, MBE, was commissioned into the Royal Signals in 1937. He served in the Tunisian campaign and, in 1945, he arrived in India with 1st Airborne Corps. In GHQ, he became the staff officer responsible for internal security in India. His periods on the War Office staff resulted in travels round the Middle and Far East. He served in Germany and in Singapore: and with NATO in Paris, Washington and Brussels. On retirement from the army he spent 15 years as a planning inspector.

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TRAINING

11 SIGNAL REGIMENT

WHITESPEAR TROOP - EXERCISE GRID IRON

by Cpl Tony Brown

Sunday 11 Oct and its another early start for the long trip North to Capel Curig. On arrival I'm met by a smiling MGS who shouts, 'Alright **Tony**, leave our barrier posts alone, mate!' (previous trip incident) – then right on cue it starts raining. After settling in (bag thrown into corner of room), it was time to brief the Phase II trainees on what was in store for the week ahead. Ex Grid Iron is a week of adventure training designed to challenge the soldiers of 11 Sig Regt who are awaiting trade training. Eight handpicked and highly enthusiastic soldiers were about to try their hands (and various other body parts) at canoeing and climbing. The claustrophobes narrowly missed descending into the caves that could not be squeezed into the programme.

During a truly wet week which filled the rivers but failed to dampen spirits, the trainees spent the first day on the Afon Llugwy river in Grade I – II waters. The second day was spent largely under the Afon Llugwy in Grade III waters before moving on to some drier activities. The following two days were spent in pursuit of thinner air on the North Face of Tryfan and on to the Glyders. In spite of an exhaustive day and an early night, not much sleep was had because of the 50mph winds. Most managed to make up for this, however, on the bus home.

The adventure training section of Whitespear Troop has undergone some changes this year with the arrival of a new face, **Cpl Tony Brown**, and the departure of **Cpl Matt Thomas** to military training. With the impending preparation for civilian street by **WO1 Bill Ogden**, **Sgt Chris Gleadow** and **Cpl** 'Dave' **Allen** in 1999, the section will be losing a great deal of expertise. The message is very clear to anyone who wants to pursue adventure training in an instructional capacity, as a full time job, who has some basic qualifications and would like a posting to Blandford, then Whitespear Troop desperately needs you. Interested individuals, both male and female should go through their chain of command, but further details can be obtained from the 2IC 11 Sig Regt on Blandford Mil 2235.



About 2500 feet closer to God
(L-R): Sig Moore, Sig Whalley, Sig O'Conner, Sig Berry, Sig Anderson, Sig Smith, Sig Tunnacliffe, Sig Collins.

INTER SQUADRON NOVICE BOXING COMPETITION 1998
1 SQUADRON CHAMPIONS

Team Manager	**SSgt Adie Chapman**
Team Trainer	**Cpl Hughes**
Team Trainer	**LCpl Rayden**
Team Trainer	**Sig Foster**
Team Trainer	**Sig Johnson (Welter)**

This year's Inter Squadron Boxing Competition began in September with the start of morning training runs at 0600hrs three times a week. This continued for two weeks until the teams' fitness began to improve and then skills training four nights a week began. As usual the numbers of people including the women, who were competing for the first time this year, started off at 83 but soon dwindled down to 30 as the training became harder and the mornings got colder. Only a few of the men had fought before but for the ladies this was a new experience which came to a head when light sparring with the lads began. The team took shape, but a few injuries and the realisation of what was in store further reduced the numbers, leaving the final team with a total of 13 male and 5 female boxers.

The prelims took place on the 30 November 1998, which the team came through well giving us seven male and five female boxers for the finals. The big night itself was a great occasion for 1 Squadron. Every boxer was well prepared and very psyched up and the sheer guts of all in the ring reflected this. Two members of the Squadron team scored the only knock outs of the night, both in the first round. These were **Sig** 'Scotty' **Johnson** and **Sig** 'Clubber' **Smith** 680. Special mention should also be made of **Sig Fitzpatrick** and **Sig Flynn** who both won the Best Boxer Trophy in their respective classes. With the Squadron winning seven out of the twelve bouts on the night, they secured the first ever male/female Inter Squadron Boxing competition at 11 Sig Regt.

THE HARROGATE CUP

by Sig Wildman & Sig Sidorowicz

The Harrogate Cup is an annual competition held between the troops and squadrons of 11 Sig Regt. Throughout the year different sports are contested between the teams. The competition is run on a points system, the squadron with the most points at the end wins the cup. The first to be played was five-a-side football with Rhino Troops' A team proving emphatic winners in the Inter-Squadron 1st team competition. In contrast Rhino Troop B Team struggled but luckily Kohima Troop B Team came good clinching the overall competition for 1 Squadron. 2 Squadron finished a close second, only one point behind. Most impressive results came from Iron Troop A team collecting a total of four points out of a possible six. Ulster Troop fielded a good side but 3 Squadron were let down by 2 poor sides from Lightning Troop. The second event was volleyball and proved an exciting competition. Spearheaded by both of Iron Troop teams who took maximum points and with Beaufighter Troop's fair efforts, 2 Squadron took the trophy. Iron Troop was again in the running when the basketball competition got under way. But this time the combat trades of 1 Squadron didn't get a sniff, finishing in last place. Meanwhile the competition between 2 and 3 Squadron was hotting up. The squash tournament was almost a repeat performance of the previous event, with 2 and 3 Squadron at loggerheads. Once again 1 Squadron hardly influenced the final result as the other two 2 squadrons finished level on points. The Harrogate Cup was it seemed, evolving into a two horse race.

The netball competition saw a rejuvenated 1 Squadron, especially Kohima Troop, who put in a sterling performance. But it wasn't enough as, once again, 2 Squadron, led by Iron Troop, stole the show, finishing ahead and securing a valuable place in the overall standings. During the football competition, it was the second teams that provided the excitement, with 2 Squadron clearing the table and taking the win. It was worth remembering however that 1 Squadron's dominating team from Kohima Troop had been mostly inherited by 2 Squadron so there was a quiet air of confidence that paid off with yet another victory for Iron Troop. With 2 Squadron steaming ahead in the overall points, 3 Squadron had a lot of catching up to do and their comeback started with the assault course and continued with a win in the drill competition. This set up the grand finale in the boxing ring:

2 Squadron had to beat 3 Squadron but it was not necessary to win the boxing competition outright to take the Harrogate Cup. It was the lack of female competitors from 1 and 3 Squadrons which proved to be the decisive factor as 2 Squadron had more than enough volunteers. In the end the more experienced boxers of 1 Squadron, three of who had boxed before, proved too much for the exceptional amateurs of 2 Squadron, winning the event by three points. A gallant performance from 2 Squadron, however, saw them finish second ahead of 3 Squadron who surrendered their lead in the Harrogate Cup to the victorious hands of 2 Squadron.



Col Le Gallais presents the Harrogate Cup to 2 Squadron at the conclusion of the Regimental Boxing Night

2 SQUADRON –FEMALE BOXING

by Sig Emma Lawton

The room was full, the noise deafening. 2 Squadron boxing team - the first meeting, only this time there was a new addition - a female squad. 11 Sig Regt allowed females to compete for the first time at the Inter Squadron competition. A lot of people were doubtful, comments such as 'females can't box' and 'they'll never do the training' were flowing but that just made us more determined. Our trainers **Cpl Rob Kirk, Cpl Steve Riley** and **WO2 (SSM) Phil Christie** were more than positive. In fact, I think they would have preferred to be training to box themselves.

So rising at 0530 hrs every morning to parade outside the gym became a regular thing. Often during our runs we would bump into an opposing Squadron and as if on cue everyone would start to run faster or push out enough press ups to beat a world record and shouts of 'losers' could be heard from both teams, but it was all friendly banter really. Every night we'd be in the boxing gym working up a sweat on the bags and pads and perfecting our skills. More trainers started helping out these were **LCpl Chris Orr** and **SSgt Chris Pomfret.**

The hardest part of the training was the sparring, not because of the pain and hard work but the fact that we now had to hit each other. We were friends, but before long it dawned on us that if we wanted to make the finals we had to think only of ourselves, just for this once, which was even harder because we were a team. As the time drew closer to choose the team for the finals, 3 Squadron had no girls and 1 Squadron only a handful while we had an army of females eager to don their gloves and get stuck in. Due to this shortage it meant only one thing - we could only enter boxers to match the weight categories of 1 Squadron, so only a few of us would actually fight on the night. The lucky ones were **Sig Rachel Goodhall, Sig Julie Parry, Sig** 'Red' **Stables** and **Sig Debbie Myers**. I had a walkover due to **Sig Sarah Hardy** (1 Squadron) dropping out because of injury. The rest of the team, though disappointed at not boxing, threw themselves into helping the fighters. The trainers would throw person after person into the ring with one of us until we were totally exhausted and nearly in tears.

As fight night arrived the team met in the gym and that's when the hard work put in was displayed. As the fighters were getting ready we cheered them on giving them plenty of encouragement and letting them know that they had our full support all the way. The first fight to be announced was **Sig Rachel Goodhall** to fight **Sig Emma Flynn**. The fight was full of true aggression with loads of effort and skill shown by both boxers but unfortunately for us, **Sig Flynn** was the winner. Next came **Sig Julie Parry** and **Sig Mel Rudkin**. **Parry** stormed straight in there as soon as the bell rang and was soon showing the audience just what she was capable of. The fight was stopped in the second round and **Sig Parry** was clearly the winner. **Sig** 'Red' **Stables** won her fight, which was also stopped due to the blood from **Sig Lyndsey Smith**'s nose making the ring look like an abattoir before clean up time. By the last and final fight, the crowd were in a frenzy shouting themselves hoarse. In came **Sig Debbie Myers** and **Sig Sonya Jamieson**. **Myers** got straight in there and was 'kicking butt' when a sudden punch caused **Sig Myers** to drop her guard and the fight was **Sig Jamiesons**. All the female boxers showed excellent sportsmanship throughout the whole night. Who said females couldn't box!



The White Helmets

OC RSMDT	**Lt Col Jack Amberton**
Team Capt	**Capt Gordon Newell**
Team Sgt	**Sgt Don Brebner**

The year closed with the departure of the OC RSMDT, **Maj Keith Russell**. Fortunately he isn't moving too far - RHQ Royal Signals - so he can always keep his hand in - or feet on the pedals, so to speak! The Team thanks him for all his hard enduring work over the years and wishes **Keith** and **Joan** the very best for their future outside the Army. The Team welcomes the return of **Lt Col Jack Amberton** to the White Helmets. Over the past months the Team has gone through the quieter part of the year with soldiers away on upgrading courses and crammer exams. Needless to say, in the meantime the Corps has kept us busy with late-night appearances for the SOinC and the Princess Royal's Lady-in-waiting - riding out of the shadows in the Officers' Mess gardens is becoming a Team speciality. October and November saw the Team visiting a number of available units throughout the Corps to recruit for the Selection Course which took place between 30 November - 11 December 1998 at Blandford Camp and Bovington Tank Training Area. This was a terrific course with a week spent solely on cross-bike skills which many members had never experienced before. As the course took place the Triumphs were serviced and de-trimmed and the Teams' berets hung up for a number of well earned weeks of leave on the 14 December 1998.

REVIEW OF 1998 SEASON

by Cpl A. Malin

As the 1998 season for the White Helmets comes to a close we can look back at some of the highs and lows of this year. Nine new riders joined the team in January and commenced training during the bleak winter months at Blandford Camp and Bovington Tank Arena. In March the Team went to RAF Sealand near Chester for our annual training camp. It was here that the rough draft for the 1998 show was drawn up and also where this season's first-year riders surprised the Team Sergeant by almost all learning to reverse ride a Triumph, a feat normally achieved in the second or third year! There were a couple of inevitable accidents due to the nature of the training that led to some minor injuries including various bruises and the odd broken rib. Two unfortunate souls were a little bit unlucky and paid a visit to the local hospital, namely **Sig Gary** 'Fish' **Fisher** with a broken ankle and **Cpl Andy** 'Capp' **Butterfield** with a sliced, diced and broken thumb and forefinger - both riders are gladly back to full fitness.

In April the team returned to Blandford and began rehearsals for the SOinC's Opening Show. Everyone had their allocated tricks and places and all that was needed was a little spit, polish and finesse to bring the show up to scratch. Rehearsals went well apart from a couple of hiccups including **Cpl Adam** 'Lizard' **Malin** being spat off the back of a Triumph and watching in horror as it narrowly missed **Maj Russell's** car before being stopped by a brick wall. The final dress rehearsals went well apart from the rain resulting in a hurried trip to the dry cleaners to sort the uniforms out for the next day!

The Opening Show itself was excellent. The weather held off, the performance was smooth and trouble free and the SOinC's approval to go on tour was given without question. It seemed only fitting that after a show of such a high standard a celebration should ensue. The buffet and afternoon function were most enjoyable but the highlight had to be the 70's night disco with full-monty appearances from **LCpl** 'Tonka' **Richardson** and gang. A difficult party to top - until next year!

After a very brief break the 1998 tour began with a trip to JHQ Rheindahlen in Germany and SHAPE in Belgium. The Americans at SHAPE loved the Team and were overawed, but the highlight by far was with the Band at JHQ where the ten-man Tableau fell down in the middle of the arena with a Scottish piper on top of the ladder. Other memorable performances this year included the Royal Shows at Stoneleigh, Bath & West and Norfolk, all of which were huge. Other highlights were the Cromer Carnival with the 'Malin brothers', **Sig Matty** 'Karaoke King' **Adams**, the show at HMS *Collingwood* in Portsmouth and the Corps Cocktail Party. At the Corps Cocktail Party the Team produced a totally non-stop action show that was fast, furious and breathtaking - both for the spectators and ourselves. The team also enjoyed other highlights in 1998 including the Team Sergeant, **Sgt Don** 'I-don't-swear-much-honest' **Brebner** going through the barriers at the Royal Bath & West Show. At JHQ, **Cpl Bob** 'noxious-but-I-tell-a-good-tale' **Sizeland** chatted with the General, informing him about the crucial valve-clearances required on his recently bought Hoover and the Team won the Tug-of-war championship at the Bolsover Tattoo. The Team thoroughly enjoyed a day filming with **Hale** and **Pace** (yet again) and were subsequently forced to appear on TV. Although the much awaited trip to the Greek Military Tattoo in November was cancelled (surprise - not!) the Team have made a total of 99 performances this year at over 41 different venues and have spent over 90 nights away from home in Blandford Camp. This year's Shell road-miles added up to 24,086 - can you imagine how many free glasses you get for that - no wonder we can't get the bikes in the garages. Accidents in the arena this year have thankfully been below average with just one back injury and one leg injury. **LCpl** 'Riksta' **Ross** and **Sig Matty Adams** are now fully recovered. Accidents outside the arena have unfortunately made a bit of an impact on the team with **Cpl Charles** 'Charlie' **Chester** rupturing his spleen at the start of the season and **Cpl Adam Malin** breaking both arms and cheekbone in a biking accident in October. Fortunately our wounded warriors are now back to full fighting strength.

The 27 Triumph motorcycles have performed very well this year due to the TLC afforded by the mechanics, headed by **LCpl** 'Tonka' **Richardson** including **Mr Ivor** 'German bloke' **Downer**. Recruiting also went very well mainly down to **LCpl Mavis Cann. LCpl Mavis Cann** contributed to recruiting with a total of 968 recruitment packs dispatched by SORLS on information received from the White Helmets in many locations around the UK. Unfortunately the team has had to say goodbye to five riders this year, **Cpl Victor Malin** the team corporal, **Cpl Rob** 'Yeti' **Downton, LCpl Mavis Cann** and **Sig David** 'Darvid' **Taylor** all going to civvy street. **Sig Gareth** 'Tidy' **Ryder** posted and promoted to LCpl although he may be back soon! Promotions continue well within the Team with congratulations also going out to **LCpl Charles** 'Charlie' **Chester** now promoted to Cpl. This season ended with the arrival of the new Team Capt, **Capt Gordon** 'Gordybabes' **Newell** in time to practice his commentary at an absolutely massive Newbury Show. The 1998 selection course ended the year with twelve hopefuls trying for places in the team. If this year was anything to go by I am sure that those who are successful and make the grade will have a most enjoyable tour. Looking forward to 1999 the season is already shaping up nicely with more enquiries than we can meet. The Royal Tournament is confirmed and should be memorable as it will be the last Royal Tournament in its present form. Provisional bookings include the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, the Army Exhibition for Schools at Catterick and many famous national and county shows. A possible

highlight is the provisionally booked Belfast Show - the Team has not operated in Northern Ireland for many years.

SELECTION COURSE 29 NOVEMBER-11 DECEMBER 1998

The annual course ran for two weeks at the very end of the year that saw 12 hopefuls from across the Corps attend the challenge here at Blandford.



Selection Course 98
Back row (L-R): Cpl Strachan, Sig Fiddes, Sig Curtis, Sig Woolnough, Sig Wright
Front row (L-R): LCpl Hildreth, Sig MacDonald, Sig O'Neil, LCpl Horton, LCpl Ross, Sig Ashton.

The first week was spent confidence building as the bikes threw the riders all over the moorland down on Bovington Tank Training Area. Injuries were a sad inevitability and this was the end of the selection for two hopefuls. Those making it through the jumps, streams, sand, mud and grit began riding on the Triumphs after a week and were soon performing some of the simpler tricks before the final show for the OC RSMDT. Here the media and Garrison support services for the course attended and saw the Team put on a final display with the Selection Course personnel joining in the display. In between PT, lecturettes, bike maintenance and inspections the two weeks are very busy - but the achievement at the end far outweighs the test! If any members of the Corps are interested in pursuing an out-of-the-ordinary exciting tour and would like to take the opportunity of being part of a unique Team then accept the challenge and call the Team at Blandford Camp on (mil) 737 2365 or (civ) 01258 48 2365. You are not expected to have a motorbike licence.



No. 13 Sig Fiddes performs the Angel on the final day of the selection course

263 (HARROGATE) SIGNAL SQUADRON ARMY APPRENTICES COLLEGE, ARBORFIELD

OC **Maj Steve France**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Mick Senior**

This term we say welcome first of all to **Cpl Bob Ayres** Para, who joined us in October from 2 Para, and **Cpl Sy Cullen** who arrived in November from 7 Sig Regt. A very warm welcome also to their families. Sadly, it is also goodbye to **Cpl Dave Fitton** and his family who go to Germany to join 1(UK) Armd Div Sig Regt. Our heartfelt thanks to him and his family for their companionship and support to the Squadron during their time with us. As the end of term approaches and Christmas recess draws ever closer, it's 'running around like headless chickens' time again, what with the drill rehearsals, Cadre week, Basic Leadership, Quad Games and the like all happening together, not to mention the end-of-term administration for ATs! We finish the year with our Senior Term ATs passing out on 17 December and the last working day of the College being 18 December.

A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE ARMY APPRENTICES COLLEGE

The College is a unit within the Individual Training Group (ITG) and part of the Army Training and Recruiting Agency (ATRA). The aim of the College is '*to provide young men and women with the military skills, education and opportunity to develop as leaders in the Technical Corps of the Future Army*', and it is our vision '***to be the best training establishment in ATRA***'. The College is currently established to train up to 1002 Apprentice Tradesmen (ATs) a year. Of these, 216 are RE, 246 R SIGNALS, 171 RLC and 369 REME; although, allowing for a maximum wastage rate of 20%, a minimum of 801 ATs are delivered to respective Phase 2 training establishments, like the Royal School of Signals. The College is commanded by a Lieutenant Colonel (currently **Lt Col J. W. Mitchell** RE) and comprises a College HQ, a Military Training Wing, an Education Wing and 4 Training Squadrons or Companies, of which 263 (Harrogate) Signal Squadron is one. The Squadron was formed in September 1996 after the closure of the Army Apprentices College at Harrogate. The course ATs undertake at the College is the Apprentice Foundation Course which runs for 28 weeks and encompasses Military Training to the standard of the Common Military Syllabus for Recruits (CMS(R)), Education/Key Skills, Leadership & Initiative Training and Character Development. The 28 weeks is divided into two terms of 14 weeks, the first 14 being devoted in the main to CMS(R) and the second comprising mainly education. Entrants to the College are accepted between the ages of 16 and 18½ and Royal Signals ATs are placed in either the Technician Trade Group or the Telecommunications Operator Trade Group. On application, potential Technician ATs must have Grade C or better in English and Maths at GCSE Level or equivalent, and potential Operator ATs Grade D or better.

BRADLEY AND PENNEY TROOPS
EXERCISE JANNER'S JOY
*by **AT LCpl Iddon** and **AT Jack***

On Thursday the 26 November, as we departed from the College to Salisbury Plain Training Area, everyone was apprehensive because of the 'Baltic' weather conditions. We arrived at our drop off point at 2030 and had a 'Short walk?' to our location where we made a hasty harbour. Once we had arrived and set everything up we immediately headed out on an OP under the fearless leadership of **Cpl** 'Muz' **Murray**. We left at 2359hrs and returned to the harbour area around 0600hrs. We had to dig and dig in our harbour area in the morning and most of the afternoon. Then at night we embarked on a recce patrol returning back at 1200. Bradley Tp then carried out a Relief in Place of Penny Tp's Key Point Defence. What we hadn't realised was that whilst we had been relatively warm and dry, Penny Tp had been located in the 'Somme'. Knee deep in mud, we reluctantly changed locations. However, Penney Tp, who thought they were off to dry off in the Harbour, got a nasty shock as the heavens opened up on their 'tab' in, leaving them with swimming pools instead of shell scrapes.

The following morning was by far the best part, the final attack! 2 Section of Bradley Tp were seconded to Penney Tp and tasked to provide a dummy attack on the REME position. They ably sneaked up to 30m from the REME position and fixed them in place whilst Penney Tp stormed the position rapidly destroying all the enemy. **AT Madine** from the Penney Tp warriors became the ultimate human ground mat covering the barbed wire entanglement whilst **Cpl** 'Yak' **Ayton LI** spurred the rest to hurl themselves over him. Simultaneously Bradley Tp's key point was attacked by a combination of 'grunts' Infanteers and 'sparkies' REME, unsuccessfully, of course because of the heroic fanaticism of **Sgt Mark Wigmore** supervising the defence, which led to the annihilation of the attackers.



Ats Simpson and Martin preparing to go on patrol

THE HARDEST THING IN TRAINING
*by **AT Snelling***

The time that I've spent in the college has been enjoyable, but difficult. It has been strenuous mentally more than physically, simply because of the amount of pressure dealt out over a long period of time. Everyone has different memories, high points and low points, some very low points! On many occasions I have felt like saying, 'I've had enough.' and throwing in the towel, but I've found myself gritting my teeth and getting on with it, with help from my fellow ATs, and ever caring Troop Staff? Ever caring, especially when I lost my glasses on Exercise just before the Judging Distance stand, in front of the Squadron OC, NOT! The hardest thing for me was Ex Dragon's Teeth during which, because I wasn't very motivated, I didn't perform well. The next day after the Exercise, I got picked up on muster parade for having cam cream on my neck - this really put the icing on the cake for me! After this I was on a real downer and I thought I might leave, but I got through it. The good times at the college have outweighed the bad. With one and a half weeks remaining, I am glad that I have succeeded and I look forward to passing off.

THE MOST INTERESTING THING IN THE COLLEGE

The most interesting thing about being at the Army Apprentices College is the military training. For the last 28 weeks the rest of the intake and I have been learning the basic skills of a soldier. These have included fun things such as shooting and field-craft, and the not so fun things like NBC lessons. Before I joined I had no idea of what being a soldier was going to be like. Even now as we prepare to pass off, we are still learning; although we have already learnt a lot. Unlike all other Phase 1 Training Units, we had to spend time in the classroom learning trade skills that would help us in Phase 2 training. Overall, the past 28 weeks have been a fun time with its ups and downs. The ragging and the praises and meeting new people from a variety of backgrounds all helped to make the Drill, PT, and other military lessons seem easier especially when some of your peers were worse than you!

EXERCISE SALERNO SABRE
*by **Cpl 'Muz' Murray***

I was originally selected to form part of a 4-man team to take part in an Italian-run NATO patrol and military skills competition, which was to be held in Solerno, Italy at the beginning of November. **Capt Andy Elms** REME, **WO2 (QMSI) Chris Higgins** APTC, **Sgt** 'Shaggy' **Phillpott** RE and I formed the intrepid team, combining our skills and knowledge of communications, demolitions, weapons systems, canoeing, military tactics and fitness to form what we perceived to be a team to be reckoned with.

Shortly before the date of departure, **Capt Andy Elms** informed us that the host Italian unit, having been put on standby for Kosovo, had cancelled the competition. We were naturally very disappointed, as we had been building up to the competition for some time, putting in a great deal of mental and physical preparation, only to have the anti-climax of no longer being able to go. Fortunately, when many would have quit, **Capt Elms** managed to drag the phoenix of a salvaged adventure training expedition out of the ashes of cancellation. We secured the funding and support to still travel to Solerno and run our own adventure training expedition, culminating with two days R & R in Rome. After liaising with the British Embassy in Rome and the British contingent in AFSOUTH, Naples, we managed to conduct a very enjoyable and fulfilling four days' adventurous training. These days included a trek up to Mount Vesuvius, a dormant volcano overlooking the ancient ruins of Pompeii, and a very adrenalin-charged two days' sea kayaking along the coast of Naples, under the ever watchful eyes of **WO2 Chris Higgins.** The R & R in Rome proved to be culturally fulfilling, and we left Rome with lots of bemused Italians wondering where on earth the four retro-1970s' Websters beer swillers had come from, or maybe what planet!

Thanks to **Capt Andy Elms** for his determination on making this a successful and enjoyable trip right from the start, to QMSI, **Chris Higgins** on being a constant source of amusement with a never ending supply of torture tactics and outstanding Scottish impersonations, to 'Shaggy' for his immaculate dress sense and fluent linguistic skills and lastly to me, for actually making it back alive. All in all, we had a Scorchio time!



Cpl 'Muz' Murray 'on Exercise' in Salerno, Italy

RAWSON TROOP
REFLECTIONS ON THE SECOND HALF OF JUNIOR TERM
*by **ATs Greenhalgh, Wilde** and **Macmahon***

Since returning from half-term leave we have engaged in a variety of different activities, some military and some more civilian-orientated. We went on Ex Dragon's Teeth at Longmoor Training Area. This was our first 48-hour test exercise. We were tested on all our basic field-craft skills that we had previously been taught at the college. This included cam and concealment, judging distances, harbouring, range cards, sentry duties and administering ourselves in the field. Although the going was difficult, everybody was pleased with their personal performance. We all proved to ourselves, and our Staff, that we had learnt something from those 'exciting' fieldcraft lessons. We will always remember how COLD it was on those early morning 'stags'.

There have been a number of range days conducted over the last seven weeks. They were all training towards our Annual Personal Weapons Test (APWT). This is a major test in the CMS(R). On these days we also had a number of concurrent activities taking place. These ranged from field signals to recce patrols! The range days also gave us a chance to get out of camp. NBC has played a big part of our training recently, in preparation for our NBC attainment test, which we have just completed! We were all pleased to have passed this test.

External Leadership (EL) was a civilian type of adventurous training in Wales. We stayed at an Army camp in Crickhowell. From this base we conducted 3 different activities. These were rock climbing (including abseiling and a visit to a really good indoor climbing centre), kayaking on a freezing cold Welsh lake and mountaineering over the Black Mountain Range. Mountaineering was the best activity because it gave us a chance to get out in the wilderness and put our map reading skills to practice (plus, at 811 metres, the views were breath-taking). EL was a good experience for us all as it gave us all our first chance to relax together in civilian surroundings.

Rawson Troop also went to a Combined Services Entertainment (CSE) show at Churchill Hall in the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. This was an enjoyable night out of camp, and was also quite a good laugh. The whole of the Troop hope the rest of our course at the Army Apprentice College is as good as the last seven weeks. Finally, a mention must go to all the Staff of Rawson Troop for their support and all their help.

SCOTT TROOP
AN AT'S VIEW OF LIFE SO FAR
*by **AT Evans***

After finally completing the first tough seven weeks and having a nice week's leave, we arrived back at Scott Tp lines to a smiling **Sgt** '2 pico-seconds' **Wagstaff.** Not knowing what was in store we went to have a look at the timetable; the first piece of good news was Muster parade and an inspection by the Sergeant Major! The best thing about coming back was we could wear our civvies and have our radios, although most of us had lost these privileges by the end of the first week! They have been given and taken away with regular monotony ever since! Nearly everyday we have had locker inspections by **Cpl** 'Tasmanian Devil' **Brotherston,** and **Cpl** 'MC Paul' **Millington.** These early inspections improved us considerably, or at least we like to think so. Latterly, we have been on External Leadership to not-so-sunny Wales. There we did Hillwalking under **Capt Jeffries, Sgt Wagstaff** and **Cpl** 'Short Cuts' **Askin;** Abseiling/Rock Climbing (good for those who like heights) at which even **Cpl Millington** had a go; and Kayaking, breaking the ice to launch the boats whilst **Cpl Brotherston** watched over the pies in the cafe! Now it's the last two weeks of term: last range day, last PT lesson, a trip to London, then home for Christmas and onto the Senior term in the New Year.

NEWS FROM BOSNIA

1 (UNITED KINGDOM) ARMOURED DIVISIONAL HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO **Lt Col E. M. Flint**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) M. A. Schofield**

This issue of *The Wire* finds the Regiment deployed all over the world. 208 Sig Sqn are serving in the Falkland Islands, while 211 Sig Sqn, supplemented by personnel from 212 Sig Sqn, have formed the MND (SW) CIS Sqn in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia. We also have members of the Regiment serving on the prairies of Canada, at Corsham in the United Kingdom and of course our anchor back in Herford. It is a sobering thought (ironically), that the Regiment was able to stretch New Years Day to approximately 30 hours, (if it had wanted to)!

MND (SW) CIS SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj A. A. S. Harwell**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Palmer**

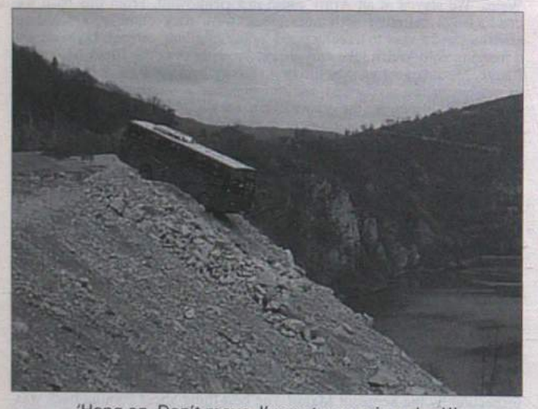
The Squadron arrived in Theatre on or around 17 October 1998 and was immediately thrown into an extensive and efficient hand-over period with 3 (UK) DSR. Full responsibility for comms was handed over on 24 October and thereafter the 'con' was ours. Almost immediately the Squadron was in full swing, deploying Special Task Groups to cover a variety of incidents, practising the armoured tactical HQ in the Banja Luka area and deploying the GOCs Forward HQ by Chinook (a novel experience for an armoured war-fighting unit).

COMMUNICATIONS TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt Morton**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Wharton**

Mid October saw Comms Troop deploy onto the multitude of Hilltop sites and Rear Link detachments that are spread about the Divisional area in Bosnia. The hand-over/take-over from 3 (UK) DSR was so smooth and efficient that it was a shell-shocked group of men who on arrival in Split were bundled into the back of Land Rovers only to see the light of day at what would become home for the next five months. For those who may be forced to write a history in the years to come, the Troop currently mans 7 hilltop sites (Vitorog, Gola P, Lisina West, Radaljica, Sjenokosic, Ivovik and Banja Luka West) and six rear link detachments/message centres (Czech BG at Ljubija, Canadian BG at Corolici, Dutch BG at Sisava, Belgian BG at Tomislavgrad and the UK logistic bases at Kupres, Sipovo and Split).

Meanwhile back at 'the Ranch' (Banja Luka) the remainder of the Troop, less a certain SSgt (who was on holiday in USA sunning himself and not a postcard was sent), were getting to grips with the massive task of resupply. With the team driving well over 1000km of Bosnian road per week there was little time for relaxation back at Banja Luka.



'Hang on. Don't move, I've got a cunning plan!!'

Great credit goes to all the re-supply team for the many safe hours spent behind the wheel in some very testing conditions (Little credit however goes to **SSgt (FofS) Amies** for the few unsafe, never to be repeated, hours that he inflicted on **Sgt Innes**). Thanks go to Nintendo for the driver training that **Sig** 'Bleeding Eyes' **McGennity** received throughout the month on his games console. As the weather closed in and the snow began to fall the R & R plot came upon us. With comms firmly established, the 'Outdets' running smoothly and Christmas quickly approaching, our main effort has become ensuring all 'Outdets' personnel get home for R & R. Finally congratulations on promotion for **Cpl Robertson**, **Cpl Carty** and **LCpl Bagshaw**.

MOBILE TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt Shakespeare**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Leach**

We arrived in Bosnia looking forward to a happy sunny tour loaded with laughs and smiles! (The CO has implemented a policy of lots of morale or no food!) Split was still as warm as ever, even in October. The move to Banja Luka was an unprecedented success with all the vehicles making it in record time while adhering to SFOR speed limits (in case the CO is reading). As soon as we arrived in BLMF we set up the armoured HQ, much to the relief of everybody as we all wanted to get on with the job at hand. Since then things have been non-stop, with visits from CinC LAND, DCOMSFOR, the Master of Signals, Comd MND (SW), 3 foreign generals, 12 other important people and someone who looked a bit like Elvis! In addition, the Troop has conducted extensive comms recces in western Bosnia, an area of stunning natural beauty and a challenge to the brightest of Yeomen. A mention must go to **Sig Shackleton** who halted his vehicle in the middle of the road and ordered **Sig Amanda Giltrow** to stay out of harms way until he defused a particularly lethal looking boot which was blocking the road. Finally congratulations go to **Cpl Ridgers** and **LCpl Cowley** on their promotions.

HQ TROOP

Tp Comd **2Lt Gunson**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Hook**

We assumed responsibility for Commcen HQ MND (SW) Main at Banja Luka on 22 October 1998. The staff were quickly divided into three shifts headed by **LCpl Jenny Campbell**, **LCpl Angie Twist** and **LCpl Mandy Hill** with **Cpl Ged Halliday** as ADSO and **Sgt Mick Poyning** as DSO. These five supervisors oversee the six actual workers: **Sig Nicky Roberts, Sig John Garrod, Sig Al Keenan, Sig Baz Barrett, Sig Dean Thompson** and **Sig Kizzy Craddock** who are employed to test the supervisors with fluctuating memory warps for every day details. Several operators from Mobile Troop also augmented these personnel for R & R cover. The first organisational hurdle complete we started to battle out the daily routine of the COMMCEN. The task ahead immediately proved to be more difficult than was first thought. In fact life became extremely hectic over a very short period of time, as we got to grips with over 2000 messages a week. However, human nature added the much-needed element of 'humour' into the equation, the main characters of the COMMCEN rapidly coming to the surface. It started with **LCpl Mandy Hill** gaining recognition for all the wrong reasons. Soon to be followed by **LCpl Lee Gobie** (temporary cover from Mobile Troop) managing to break every computer he touched, hence being awarded a special certificate of congratulations from the DSO. Leadership, however, does not end at the DSO, there is also the ADSO; **Cpl Ged Halliday**, whose accomplishments have included selective hearing when sat next to the phone and disabling one of the chairs.



'How come I've got two bits left? - Lt Gunson has a go himself!

SPLIT TROOP

Tp Comd **Capt J. Nichols**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Dewar**

The Troop deployed at warp factor two to the Croatian Riviera and assumed responsibility from 206 Sig Sqn for supporting the main rear comms link back to the UK. In addition, the Troop took full responsibility for the first and second line repair, and back loading, of all IT used in the southern half of the operational area. Not a mean feat by anybody's standards, especially as the Troop is only 19 strong! Sad farewells go to **Sgt Mandy Jones**, going back to blighty (lucky girl) and **Capt Mosby** moving up to greater things at Banja Luka.

'BLUEYS' FROM BOSNIA

From: **Capt J. A. Symmons**
Banja Luka

(Capt Symmons is currently serving as the Liaison Officer with the Serbian Army. His letters home give a very real feel for the situation faced by the Army in Bosnia and we much appreciate John's agreement to allow us to publish, perhaps with a little 'encouragement' from his father, Lt Col Andrew Symmons of Comms Project Div, here in Blandford).

Date: October 10, 1998

Sorry about the mailshot but time is at a premium here at the moment, mainly due to Kosovo. Well as I say I am very busy but still enjoying myself. The job is quite high profile with weekly meetings with the local Generals and daily meetings with the VRS (Serb Army).



Maj Vukovic, of the Serb Army, and interpreter in conversation with Capt Symmons

It is still quite warm here with temperatures in the mid-twenties on average, but we are all braced up for the big freeze. There have been several big thunderstorms recently and a medium strength earthquake (no damage) on Thursday night. I am living in a house in town with three French Colonels and an American Major. The situation here is under review and we are likely to be pulled back to the Camp (Banja Luka Metal Factory) in the near future. The locals are great at the moment, and there seems to be almost no tension. However, things may change soon. I have the rare authority to walk around town armed and alone, so the Commanders take my task very seriously. Most British troops are not even allowed out of the camp and go stir crazy inside the wire. I am very lucky, stress levels vary on a daily basis and currently I am on Stress State 7!

One of the most notable things about this country is the striking similarity to Germany. Rolling hills, mountains and deep river valleys. The scenery is quite stunning in places especially south of here. This part of Bosnia escaped the ravages of the recent war but the farther south you go the more scarred the landscape and buildings are. There are burned out cars and tanks all over the place and most of the houses are currently being rebuilt. Literal translation of Bosnia-Herzegovina should be 'Land of Breeze Blocks'!

I have already partaken in some of the local hospitality and the people here are extremely good at it too. Many people speak English but I have my own interpreter. The interpreters are some of the best-paid people in the town. Mine drives a BMW! Cars are very cheap but you have to keep them for six months before you can import them tax free. The restaurants are quite reasonable and the waiters most helpful. Twice I have had tips turned down because they are too much. I only left three quid! Everything is quite cheap. The local beer, pivo, costs just less than 25p a bottle! I have not been out and about much but there is plenty of time yet. Went up to the local ranges a few times, and saw the Serbian Tanks firing and some platoon live firing exercises. All their equipment seems in dire need of repair but they have no money with which to do it.

I hope all is well in England and that there are no problems. I have been driving a bit since my arrival and it is quite an experience. There is not a huge amount of traffic but that which there is seems to move almost randomly. The cars are mainly old bangers that would never pass a MOT in a month of Sundays. I saw a car the other day drive into an open manhole outside the house. When we helped him out the car was all smashed underneath and had a flat tyre. The driver drove off anyway. I've also seen a Yugo with a small cow on the back seat driving around town. 'Please don't do that Daisy, I've just had it valeted!!'

Monday October 19 1998

Nearly got blown up this week, most exciting! It wasn't a bomb or anything, just some workmen rebuilding a road we happened to be driving along, They were blowing a route for the new road and we just happened to be there when the charge went off. We weren't too close but some bits of earth landed on the bonnet of our landrover. Good job I was wearing my brown trousers! There is not much going on here. Things have calmed down at least for the time being in Kosovo. We were pulled out of the house for the last two weeks in case of attack but the people in the metal factory did not understand that there really is no threat. The only threat would be from a local drunk or someone like that, but better safe than sorry I suppose. Unfortunately they forgot about the French Colonels, who come under Sarajevo. They were here the whole time having barbecues and 'leetle soirees' while we were slumming it in a 'Corimec' every night, A Corimec is a tin box with beds in it, mine happened to be next to the Helipad and generators. C'est la vie!

I have also had to speak to the Defence Minister once, he was surrounded by large men in large cars with black windows. I had to tell him that the meeting he wanted to have with Commander SFOR was a go-er and his flight was leaving in one hour! Needless to say he told me (COMSFOR) to poke off. Life has its ups and downs. Now we are back in the house I am getting back into a little of the social life and relaxing a bit more. There are CD shops around here that sell pirate CDs for DM6 (about two quid). Had a meal tonight with three mates. The bill was DM 110 (35 quid) (USA computer has no pound sign). Must go for the mo. More soon.

Saturday October 24 1998

Well the second of my nine lives was accounted for today. There was a live firing demonstration held by the Serb Army (yes all of it!) and they were firing anti-tank missiles. One of them went a little astray and exploded about 100m in front of the viewing stand. I flinched a little, as did everyone else. On the whole though it was very impressive. The Serb army still uses the old communist doctrine and when they dig trenches they link them all together. Much like the scenes in Black Adder, most interesting. There was a whole brigade in defence and all the trenches were interconnected. You could walk for miles (or kilometres depending on your outlook) without going above ground. These things are mazes. They have bedrooms and all sorts.

Well that is enough for now I will write again soon.

Date: 07/11/98

I hope all is well in sunny England. You will be pleased to hear that nothing here has changed apart from the temperature, which is steadily falling. No frosts yet but they aren't far off.

No major dramas here for the past few weeks. Last week I had to go to a cantonment site with the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team, to carry out a safety inspection. The site is a small barracks (looked like an old farm) in a village just outside Prnjavor (Northeast). The ammo bunker was a barn-like building with just a wooden door. When we went in the place was stacked from top to bottom with wooden crates containing all types of ammo. We are talking about grenades, rockets, anti-tank missiles, you name it. There is also an amnesty operation going on, whereby if anyone finds or has explosives at home then they hand it in to SFOR for destruction. Unfortunately this has drawbacks, as the VRS do not fully understand the danger. Either that or they are blasé about it, probably the latter. We found a box of handed in stuff in the clothing store. It was just sat there! It contained various mines, explosives, rifle ammunition that had all just been slung in a box and left to deteriorate.

My old 2IC has left now and the new guy, **LCpl Mellows** or 'Mez', is settling in very well. He is somewhat quieter than 'Baz' but that is not a bad thing. I am still doing the rounds of the local establishments, slowly. Our local is the town's best fish restaurant, called Alas (pronounced Alash) and much of my hard earned wedge is spent there. I took the Chief of Staff, from our HQ, there a couple of days ago. He was suitably impressed. I think though that he may have ideas about the house. I'll just have to wait and see. It has been great here for the last few days as the

French have been away a lot. Even the American Major has not been seen for the last four days.

We went to a Conscripts Oath-Taking Ceremony today. After twenty-two days of basic training the conscripts passout at this huge ceremony. There was 1890 of them, and 1000 spectators. Although massive there was a certain lack of style, such as we are used to. They just stood there, there was no marching or anything. Nevertheless it was quite an interesting morning out. Afterwards Major Vukovic took us to the Hotel Bosna for a drink, which was nice. The Hotel Bosna is the best hotel in town. It is where all the dignitaries stay when they are visiting parliament etc.

Well what else is happening? Not a great deal really. There are always lots of small problems to be solved but at the moment there are no major ones. I did come into my own last week though. We were called out to attend an RTA just up the road from here. Luckily no-one was hurt but they were all damned lucky. The driver of the Landrover braked just hard enough to avoid going under the back of an articulated lorry with a puncture that had caused it to jack-knife across the road just in front of him.

Well as you can see life here is not too hard with the odd social event mixing in with the normal daily grind.

Wednesday November 11 1998: I had my five minutes of fame today. I had to do a quick interview with BFBS Radio Live. Nothing special, just a case of, 'What do you do?'Doesn't that sound interesting, tell us about it? That was after I had to escort the General to a meeting this morning. That and having to sort out 80 soldiers who were wandering round town with rifles, it made for an interesting day.

I had to go to Viterog again today. If I haven't already told you, it is a mountain of 6,500ft and is where the Serb Army has a maze of undergound tunnels that are designed to provide a headquarters in the event of war. The weather was incredible, sideways snow! When we arrived, there was about one inch of snow. However, when we left four hours later, there was over one foot. Driving was a nightmare. The temperature must have dropped to about minus 10 degrees. Needless to say I stayed inside as long as possible!

See you all soon! - John

Date: 17 December 1998

Well here is the latest 'diary' supplement. Life is still OK and the VRS are slowly coming round after the recent incident. Spent today driving to a place called Bugojno for the regular meeting of the Entity Leaders. Quite tedious really but for the Generals it was quite useful. They were all in agreement over the points put across by SFOR. Namely, Joint Demining programmes, Security of Sites and Site safety. We sat down to lunch, that was a four-course effort. Soup (not bad), meat pie which was tasteless, lamb (to be more accurate, cold lumps of sheep) and some cake type stuff. It was fine but I really was not in the mood for it having had a long night watching the news from Iraq. Well what a turn up for the books that was. There was a Quiz Night at the Officers Mess last night and halfway through they stopped it and announced the Operations in Iraq. Can't say it wasn't expected though.

I had my first drive in a HMMMV (Hum V) the other day. It was the armoured variant and I expect it weighed 4 or 5 tons. The doors were so heavy they were difficult to open. It is a fully automatic tank on wheels and was actually quite easy to drive. It is almost as wide as a Double-Decker (*John should know as he works for London General Transport!)* My familiarisation on the Hum V was in snow and ice on a mountainside, so all in all quite interesting. The weather here is quite odd, it has warmed up a little and the snow has all but melted. However, the smoke from all the wood fires lies thick over the town. Snow and Smog! Visibility is about 15 metres.

The French *(with whom he shares the house)* are doing their handovers at the moment. Franco has left which is a shame. He was the one with the sense of humour. His replacement is quite quiet, which is not a bad thing, he seems reasonable enough. Col Rey leaves tomorrow. He recently discovered that I know a little about computers and has been pestering me ever since to help him with this and that. 'How do I delete this letter?' 'Why is my printer not working?' etc, etc.

Pedja *(Interpreter)* went sick today. He said he had forgotten about a Dentist's appointment in Belgrade for the next six days. The dentist is a friend of the family. I spoke to OC Interrupters *(SFOR – speak for Interpreter)* about it and he was not happy to say the least. He does not have anyone who can cover for Pedja. Pedja has just come back off leave too.

Monday December 21, 1998

Got hit by another earthquake yesterday. Just quiet rumbles nothing to worry about. Went up to the Metal Factory a couple of times this week for a beer (or maybe 2). The barmaid at the officers' mess is a former Miss Yugoslavia. The normal response to that is, 'must have been a few years ago'. Had a chat with Tony Dowson regarding Pedja and will give Pedja a written warning when he gets back from Belgrade.

Maj Vukovic has invited Mez ***(LCpl Mellowes RM, John's driver/2IC)*** and I to a friend's house tomorrow for a St Nicholas Day Celebration, should be a good time. Hopefully he will know where I can chop down a tree for the house. I will write about it when I get back if I'm in a fit state. I am inviting some people around to the house on Xmas Day for Drinks. Then on Boxing Day I have a DLO Conference in Vitez. Sounds like an excuse for something else to me. Who's complaining. Not I Sir!

It being Saturday there is much activity in town. Saturday is wedding day in Bosnia. The celebrations involve driving around town in large convoys leaning on your horn and occasionally letting rip with whatever piece of hardware you may be carrying at the time. It sounded like a small gun battle going on earlier. What with that and the kids with firecrackers it can be a little disconcerting at times. I have yet to work out how you tell the difference between 'celebratory gunfire' and incoming. The best answer I can give is that celebratory gunfire doesn't put holes in things until it comes back down!

NEWS FROM NORTHERN IRELAND

XV HEADQUARTERS NORTHERN IRELAND & 15 SIGNAL REGIMENT

THE BLESSING OF THE CORPS STONE PALACE BARRACKS MEMORIAL GARDENS

by WO2 (SSM) Steve Russell

Past and present members of the Corps may be interested to know that Palace Barracks, Holywood, houses a memorial garden for those that have fallen in the service of peace in Ulster (and to some degree the Falkland Islands). The garden was the concept of **Mr Albert Owens**, an ex member of the Parachute Regiment who devotes an inordinate amount of his own time to its upkeep. The Royal Corps of Signals stone commemorating those that have died during Ulster's troubled recent past has now been laid. On 29 October 1998 a service of Blessing and Remembrance was held.

The service was conducted by the 39 Bde's senior chaplain, **Maj John Tee** and was attended by the Regiment Colonel, **Col Walters**, Comd Comms NI, **Lt Col Gordon Rafferty**, CO 40 Sig Regt, **Lt Col Nigel Beacon,** and the OCs (or their representatives) for the three Bde Sig Sqns in the Province, **Lt Col (Retd) Terry Lightfoot** represented the RSA. The wreath was laid by the Regimental Colonel and was followed by a traditional act of Remembrance.

A point worthy of note is that a number of those members of the Corps who gave their life during the Falklands conflict are commemorated on other memorials within the garden, they are: Maj Forge, Lt Barry and SSgt Baker.

Lest we forget:

Sig Genge	6 Nov 71	Cpl Wood	19 Mar 38
Sig Dryden	7 Aug 91	Cpl Aikman	6 Nov 73
LCpl Lambie	15 Jun 88	Col Eaton	30 Jun 76
LCpl Paterson	15 Jun 88	Sig Reece	2 Atig 79
Sgt Winker	15 Jun 88	Cpl Ward	1 Apr 82
Sig Clavey	16 Jun 88	Cpl Howes	19 Mar 88
SSgt Froggett	16 Sep 89		





233 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj R. P. Giles**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Day**

The Squadron is currently going through a busy period with the tear down of bases and Permanent Vehicle Checkpoints, all happening at an impressive rate. Through this busy period, in the run up to the Festive Season, **Capt Jules Walster** has managed to swan off on a couple of jollies. Firstly to South Africa with the Corps Netball team for two weeks and then an attachment to RSS to assist in the running of the SORLS desk (her old job). The OC and all ranks of 233 Sig Sqn would like to congratulate **Capt Walster** on her recent engagement to **Ewen** and wish them all the best for the future. We say a fond farewell to **Cpl Mick Graham** (AGC) on his move across to movements in RHQ and welcome **Cpl Stu Brittain** (AGC) from Comms Branch HQNI who takes over the singleton post looking after the administration of some 200 soldiers.

ROMEO TROOP

Tp Comd **Capt Nick Massey**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Allen**

In the aftermath of the Good Friday Peace Agreement, the Troop has failed to see the benefits of any peace dividend. The workload has increased due to the removal and re-sitings of SF bases. The manning of our detachment, 'the hill', still goes on, and it occasionally sees some funny moments. One such time being when **Sgt Justin Woolen** decided to do the burning. After emptying an ENTIRE bottle of heptane onto the paper, he proceeded to light it. He then picked himself off the floor, wiped the blackness off his face and neck, and inspected the damage done to his non-existent eyelashes and eyebrows! Needless to say, he has not done the burning again!

The Troop said a personal farewell to the Sqn Comd, **Maj N. Keen,** who impressed us all with his abilities in drinking the half-yard. That was until a new arrival **LCpl Helen Sheffield** shocked us all into silence with her half-yard talents! The Troop would like to congratulate **Cpl Iain Galloway** and his wife on the birth of their daughter **Katie-Louise**. Also well done to **Cpl** 'Birdy' **Bird** on passing P Company, he will be leaving us soon to join 16 Air Asslt Bde. Congratulations to **LCpl** 'Ickle' **Davies** on his long awaited promotion to full Cpl. Finally a tip for **Sgt** 'Tug' **Wilson**... go to the doctor when you feel a pain... alternatively leave it six weeks before complaining about a BROKEN leg!

SPORTSMAN AND WOMAN'S DINNER AND AWARDS EVENING - 17 SEPTEMBER 1998

On the 17 September 1998 the Sportsman and Woman's dinner was held to highlight the achievements of individuals within the Regiment. It was a night to award colours to a select few who have represented the Regiment and Corps in a varied selection of sports from tug-of-war to Golf.



CO presenting the Regimental Colours for Rugby to Sig Huggett

Also prizes were awarded in various categories from the Most Improved Individual to the Best Sportsman/Woman in the Regiment. The night was organised by **WO2 (SSM) Day** and turned out to be the talking point for at least two weeks. Being a professional group of Sports persons this was the end of the season for a lot of people so copious amounts of amber nectar were had by all. **Steven Watson** a sports presenter from UTV, kept the night going with some jokes and few words during the evening and yet again the hierarchy got some stick with jokes thrown in their general direction.

On a serious note the night was meant to highlight all the prospects and sporting achievements that can be accomplished even in a busy operational unit. The persons in attendance also proved a point that there are fewer of the younger generation joining in and getting involved in the sporting field within the Regiment. There will definitely be a recruitment drive for the Tug of War and Rugby teams for next season with **WO2 (SSM) Dave Rook** headhunter for the teams. All in all this was a very successful night and enjoyed by all in attendance even it there were some seriously unfit people suffering the next day. Needless to say Rugby training was cancelled that day! A final congratulations has to go to **Capt Jules Walster** who won Best Sports Person in the Regiment for her achievements in Triathlon, Netball, Skiing and her achievements as the female focus for all sports in the Province.

FOOTBALL CRAZY IN THE STATES
A PERSONAL VIEW OF THE USA CUP 98

by Cpl D. P. Steele

Until I became an Army Referee, I never dreamed that I would be able to go to the USA and referee football matches in the sunshine (a very rare thing in NI) for two brilliant weeks. I flew from London Heathrow to Minneapolis Airport (via Reykjavik). The first thing I noticed on leaving the plane was the incredible heat - around 90°C, a bit of a change from Lisburn. There were about 12 Referees, or 'Men In Black', as we became known on the plane and we were immediately taken to the National Sports Centre (56 full sized football pitches - the biggest in the world - and they're talking about building another ten). It's right what they say, everything IS bigger in the States, from the beer - served in pitchers - to the sports centres. The teams themselves, and the Referees, were from as far afield as USA, Japan and Colombia!!

On a normal day I would referee four games, ranging from 12 year old boys and girls to Under 21 teams (future World Cup stars perhaps). The humidity was the worst thing - sun block was compulsory, and there were refreshment tents at every pitch. When I wasn't on the pitch there was lots to do! A few of us hired a car and tried to see some of the sights of Minneapolis. The Tournament Organisers really looked after us, and even laid on a VIP party. Tournament Officials, Players, Senators, Team Managers and even the local Mayor attended. What a night that was! The Refereeing itself was hard work, and for those of us with aching muscles the Organisers had even laid on massages (sometimes it's so hard being a football Official!).



Cpl Steele on duty

The one game that sticks in my mind was Colombia v Italy. The Italians scored twice within the first ten minutes. The Colombians decided that they did not like either my assistants or myself and I was forced to call security (six huge men - I already said, everything's bigger in the States - even the bouncers). Fortunately I survived the experience, without a Colombian necktie! All in all, I had a memorable two weeks, and made some very good friends. I would love to go again - but I think I'd avoid refereeing the Colombian team they take their football very seriously in these South American countries!

FAREWELL TO THE COMMANDING OFFICER
29 SEPTEMBER 1998

On a bright and sunny September afternoon the junior ranks of the Regiment gathered in the Peake Inn to say farewell to **Lt Col Rowlinson** on his departure to the Military College at Shrivenham. After a few drinks in the Peake Inn, a small presentation of a picture of the Mourn Mountains was made and the usual speeches ensued. Luckily these didn't last too long and the ex CO was whisked away in a snatch landrover sporting a Viking helmet complete with horns and waving a blow up axe, to a waiting Gazelle for a final trip round the sights of Lisburn. *Photos over page*



The departure of Lt Col Rowlinson



The Outgoing CO, Lt Col D. E. Rowlinson handing over command to his successor Lt Col G. J. T. Rafferty

3 INFANTRY BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (203)

Sqn Comd	**Maj S. K. MacRostie MBE**
RSM	**WO1 (RSM) S. Cheslett**

OPS

Farewell to the 2IC, **Capt Richard Webb** who is about to start JDSC. Congratulations on getting your Regular Commission, and good luck at 14 Sig Regt. Many thanks for all you've done. Welcome to **Capt Helen Bosley** who has come from SORLS in Blandford. Her social life may well take a nose dive.

COMMUNICATIONS TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt I. Bates**
Tp Sgt	**SSgt J. Seymour**

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

Comms Section continue their work for communications in the 3 Inf Bde area. The section consists of four teams: Syscon, COMMCEN, Crypto, and Trials. Take one of these vital parts away and the whole shebang falls apart. For the unlucky few, the tours of these unsung heroes are coming to an end, and for the lucky, it is all about to start (God bless them all). We say goodbye and *veni vidi vici* to **Lt Ivan** 'Boy Wonder' **Bates** going to Bassingbourn, **SSgt Jan** 'Butts' **Seymour** going to Blandford, **LCpl** 'Beaker' **Phillips** off to the Falklands, and **Sig** 'Not so' **Smart** off to 30 Sig Regt. Salutations are extended to **2Lt Forbes Guthrie** and **SSgt Bob Wallace**. Finally, congratulations to **LCpl Tony Adams** on his recent promotion.

TM SECTION

The last three months have been very busy, largely due to the forthcoming move to Portadown. Apart from the normal day-to-day work carried out by TM Section, there has also been a lot of packing up for the move. Salutations to **Cpl** 'Time for Telly Tubby Toast' **Webster**, wife **Denise**, and children **Shinise** and **Connor**. Hope you and your family has a good two years here. Another hello to **Cpl** 'Brummie' **Baker's** wife **Elaine** who we hope also enjoys her time out here. Congratulations are to be extended to **Sig Stainer** on coming off the recent F Board, earlier this month. Also **LCpl** 'Dogsy' **Barker** has managed to complete his Driving Instructors course. God help us all. Finally, **Cpl Solly Webster** has been awarded his Army Colours for Karate for the second time. Well done.

COMMUNICATIONS TROOP
DAY OUT PONY TREKKING

More days out to boost morale of the Troop. Off we set on a peaceful Sunday morning once everyone had arrived at the Mini-bus, complete with hangovers from the previous night. When we arrived at the riding school we were kitted out with our riding helmets. **Sig George Marshall**. was given an original looking helmet with graffiti all over it. Each horse had its own nameplate on the door of its stable. Upon looking around at these, **Sig George Marshall** insisted that he have the horse called Barney. Not being the tallest of people, **George** was a bit shocked when an enormous Shire horse emerged from the Barney door. To his credit, he still maintained this was the horse he wanted. He seemed to be suffering from altitude sickness when he finally managed to mount this gentle giant.



Private Johnson feeding her horse

Once we were allocated our horses we began circling around the school, attempting to strike the correct posture upon our mounts. At this point we were all feeling fairly confident and decided to have a go at trotting. However, **Sig** 'shoulders' **Moore's** wife **Karine** had a bit of a shock when her horse decided it wanted to become a National Hunt horse, and proceeded to go over one of the jumps and start cantering. Poor **Karine** held on for dear life as the animal beneath her ran amok. We deduced that this may have been for one of two reasons:

1. This type of event is commonplace among newlyweds.
2. **Karine**'s helmet was too big for her head, and kept covering her eyes so she couldn't see.

Knowing **Sig Moore**, we believe the latter to be the more likely. Anyway, onto the horse riding. **Karine** eventually managed to control her horse, and all the other horses were well-behaved. **Sig Emma Jones'** horse was a bit of a donkey and struggled to walk let alone trot. **Emma** did not seem to mind this too much as the expression on her face did not change for the whole of the lesson. She seemed very relieved at the end. After the lesson, we had worked up a thirst and appetite, and proceeded to the nearest restaurant for our nosebags. We congratulated ourselves on our impressive performance over the day, and nursed our sore legs for a few days after.

PARACHUTING

The aim of this day out was to complete a tandem dive from 12,000 feet. The definition of complete is simply to hit the ground at such a speed as to avoid any internal bleeding. We thought that being strapped to an instructor would remove the possibility of Jibbing' out. After putting on all our layers of warm clothing and jump suits, we looked like Michelin Men. First down was **Sig Si Frost** who performed a type of Cossack dance upon landing. He was so thrilled with the experience that he wanted to go up again. The rest of the group went up one by one and landed successfully. **Sig** 'I've done static line before' **Marshall** was the last to go up, but looked slightly different after the jump than before. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the day, and found the adrenalin rush fantastic.



Sig Marshall looking like Roy 'Chubby' Brown

EXERCISE ENDLESS SUMMER

Yet again it was another hot and clear sunny day in the Province (not), but this was not going to spoil the high morale as we set off to Portrush. The transport was stocked up with wetsuits and freshly waxed surfboards. The night before we had all watched 'Point Break', so we thought we knew what we were doing. After a two-hour drive we arrived at 5 R IRISH in Coleraine. It did not take us long to unpack and hit the beach where we soon realised the Irish coast was no Hawaiian paradise. The cold weather aside, we climbed into our wetsuits, threw the surfboards under our arms, and headed towards the surf to show the locals how bad we really were. After some top instruction by **Sig Tony Adams,** we managed a few hours in some good 5 - 6ft breaks before nightfall finally descended.

The subsequent night was successful, especially for **LCpl Maynard** and **Sig** 'keep it in the family' **Marshall**. The next day was also good for surf, but it took some time to get going as our heads weren't really up to it yet. The day went well with some good waves but **WO2** 'of course you can drink and surf' **Duncan, LCpl** 'my wetsuit's wet' **Bushell,** and **Pte** 'Shadwell flannel' **Humphries** were all too cold to carry on. This left the die hards **Cpl** 'wizard' **Cator, Sig** 'dancer' **Adams,** and **Sig** 'stalker' **Stainer** to make the most of a great weekend.



LCpls Stainer (left) and Adams (right) posing. What's new!

SUPPORT TROOP

Tp Comd	**Capt F. Payet**
RQMS	**WO2 (RQMS) D. Craig**

Welcome to **LCpl Carlton** who was promoted to Cpl only two weeks after arriving to the unit. Also, congratulations to **LCpl Osborne** and his wife **Nicki** on the birth of their baby girl **Molly.** Farewell to **Pte** 'Geordie' **Parkin,** posted to 2 Log Sp RLC who is also undertaking a charity parachute jump for another member of the Troop whose daughter is seriously ill. The aim is to raise enough money for her to go to Disneyland. Good luck with the fund-raising. **RQMS Dougie Craig** is posted on promotion to RSM, and to top it all his wife **Tracy** is having their first baby in January. Many thanks for your hard work in the Troop and good luck with the nappy changing and your new posting. It follows, therefore that the replacement of the RQMS has arrived. Welcome to **RQMS Andy Strudwick.**

EXERCISE WATER FINN

The Troop organised an adventure training Exercise in the Lake District between 15 -25 September. This involved 20 personnel from the Troop and a visit from the Sqn OC, **Maj MacRostie**. The activities consisted of hill-walking, canoeing, and mountain biking. All personnel had a great time and the following diary extracts from **Cpl Paterson** and **LCpl Howard** summarise it all.

DERWENT STORM
*by **Cpl Paterson***

Day one, week one. Got underway at 0700 hrs with the QM in a non too happy mood with **Sig Albert Finney.** After a couple of hours listening to **Albert** snoring the night before, he could take no more and eventually moved rooms. The phrase 'I'll kill you' was definitely heard at one stage. Is this a new miracle cure for snoring, because Albert's condition definitely improved after that point. After a hearty breakfast we set off to Derwent Water for a day's canoeing. The weather was foul and a gale was blowing. Not deterred, everyone got kitted in their top of the range wetsuits supplied by HM Forces Kinnegar, and off we floated with our instructor, **Pte Andy Lorimar**. We managed to bluff Andy that we were all skilled in the art of Eskimo Rolling and didn't need to practice this manoeuvre in the freezing water. The weather didn't help at all, and canoeing was a struggle for most. After a couple of hours it was obvious that none of us would ever make it to the Olympics, so the QM decided that this was a good time to call us back in and take us mountain biking. After warming up back at the villa, we changed clothes and received a safety brief. We were then taken to the drop off point and shown the route we were to take. This included a steep climb that meant that most of us ended up mountain walking rather than biking. The downhill bit was far more fun than the uphill bit, and the route led us conveniently to the local pub.



The lads at the DOP

SHORT WALK UP A HILL CALLED HELVEL
*by **LCpl Howard***

At the car park, just some 215m above sea level, looking up at Helvellyn and its first peak, our faces dropped a bit. Before we set off, the QM gave us his master plan for the day. In order to improve our navigation we were to map read throughout. If, at any point we were unable to give our location, we would have to go back down the hill 50m and come back up. The first victim, **Pte Wayne Rickard** was tasked to navigate over the first stage. Almost immediately, he became navigationally challenged but was set right by the QM. Spirits were high with jokes and song until a true view of the path leading up to Helvellyn became clear. Step by step we made our way up the path and slowly the group began to spread out with **Cpl** 'Green Gills' **Turner** holding up the rear. The responsibility of navigation passed from **Wayne Rickard** and **Paul Lawler** to **Geordie Parkin** with his new walking boots bought the previous day. The OC on the other hand walked in a pair of trainers and subsequently decided to buy a pair of boots that he didn't use. Approaching the summit we passed a steady stream of walkers coming down from the hill. With our group huffing and puffing but still trying to look as though we were enjoying it, we were passed by a group of young ladies. How embarrassing. We eventually reached the summit and had a spot of lunch. This consisted of doorstep sandwiches which most of the lads turned their noses up at. Once the QM started to get a bit cold he decided that it would soon be time for a pint, so off we set again. Once down off the top of the hill the pace picked up with the end in sight. The joking soon started again but the group found themselves slightly lost which dampened spirits once more. The QM took over as point man and soon found the main path. He also stepped up the pace as the village lay ahead with the pub beckoning. After a few pints we jumped in the transport and made our way back to the four star accommodation and Barbecue. The QM insisted that we were going nowhere until all the sausages had been eaten which we duly managed along with a few pints. We then went into town!



At the summit
Rear row (L-R): Cpl 'Si' Ferrer, LCpl 'Howie' Howard, Sig 'Taff James
Front Row (L-R): Maj Stuart MacRostie, LCpl Ian Pearce, Capt Fred Payet, Sig 'Albert' Finney

MERCURY CUP – MILITARY SKILLS COMPETITION

The almost victorious military skills competition team consisted of **Lt Ivan Bates, Cpl** 'Ozzy' **Osborne, Cpl Tom Wise, LCpl Scott Maynard, LCpl Ian Pearce, LCpl Andy Nunns, Pte Paul Ridgeway,** and **Sig Carl Stewart**. Our first stand was the equipment check that we were very optimistic about as our RSM was running it. Until that is, we started to lose points for 'the wrong T-shirt, and it's inside out', and another team member forgetting his ID card (well done, Sir). 'It's in my trousers' just doesn't count in the dog-eat-dog world of military skills competitions. Next up was the assault course. We knew the time we had to beat, but failed in our attempt - badly. With much gnashing of teeth and flailing of limbs we just survived the torture of it all. The FRG stand was our third stand. The team had an infallible plan that seemed to be left at the start line. All was going well until the rioters began to get a bit excited and started to throw themselves at us. We needed batons, and fast. Congratulations must be extended to the firers who were obviously using the 70's tactic of trying to bounce the rounds off the floor. Our fourth stand was First Aid. We would have done so well had **Lt Bates** found the final casualty. Also **Pte Ridgeway** lost us some points by refusing to give up his warm jacket so the casualty would have had a chance of survival. However, overall it was a good performance and the team managed to accrue enough points to come second in this event. Team medics rule. We came first in the next event, the pistol shoot, which involved scrambling from wooden cars. In high spirits we moved onto the final event, the clay pigeon shooting. This was more fun than competition. Worst shot was **Sig Stewart** and best shot was **Lt Bates**.

All in all it was a very enjoyable day, and the final score was such that three teams at the top (including us) all had the same score. This meant that the final positions were decided on the assault course timing that, needless to say, meant we came third. 39 Inf Bde won the competition but won't next year.

39 INFANTRY BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (213)

Sqn Comd **Maj N. J. Borrill**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) G. B. Hawkins BEM**

FAREWELL TO MAJOR R. J. HEALEY

On 10 September 1998 a fun day was held to bid a fond farewell to the Sqn Comd, **Maj Rob Healey**. The day began with breakfast in the Sgt's Mess followed by a city flight around Belfast. Upon his return **Maj Healey** was hoisted up the mast to the rear of the Squadron and then undertook a high-speed descent. The OC assured all present that the green tinge around his gills when he reached terra firma was due to dinner the previous night. The rest of the day revolved around the Officers and Seniors taking on the junior ranks at all the OC's favourite sports; namely football, hockey and volley ball. Highlights of the various matches were **Maj Healey**'s hat trick on the football field, **Sgt Avery** receiving a smack around the chops during the hockey and a distressing level of uncoordinated bodies in the Officer and Seniors' volley ball team. Experience bested youthful energy and the Senior ranks beat the juniors in all events. The day was rounded off by a superb curry supper in the Horseshoe Club followed by presentations, speeches and some very enlightening skills. The Squadron presented **Maj Healey** with a crystal horseshoe and wished him and his family all the best in their new home at RMCS Shrivenham. The Squadron welcomes **Maj Nick Borrill** and his family. He takes over as OC of the Squadron.

TM SECTION

Well, as our last entry fell into the Bermuda Triangle, we'd best catch up with the crazy goings on at 39 TM Section. We ought to start with some hellos and goodbyes. The Riggers have said goodbye to **LCpl Ali Lloyd** who is off on her travels to Cyprus, although we hear that she's not too happy about it. Meanwhile, **Sgt** 'Lex/Taff' **Lougher** has taken the helm as Section Sergeant. The workshops have lived up to their role as an alternative TI crammer and sent **Cpls Gethin Tudor Bevan** and **Andy** 'Evil Knievil' **Ward** to Blandford. We have also had the arrival of **Cpl Eric** ' Devo' **Cassee** who is on his RSCC before he leaves to join everybody else at Blandford. **Sgt Fete Barber** joined the great unwashed masses in civvy street after a long and distinguished career. Finally, **Cpl Marcus** 'Hockey-boy' **Murcott** leaves, surprisingly to play hockey at 16 Sig Regt.

Arriving, we have **LCpl Gallagher** and **Sig** 'I can drive, to be sure' **Wade** straight from the factory. Congratulations to **Cpl Sean** 'Homer' **Wedge** on completing his RSCC, with extra marks for being able to watch for enemy with his eyes closed. **Sig Jim Lawrence** completed his caving course, further improving our relations with all manner of gnomes, dwarfs and pixies, and let us not forget the Grim Reaper **Sgt** 'Six Million Dollar Man' **Bates** who has had yet another rebuild on his knees. Ouch!

ROVER GROUP

Congratulations to the newly weds **LCpl Jim Bowen** and wife **Karen** we wish them all the best for the future. A warm welcome goes to **LCpl. Mick Constable** into the group who has come down to us from SYSCON to replace **LCpl** 'Dick' **Hartley** who has left to do his PTI thing In the gym down at Blandford; Good Luck to him.

The drivers in the group have been stealing the limelight of late with **LCpl Martin** 'Stop or I'll Fire' **Walsh** nearly apprehending armed robbers, but apparently his door was stuck. **LCpl** 'LALA Geordie' **Owens** managed to drag himself away from the NAAFI staff to do a spot of driving only to get caught speeding. The group continues to fill the Squadron teams for every Military Skills competition going; Mercury Cup, Motrose Cup and any other Cup you care to mention, you name it we'll be doing it. A final note, if anyone was wondering why the paramilitaries have called a cease fire just have a look at the photo, I must emphasise that the two 'Warriors' pictured were unsuccessful, Rover Group. **Kev** and **Marko** enjoy the photo.

THE GREAT NORTH RUN 1998

by Sgt S. Hylan

In most years the Squadron entered a team in the Great North Run. Our accommodation was an 'A' grade 5 star hotel on the coast of Whitburn. The team consisting of **WO1 (RSM) Hawkins BEM, WO2 (RQMS) Lawes, Sgt Hyland, Cpls Wardale** and **Cassee** with the support staff of **Pte Binney**, had trained over the past months and were ready 'for battle' on Sunday morning. In the meantime we had a lot of historic sites to visit and visit the sites we did, most until the early hours of the morning.

On the day of the run we all arose bright and early, jumped into the admin transport and disembarked at South Shields. Then it was onto the famed Melro rail system and from there to the very front of the run. Once the run started the going was easy for the first 500 yards. Then the ground seemed to go uphill and carry on going up hill until 500 yards short of 13 miles. An excellent time was had by all and everyone said that they would love to participate in the run again next year.

EXERCISE PEAKS FINN - 4-10 OCTOBER 1998

Exercise Peaks Finn was an adventurous training exercise carried out by members of the Squadron. The aim of the Exercise was to walk the four highest peaks in each of the home nations, which included Slieve Donard in County Down, Ben Nevis in Scotland, Scar Fell Pike in the Lake District and finally Snowdon in the Snowdonian National Park. Each day a different mountain was climbed, ending up in Wales for two days, one for R and R (DRINKING) and the second for canyoning which involved climbing up waterfalls and jumping off cliffs. The OC Squadron and RSM visited the team in Wales and enjoyed some of our great hospitality and choice of night-time venues.

RQMS' DEPARTMENT

by WO2 (RQMS) S. F. M. Lawes and Sgt S. Hyland

Under the auspicious leadership of **WO2 (RQMS) S. F. M. Lawes** the department has worked tirelessly towards the ultimate reward ot a sports afternoon, but as usual to no avail! Rumours have been flying around that due to the amount of time the department spends cleaning and tidying the stores that the Pope was going to pay us a visit and he would give us the said sports afternoon. This was quickly quashed by the RQMS who announced the Logistics Inspection Team was visiting in his place. Much

has happened since the last mention in *The Wire* some months ago including **Sig** 'Faye' **Edwards** who was due to attend a gliding course at Bicester. However, the hire car she was given failed to reach its destination and also the neck brace she had to wear stopped her from flying it and also impeded her filling out the FMT 3. **LCpl** 'Mac' **McGuinness** has spent the last four months whinging and moaning about the state of his accounts and even carried this on whilst on holiday in the seaside resort of Magilligan. **Sig** 'Sticky' **Bunn** has finally escaped from the clutches of the RQMS and moved to the MT Section. He is at present in the process of retrading; we all wish him well in his future career.

Cpl 'Paul' **Selby** has, after many years of service, finally completed a number of courses. That was after the usual comments of '****What do you want that for, you're a storeman'. These courses included MLT, (walking in the Lake District) and also a Map Reading instructors Course (walking in Berkshire) and he is now in the planning stages of taking the Department out for a days walking (using various local hostelries as key focal points).

We are pleased to announce the arrival **Sig** 'Kev' **Pack** into the Department. He has joined us from 1 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt and who, after initial reviews and arrival procedures, was promptly booked into the Dental Centre for major surgery. We would also like to welcome **Pte** 'Steve' **Binney** (RLC) to the Department who has joined us from the MT.

MOURNE MINDER II

by LCpl Mandie Smith

Having just arrived in Province, my new Staff Sergeant, **Staff Robinson,** decided that it wasn't on that I had time to settle in or even unpack. So after being put on a couple of courses and thrown into my new job feet first, he wasted no time at all volunteering me for the Squadron's much talked about Battle Camp, Mourne Minder II (no surprise there then!) We deployed on the exercise on 1 November. We all met outside the Squadron, jumped into our mini-buses and left sunny Lisburn in fairly high spirits. The high spirits soon turned into moans and grumbles on arrival at the not so sunny Magilligan Training Centre! Day one was dry training... although dry is the last word I'd use to describe the first day - wet, soaking and drenching are words that would be more fitting. Even though the weather was appalling we still managed to fit in a fun packed day of section battle drills, pairs fire and manoeuvre, first aid and a pyro demo. Oh, we also managed to have quite a laugh at those that forgot to bring their waterproofs and a number, like **LCpl Leicester Richardson,** who did bring them, but only had the 3p crisp packet type, so got soaked to the skin anyway!! As the week went on the weather did dry up a touch, as did the enthusiasm, but luckily for us **Sgt** 'Donkers!' **Coates** had plenty to keep us busy. Daily tasking were dished out each night on our briefings, along with much pleading for us to turn up for breakfast each morning as the DS didn't like eating alone .....Aaaahhhh!

The third day was spent on the ranges, with nearly all the Squadron passing their APWT and APWA. A miracle in itself. The background activity was Practice Grenades ready for the Grenade range the following day. **Sgt Scotty Cain** seemed cool and calm whilst teaching us the basics in the Troop shelter, but didn't seem quite so brave once he realised that I was actually female and threw like a proper girl!! Day four saw the beginning of the end (of the Exercise and not me killing everyone on the grenade range!). We spent the morning throwing grenades and later getting to grips with the riot gun, both of which we all enjoyed. The afternoon was the Section competition that the DS had lovingly concocted. It comprised an NBC stand, First Aid Island, Command Task and finally a stretcher race. There were three sections that took part and we all seemed to have quite a laugh - unless you talk to my section about first aid that is! The day went fairly well overall with only one real injury. This was **Pte Kev Wills**, from One Section, who decided that instead of following the people in front of him on the log race and running round the wall, he would attempt to run through it, causing himself a little bit of pain!

That evening we completed a live firing exercise, once again the rain graced us with it's presence, along with the wind. The idea was to do a Platoon Section in defence. It all seemed to be going pretty well with **Sgt Rich Avery** being chuffed to bits with the set of orders he gave us, only to have them blown into the wind due to us running out of range time. Not that that really mattered as the Exercise had to be cut short due to a minor accident on the GPMG effects gun involving a 'cook off'. On the last day we finally got to spend some time in civvies and undergoing driver training. The intention was to conduct skid pan driving manoeuvring and a written test, but nothing seemed to go to plan with the skid pan car breaking down. This was a shame as we had to go home early! All in all it wasn't a bad a week (apart from the horizontal rain). It was very obvious that all the DS had put a lot of effort into making it an interesting and informative exercise, and I think that we all managed to have a laugh at some point; even if it was only in the coach on the way back!

MERCURY CUP MILITARY SKILLS COMPETITION 1998

The Mercury Cup Military Skills competition was held at Ballykinler on Monday 23 November 1998. The competition was contested by all six Regular Squadrons in NI and the results are as follows:

SQUADRON	POINTS	POSITION
39 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn	17	1st
225 Signal Squadron	17	2nd
3 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn	17	3rd
HQ Squadron	20	4th
233 Signal Squadron	23	5th
8 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn	28	6th

The positions of the three teams scoring 17 points were decided by their times on the Obstacle Course Stand.

MERCURY CUP COMPETITION OVERALL POINTS AND POSITIONS 1998

SQUADRON	POINTS	POSITION
39 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn	7	1st
233 Signal Squadron	9	2nd
225 Signal Squadron	13	3rd
3 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn	15	4th
HQ Squadron	17	5th
8 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn	23	6th

NEWS FROM THE REGIMENTS

1 (UNITED KINGDOM) ARMOURED DIVISION HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL REGIMENT

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS

A LS&GC presentation took place on Wednesday 25 November 1998, in the WO and Sgts Mess. The medals were presented by **Brig J. E. B. Smedley**, Dep Div Comd. (*Photo page 22*)

LCP TROOP 212 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Tp Comd **2Lt W. Burlinson**
Tp SSgt **SSgt R. Breheney**

Since the deployment of the Bosnia Squadron the Troop has been busy maintaining the Squadrons A and B fleet vehicles. However, in between they have managed to take part in a number of activities. Ex Cluster Crew was a Squadron navigational 'rally' which led to **Cpl Tris Dunbar, LCpl Dom Rowe** and **Sig Gav Wilson** taking part in Ex Magnum Spirit. The Troop has also taken part in the Inter-Troop 5-a-side football competition. As **SSgt Bob Breheney** had already defected to another team, **Sig Gav Wilson** led the Troop. The other team members were **Cpl** 'Geordie' **Pearson, LCpl Ian Fowler, Sigs Bob Yuille, Jim Callender, Tony Grimes** and 'Shep' **Heap**. Playing under the name of the 'Pink Pansies' the team went on to win their league and eventually progressed to the



Sig Jim Callender and Cpl Tris Dunbar
One of five teams that successfully completed Exercise Magnum Spirit



Back Row (L-R): WO2 McCracken, SSgt Barcley, SSgt Harvey, SSgt Robertson
Middle Row (L-R): WO2 (A/RSM) Kemp, Maj Harris, WO1 Bolt, Paul Harvey, Brook Harvey, Kier Harvey, Sgt Tracy, Brig Smedley
Front Row (L-R): Mrs Bolt, Mrs McCracken, Mrs Barcley, Mrs Harvey, Mrs Robertson, Mrs Tracy

final, where they came up against an experienced 1 ADSR Rear side, which included **SSgt Bob** 'the traitor' **Breheney**. After a hard fought 2-2 draw after normal time, the game went into extra time and the 'Pink Pansies' eventually went on to win by the 'golden goal' scored by **Sig Gav Wilson**. Well done boys!

The Troop would like to welcome the following new members and their families: **2Lt Louise Burlinson, Sgt Tony Rosen, Cpl Mac McCallum, LCpls Ian Fowler, Al Royston** and **Sigs Clare Brydon, Si Bums, Ilona Caufield, Baz Harvey, Dave Honeywill, Mark** 'Weeble' **Robinson, Jo Thomas, Gav Wilson** and 'Taff' **Wilson**. We would also like to congratulate **LCpl Ian Fowler** on his promotion to Cpl and **Sig Dave Honeywill** on his promotion LCpl. Lastly, we say farewell to **Cpl Tris Dunbar** and **LCpl. Dom Rowe** who are leaving us shortly, Goodbye and Good Luck!

TRUNK GROUP - PANTHER TROOP

Firstly, we would like to welcome our new Troop Commander **2Lt Chris Biddulph** and say a fond farewell to **2Lt Mike Morton**, who is serving out in Bosnia. (No Sir, you haven't been sacked; you've just been moved sideways!). The Troop has been busy over the last month preparing for the Station bonfire and the Station Christmas Fayre. However, we have still had time for some fun. We completed a successful exercise in Poland. All the soldiers involved gained a vast amount of experience in both communicating and learning how to follow the Polish Military Police at 30kph for 5 hours. We have demanded sunglasses for the lead Landrover on Ex Ulan Eagle 1999!

A DAY AT THE RANGES

by Cpl McCallum

On Saturday 28 November six other members of the Squadron and myself set off for Augustdorf as guests of the 2nd Company 212 Grenadier Panzer Battalion. We were primarily going to shoot the MG36 the latest edition to the German personal weapon family, but there was also a competition shoot that involved firing the MG36 and the Uzi 9mm. We arrived at Augustdorf, after having got the 'adult' out of bed (cheers **Sgt** 'Barney' **Balmforth**), at about 09:15 and introduced everyone to **SSgt Stephan Schreckenberg**, who would look after us for the day. The first call was for us to have a good old strong German coffee before we began. For interest **Stephan** had organised for us to fire the German equivalent to the GPMG, the MG. After everyone had had a couple of goes we were in full agreement that, although not quite as scary as the GPMG, we still wouldn't like to be on the receiving end of it.



SSgt Stephan Schrenkenburg showing Sgt 'Barney' Balmforth how to fire the MG36

After our short period on the MG and another coffee, we went off and had a quick run through and hands on the G36. For those of you not familiar with the weapon, it comes with both a sight similar to the SUSAT and, above this, a **RED DOT** laser sight! We went onto the 25m range to fire the first part of the competition shoot, which was with the red dot sight. Although we only had a few minutes with the weapon before hand, everyone shot well. **Cpl Tris** 'wait till the Uzi shoot' **Dunbar** scored a maximum 60 and everyone else was in the high 50's. We then went on to the Uzi 9mm and split into groups of three for the shoot. After my confirmatory shoot of three rounds at 100m there was apparently calls from local aircraft that they were being shot at! Investigations are ongoing after my six shots, allegedly, took down a British Airways M! (I scored 4 out of 60!) **Cpl Tris Dunbar** has a confirmed kill with a score of 2. Congratulations were in order for our civilian gate guard, **Petra Hilling**, who scored 45.



SSgt Stephan Schrechenburg showing the 1 ADSR team how to use the Uzi 9mm

The final discipline was a 200m shoot with the G36. The scores were getting close now and everyone wanted to do well for a prize. Sadly **LCpl Dom Rowe** had to face embarrassment when he only scored 36 on his round while his wife, **May**, got the top score of 53! With the competition over we went back to the bar for the prize giving, even though we didn't expect many to be coming our way. After a few beers the SSM got up to announce the results. In the women's competition on the G36, **Mrs May Rowe** came first. In the German Army regulars competition **Stephan** came first and **Petra Hilling** came 7th. From both **SSgt Stephan Schreckenberg** and his SSM congratulations go to **Petra** for an outstanding performance against the men. For the guest team competition we came first. Overall, the whole day was a brilliant experience for both us and the Germans and a few things are now in the pipeline for the future. Finally I would like to thank everyone for coming along and making it a worthwhile day.

LADIES CROSS COUNTRY TEAM

In order for the females of 1 ADSR to form a Cross Country team, the Regiment had to deploy to Bosnia. Finally though, with a small amount of persuasion, a promise of a running strip and seven Royal Signals and one Adjutant's General clerk later, the team was ready to rock and roll. The female team normally travelled to races with the male team. However, after travelling to one particular race in Hohne it was decided that we would make our own way in the future. The journey began at Hammersmith Barracks at 1000hrs where we all piled into the minibus and waited while the driver tried to work out where first gear was in relation to third! Our driver will remain nameless apart from the fact that the individual concerned was an Adjutant's General clerk and female.

Firstly we took a slight detour so that our Cross Country officer (who shall also remain nameless) could purchase some cream for his delicate skin to protect him from the harsh conditions that were waiting for us outside. Once the shopping was over we finally headed to Route 2. The driver, having never been to Hohne, had to rely on directions like, 'Just keep going straight until we tell you otherwise.' Basically that meant driving straight past the exit and carrying on for at least thirty minutes until someone decided to look at a map! Whoever made the comment, 'Never give an officer a map,' could not have been closer to the truth. Have you ever tried to come off the autobahn at one exit, only having to drive for another 20km before you can go in the opposite direction? So, we were finally heading in the right direction, driving somewhat like Nigel Mansell. Considering the time was now 1330hrs and we should have registered 10 minutes earlier, the female aspect of 'girl power' put her foot down, literally. Several red lights and tractors later we were still driving around Hohne. It's quite a nice place really, in the middle of nowhere and no Army Barracks to be seen for miles.

The passengers in the 'happy bus' were now becoming quite restless. Most of them had been asleep since leaving Herford, including one bright male spark who kindly informed us that we were nowhere near Bergen Hohne! This was the first time that Bergen had been put in front of the word Hohne. It was decided that it was time to stop and for us all to agree that we were not going to make the start of the race in fifteen minutes. OK, so we saw parts of Germany that we had never seen before, some of them closer than we had anticipated. However, that was down to having 'squidgey brakes,' the men would have said it was the driver. Seven and a half-hours, a snow blizzard and a 6km tailback on Route 2 later, we finally returned to Herford.

Now for the best part, a race was being held at 4 Regt RA and both male and female teams were going to compete, that was until a better offer came along for the men to play a 5-a-side football competition at Herford. Well, that was not going to stop us from competing. We arranged a minibus and a driver, even though it was a male, and drove to Osnabruck. This time we arrived in plenty of time (and didn't get lost) and had a chance to survey the course and the opposition. The team had been initially told that the course was 4.5km, however, the briefing was to inform us differently. Well, what's 2.5km between friends? It was an extremely cold day and the ground was very hard from the night's frost. We were told that the course was 'undulating' (the posh word for hilly) with some straight parts! Twenty-eight girls set off, pushing and shoving each other to get away from the main pack and get a good position. We had entered two teams of three and all did extremely well. Team 'A' got 3rd, 4th and 10th, whilst Team 'B' got 17th, 18th and 19th. Overall, out of the seven teams our 'A' Team came first. We had achieved something without the aid of the men and it felt good. Here's to the next race!

2 SIGNAL REGIMENT YORK

CO	**Lt Col C. Wakerley MBE**
RSM	**WO1 (RSM) D. A. Whitaker**

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj D. J. Walker**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) A. J. Terry**

The Squadron has, as usual, had an abundance of people coming and going in the last three months and sadly, there is not a publication big enough to list them all. However, we wish them all the very best for the future. In SHQ, we say farewell to **Capt Graham Reith** who goes to 19 Mech as the QM. Welcome to the new Families Officer, **Capt Geoff Woodcock**, fresh from the hallowed turf at Blandford. With the build up of the festive season the Squadron has seen a varied and busy period of activity including RSIT, PRE, a Mil Skills Competition and various sporting events.



Competition Winners M Troop
Standing (L-R): Cpl Williams, LCpl Hayward, Sgt Walsh
Sitting (L-R): LCpls Wood and Hughes

On 11 November, we held an inter-department Mil Skills competition. This was a one-day event consisting of a CQB Shoot, Confidence Course, Assault Course, SAT Shoot, First Aid and a General Knowledge Quiz. Each department entered a team with the exception of M Troop who had hedged their bets on two teams. The day proved to be a great success and was a hard fought battle with plenty of calls for re-counts, such was the competitive nature. Last years' winners, Catering Dept came a close second, but the Techs had the day with their first team scooping overall victory. Our thanks to **SSgt Gardner** and **Sgt Bladen** for organising the event and some good news, as a result of **Sgt Fauld's** General Knowledge Quiz, he was volunteered to sing solo at the Regiment's Carol Service!

SPORTING EVENTS

Having discovered a number of trophies hidden away, the following events were held between departments:



'Give it back, you haven't signed for it!'
Front to Rear: Mr Potter, Cpl Mountain, Sig Dunnachie, LCpl Williams, WO2 (RQMS) Elliott

4 Nov – 5-a-side-football — Winners: LAD (runners up – M Tp)
11 Nov – Volley-Ball — Winners: MT (runners up – LAD)
9 Dec – Tug-of-War — Winners: LAD (runners up – SHQ)



Volley Ball Winners
Standing (L-R): Cpl Ganesh, Sig Blundell, LCpl Amrit
Kneeling (L-R): Sig Balleram, SigWilkinson, Cpl Man

RHQ/RAO
EXERCISE SHINY EBOR 5

A dark winters morning brought together the RHQ and RAO under the heavy skies of the North York Moors. All met at 0600hrs sharp, except for the 2IC and RAOWO (excused an early start as recommended by Age Concern). A team building al fresco breakfast, beautifully prepared by the RCWO's staff gave us a hearty start before striking off in to the wilderness of Goathland for a days' hill walking.

Having arrived in the heart of Heartbeat Country, most were disappointed that the actual surroundings bore little resemblance to the television programme and that no-one would be spotted as future talent for Yorkshire TV. It was also noted that the Aidensfield Arms was still shut – and it was at least 0830hrs! Time to get started and Traffic Officer, **Capt Mick Boxall** immediately took charge of the map reading. For the first few miles, his isolated silhouette could be seen on the skyline, as no one actually believed he knew where he was going. Then the rain came down and the mist rolled in, and most decided that **Capt Mick**'s heels were a pretty good view to admire, so we all followed on (that is, until he put his back out and got back on the mini bus). Speaking of mini buses, our trusted safety gang – **Cpl Julie Ward, Sgt Jayne Doherty** and **Cpl Gaz Hartley**, tried to ensure that we had the odd break out of morale by turning up with piping hot tea, just as another muddy excuse for a path led off in to the gloomy distance. At one point, they surpassed themselves as supreme administrators by producing a birthday cake, complete with candles, for **WO1 (YofS) Simon Lock** who was indeed, 21 yet again. He said that this was a birthday he would never forget!



(L-R): Capy Mick Boxall (Traffic), LCpl Karl Smith,
Maj Frank Riley (2IC), WO2 Pete Aggett (RAOWO)
Sgt Shane Carnell, Sgt Bev Lumb,
WO1 (RSM) Dave Whitaker, Sgt David Lloyd
WO1 (YofS) Simon Lock

By now, our young and trendy walkers, **LCpl Karl Smith, Cpl Conrad Williams** and **Pte** 'Nobby' **Clark** were all reluctant to go on. Not, as you might imagine, because the going was too tough but because their Caterpillar boots and designer outdoor wear began to look a little less than polished. That having been said, even the best Chris Brasher Gortex didn't cope well with the bog-land we began to encounter. The cries from Det Comd (and newly appointed Press Officer) **Capt Linda Johnston** that were supposed to be for photo opportunities; were more likely a ploy to allow her to catch up!

Around five or so hours after we'd set off, that well defined landmark 'The Red Lion', appeared before us. A mile as the crow flew (about 2½ for the route we took!) and we would be at our journey's end. At this point, **WO1 (RSM) Dave Whitaker** proved that he really could walk on water and without so much as a patch of marshland touching his soles, took off for said landmark with amazing determination. Sometime later, amid 17 unthawing bottoms against the Red Lion's blazing fireplace, mutterings could be heard regarding Shiny Ebor 6 taking place during a time almost unheard of for team building events – SUMMER! HQ Squadron and indeed all of 2 Sig Regt, join together to congratulate **WO1 (RSM) Whitaker** on his recent selection for a commission in May 1999.

214 SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd — **Maj Dave Somerville**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) Bob Forshaw**

VIKING TROOP
Tp Comd — **2Lt Peter Hale**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt Terry Shiels**

Viking Troop has had a quiet few months since returning from Battle Camp. This stable period in Barracks has been used to complete ATD training and in preparation for RSIT and PREs. For many in the Troop it has been their first RSIT and the experience has proved to be an education. The Troop has however managed to escape the rigors of barrack life a few times. On one particular day in early November the Troop participated in a very successful OBUA day held in Catterick. This contained plenty of fighting through buildings, molatov cocktail throwing and other activities that couldn't strictly be included in day to day training. The day was enjoyed by all and was said by many to be excellent preparation for forthcoming Troop trips. A special well done also has to be said to **Cpl Cadywould** who came twelfth in a recent Army Cross-Country race.

On the arrivals front we would like to welcome **Sigs Pember, Elliot** and **Parker** who have arrived fresh from Blandford. A big welcome also goes to **Cpl Kama** who joins the Troop on promotion from Tornado Tp. Viking Tp are now looking forward to the Christmas period with a number parties and a well deserved break.

ROMAN TROOP
Tp Comd — **Lt Adam Honor**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt Morrison**

Roman Tp has had a number of notable postings out of late. These include **Sgt Kleppang** and **Cpl O'Brien**. Both will be sorely missed, especially **Sgt Kleppang** and his useful lifts to visit girlfriends. Thanks Del! **Cpl O'Brien** left on a high note, after 22 years of exemplary service, he was dined out in great style with a local member of the constabulary visiting to bare all. The Troop has also said farewell to **Cpl** 'Schimper' **Stevens** and **Sig** 'The Druid' **Wilson**. A recent update on **Cpl Stevens** is that he has finally discovered what hard work is all about.

Other than this the Troop has had a quiet period with the only highlight being an exercise supporting the Territorial Army. Ex Winter Eagle took place over the weekend of 20 November and Roman Troop was based within the barracks for the duration. The Troop established itself in eager anticipation for the first links to drop in that evening but alas the Troop were still waiting at 0530hrs on the Saturday morning. Eventually terrestrial links were engineered and the network lattice took shape. The exercise continued at the same pace for the remainder of the weekend, with trunk nodes moving around the North East of England. **Cpl Warburton** continued to lead from the front, his robust performance on the Play Station inspired those around him but no one could even get close to his high score. The Exercise eventually finished late afternoon on Sunday with all parties feeling the aims had been achieved.

TORNADO TROOP
Tp Comd — **Lt Bee Bryan**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt Neil Cooper**

We have had our fair share of new arrivals and the Troop has grown to a respectable 34. So a big 'Welcome' to **Sgt Graham Norris** from 14 Sig Regt and **Sigs Stockdale, Griffiths, Holmes** and **Dawes** all from Blandford. Goodbyes go to **Cpl Marcus Bailey,** off to 21 (AS) Regiment on promotion, and **Cpl Charlie Kama**, who stayed a little closer to home, and is sampling the third Troop in 214 Signal Squadron with an inter - squadron posting to Viking Troop. Maybe one day he will find one he likes and stay there for a bit longer! Also, congratulations and a temporary 'Goodbye' to **Sig Vicki Brighton** who got married and is now **Sig Wilford.** We hope to have you back in the Troop in the not too distant future. Finally 'Congratulations' to **Sig Graham Rennie** who came off the board for promotion to Lance Corporal. He will be off to 16 Signal Regiment shortly and is, at present getting plenty of practice in for that posting on the ski slopes of Austria.

THE VISIT OF WELBECK STUDENTS
2 SIGNAL REGIMENT

For the second year running 2 Sig Regt played host to an enthusiastic bunch of Welbeck students who were interested in joining the Royal Signals upon commissioning from Sandhurst. The visit lasted three days and was designed to be a healthy mix of education, enjoyment and entertainment, with a common thread of competition running through it all. The nineteen students arrived at lunchtime on the Wednesday and spent the afternoon being briefed on the Regiment and the Corps from both regimental personalities and the SORLS team who came up from Blandford for the visit. The evening was then taken up with a Regimental Dinner, complete with band. For many this was their first visit to an Officers' Mess. It was an opportunity for the young subbies to do their bit for recruiting and convince the Welbexians that the Corps is the best not only for career opportunities but also for Mess life. This did not seem to take much effort as the bar bill was picked up by SORLS, and everyone had a thoroughly enjoyable night and eventually got away to bed in the wee small hours.

Battle PT at 0800hrs sorted out most of the bad heads the next morning before a three way circuit of stands run by 214 Sqn. This consisted of driver training, a 30 metre range and a radio relay task. In the afternoon 219 Sqn took over and introduced the students to orienteering in Land Rovers, map reading and radio detachments. In the evening, the subbies took control again for a cultural visit to York. This did not go on too late as the students had to up early for a range day. The range was run as a competition with prizes for the best individual shot and section. The students left after the prize giving lunch, following a very successful visit.

219 SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd — **Maj D. C. Gaul**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) Neighbour**

After just a week back at work from the summer leave period, it was back onto exercise supporting the RAF on Ex Rustic Reiver. Most of SHQ had a rather easier time of it at Otterburn Camp at EXCON while the rest of the Squadron had to do things like dig trenches and put lots of nice green and brown make-up on at least twice a day. The Exercise was a great success even though we did lose the new 2IC to hospital as he tried to attack one of the Trunk Nodes and his nose had an argument with someone's Kevlar helmet – oh well!! Such are the rigours of playing war. After all that it has been relatively quiet up in SHQ apart from **FofS SSgt Richie Paterson** getting everyone psyched up ready for the 'infamous' RSIT Team arrival. And, of course, who could forget the **YofS SSgt Billy Barnes** and his Falklands Stuff!

EAGLE TROOP
Tp Comd — **Lt Alex Clixby**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt Andy Allen**

Since Battlecamp, at the end of September, the Troop have been busying themselves with a number of Troop training days and an exercise for visiting Welbeck College students. Since Welbexian Eagle, the Troop has been kept busy with a number of training days, including a visit to the SAT range and a driver training day. The SAT range was great fun, although the technophobic, oldies in the troop (including **SSgt Andy** ' this doesn't beat a wet range day' **Allan**) were not convinced. The remainder of the Troop's time has been used in preparation for the forthcoming RSIT and PRE inspections – good fun for all. During this time we are saddened to lose a large number of the Troop. The leaving members are **Cpl Al** ' in the good old days' **Hanlon, Cpl Andy** 'where is my bike' **Moffat, Cpl Mickey** 'good sneck' **Mitchell, Sig Andy Kay** and **Sig Cath** 'what is 19 Mech Bde' **Hermitage**. We have also lost two of our soldiers to Civ Div, **Nick** ' fireman' **Brown** and **Tam** ' hat' **Dick**. Lastly, congratulations to **LCpl Gaz Willaims** on his promotion to **Cpl** and **Sig Kelly** 'you can stop creeping now' **Thompson** on her promotion to Lance Corporal. We now look forward to start packing our thermal vest and long johns for our deployment to JCUFI.

FALCON TROOP
Tp Comd — **2Lt Kerry Cochran**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt Carl Tucker**

Firstly, we would like to congratulate **LCpl** 'Maureen from driving school' **Lawrence** on his promotion. During October assets of the Troop deployed on Ex Arreade Fusion, a two-week static exercise in the pleasant surroundings of Blandford. The majority of Squadron manpower managed to complete the whole exercise except the part timers Tp OC, **2Lt Kerry** 'go Ricky' **Cochran** and **SSgt Carl** 'get to your BASHAs' **Tucker,** who seemed to be only able to manage a week each.

On return to Imphal, the Troop increased the output rate in preparation for the RSIT team to come and inspect our new SAN Airportables. Unfortunately for them, it was felt the Troop wagons were in good order and they were left slightly unfulfilled. Now that RSIT has been completed the Troop can return to normal garage routine and, the majority of the hard work now completed, can return to making a more interesting and varied training programme. The Troop are even willing to stay during their NAAFI breaks, but this is to compete in a darts league. Currently led by **Cpl Billy** 'Bristow' **Morris** who usually partners the weaker players and **Cpl Craig** 'Robin Hood' **Purdon**. For the more intelligent members of the Troop, **Sgt Cas** 'curly sue' **Cassidy** and the Sys Ops produces the Trivial pursuit cards. With the build up to Christmas, everyone was looking forward to the Troop function that was held at the York brewery and of course the Squadron deployment to the Falklands. Finally, another mention for **Cpl Billy Morris** and **Sig Tam Dick** who both took part in a gruelling two-day marathon over the North York Moors in aid of the Macmillan Cancer Relief Fund. The guys successfully raised over £200 by completing the course through some of the worst weather conditions seen on the Moors this year. The Karrimor International Marathon is an annual event covering 50kms of arduous terrain. The competition is a notoriously tough challenge, only 20% of the entrants finished the course alone, not to mention raising money for charity at the same time; well done lads!



Handing over the cheque to Macmillan Cancer Relief
(L-R): Sig Dick, Miss Wilma Burniston (Macmillan Cancer Relief Fund) Cpl Morris

3 (UNITED KINGDOM) DIVISION HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL REGIMENT

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS
CO — **Lt Col N. D. Couch**
RSM — **WO1 (RSM) G. J. Stoker MBE**



Grand Opening of the Regimental Launderette
LCpl Batty (NCO IC Scissors), Maj Wells, Lt Col Campbell,
Maj Ewell and Capt Stachini

202 SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd — **Maj R. J. Quinlan**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) S. G. Jackson**

1998 was a good year for the Squadron, the majority of whom have returned from an operational tour, a little bit stronger and wiser. At the beginning of 1999, the Squadron is likely to be detaching more people in order that the Regiment can continue to provide support to operations, but in the interim, and for the first time under **Maj Quinlan**'s Command, the Squadron is now a single team again. In the few short weeks between post-operational tour leave and Christmas stand-down, the priority has been to reconstitute and practise the Squadron in its war-fighting role in preparation for our first Exercise in January. This has involved reorganising personnel and equipment into the three Troops, accounting for stores, and conducting a short PACEX to remind most, but also to teach some of our newest soldiers what supporting a Divisional Headquarters in the field is really about. It is with great regret that we trade in a vintage Sergeant Major, **WO2 (SSM) Tait** who is moving to be RQMS, and we all wish him very well. This year's latest model is **WO2 (SSM) Jackson** who we are pleased to welcome from the Training Wing. Also to RHQ we lose our IBM Mainframe **WO1 (FofS) Osborne** to whom we send our thanks and best wishes. Welcome, then to the Pentium-driven **WO2 (FofS) Ramsdale** who takes up his appointment in Sqn Ops.

WATERLOO TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt C. E. Caie**
Tp SSgt **SSgt A. J. Crawford**

The Troop returned to work at the end of November after a month's post tour leave. We were met by the unsmiling faces of the rear party who glumly pointed at the empty shells of all the Panzers we left behind. Well, not to worry, three weeks until Christmas stand down to get them ready for Exercise in January and to indulge in the usual round of festivities. Hopefully, in the haze of these happy occasions, the haemorrhaging of personnel leaving will not seem quite so bad.

We say hello to **Sgt John MacNamara** who joined us at the beginning of December. Goodbye and congratulations to **Cpl Steve Piper** and **Emma** who go on promotion to 33 Sig Regt at Liverpool. Also to **Cpl** 'Buck' **Rogers** and **Emma** who also leave on promotion to 14 Sig Regt. Goodbyes also go to **Sigs** 'Juice' **Joyce** and 'Scouse' **Traynor** and finally, farewell to **Sig Chris Pimlott** on his departure to Civvy street where it is rumoured that he will keep a certain Hospital department in business.

OVERLOON TROOP
Tp Comd **Capt L. Rendricks**
Tp SSgt **SSgt J. R. Stillie**

The Troop has finally reformed after being spread to the Four Corners of the globe. No sooner have we become a Troop again than we are already saying goodbye to a few older members. **SSgt Jim Stillie** is soon to leave us for the warmer climes of Cardiff UOTC. **Cpl Steve Sorbie** and **LCpl Olivia Barnes** are both leaving the Army, good luck! Also good luck to those soon to be posted away from Bulford; **LCpl Joey Collins, LCpl Charlie Edwards, Sig Andy Bedward** and **Sig Thompson**. We welcome to the Troop **Capt Jimmy Hendricks, Sgt Claire Clark** and **Sigs Baber** and **Fox**. The majority of the Troop made up the over worked and under appreciated Squadron rear party. We have worked like demons while the rest of the Squadron has been sunning itself in Bosnia, the Falklands and Canada. Who do they think painted the Squadron Offices and maintained all the wagons while they were away? We did not realise watching paint dry could be so exciting! Presumably concerned about the Blu-tack that had been used instead of filler, **SSgt Stillie** was heard to shout in true Sergeant Major fashion, 'Don't lean on the walls, they've been there longer than you have!' In any case the offices now look very smart, including the notice board being used to cover the holes that even Blu-tack would not cover.

BUSSACO TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt D. A. Jackson**
Tp SSgt **SSgt A. Dick**

After a well deserved month's leave, the Troop exchanged their civvies for coveralls and returned to work in the garages, setting about those jobs which the rear party were too busy to do. We would like to welcome **Cpl Bob** 'I like my food' **Dryden, LCpl Jim Annis** and **LCpl** 'Mice lover' **Maxwell** also **Cpl** 'Plug' **Graham, Cpl** 'Taff' **Thomas** and **Sigs Giblin, Warden, Hunter** and **Wrightman.** A sad farewell goes to and **LCpl** 'Flash' **Kidner** and **LCpl Jim Stewart.** Finally, we say farewell to **Sig Bob** 'Noxious' **Steel.**

206 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Following a turbulent and varied year the Squadron is now once more whole and back at work following post Bosnia and Falklands leave. The Squadron is now in full swing preparing for a busy Exercise season in the New Year, even managing a short Exercise a whole 48hrs after everyone returned from leave! It was all jolly exciting to get the train set out of its box for the first time in 18 months, and it all went surprisingly well. Also a big welcome goes to **WO2 (SSM) Stu Archer** who takes over the Squadron on 18 January 1998. The outgoing SSM, **WO2 (SSM) Chris** 'The Wig' **Hymas,** moves temporarily to the Training Wing before posting to 1 Div as RSM next year. All the best **Chris**!

INKERMAN TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt Alex Fennel**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Steve Bartlelet**

After returning from post-Falklands leave the Troop began the task of turning around all of the vehicles and equipment that had been left behind. After a great deal of hard work three more vehicles returned from Bosnia and there was just time to get these ready around for Ex Rhino's Return 1. This comprised of a plug-up followed by 36 hours relearning all of the old skills whilst moving to locations on Salisbury Plain. To get everyone in the right frame of mind there was non-stop rain for the duration of the plug-up and a few teddies definitely got thrown around, mentioning no names **Sig Kennet**. While pausing for lunch the new (and some old) members of the Troop got a lesson in Inverted V antennas from **Cpl Sean** 'Richie' **Richardson** though it must be said that due to the rain they were not a very receptive audience. Just before the end of this phase **LCpl Shaun** 'The Drive' **Thomas** took some of the Troop through the use of four wheel-drive on the wagons. This should hopefully stop the stench of burning clutches every time we pull into location. **Sig Lynnette** 'Diesel' **Anderson** learnt that generators don't like the wrong fuel and **Sig Jason** 'Einstein' **Leroy** learnt just what a tent looks like when it's inside out. Due to the inclement weather the Plain was like a speedway circuit and the Troop OC, **Lt Alex** 'Ninja' **Fennel** and **SSgt Steve** 'Stirling Moss' **Bartleet** very nearly had an embarrassing moment when they took the recce vehicle through some tank tracks.

The remainder of the Troop got back from their Post-Bosnia leave just in time to help clean the vehicles and this resulted in an unofficial competition amongst the guys as to who could get the most mud on their wagon. Congratulations go to **Sig Steph** 'Bianca' **Catney** who got married recently, shame her other half is in 222 Sqn. Finally there are a few farewells to **Cpl Jo** 'Disco' **Ruth** moves to 210 Sig Sqn and **Sig Garry** 'Spide' **Wilson** goes to be a bad influence on Officer Cadets at Sandhurst.

MONS TROOP
Tp Comd **Capt P. M. Newton**
Tp SSgt **SSgt R. Bed**

The early days of November heralded a brief re-union of Mons Tp after returning from their deployments across the globe. Farewell to three Troop stalwarts, **LCpl Andy Stoker** (CivDiv), **Cpl Jo Biddle** (Germany) and **Cpl Scott Day** (Germany). From the ashes rose a new Mons Tp with a welcome to **Sgt Tony** 'Nice Hat' **Wringe** and **Sig Mick Sutton**. **Sgt Wringe** has come fresh from the colds of South Georgia with the new Troop mascot, Daphnie the Alsation who has proven to be better than his master at barking out drill. **Sig Sutton** has found life in the Troop a little difficult since it has come to light that he is related to the new RSM. As a result he is suspected of being a mole and is rarely told Troop gossip.

EXERCISE IRON SPEAR–KENYA
Exped Ldr **Lt Alex Fennel**

Ex Iron Spear was an adventure training exercise in Kenya that ran over the period 11- 28 September 1998. Ten of the twelve participants were veterans from the Regiment's recent JWFI tour and were keen to experience hot weather after six months of being cold in the Falklands. After a delayed flight out of Heathrow we very nearly missed the connection from Brussels to Nairobi and after a mad dash through Brussels airport everyone took their seat with minutes to spare before take-off. The main aim of the expedition was to climb Point Lenana, the third highest peak of Mt Kenya and the highest point accessible without specialist climbing equipment. Before the ascent could begin we had to get to the base of the mountain and this was achieved in what felt like the slowest truck in the world. Everyone got their first four blisters on this journey - on our hands, caused by hanging on grimly during a particularly rough 10km section. The first night on the mountain was spent finding out what items of kit proved impossible to use in field conditions. In particular the tent owned by **LCpl Mark** 'Where am I' **Flintham** took an age to set up. In addition the stoves had a habit of dripping burning fuel everywhere and at one stage a hut we were using for shelter was nearly set alight by **LCpl Dave** 'Home boy' **Corcoran**. Altitude sickness set in on the first full day of the trek for a couple of people and so the pace was fairly slow which gave everyone a chance to admire the spectacular views along the Chogoria route up the mountain. To try and combat altitude sickness **Sgt Chris** 'Why am I here?' **Cheesman** spent the day drinking Dioralyte as if it was going out of fashion. As we climbed higher more and more suffered from altitude sickness and the night spent just short of the summit was agony for everyone. As **Sgt Pete** 'Fire starter' **Rodriguez** pointed out 'I haven't had this much fun since my Grandad's funeral.' To ensure a spectacular dawn view of Africa from the summit everyone had to get up early to start climbing at 5a.m. The weather was unkind at this point and instead of the glorious dawn view across the savannah we looked at the inside of a cloud for a freezing twenty minutes. Everyone took heart from **LCpl Mariah** 'Amuse me now!' **Harrop**'s comment of, 'It's not cold, just a bit windy.' The sun did come out briefly and after a quick photo session on the summit it was time to begin the descent.

At the end of the expedition there was time for 24 hours of R&R in Mombassa. After some fierce negotiations **WO2 Gaz** 'Live to party' **Wilson** secured two beach front cottages for the night. A very relaxing day was spent on the pure white beach looking out over the blue waters of the Indian Ocean. After catching the overnight train back to Nairobi there was just time to buy some souvenirs before heading to the airport for the flight home.

222 SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj M. Billingham**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) F. Roberts**

SHQ Troop has had a busy period since summer leave including Squadron Battle-Camp which took place in 'Sunny' Sennybridge with members of the Troop getting expert tuition on tactics, ranges and getting soaked and getting wet and miserable drills! The Troop also deployed on a shakeout exercise with the new OSC crew deploying for the first time, peace and harmony there was 'NOT'. The run up to Xmas will be a sober affair with only 33 parties to attend on **SSM WO2** 'Mine's a Xmas Tree' **Roberts** social list! Congratulations to newly promoted **SSgt** 'The Nose' **Curtis, Sgt Meadows, Cpls Anderson, Burman, Pilmer, Stenning** and **LCpl Pereria.** Welcome to **Sgt Simons** and **Cpl** 'Windy' **Gale** to the Troop and a sad farewell to **SSgt Jarnell, Cpl**'s **Dawes, Sibbald, Welch** and **LCpl Ashman.**

MASIRAH TROOP
Tp Comd **2Lt Emma Fawcett**
Tp SSgt **Sgt M. Emmerson**

After a fine period of block leave the Troop prepared to deploy on the Squadron Battlecamp. A selected elite were sorry not to experience the deep joys of sunny Sennybridge but departed the country, heading in search of adventure, in South Africa. Ex Kruger Iron proved to be a great success with a large number of the troop represented including **SSgt Al** 'I wish I was posted' **Keen** and **Lt Al** 'Boss' **Rawes.** This left **Sgt Emmerson** holding the reins once more. It's all change at the top fgr the Premier Trunk Node of the Squadron. A fond farewell to **SSgt Al** 'Did I tell you I was posted' **Keen** moving back up north to 2 Sig Regt. Also it's farewell to the founder **Lt Al** 'Danger' **Hawes**. Having arrived back from

adventures in South Africa only to find that the 2IC's chair vacated by **Capt Adam** 'the beret' **Hillary** is now his. A warm welcome to **2Lt Emma** 'even shorter than Emmerson' **Fawcett,** the new Tp OC coming straight from the Blandford Chocolate Factory.

OMAN TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt R. Sellwood**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Baker**

Once again it has been a turbulent time in Oman Tp with lots of postings in and out. The Troop has also been busy with the first communications exercise since it was reformed. This saw the Troop touring some of the finest pig farm locations Wiltshire has to offer. This Exercise included a special guest appearance of **SSgt** 'Bru' **Baker,** who spent a suspicious amount of time 'looking' for kit on the back of the Admin Bedford. The Troop would like to welcome **Sig Walters** and **Sig McCarther** from the factory, **Sig Millar** and **Sig Swailes** back from counting penguins in JCUFI and the Three Amigos back from BATUS after six months of Exercises with the infantry and armoured corps. Farewells from the Troop go to, **Sig** 'Big Vicki' **Ashworth** and **Sig Swailes** both posted permanently to Civ Div. **Sig Blackett** and **Sig Millar** both go up to 2 Sig Regt in York and **Sig Wright** is posted to 7 Sig Regt. We all wish you well in your new jobs.

SHARJAH TROOP
Tp Comd **2Lt A. Johnson**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Lang**

The Troop recently took part in Ex Arabian Reprise. A squadron exercise that was a very short, but a badly needed one. It gave the rest of the Squadron a chance to catch up to TN 093's standards, especially after the digging out of **Sig** 'Bri' **Dents** truck. Sharjah Tp was located around Hungerford and the local area with some of the areas being a little 'tricky'. The first location resulted in the whole Node being crammed into a tiny space that didn't have enough room to swing a sprog.

In November Sharjah Tp forced themselves to go on a brewery trip, big mistake. The trip began with a tour of the brewery, this tour was supposed to last for an hour. However, when the guides noticed that the entire Troop were puppy eyed, they managed to get us round in ten minutes (who cares where it comes from, we just want to drink it). After 22 years service in the Signals, **Cpl** 'Elmo' **Ennis** has finally retired to Civ Div. **Elmo** will be greatly missed by everyone including the Kiwi, Bulford's local pub, as **Elmo** is their best darts player (and drinker). **Elmo** was seen off by the Troop with a meal and a lot of drinks. A fond farewell and congratulations to **Sig** 'Prince of darkness' **Harkness** for coming of age, the LCpls' board and his subsequent posting to 1 Div. Hopefully the women and children will be able to sleep better at night now, but I don't think the landlords will.

ADEN TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt C. Crowther**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Hogg**

The last couple of months have been hectic for Aden Tp. On our return from battle camp we were straight out again on a Comms Exercise - 'Arabian Reprise'. This was an opportunity for the Squadron's trunk nodes to blow off the cobwebs on their skills and drills and their wagons! The period has seen several Troop personnel away on various courses. **Cpl Hobson** has been away in Tidworth learning to read and write on his EFP course while **Cpl** 'Chalky' **White** and **Cpl Graham Parkhill** have been in Blandford on their Class 1 understanding their role in the trunk node (they are still none the wiser). Congratulations go to **Cpl White** and **Cpl Parkhill** on their promotion to Cpl and to **Sig Hemley** who win pick up LCpl early next year along with a posting to Blandford soldier on! A number of our flock are significantly happier having passed their 3-2 upgrade exam and securing some extra beer tokens each month, namely, **Sigs Martin, Brewer, Robb** and **Webster.**

Outside of the routine the Troop has managed to keep itself busy as ever. We were invited to return to the village of Eddington to assist with Remembrance Sunday. The parade was followed with copious amounts of booze, chips and war stories from those past and present. It also provided an opportunity for **Sig** 'Ginger' **Davies** and **Sig** 'Taff' **Francis** to make the most of their final days of freedom. They have both been sentenced to a fate worst than Bosnia.... Marriage! Congratulations to both ... we hope.

The Troop also managed a trip to Portsmouth to see how our counterparts in the Navy lived in the days of yore. The day comprised of a visit to HMS *Victory*, Admiral Nelson's flagship and to HMS *Alliance*, a 1950's diesel hunter-killer submarine. After the initial giggles the lads soon realised that their lot in the back of a Ptarmigan vehicle is luxury compared to some of the stories. The trip was followed by a few jars in Portsmouth. Everyone had a good day out except for **SSgt** 'I'll just lie here and die' **Hogg.**

EXERCISE ARABIAN BATTLE 4 - 16 OCTOBER 1998

Ex Arabian Battle was the Squadron Battle Camp of the year. The Exercise took place on SENTA training area. The training package was compiled by **Lt** 'Crazy' **Crowther, SSgt Brad Hogg** and **Sgt Jas Meek.** The training composed of three distinct packages; a live firing week supplemented with military training, a patrol competition weekend and a dry (yeah right) training four day exercise. There are far too many anecdotes to recount within the columns of this magazine, however, the Squadron's exploits will live forever more on the lips of those who took part and those who, in hindsight, wished that they did! The Exercise has been recorded and summarised by **LCpl Andy Morris** of Aden Tp. He recounts the Troop's experiences. 'The assets and men of 222 Sig Sqn came together on the 4 October 1998 to deploy on Ex Arabian Battle (Battle-Camp 1998). The first phase was a seven-day range and training package; whose aim was to relearn and revise many of our forgotten infantry skills. The second phase would see the Squadron implement the skills that they had learned the previous week. The Squadron arrived at SENTA, Sennybridge on Sunday evening and split down into the respective Troops. We then trotted to the NAAFI for what was to be our last drink for at least a week (a long time for many of us). Most lads had a couple of beers followed by an early night in anticipation of the early start the next morning but **Sig** 'Swampy' **Martin** had a reputation to uphold and successfully managed to maintain this on the first night of the Exercise. The Squadron rose early on Monday morning to deploy to the ranges. Throughout the week each Troop would get the opportunity to shoot on the IBSR, MMTR, live Field Fire and a Night Shoot. Whenever a Troop was not on the ranges they were on one of the many and varied background activities. One such activity was the Night Navigation Stand conducted by **Sgt** 'Angry Little Man' **Emmerson.** He disqualified A Tp just for using their initiative (cheating). The Troop would most likely have got away with the scam only for the big mouth of **Sig** 'Scouse Snitch' **Davies.** The week ended with the inevitable Patrol Competition and the infamous Sennybridge Assault Course. After the event the Squadron returned to SENTA for a night off and the presentation to the best section for the first week which was won by 2 Sect, A Tp. The following morning the Squadron would deploy on Exercise but not before the designated OP commanders had the opportunity to recce their positions from a Gazelle helicopter that was somehow acquired by the Squadron. The Exercise finished with a Coy level attack on the enemy position. The attack was set to launch at 0700 hrs (first light). Unfortunately somebody (Sqn Comd) accidentally set off a trip flare at 0635hrs which managed to catch the enemy off balance along with the rest of the Squadron but we managed to successfully overcome the little mishap and won the war (again).



Bosnia Medal Parade - (the worst beret)
CO presenting to Sig Foster, WO2 (SSM) Tait behind



Bosnia Medal Parade - (the best beret)
CO presenting to LCpl McDougall, Sig Richardson, Sig Marshall and Sig Giddings in the background

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7 SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO **Lt Col D. A. H. Jones**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) S. Smoothey**

There are so many entries for *The Wire* this issue that it is obvious that 7 Sig Regt has been an active if not operational unit.

BA (G) CROSS-COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIP 1998

*by **Cpl Templeman***

A day to go down in sporting history, it had never been done before, one Regiment winning both male and female events. For this to be accompanied by ladies champion, first junior, second junior and third individual overall makes you wonder if it was worth the opposition turning up. This was a great day for **SSgt** 'Stu' **Taylor** to bow out of 7 Sig Regt cross-country. The whole team would like to wish him and his family all the best in his new posting in SHAPE. Also welcome to **SSgt Scott** who will be taking over **SSgt Taylor**'s mantle.

The ladies' event was run first and much encouragement was offered to ladies team by the male competitors. Most of this was well received apart from **Cfn** 'Maz' **Cooke** whose limited vocabulary couldn't muster a witty response. The first lady in for the team and overall winner was **2Lt Noakes** who won the event convincingly even though being slightly geographically challenged for part of the race. A big welcome to **LCpl Hemstead** who was the second team member to finish in 11th place closely followed by **Sig Paula Barratt** and **Sig Siobhan Nolan** in 14th and 16th respectively. There was also a valiant effort by **Pte Leane Dick** in 44th and **Cfn** 'Maz' **Cooke** who brought up the rear. The men's event started immediately after the ladies finished with most people trying to keep their warm kit on until the very last second. Reports from the girls said that it was a very hilly course fortunately this was changed for the men into a quite ridiculously hilly course. The hill approximately halfway round was particularly sadistic. I say approximately as I was trying to stop my spine falling out at the time, it's been a while since I've seen grown men cry.

First in for the team and 3rd overall was **WO1 (YofS) Lee Kiely** and just over a minute behind, depending on who you talk to, was **WO2 (RQMS) Jed Keane**. **SSgt Stu Taylor** managed 7th closely followed by **Sig Lee Manton** who was the first junior. **Sgt** 'Tiny' **Tindale** put in an excellent performance compared to last years slightly OLAK effort. **Sgt** 'Col' **Forrester** came in two places behind 'tiny' in 13th and I'm sure the fact he is now Cpls course trained was of great use to him on the course. The 2nd junior in was **LCpl Musgrave** in 14th place who maybe could do better if he stopped smoking but I was told not to mention that. After somewhat of a battle at the rear of the pack **Maj Smith** came 26th with **Cpl Evans** and **SSgt Scott** 27th and 30th. A special mention I think must also be made of those individual runners who did not get picked for the team even though one of them did come 6th out of the Regiment. Those runners were **2Lt Howarth**, **LCpl** 'Hoppy' **Hopkinson**, **Cpl Steve Templeman**, **LCpl Steve Baulch**, **Cpl Hayword** , **LCpl Duddles** and **Sig Wilkinson**. Absent on his PTI corse was **Sig Aaron Garside** but I think we proved our point without him and if the points-margin had been any clearer the other units might have got suicidal.



The highly acclaimed 7 Signal regiment x-country Team

CO'S FUN RUN 1998

On 23 October, 7 Sig Regt held the British Forces Germany wide CO's Fun Run. It was a charity event in aid of the British Legion Poppy Appeal. Those who competed in fancy dress had a shorter route to run. This incentive led to an amazing display of ingenuity and creativity. Uniform Tp united to produce a snooker table with their heads representing the different coloured balls. It was a great costume although they did not complete the run at great speed and were not too impressed when the Officers, who were perambulating around in black tie with champagne, decided to use their umbrellas to have a game. Bill and Ben the flower pot men put down roots half way round and brightened up the route. An escaped prisoner began to wish he had not opted for the real ball and chain as it was more like the CFT for him. However, some managed more practical costumes. 7 Sig Regt raised the second largest amount of money in 1997 and aim to raise the most this year. The final total was DM 1382 and it has not yet been announced how that compares to the rest of Germany. Everybody enjoyed the event and it was an excellent way to support the Poppy Appeal.

OP MARINA FOR BELORUSSIA

During the month of July, clothing and food was loaded aboard a truck, that was paid for by a German charity 'JESU', bound for Minsk, Belorussia for distribution to orphanages and old peoples homes. The truck, fully laden with supplies, was bound for the orphanages and old peoples homes in the areas of Belorussia which had been severely contaminated by the Chernobyl nuclear reactor meltdown. 'JESU' informed us that though they had much more to send they were unable to, as the cost of another vehicle was DM 4000 and that their main priority was paying for children to come and stay in Germany at Christmas and during the summer months.

Members of 7 Sig Regt decided to raise the DM 4000 needed in order to hire the next truck. This had to be done by the end of October, as afterwards there would be problems on the route into Eastern Europe due to the onset of winter. It was done with the aid of many. The YMCA donated a 22 inch teddy bear for a raffle, this raised over DM 500. The families NAAFI, Krefeld, allowed us to hold a collection point for loose change and NAAFI stamps for the purchase of supplies and food and toiletries. A kiosk was set up, at the Bradbury Barracks swimming pool for the selling of drinks, sweets, crisps and ice-creams, this raised in excess of DM 1000. Donations from the Sergeants Mess Welfare fund, 231 Sig Sqn, 229 Sig Sqn, 232 Sig Sqn and HQ Sqn, 7 Sig Regt resulted in nearly DM 1000 of donations. Also a 24hr sponsored BFT, held on West Park, prior to the start of the Bradbury Fair raised in excess of DM 3000. Donations were also received from supporters of JESU, led by **Mrs Brenda Lawrence** from JHQ of DM 450, raised at a car boot sale. All these gave us the money for the truck that departed from Germany, once again fully laden on 14 October. On the truck was clothing, toys, food and baby care products collected throughout Germany ie Hameln, Osnabruck, Krefeld, JHQ which were stored along with other supplies in RAF Bruggen. Krefeld Primary School donated the Harvest Festival Gifts from Year 1 and 2 children - these were all tins and were presented in a special assembly to **Maj Gregg**. JESU have said the tins were especially well received by the Belorussians, because they are safe food for the children to eat - uncontaminated, unlike the raw food they are use to most of the time.

Many of the baby products came from companies made aware of Op Marina by **Jenny Nairn**, Courses Clerk, 7 Sig Regt, who wrote over 30 scrounging letters with replies and help from four, they are: Bettacare Ltd, PHP, The Great Little Trading Coy, Tomy. These companies had already exceeded their annual allocation of donations to various charities but still came up with the goods and the cost of postage to Germany. We would like to thank them on behalf of Op Marina.

Much fun was had throughout the fund-raising, especially during the sponsored run, with four teams taking part, two teams consisting of Royal Signals personnel, one team AGC personnel and one team REME personnel. Those who could not commit themselves to the full 24hrs nevertheless were not to be left out. Members of the 7 Sig Regt insisted on joining in the running at lunchtime, in the evening and throughout the night. The WO's and Sergeants' Mess came over and gave all runners a break by running a few laps midway through their dining out of the RSM, **Pete Griffiths** (at 0300 hours).



WO1 (RSM) Pete Griffiths
leaves the Regiment with his swimming pool

This was very entertaining for all runners as they took one step forward and two steps back! The first runner had a broken leg, but being fully anaesthetised at the time did not seem to notice. The pre-run briefing which was given by **Maj Cathie Gregg,** OIC 43 AEC, included the instruction that plenty of fluids were to be taken on board - she didn't say what type of fluids, and there was a lot of giggling at around 4.00 am. As the money we raised exceeded the amount required, fund-raising will continue next year in order to pay for another truck in March 1999 as there are still more supplies to go.

The first Op Marina truck arrived in Minsk on Sunday 18 October and was successful in reaching **Olga Cawoll**, the Minsk representative of JESU. She fought off the attentions of Customs and managed to get personal parcels to the JESU children delivered and will oversee distribution of the rest through various distribution points set up by the charity. Anybody wanting further information on Belorussia and the 'Chernobyl Children' or wishing to offer help can ring **Maj Cathie Gregg** on Krefeld Mil 2236 or **Cpl Geoff Richards** on Krefeld Mil 2378.

7TH US SIGNAL BRIGADE 'VOICE OF FREEDOM' PARADE

Friday, 6 November saw the 7th US Signal Brigade change its Commander. The incoming Commander is **Col Melita E. McCully** who was commissioned into the US Women's Army Corps in 1976. The momentous event was marked by a parade at their Taylor Barracks Camp in Mannheim. The 7th Sig Bde maintains a combat ready, forward deployed signal force. The parade was attended by both American soldiers and soldiers of those nations who work closely with them. The parade was made up of officers and soldiers from the Headquarters and Headquarters Company-7th (US) Signal Brigade, 44th (US) Signal Battalion, 7th (UK) Signal Regiment, 40th Regiment De Transmissions (FR) and the 990 Fermelde Regiment (GE).

The British contingent was led by **2Lt Jones** and **WO2 (SSM) Ward.** The practices were interesting to say the least. With each version being made different by **2Lt Jones**'s excellent improvised drill. The night before the parade a bit of Anglo-American integration was indulged in. The medium for this event was line dancing. **Sig Murray** and **LCpl Sigston** both Linemen, showed the Americans how to really do it. To make sure everyone was ready for the parade a spot of PT was called for in the morning. The parade passed with no incident except a solo drill movement by **2Lt Jones** again.

REGIMENTAL CADRE COURSE

*by **Sig Ranson***

On 25 October 27 Signallers and a Lance Corporal embarked upon 7 Sig Regt's most demanding and arduous course, the Regimental Cadre Course. The course was lead by three Section Commanders. 1 Sect was headed by **Cpl Matt** 'Just done my Skillies' **Eastman**, 2 Sect by **Cpl Stevie** 'I love the parade square' **Evans**, and 3 Sect by **Cpl Geoff** 'This is better than running the cinema' **Richards**. The course students were subjected to a character readjustment in the first couple of days. It consisted of a BFL on the Monday, and a boot run on the Tuesday. **Cpl** 'Taff' **Evans** combined gymnastic skills with swimming in large puddles, simulating Welsh Mountains by running up near vertical hills. Wednesday was supposedly an easy circuit training session in the gym, which left most people staggering out at the end. Towards the end of the first week we were told to prepare for the first Exercise, Ex First Venture. What we weren't told was that from the first minute we were on the training area it would rain and continue to rain. There came a point when you couldn't tell thunder and lightning from thunder flashes and flares, and our shell scrapes filled with water quicker than you could dig it. Part of this Exercise was a very cold and wet Night Navigation Exercise where the incentive was to get around as quickly as possible in order to get back to your sleeping bag and thaw out. The most feared event the stretcher race, was renamed the 'Lets stick a bit of tank track on two scaffold poles' race and run around the area with it. This was okay until the gym staff decided we would go swimming in - yes, you've guessed it - large puddles! We were, however, pleased to hear that we had the weekend off to wash and iron kit, bull boots, write up notes, prepare lessons and then get some sleep.

Week 2 arrived, halfway there or half still to go? Monday mornings, notoriously bad anyway but with only one (scheduled) PT lesson to go things were looking up. Tuesday morning, Drill Test - Rain. These two words seem to always follow side by side. The evening was a contender for the longest ever orders lesson, followed by deployment onto the final exercise. The expectations for Ex Final Endeavour were going out into the field and getting wetter for longer than in the first Exercise. Unfortunately the DS had forgotten to book the rain and so it did not come. This Exercise was unpopular as we missed the Regimental bonfire night, so the Tp Sgt, **Sgt Carl** 'Keen and Green' **Budding,** decided to have one of his own disguised as a platoon attack. A big thanks to the OC Training Wing, **Capt Boyle** for his enlightening lesson on 'The Memo'. It was enjoyable if not informative. A good course was had by all. Congratulations go to **Sig Samuel** for Top Student, **Sig Roberts** for Best Field Soldier and **Sig Flook** for Best Endeavour.

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj Bob O'Hara**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Angie Hilborn**

The Squadron would like to say farewell to **WO2 (SSM) Hilborn** and we wish her luck not only on posting, but also on her new appointment as RSM. We all know just how happy she is to be going home to God's Country and on to sunnier climes in 'Bonnie Scotland'. The SSM would like to thank the OC for the constant supply of biscuits (or rather thank **Maureen**!). We welcome **WO2 (SSM)** 'Stretch' **Barry** and wish him well.

UNIFORM TROOP

Tp Comd **WO1 (FofS) Steele**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Matt Wakeling**

The Troop would like to welcome **SSgt Matt Wakeling** along with wife **Lisa** and family. We say a tearful Goodbye to **SSgt Rob Hood** who joins 231 Sig Sqn, **Cpl** 'Taff' **Powell** to his A1 course, **LCpl** 'Ollie' **Oliver** off to earn a living in civvy street and last but not least a tearful goodbye to **Sig Miranda** 'Bombdog' **Jenkins** also off to civvy street. The Troop decided to make a name for itself in the annual Poppy Day Fun Run. This year it was decided that we should run as a Troop. After a week of careful planning we decided to go as a snooker table. With 48hrs to go we managed to get hold of a large amount of cardboard which was hurriedly painted and holes cut out. Table legs and pockets were then made and painstakingly attached. The only things to add were the balls that were ingeniously made from our heads being placed through the holes. These were in turn painted using hair dye, face paint and cam cream. Needless to say all our hard work paid off as the Troop were judged winners in the 'Best Dressed' category.

CIS TROOP

*by **LCpl Matt Duddles***

Tp Comd **Capt (TOT) O'Brien**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Tipple**

We bid farewell to our old Tp Comd, **Capt (TOT)** 'Noddy' **Baugh** and his wife, **Debbie** on their posting to JHQ. We wish them all the best. We welcome the new Tp Comd, **Capt (TOT) O'Brien** and his wife, **Julia,** and their two children, **Laura** and **Michael**. They came from SSSU, RAF Digby, where the TOT reportedly only spent two afternoons in nine months there. I can't think where we got that information. We also say good-bye and good luck to **Sgt** 'Paul' **Elgenia** and his wife **Jackie** and family, they're off to sunny CIS in 2 Sig Regt, York.

Congratulations to **Cpl** 'Jacko' **Jackson** on promotion to Sgt, we wish him and **Lynn** a safe tour at his new post in Northern Ireland serving with 1 QLR. September and October saw the troop working like dogs ('mules!' cry the masses) with two new additions, **LCpl** 'Shaz' **Dainty** and **SSgt Neil** 'Taff ' **Evans** having a traditional CIS welcome of excessive working hours during Ex Arrcade Fusion. Unfortunately for 'Shaz', her beret and belt were lost right at the start in an incident involving **LCpl** 'Tommo' **Thomson** and a portaloo. The mind boggles. And remember 'Shaz' not to hang freshly washed underwear up in a BSV to dry. We all thought the paras had landed!

Meanwhile **Cpl** 'Dunny' **Dunnington** and **LCpl Bob Morton** were sunning themselves in Milan, with 3 IT Div enjoying plenty of pasta and pizza. But of course they hated it, according to the e-mails sent during the dead of night; we sympathise honest. One cause of confusion for them was the Italians NBC warning sign. It's the same as the NATO 'all clear', mask on, mask off, mask on, mask off. MNDC got their share of hard work (we're sure) where **Sig** 'Ange' **O'Sullivan** and **Sig Neil** 'Boz' **Borrows** handled the show pretty well.

OFFICERS' MESS

Mess Mgr **Sgt Mick Angove**
Head Stwd **Cpl Steve Peacock**

The Officers Mess of 7 Sig Regt has come to the end of an era. After 39 years, the military staff is to fade into history with their jobs being demilitarised and handed over to the civilian sector. Due to this fact the trusty military team of **SSgt** 'Angry' **Angove** and **Cpl** 'Old man' **Peacock, Sig** 'Scouse' **Dowell**, and **Sig Sutherland** are attending the vehicle park rehabilitation centre, to aid their impending move back to their roots of origin. The military team are looking forward to shorter working hours, going back on Exercise and a social life. As we are on the eve of a new era we must remember all the Officer Mess staff who have served it so well over the years. For all their hard work we thank them. We wish all the civilian staff past and present all the best in the future and thank them for their loyal service. As the end of 1998 approaches the Military team say **'Goodbye'.**

229 (BERLIN) SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj Chris Robinson**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Stevie Bovan**

The Squadron has just returned from Ex Shelldrake Sword that lasted from 1 November to 13 November 1998, after an eight-hour journey to the bitterly cold northern outpost of Hohne. The aim of the Exercise was to provide SCRA communications for the Royal Artillery. Apparently, once a year on their major Exercise, each Gunner, if he has been a good boy, is given the opportunity to fire one, yes 'One' live round. Fortunately for us in the Signals, we were there for their big day. The Exercise was mostly static for Trunk Nodes 011 and 012. This was most unfortunate for Radio Relay detachment 12B. They set up in what appeared to be an 'allegedly' haunted area of woodland. They reported much lower temperatures in their part of the wood, and shadowy figures were seen loitering around their det. A feeling of uncertainty and fear went sweeping through the ranks of Trunk Node 012. **WO2 (SSM) Stevie** 'Aahhh' **Bovan** decided to quash these unfounded rumours. Bravely, he ventured into the 'allegedly' haunted woods, alone. He was later seen attacking the corner of a 9x9 tent with the butt of his rifle. So there was something out there, 'allegedly'! The next day, the node home was to attend a briefing, and was told in no uncertain terms that the merest mention of ghosts, shadows, UFO's, Leeds Utd winning the double and all other paranormal events were strictly forbidden.

CHARLIE TROOP

Tp Comd **2Lt Caroline Evans**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Gary Davies**

A sad farewell to **Cpl Paul** 'Houndog' **Hounsell** who moves on to Londonderry, and also to **LCpl Lee Glaves** who leaves us for AFCENT. Congratulations go to **LCpl Ian** 'Hoppy' **Hopkinson** and **LCpl** 'Mac' **Donnell** on their recent promotion. We would like to welcome **2Lt Caroline Evans** as our new Troop Commander. During Shelldrake Sword, some members of the Troop were treated to a fire power demo by our friends in the Royal Artillery. We also managed to fit in Wolf Training (Not the howling variety!) and just to fill out our days we managed to include some cross trade training. On a more sobering note, some members of the Troop took a trip to the Belsen Memorial Site. Now for some hello and goodbyes: Firstly a sad goodbye to **Lt Annabel Taylor** who leaves us as Troop Commander. Many congratulations go to **Sig Andy Mc Farlane** and **Anna** on the birth of their new baby on 5 September. The Troop says a big welcome to **Jack Owen** who weighed in at a bouncing 9lb 4oz. We would like to welcome our **Sgt Steve Foord** and his wife **Rachel**. Finally, farewell to **Sgt Kev Wood** who is off to do RSIT. No doubt he will be back to haunt us.

WHISKY TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt Wilson**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Robson**

It has been a busy period for Whisky Tp over the past few months, what with exercises and the Cadre Course coming and going, and a couple of promotions too. First of all we would like to say hello to **LCpl** 'Col' **Villiers** who has joined us from 2 Sig Regt in York. Straight from the factory are **Sig Taylor**, **Sig McCabe**, and all the way from 231 Sqn, **Sig Townsley**. I'm sure they will all be a great asset to the Troop! There have been a few promotions within the Troop, starting off with the boss, **Lt Wilson**. Also congratulations must go to former **LCpl Russ Ryan** who is now **Cpl Ryan**. Last but definitely not least our No 1 ED **LCpl Bonney** has just received his stripe after a long stretch in the Officers' Mess. The whole Troop would like to congratulate **LCpl Martin** 'Jack' **Horner** and his wife on the birth of their daughter **Charlotte**, who was born on 6 November 1998 weighing in at 6lb 6oz. Sadly though, we will be saying goodbye to the **Horner** family at the end of this year, so we wish them good luck at 21 Sig Regt. Between 18 October and 6 November 1998, a Cadre Course was taking place at 7 Sig Regt. The only member of the Troop to complete the course was a Scouser. **Sig** 'Ruby' **Murray**, who did extremely well, and came very close to being top student. Hopefully we'll be seeing him come off the board sometime next year.

231 SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj** 'Dumb Waiter' **Whitehead**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Ward**

Now in the twilight days of **Maj Whitehead's** command, the Squadron prepares to wish him, **Debbie** and **Bryony** a fond goodbye and best wishes for Warminster. The build up to Christmas has been hectic but season for being jolly has now arrived. The Regimental reshuffle will change the Troops that make up the Squadron, so here is their reports for the last time as all part of 231 Sqn.

OSCAR TROOP

Tp Comd **2Lt Jones**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Dunseith**

The Troop has had yet another amazing month. NOT! What with Arrcade Fusion, Board of Officers, and the Regimental reshuffle, it has been a very busy month for the troop with 10 per cent manning. Arrcade Fusion started the month out at Ayrshire Barracks again. This went without a hitch, except for the fact it took a few attempts to site us. We also lost our beloved leader **2Lt** 'Don't ask me' **Hamilton**, who goes to Blandford to attend his Troop Commanders Course. Papa Tp eventually got their comms in and joined the Exercise, although they only had command for 24hrs. Surprise! Surprise!

No sooner were we back from exercise than it was time for the Board of Officers, and with **SSgt** 'Have we got it' **Dunseith** and **Sig** 'Yes' **Curran** checking all the kit five times this didn't go too badly! During the Board of Officers someone thought we didn't have enough to do so they thought we would move the Troop and the accommodation around at the same time. The good thing was we got rid of Papa Tp. They might now have to do some work for once and we might get to share the workload fairly.

We're now into our UWI prep. The Troop says farewell to **LCpl** 'DJ' **Lyons** who will be joining Civ Div after an extensive resettlement period. We say hello to **2Lt** 'I love Lima' **Jones** all the way from Lima Tp, **Cpl** 'I'll get there one day' **Wilson, Sig** 'They're not big' **Constable** and **Sig** 'I like running' **Walker.** We would like to welcome more but then we might be able to make a Troop.

PAPA TROOP

Tp Comd **2Lt Lowther**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Gemmell**

The Troop has just experienced another turbulent time in its busy life. With **SSgt Archie** 'Do you know I can fish?' **Gemmell** now firmly settled in the co-pilots seat, it was time to say goodbye to some of the Troop. **2Lt** 'Is Tropo in yet?' **Lowther** has been elevated to the dizzy heights of OC Tac Tp and **Cpl** 'There is nothing wrong with my switch' **Lund** has been posted on promotion to 3 Div. Before you could say 'Regimental reshuffle', Papa Tp found itself moved to 232 Squadron and under the guidance of **2Lt** 'Tanya' **Noakes**, fresh from her Troop Commanders course. Long live **Maj** 'Can I shoot it?' **Stringer**. As if that wasn't enough to contend with, **Cpl** 'I'll sort it.' **Jackson** did a magnificant job in preparing both the Troop and the stores for the recent Board of Officers. Many thanks.

QUEBEC TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt Richard Byfield**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Rob Hood**

Much has happened in the busy world of Quebec Tp in recent months. However, we have moved garages and exchanged all of our old Landrovers for the new 'Wolf' version. We must say well done to both **Sig Jimmy Samuel** and **Sig** 'Robbo' **Roberts** who did exceptionally well on the Regimental Cadre Course. The Troop has changed considerably and welcomes **SSgt Rob Hood**, **Sig Danny Pincott**, **Sig** 'Leo' **Learmonth, Sig** 'Interesting' **Lane** and **Sig** 'Twiss' **Twissel**. Unfortunately we couldn't keep our manpower up too high so we had to say goodbye to **LCpl** 'Ollie' **Olver, Sig Karen Stafford** and **Sig** 'Scottie' **Steele** who are all off to 21 Sig Regt. We also say farewell to **LCpl Lee** 'Hank' **Hankinson** who goes on to 19 Mech Bde. Finally our congratulations go to **Cpl Stu Hunt** and his wife **Nikki** on the birth of their baby boy **Thomas.**

LIMA TROOP

Tp Comd **2Lt Steve Jones**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Phil Hay**

We would like to welcome **SSgt Phil** 'I've got every qualification' **Hay,** wife **Rachel** and family. We hope they have an enjoyable and fruitful tour with us. Farewell to **2Lt Steve** 'Barnsley' **Jones** although he is only going next door to Oscar Tp. Congratulations to **Cpl Steve Evans** on his promotion to Sgt and posting to 14 Sig Regt. **SSgt Phil Hay** arrived at the Troop just in time for Arrcade Fusion, unlucky for him. The Exercise started in the usual way with Line Tp getting stuck straight into the action, this we did faster than any other time 'thanks to the diagrams'. As the Exercise calmed down and the hustle and bustle subsided, Line Tp settled into their normal working routine.

Cpl Steve 'I'll see you when I see you' **Evans** found it difficult fitting into a daily routine and never got his combats dirty. We must say a word on **Sig Jamie** 'Cheeky boy' **Smith,** who has to be the only one who could reduce five lengths of faultless cable into a 'birdsnest'. We would like to remind **Sig Jock** 'Sicknote' **Fleming** that the best way to move a Bedford is to drive it and not with his head. Our other Line Det based at Louth Trg Area was under the command of **Sgt Drew** 'Where's my NBC suit' **Drewett** who neglected to bring it on Exercise. It was a good job the back of the truck was NBC proof.

As the Exercise drew to a close, rumours started circulating about half the Line Tp moving to 232 Sqn. This proved to be correct and the relevant people were informed, after the SSM made sure everyone had bought a Squadron sweatshirt. This is a end of a era as 231 Sqn, Line Tp is one of the only 'real' Line Tps left in the Royal Signals. Impostors in black line belts be warned (HQMT). Even though the Troop is split we hope we all remain close friends and thanks for all your hard work in the past. 'KEEP IT UP'

232 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj Alan** 'Jerry' **Stringer**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Hughes**

SSgt (YofS) 'Gaz' **Tabor** has purchased a caravan and it is important that all those who know him in the Corps realise his change of character. Apparently he is keen to start a club for those fellow caravaners in the Krefeld and JHQ area. The OC temporarily got excited over the prospect of an operational deployment and promptly cancelled his diving trip to the Red Sea. Last seen sat at his desk in cold Krefeld, nobody is allowed to mention diving especially the five hundred pounds he spent on his dive computer. Congratulations to the Squadron Clerk, **LCpl Anne** 'I'm in charge 'round 'ere' **Bristow**, on her marriage to **Cpl Tony Simmons** of HQ Sqn. All the best for the future. Finally, congratulations to **Cpl Blair** 'Mac' **MacDonald** on selection for the Yeoman's Course next year.

DELTA TROOP

Tp Comd **2Lt** 'Pierre' **Farrimond**
Tp SSgt **SSgt** 'Stef' **Newton**

Hello to everyone out there in Wireland from Delta Troop. In October the Troop deployed on Ex Arrcade Fusion with some lads and lasses going to Italy again. **LCpl** 'Sean' **Ablott** and **Sig** 'Connie' **Turner** went to Greece with 16 Sig Regt while the rest of the Troop went to Euskirchen, 40 miles down the road from camp, less those of course who were fishing or packing to go to Nepal. Despite the last minute changes everyone deployed to their respective locations on time. The Exercise went very well for everyone except **LCpl Damon** '2 pints' **Gauchi** whose exploits in Milan included crashing a Landrover and losing his passport. In Euskirchen **Cpl Matt** 'Cleggy' **Clegg** had his SAN working like clockwork, giving himself enough free time to set the fastest stage time on **Colin McRea** Rally. Next time **Cleggy**, next time.....

In the run-up to Christmas the Troop was kept busy with the Board of Officers and the UWI's which went well for the Troop, so well done to everyone. On a final note we say congratulations to **Sig** 'Paddy' **McFarland** and **Sig** 'Lance' **Buckle** on their recent promotions to LCpl. There's hope for everyone!

TAC TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt Young**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Mackenzie**

Welcome to **Cpl** 'Randy' **Randerson** and **Cpl** 'Gwa' **Grey** and their families and congratulations to both of them on promotion to 'full screw'.

More hellos go to **Sigs** 'A. Cleft' **Dinsdale, Debbie** 'Bob' **Shillinglow** and **Trish** 'Jimmy Cranky' **Drummond.** Sadly we must also say farewell to **Lt** 'Peanut' **Young** who is now off to pretend to be warry in Cyprus. **SSgt Phil** 'It's not a Harley, it's a Chopper' **Mackenzie** is off to HQ Sqn with both of his beloved bicycles.

RADIO TROOP

Tp Comd **2Lt Nicky James**
Tp SSgt **SSgt George Farrar**

First a few hellos and goodbyes. **LCpl** 'Lee Spandex' **Renwick** leaves the Troop and Regiment with our best wishes and good luck for the future. **Sig** 'Shaggy' **Palmer** with his wife **Emma** and son **Jack** are also leaving. Congratulations to the **Palmers** on the birth of their new son **Dylan** Hellos to **Cpl** 'Si, The Pimpernel' **Riley** and his wife **Claudia**, **LCpl** 'Ken' **Barlow** who with only a few days in the Regiment went to Nepal with **Sig** 'Audi, Q, Nancy, the Siggy formally know as Corrigan' **Qualtrough,** for a spot of hill walking. **Sig** 'Not a Scouse' **Hallway** and his wife **Gill** and their daughter **Kayleigh** also arrived along with **Sig** 'Andi, 450 DM for WHAT???' **Porter** fresh and interested from the sunny School of Signals. We thank them dearly for sending him. Congratulations to **LCpl** 'Oz' **Bowden** on his promotion to Corporal.

Morale is as high as ever with comments such as 'Where do all the leaves come from?' **(Sig** 'Village' **Parkin**), and 'Yes Officer I'm pretty sure it was stolen....oh hang on a minute, it was me' **(Sig Ian,** 'Where's your licence gone' **Walker**). The Troop is looking forward to Christmas and then skiing in the New Year in Bavaria. Finally congratulations to **Sigs** 'Flossy' **Fallows** and 'Merc' **Ainscough** on their imminent wedding.

EXERCISE ARRCADE FUSION 1998

7 Sig Regt began deploying assets into the field on Monday 21 September to prepare for the large-scale multinational Exercise, Ex Arrcade Fusion. 231 Sig Sqn constructed communications to headquarters at Ayrshire Barracks and Louth. They also provided the majority of the Regimental manpower. 232 Sig Sqn deployed radio to support all locations and Secondary Access Nodes commanded by **2Lt Nicki James** (Italy) and **Lt Pete Young** (Euskirchen) in support of Divisions. Thanks must also go to 229 Sig Sqn who played a major role in filling the gaps that undermanning has caused in the other Squadrons. The Regiment proved to be well prepared and although problems developed with CIS equipment regularly, the technicians dealt with faults effectively. They even managed to provide technical assistance to other units including Royal Artillery BATES and 7th US Signal Brigade. A good working relationship developed with the American Satellite team who relied upon 231 Sig Sqn; especially **Cpl** 'Ginger Ninja' **Crompton** who was awarded a medal for 'outstanding work beyond the call of duty'. Overall the Exercise went well and 7 Sig Regt, Exercising for the last time before Regimental reorganisation, provided a service to Staff users which was appreciated at the highest level.

EXERCISE ARRCADE FUSION ITALIAN SAN

The one and a half day journey began by **Sig** 'Jordie' **Ainscough** having to squeeze into the back of the HF det owing to the undue amount of kit the OC, **2Lt Nicky** 'friend-of-generals' **James** had brought. The warnings from the Ex Able Condor Italy trip that the diet would consist of pasta and lettuce was forgotten on the first night in the American base where an 'on tap' coke machine and 'help-yourself-mister-whippy' ice cream machine were heralded with delight. However, two weeks later the repetitive menu of pasta, lettuce and bread made us appreciate even more the egg and bacon baguettes prepared by **Cpl** 'Itchy' **McIntosh** and his handy helper **Cfn** 'Scratchy' **Williams**. On arrival there was no sign of Italian activity so we indulged in a pre exercise R and R trip to Milan. However the work started in earnest when the cam net was erected. **Cpl** 'Random Peg' **Millikan** finally took control and the end product was worth all the effort and lost teddies. As the Exercise progressed we relaxed into the shift system and the sunshine. The LAN Managers **Cpl** 'tall man' **Dunnington** and **LCpl** 'keep your pants on' **Morton** kept rushing down to the HQ to help the Italian staff find the 'send' button for the email. **LCpl** 'Unfortunate' **Gauchi** tried to keep himself out of trouble by being the most reliable person to switch on the loudspeaker for the conference calls.

The SAN was kept on its toes by a stream of visitors from the Squadron OC, **Maj** 'I'm not here for a holiday' **Stringer** to COMARRC himself. There was the ongoing task of trying to locate the Portuguese Brigade for conference calls. **Staff** 'It is I' **Hannah** kept himself amused when comms worked by practising his Italian wink or accidentally tripping into **LCpl Morton**'s bag of cookies. The exercise, the comms and Staff's patience ended in an impressive electrical storm. **Cpl Millikan**'s cam net masterpiece had to be taken down soaking wet. The trip back was achieved in safety by **Sig Holt** restraining himself from taking out the Italian Caribinari motorbike escorts and **Sig** 'Scouse' **Hallway** wisely ignoring a direct order from the OC to close his eyes as he drove through Switzerland. The SAN group arrived in Krefeld to enjoy a cold, wet weekend with no pasta and no Splügen.

EXERCISE MAGNUM SPIRIT

A military driver training exercise known as Magnum Spirit 1998 took place in and around 21 Engr Regt at Quebec Barracks in Osnabruck. 7 Sig Regt entered one team consisting of **Sgt Leigh Northeast**, the driver, and **2Lt Emma Hamilton-Green** AGC (SPS), the navigator. The event was a test of driving skills, navigational ability and endurance of the crews. The event started off with a 200km Night Navigational Exercise followed by daytime Special Sections and then another 170 km Night Navigational Exercise. Apart from fatigue the other hazards thrown at the teams were the snow, ice and freezing fog. This proved too much for some crews as a few Landrovers ended up in ditches! But not 7 Sig Regt's crew. The skill of **Sgt Northeast**'s driving combined with the fairly accurate navigational skills meant they came 38th place out of a starting number of 85.



Sgt Northeast and 2Lt Hamilton-Green go Amphibious

9 SIGNAL REGIMENT (RADIO)

DHEKELIA DASH

On November 28 1998 hundreds of runners gathered for the 32nd Dhekelia Dash. A record 54 teams had entered to compete over the undulating 15 mile route. Each team comprised 15 runners who each had to complete, an approximate 1 mile leg.

The Ladies Team from Ay Nik, who have won their category for the past two years, entered with some trepidation. With the reduction of numbers within the Regiment over the past year the pool of females to choose from was slightly limiting, but the Ladies were still determined to do well. The team, which consisted of a combination of wives and military personnel waited eagerly at their respective checkpoints to give their all on each leg.

Epi Strollers had an outstanding team this year and had obviously carried out much training in their quest to take the female trophy away from the Ay Nik Ladies. They were successful in their bid, so congratulations Epi Strollers, but watch out next year we will be back. Ay Nik Ladies put in a very good effort coming a commendable second place.

EXERCISE ISLAND WIDE
THE LONELINESS OF THE LONG DISTANCE RUNNER

Approximately four months ago, **Pte Steve Houghton**, now LCpl, of the QM's Department decided he would like to organise a charity event that had not been attempted before. The idea was to have a team of runners who would run through all the UK military bases on this paradise island, including the Troodos Station in aid of the Cyprus Anti-Cancer Society and The Anthony Nolan Bone-Marrow Trust (UK). So was born Ex Island Wide. The team of five runners would run relays with a support team covering the following route: Ayios Nikolaos Station-via Larnaca & Limassol-Akrotiri-Episkopi-Troodos-via Nicosia-Ayios Nikolaos Station.

The next step in the plan was to gain big sponsors. After many futile letters it was obvious no one thought the event viable and alas no offers were forthcoming. This did not deter **Steve Houghton** in his perseverance. Next were the team, he and four other volunteers plus a support crew. Despite initial misgivings, the runners came forward and the support crew was selected. The route and the necessary paperwork had to be cleared through CyPol and the relevant Garrison Headquarters, eventually the initial idea became a reality. The date was set for Sunday 20 September to begin at 0500hrs. Each masochist would run 30min slots with a 2hrs recovery supported by a coach and two safety vehicles with water and rations in abundance. The estimated time of completion was late Monday evening.

After numerous last minute worries the big day arrived. The CO of 9 Sig Regt (R), **Lt Col Whitby** kindly set off the first runner with all the encouragement anyone could muster at 0500hrs. Very soon the runners settled down into their routine of run, drink, eat, rest and run again. The safety vehicles were leapfrogging backward and forward which caused some consternation with the SBA motorcycle escort as the local population looked on in bewilderment. Dhekelia flew by without a second glance; Larnaca came to a stop as the tourists looked on, causing more confusion. Once on the coast road to Limassol the sea views and villages



The full Team

were the last thing on the runner's mind -Macdonald's was calling. A detailed list of orders was rustled together by support team members **SSgt Andy Slack, Cpl Mick Marvel** and **LCpl** 'Mac' **McCulloch** and despatched at full speed to get the grub! Back down the road with food the now weary runners were back on top form after the boost of Big Macs and milkshakes (just what the dietician ordered!)

Next was Limassol where the support team was again despatched to shake buckets in poor unsuspecting faces. It didn't take long before they found the area of scantily clad beach-babes in abundance-they managed to raise 30 cents and a case of temporary blindness. Once again the runners brought the place to a standstill, the recovery rate was amazing once the beach-babes were spotted. The route through Akrotiri was a case of through the station past Tommy Tuckers and back out, but the response and the monies donated were much appreciated. Unfortunately there was no time for the suggested visit to BFBS Radio. Regular phone calls were made to the presenters who constantly cajoled and encouraged listeners to give money. On the spot live broadcasts were given with the support team being ridiculed for their poor radio voices and the constant updates were readily broadcast thanks to the very helpful BFBS DJ's. Next to come was Episkopi Garrison, in through the front and out through the back with a bemused Light Infantryman unlocking and locking up afterwards. Obviously Sunday night is sock sorting night with not a soul to be seen.

There was now the daunting sight of Troodos looming in the distance. Fortunately with some forward planning there was a chance for the resting runners to get a shower and a hot meal once within the Station. Needless to say the run-up was full of incident, mainly because by this stage we had lost our Police escort. This was a definite nightmare knowing patience is not a virtue amongst the local drivers. Surprisingly, at one point the runners were held up by a lorry, which was travelling even slower than they were. By the time they reached the top morale was at its lowest ebb, and legs and feet were suffering their own private hell. The effort and determination not to walk was a sight to behold, regardless of the pain and frustration of stiff joints. Once the top of Troodos was breached it was turn around and run back down, the runners were well ahead of schedule but it was now dark. The safety vehicles were placed front and back with flashing lights and lots of concentration involved. The pace picked up and before we knew it Nicosia was in sight. The route planners had a little hiccup on the outskirts of Nicosia with one of the vehicles disappearing and then phoning from a phone box to arrange a meeting point. Luckily the now testy runners were oblivious to this as the off shift were now able to pass out within seconds of climbing back aboard the admin coach. The golden blanket would have to be shared. This also became a no-go area for non-runners, as the smell of sweaty socks and trainers was enough to banish even the bravest.



Sgt John Brooke, Nicosia to Larnaca

Following the road parallel to the motorway Larnaca soon came into view. The worry was now arranging a reception committee back at camp some 12 hours ahead of schedule despite protests from the team to make the most of it slow down and enjoy the scenery. After the Larnaca ring road it was back onto familiar ground back up the Corridor Road to Ayios Nikolaos. The support team shot forward with the escort vehicle leaving **SSgt Kev O'Neill, Sig Jimmy Brooks** and the Duty Medic, **LCpl Nicky Holdridge**, holding the fort behind the runners. On arrival in Vrysoulles it was envisaged the team would catch up at 1230hrs-wrong-they were now motoring with the finish in sight. At 1210hrs they were spotted coming into the village. Panic stations, the reception committee was expecting them at 1300hrs and they only had about 10mins of running left to do. There was no stopping them now, so they swept through and up to camp to receive a slightly smaller reception, but never the less enthusiastic one. Finishing 12hrs ahead of schedule and still standing the incredible feat was accomplished by the following:

LCpl Steve Houghton, Sgt Dave Churchward, Sgt Adie Davidson, Pte 'Pez' **Perry** and the old man of the bunch, **WO2 (SSM)** 'Taff' **Thomas**. Reserves were **Sgt John Brooke, Cpl** 'Paddy' **Reece** and **Pte** 'Swede' **Stephen**.

The statistics are as follows:

Total Distance:	224.6 miles
Total Time:	30 hrs 21mins
Distance run by each runner:	44.6 miles

TRAINING WING TROPHY 1998

On Wednesday 25 November 1998, the annual Training Wing Trophy Competition was held around the Ayios Nikolaos Station. The competition comprised of nine Military Skills Events and was entered by a total of six teams from each of the Squadrons within the Regiment. An all female team was also entered, obviously intent on destroying some male egos. The competition took the format of a round robin, with teams being awarded point's dependant on their final positions in each event, the team with the lowest score at the end being the winners. Each team was given a different start time, Support Squadron got the competition underway with the obligatory kit inspection by **WO1 (RSM) Sherrard**. From this the teams went on to the assault course (twice!) carrying a jerry can of water throughout the various obstacles. This was followed by the range, a command task, written tests on ATD's, a stretcher race, first aid and finally an unopposed river crossing. From the beginning the Operations Squadron Team knew they had a strong chance of winning. The many days spent training gave the Team Captain, **Lt Short**, a difficult choice in deciding the final team. Eventually resorting to the old 'Short' straw method. They made a strong start represented by **Lt** 'I can't believe I only hit 3/10 clays' **Short, Sgt Paul** 'I'm not ginger' **Timmis, Sgt Kev** 'I can't believe we have to do it twice' **Taylor, Cpl Jas** 'Follow me I'm a PTI' **Roberts, LCpl** 'God damn it' **Bond, LCpl** 'Zebedee' **Timewell** and finally the two side-kick reserves **Cpl Mike Foster** and **LCpl Colin West**. Despite this being the hottest 25 November for ten years, in Cyprus, all the teams put in maximum effort. The girls' team must be commended for at least attempting the assault course, but it was clear after only five events that Operations Squadron was going to run away with it. They put in a commanding performance throughout the day and were justified in gaining overall first place, second place being a very close ten points behind!

Congratulations must go to all those who took part in the competition and special thanks to the Training Wing and Gymnasium staff for organising an overall enjoyable day. The quote of the day must go to **WO1 (RSM) Sherrard**, who at the Operations Squadron river crossing remarked 'Look, the DI (SI) team are all wet'. Thanks Sir!

VISIT OF COL D. T. W. GIBSON MBE

After nearly 40 years a momentous occasion was marked in the Regiments history when the first and last Commanding Officer of 9th Signal Regiment (Radio) met on 2 November 1998. The Regiment welcomed back into the fold **Col D. T. W. Gibson MBE**, the incumbent CO from 1958-60 when the unit was raised, who had taken time out from a family holiday to visit.

After a tour of the Regiments facilities and the lozenge **Col Gibson** and his wife **Monica** were entertained in the Officers' Mess for lunch. **Col Gibson** then gave an informative presentation on life during the formative years of the Regiment and the challenges faced when working with National Servicemen. About having to live out of tents as the infrastructure of the barracks had yet to be built and having to cope with the political tensions of the day.

Both **Col Gibson** and his wife commented on the remarkable improvements that had taken place during the 38 years since their departure. Most noticeably for them was the present geographical position of the old CO's house, now across the border in the Turkish controlled Republic of Northern Cyprus. The Regiment would like to thank **Col Gibson** and his wife **Monica** for making time to visit and allowing us to mark such an occasion.

IS THERE A BRANCH OF THE RSA IN NEWCASTLE? FIND OUT AT

www.royalsignals.army.org.uk/museum

14 SIGNAL REGIMENT (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)

226 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Another busy period for the 226 Sig Sqn (EW) hierarchy, **Capt Paul Newson** and **WO2 (SSM) Al Jenkins** are both swanning on a recce to Belize. **Capt Paul Newson** is then away skydiving in Florida. It's all right for some. **WO2 (FofS) Dean Briers** has just spent two weeks on a combat survival course with a few blisters as a souvenir. **Maj Rob Meinertzhagen** and **WO2 (YofS) Dick Rutherford** have been busy in sunny Rheindahlen on Ex Arrcade Fusion.

640 SIGNAL TROOP

Congratulations to **Sgt** 'JP' **Walker** on becoming the Army Driving Champion and congratulations to **Cpl Simon Green** on passing P Company. Congratulations to **Greg Mulley, Paul Pettman, Jay Aldred** and **Chas Caley** on coming off the Corporals board and to **Chas Caley** again on passing his Tl upgrading. Finally, congratulations to **Cpl Nicky Dawson**, the 226 PTI, for all the biscuits and chocolates.

On 27 September seven members of the Troop, under the watchful eye of the Troop OC took four of the Troop's specialist vehicles to Salisbury plain to take part in the Staff College demonstration. Over a period of three days the OC and the Detachment commanders were to each give a total of 55 briefings to the groups of visiting officers. Some of the groups that come round were from foreign nations, in particular Kuwait, which provided a few language problems while trying to describe how the British Army and particularly 640 Tp conduct electronic warfare operations. **LCpl** 'Chuck' **Norris** and **LCpl Mark Young** had the task of entertaining the visiting officers with a mobile display of one of the Troop's wildcat jammer vehicles moving into location, while helicopters flew overhead and the artillery fired off their guns a hundred yards away. The EW stand generated a lot of interest amongst the visitors and we regularly ran out of time before we could answer all their questions. The Troop is well acquainted with giving briefings and demonstrations and the three days passed with out any major hitches. Although the Troop OC did have to help **Cpl** 'Skid' **Rowe** out on one occasion when he became tongue-tied after seeing an attractive young female amongst one of the groups. Although we enjoyed ourselves the lads were happy to see the back of the cold showers at Rolleston Camp and head off back down the M4 and its obligatory Burger King stops, which now seem almost SOPs.

In October the Boss, **Capt Jim Brown** thought it would be a good idea to have a Battlecamp so he tasked **Sgt** 'JJ' **Walker** to run one. So with some anticipation the Troop paraded at 1400hrs on Sunday 4 October to be issued all the paraphernalia that accompanies this sort of Exercise. The low level Dafs commanded by **LCpl Holdridge** arrived at the HLS dead on time for the move to Sennybridge. On arrival in location we were told the scenario was that our detachments had been over run and that we had to make our way back to friendly lines. We soon found out how hard it was to map read in the dark whilst moving tactically across the area. Five hours, and a few lost teddies later we finally arrived at the friendly locations. The next morning three teams found they had all slept within two metres of each other and not even realised. After breakfast we waited for tactical pickup, but when the Boss arrived he was horrified to find that we all appeared just to be waiting for the No.22 bus, and made us walk back! Once back at Farm 2 we had lessons from **Sgt** 'JJ''s friends from the Pathfinder platoon, 23 PFA and 2 PARA. Due to the live firing the next day we were then allowed the compulsory ten hours sleep.

Day 3 already and the start of the range package, Individual CQB. First down was **Sig** 'Mothball' **Taylor** anyone would have thought it was midnight the way he ghost-walked down the range. There were also a few other people who obviously needed the practice. **Cpl** 'Mac' **MacDonald** should book himself into the opticians as he claimed there were no targets, only tree stumps. **Cpl** 'Scouse' **Meehan** was quite glad of the impromptu weapon-cleaning lesson, after dropping his rifle nose first into the mud 30 seconds before crossing the LOD. That night both sections were tasked to recce some woods, with the intention of using them later in the week. After setting off with good intentions it all too soon went down hill. 1 Section were quickly caught and decided to share a brew with guy's from 216 while waiting for 2 Section to return. They proved no better, walked straight past an enemy Landrover and stepped over two of the enemy before entering the wood. After walking round the wood the obligatory blue on blue nearly happened when **Sig** 'Drew' **Connor** proved that ED's really cannot count. 2 Sect also missed the bus as the map-reader and point man had a lack of communication. If it had not been 18km back, we would still be walking. Pairs fire and manoeuvre, a few heart stopping moments for the DS. **Sig** 'Adam' **Welton** found out that if you shoot at the targets in the wrong place they have a tendency to fight back. The evening entertainment was lessons on FISH and CTR's.

The big day, Section Attacks, everyone was quite excited. However, the DS looked a tad apprehensive about the whole thing. 1 Section proved they were no marksmen, when only 18 rounds had hit the target after leaving the start with over 1500. 2 Section's went a little smoother after the contact there was at least 200m to cover on belt and buckles before everyone could see the target and were in cover. By this time the Sect Comd's and 2IC's voices were already nearly gone. Luckily no one died although **Sig** 'Gaz' **Roscoe** looked a bit nervous as he went to post his non-working grenade. Afterwards everyone then had a go on the 'I don't want to play' GPMG. After returning to Farm 2 we got issued our sawes kit for the next phase.

This phase was to move into the woods that 2 Sect had so expertly recce'd earlier in the week. Once in the wood both Sections were given two separate building's to CTR. Fortunately for 2 Sect they had driven past their objective about ten times that week, so they just sat around in the very cold Sennybridge night and waited for the truck to take them home. Later that night the Sections were then given their orders for the daring morning raid on 1 Sect CTR objective. At 0430hrs, 2 Sect rose from a glorious night's sleep ready to meet 1 Sect at 0515hrs. 1 Sect obviously wanted a late start and did not turn up until 0530hrs. We then moved to the Bergen cache and put on the sawes kit. Which immediately gave our position with it's bleeping. The Sections all moved to the start line ready to cross at 0700hrs when the fire support would open up. At 0700 and 9 seconds **SSgt 'Franco' Flaherty** finally got the thunder flash to work and all hell broke loose. 1 Sect moved in to take the bottom floor, which turned out to be quite a struggle and a few choice words were spoken between **LCpl Roberts** and **LCpl** 'Trigger' **Wilson.** 2 Sect moved through to take the top floor, their attempts to get up the stairs were halted by a number of stoppages and in the commotion one of the enemy managed to jump out of the window. No sooner had 2 Sect got up the stair than they were called down to assault the next building but with only 3 out of 16 soldiers left alive the DS decided to call it a day. Not, however, before an Assault course race between the two Sections. 14 minutes later a very wet and muddy 2 Sect claimed victory. We made our way back to Farm 2 where we handed in all the stores before spending the night informally debriefing each other with the aid of alcohol.

Early October also saw four Troop members deploy to Germany to take part in the CP Ex Arrcade Fusion while the rest of the Troop roughed it on battlecamp in Sennybridge. Although other members of the Regiment deployed in support of the ARRC, the Troop was to act out its role in support of the Multi National Division. The Troop OC, **Capt Jim Brown** and **Q Andy Jensen** managed to wangle themselves on a flight with the Regimental Operations Cell while **Cpl** 'Skid' **Rowe** and **LCpl Steve Frost** were left to drive the vehicles to Germany via the Ramsgate ferry. Once the troops had met up they were to split up again. The **Q** and **LCpl Frost** going to play the role of the troops assets on the ground at Ayrshire barracks and the OC and **Cpl Rowe,** along with **WO1 Thirsk** from Regimental Ops, travelling to Euskirchen and the MND HQ. Settling into the routine at the German barracks and the divisional HQ took only a short while, although the menu did not agree with everyone's idea of ideal cuisine, the inclusion of jelly babies and sparkling water surprised most people. Before the Exercise started the troops enjoyed a relaxed period and got to sample some local hospitality in the way of the local bars. Thanks to the OC's manoeuvre approach to tactics (the art of running away), the paper troop suffered no casualties, which is more than can be said for the rest of the division. The Exercise was quickly renamed Arrcade Confusion by some! By the time endex had been called everyone was more than ready to let their hair down and relax for the day or two before it was time to set off again back to Brawdy. The empty trailers we had brought served there purpose in providing us somewhere to stash our duty free allowances, but next time bigger trailers may be needed. Thanks must go to **Maj Danby** and **SM Bruel** for hosting us during our visit to MND HQ.

HOTEL TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt Michael Powell**
Ops WO	**WO2 Nigel Watton**

In an attempt to escape the humdrum of the vehicle bays most of the Troop headed up to Capel Curig, in Snowdon, for five days hill walking, which was blessed with clear weather. On return there was a quiet period disturbed only by **Cpl** 'Gym Queen' **Dawson**'s shouts as she beasted us around the Gym, the majority of the Troop now being sent to school with Racal in Heckfield. Those who remained behind are packing their bags in preparation for various adventures. **Cpl Danny Clayton** is jetting of to Barbados to play cricket. **LCpl** 'Evel' **Hildreth** is heading off to the factory in Blandford for White Helmets selection. **LCpl Joe Gallagher** has already begun a six month stint in sunny N.I. and **Sgt** 'Father Ted' **Whichelo** has been packed off to equally sunny Bosnia for a white Christmas along side **Cpl Tony Taylor** and **LCpl** 'Webby' **Webster.**

Congratulations are in order for **Cpl** 'Pottsie' **Potton** on his recent marriage to **Emma** and **Cpl Chris** 'Daddy' **Dunn** for passing his pilot selection. Well done also to **LCpl Niomie Wilson** and **Sig** 'Woody' **Woodrow** for their recent performance in the army swimming championships and **LCpl** 'Dinger' **Bell** for managing to swing a golfing swan in South Africa.

A big hello to **SSgt Frank Campbell** who has been posted in to sort out our admin along with his wife **Jo**, and we look forward to seeing **Cpl Lee Holmes, Cpl John Panlihurst** and **Sig Dianne Bradley** who will return from Bosnia in January. Finally goodbye to **LCpl Katie Heath** who along with her husband **Mick** are due to begin life afresh in civvy street.

ROMEO TROOP

The year continues to be challenging for the Troop. The main event of the year took the shape of a deployment to the sunny island of Cyprus for Ex Sienna Sands. The work element proved 'interesting' as did the R and R that followed. All in all it proved to be a successful deployment and enjoyable by all who took part in the Exercise. The Troop has continued to enjoy some varied activities, namely windsurfing, coasteering, surfing and a cross-country driver training day at Sennybridge organised by **Cpl Daz Brown.** This day saw the Troop putting the Wolf Defenders through their paces in testing conditions that also brought out the lunatic element in those who took part. As always the turnover in manpower has had an effect on the Troop, sad farewells to **SSgt Steve** 'werewolf' **Moffet** on completion of his Supervisor Radio course, **Sgt Bill Riley** to civvy street along with **Cpl Steve Miller LCpl** 'Scouse' **Littler** and **LCpl** 'Bamber' **Barron.** Good luck to you all !

COMMUNICATIONS TROOP

OC/SSgt **SSgt Paul Jude**

A big Comms Tp welcome to all our new Cut and Thrusting members, **Sgt Steve Brown** and family, **Sgt Titus Reene** and family. **Cpl Stu Latham** and **Sig** 'Gibbo' **Gibson** who have returned from sunny Bosnia. **LCpl Bill Scourfield** on return from London, **Sig Davey** 'When I was in NI' **Kerr** from JCUNI **Sigs Mike Mcghee** and **Phil Bartlett** from the sausage factory. GOODBYE to the one and only **SSgt Paul** 'Hobo' **Jude** to 2 Sig Regt, a fond farewell and all the best for the future.

EXERCISE BONNIE DUNDEE

From the two operations being required, the whole Troop ended up deploying to Otterburn and Scotland in support of Highland 51 Bde and Lowland 52 Bde. An Exercise with a difference was this one. All started well with our initial deployment to 55 Sqn (L) to pick up some TA personnel. Then came the follow on to Otterburn. The first few days were spent on Comms tests to establish what coverage could be given to support the final FTX of both Brigades together. Day 3 saw the Troop split off to go to their various locations to meet up with their respective Bde's. **LCpl Stu Kelly** fought long and hard to get himself back to Scotland only to wish he hadn't. The more we neared Glasgow the more excited and stronger his accent got. Only to drive straight past and keep going. After our RV with the Highland BDE at Perth we embarked on our journey to Gareloch Head North of Glasgow. A lot has to be said for some drills in the TA. The convoy Commander was 2IC of a red VW Golf. Certainly raised a few eyebrows from the regular contingent after eventually arriving at our destination the two RRB's were deployed. Due to the shortage of maps RRB 1 was taken out and given a map. RRB 2 was led round the mountains and once it was established that all the gates to the sites were locked the RRB was told to stay put in a lay-by until the morning when something would be sorted. After eventually getting on the site, the link was established between Gareloch Head and Culty Braglaw. On Friday the net went deathly quiet. Once Comms were established on the mobile phone the RRBs were informed that endex had been called 'Nice One' not. The following phase was 2 Bde's commanding for the final push where we were given a lesson on electrical torture by **Sig Jono Johnson**. He does like to go out with a spark or two 'Eh Jono.' 1 x Gene lead and 2 Gene's later the RRB was with power.

237 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj J. W. Dakin**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Richardson**

LEWT - FAREWELLS

The Troop bids a temporary farewell to **Sgt** 'Brads' **Bradbury** on roulement tour to Bosnia for six months and welcomes back **Sgt England, Cpl South** and **Cpl Clarke** from recent tours. The Troop also welcomes the arrival of **LCpl Bradshaw** on his recent posting to the Troop from 9 Signal Regiment (Radio). We bid farewell to **Sgt** 'Nico' **Nicholson** on posting.



LEWT being extracted from the end of Phase 1, Ex Pegasus Anvil

EXERCISE MEDMAN 5 - 5 SEPTEMBER - 8 OCTOBER 1998

The LEWT Troop deployed to Canada on Medman 5 as a part of the OSG Battlegroup. This was an excellent opportunity for the LEWT to participate in field firing including LAW 94, GPMG, explosive techniques and battle inocculation. The Troop was able to qualify and conduct live Artillery target indication that concluded in directing fire from five AS90 guns. The remainder of the Exercise included Heli Ops and a full force on force TESEX. Post Exercise entertainment included an R&R package to sample the delights of Edmonton.

EXERCISE FOXES' LOOK–23 NOVEMBER - 2 OCTOBER 1998

Five members of the LEWT deployed to Hohenfels, Germany, attached to 101 MI Battalion of the US Army. This was an Exchange Exercise culminating in a force on force TESEX. This provided an excellent opportunity to see how the 'Big Green One' operates. The Troop looks forward to possible Exchange Exercises in the future. Presently the Troop is in a period of rest and recuperation and is preparing for the next wave of annual exercises, both abroad and at home, including 5AB and 24 AirMobile that started in earnest in January 1999. It is also intended to hold a LEWT cadre in mid 1999.

245 SIGNAL SQUADRON (M)

Sqn Comd **Maj M. Davis**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Fisher**

EXERCISE ULAN EAGLE 1998 - POLAND

This September saw the Squadron take part in the biggest Exercise of the year. Around 3000 British Troops took part, with a Polish Tank Company, and the MF joining in for good measure. This was the first time British and Polish soldiers have trained together since the Second World War. 245 Signal Squadron (Electronic Warfare) provided a Troop of 37 men and 16 vehicles. The Troop was commanded by **Lt** 'Rich to his mates' **Bailey** and included an ECM Jammer and Direction Finding capability.

The Exercise began in the early hours of 17 October, with a road move from Brawdy to Harwich. This was to be our first introduction to the joys of serious convoy moves, something we became more practised in as we made our way across Holland and Germany (and eventually to Poland). Most of the vehicles arrived safely, in hope of some major 'surgery' in the field. In Hohne we were brilliantly looked after by 207 Sig Sqn, who bent over backwards to make things as comfortable as possible for us. After the first night in Germany, when we boosted the bar profits somewhat, the OC, **Cpl Cam Logan** and **Cpl Luke Venni** organised a trip to the site of the old Bergen concentration camp. This was a moving and eerie visit, and everyone was deeply touched.

The next couple of days were spent making sure that all the pre-deployment admin was completed. **SSgt Jez Clarke** managed to pull an absolute blinder by landing the coveted position of IC 'Train Party' for the move of the 432's to Poland, a job that meant the stress of 20hrs continuous sleep. He was obviously chosen for his excellence in this role back in barracks. The Yeoman, **WO2** 'Taff' **Owens** insisted on initiating every comms procedure known to man and some good comms training was conducted in the field. It is unfortunate that the Ptarmigan link proved to be so unreliable - which of course was blamed on the YofS. The Ops WO, **SSgt Roy Poulton** busied himself with a fine display of juggling, whilst **Lt Bailey** alternated between sleep and JOTES revision! **SSgt** 'Wally' **Wallace** busied himself with the admin role - although his need to do resups at high speed, cross country was sometimes lost on his passengers. Our main role was to support OPFOR, and provide D17, force protection and ECM. All three aspects were successfully provided and we received excellent feedback from the final exercise. The highlight was the OPFOR prep day, when we received a truly excellent Warrior demo, close up examinations of Challenger and CVR (T) and the chance to crawl over the T-72s provided by the Poles. The return to Brawdy was fairly uneventful, especially if you ignore the Ops WO's ability to lock himself in a Portaloo. Questions were asked as to why he was singing George Michael tunes all the way home! All in all, the Exercise was very good. We provided good product, and had the opportunity to train in field conditions using the Armour properly. Congratulations to **Sgt** 'Midge' **Midgely** for his promotion in the field.

ZULU TROOP - EXERCISE RUNNEL STONE 1998

Zulu Troop was invited to take part in Ex Runnel Stone by 1 (RBY) Signal Squadron (SC). The Exercise was an unconventional warfare exercise that took place in Northern Denmark. Preparation for the Exercise took the form of Helicopter training on the airfield, this training was followed by low level patrolling, CTRs and CQBs on Sennybridge training area. With patrol orders complete, the team boarded the C130 at Luton for the Club Class flight. Quite surprisingly, none of the team was airsick, but some of the more experienced airborne travellers had a little bit of trouble! The flight abruptly ended with a rather bumpy Tactical landing onto a beach where after a quick sandblast from the departing C130 we established our first RV. The team split into two patrols and headed towards our respective targets for CTICs. The first patrol had a successful Recce under **SSgt Donnelly** managing to be clear of the target by first light. On the other hand the second patrol, led by **Cpl Dirk McMullen**, had a more eventful evening. After getting compromised they managed to split up losing the Danish tour guide and **Sig** 'My Way' **Green,** who were subsequently captured by the Danish home guard. A patrol the next afternoon had a brief contact with the enemy, however they managed to escape under smoke before the enemy could organise themselves. With orders received preparations began for the final attacks. Plan A for the enemy to be distracted by the Welsh naked Yo Yo champion (**LCpl Tony Gallagher**) was not possible due to him leaving his yo yo at home. Plan B was a success with both targets destroyed. The team exfiled from the enemy area on foot to a prearranged FILS and after a rather cold and wet wait, the Puma arrived to airlift us back to our safehouse. After breakfast and debrief the tired and weary team boarded the C130 for the flight back to Blighty in time for tea and medals. We would like to thank 1 (RBY) Signal Sqn (SC) for an excellent exercise. We hope to see you next year.



Members of Zulu Troop alight from the Puma

SQUADRON CHARITY WALK

On a pleasant sunny afternoon in mid September, sixty members of the Squadron set off on a charity walk along the estuary of the Cleddau River in Pembrokeshire. The aim of the walk was to raise a substantial amount of funds in order to re-equip the children's ward in Withybush Hospital, the local hospital in Haverford West. During the three-year period that the Regiment has been in Wales, several children of Squadron personnel have had cause to use the limited facilities of the hospital. **Cpl Rab Grice**, whose daughter was one of the patients, decided to grasp the initiative and organise some funding. He cajoled, persuaded and frightened enough Squadron personnel to take part in an extended PT session, walking and jogging around the sixteen-mile course so as to raise 'some dosh'.

There were no casualties on the afternoon and some enterprising Sqn members - **Cpl** 'Taff' **Carter** and **LCpl Benny Burns** - even managed to squeeze some cash out of the locals en route. As part of the tradition, after a few hours exercise, a period of rest and recuperation was required at the end of the route. This was overseen by **WO2 (SSM) Mo Fisher**, who warned off a local landlord that he was about to be invaded. Needless to say, he had no objections as he saw his profits hit new heights. As this item goes to press, money is still being collected, but early indications suggest a possible total of a thousand pounds. Well done 245 Sqn and especially **Cpl Grice**. Finally, the Squadron bids a fond farewell to the OC, **Maj Mark Davis, Debra** and **Mary** as they depart for Germany, where **Maj Davis** is to be 'Our Man at ARRC'.



245 Signal Squadron - Charity Walk

16 SIGNAL REGIMENT

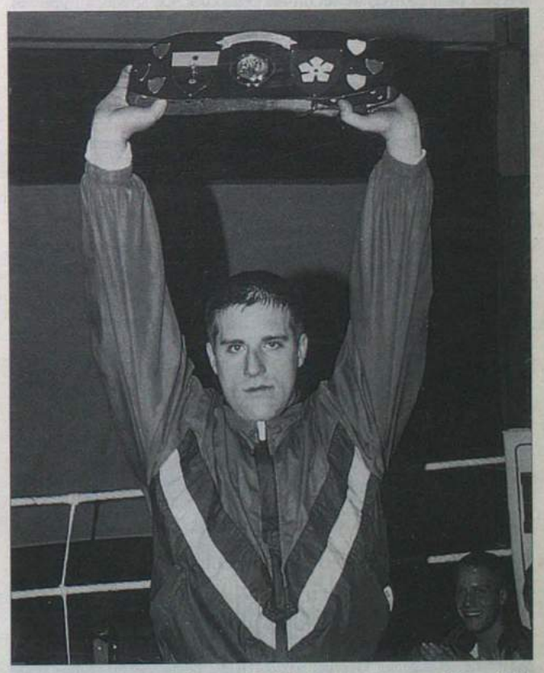
REGIMENTAL BOXING

Not withstanding RSIT and numerous other commitments, the Regiment made the brave decision to hold an evening of boxing on Friday 27 November 1998. With the date firmly implanted in the minds of those concerned, not least the boxers, it was all hands to the pump, and planning began in earnest. Squadron programmes were manipulated to ensure that, where possible, soldiers were given a minimum of six weeks training. Tasks were issued by the RSM with **WO2 (SSM) Paul Fleming** and **SSgt (SS1) Jan Kilsby** heading up the show and before long the night itself arrived. With everything in place, boxers psyched and spectators whipped up into a frenzy by **SSgt Nick Hawkins** and his sound system, it was time to. 'get down to it'. With a crack of thunder and to the sound of a tune that the RSM certainly didn't recognise, the boxers were called for.

First up were **WO2 (SSM) Paul Fleming** and **WO1 (SMI)** 'Molly' **Molloy** who gave a stunning performance of how you should, and shouldn't, conduct yourself in the ring. Following this and with the help of a Prince Naseem style light show (complete with smoke, laser and the sound of his favourite 'tune'), each boxer made his way into the arena. The smell of adrenalin filled the air as each boxer made what has been described as 'The Long Walk' to the ring and it suddenly dawned on them that it was time to put all that training to the test. In an atmosphere befitting Caesar's Palace, each boxer gave a performance to be justifiably proud of. Worthy of a special mention are **Sig Teesdale**, who boxed with considerable style and panache. **Sig Barron** who was awarded the trophy for 'Best performance by a runner up' (a pair of boxing gloves donated and signed by Shea Neary; WBU Welterweight champion of the world), and **Sig Ramsden** who was declared the 'Best Boxer' of the evening and awarded the Leicester Belt.



The CO presents Sig Barron with the Best Runner-Up prize, a pair of Shae Neary's boxing gloves



Sig Ramsden with Leicester Belt for the best boxer of the night

Finally, congratulations must go to all of those involved in the event, in particular the boxers, all of whom showed great courage and commitment in providing the spectators with an incredible evening of boxing. The Boxers: **Sig Ferguson, Sig Wells, Cpl Angus, LCpl O'Connor, Sig Delaney, Sig Ross, Sig Teesdale, Sig Moor, Sig Bashford, Sig Barron, Lt Hutchinson, Sig Ayscough, Sig Weston, LCpl Womble, Sig Ramsden, Cpl Stainthorpe.**

LEICESTER TROPHY ORIENTEERING

The new season has had a slow start with the postponement of both the UKSC (G) League and 16 Signal Regiment's Leicester Trophy, due to commitments and land clearance, but at last the runners are off. This season has seen the popularity of orienteering increase with welcome new blood, and not a moment too soon, as last season 16 Sig Regt's team average age was close to 36 years old. Still leading the way, however, are **Maj Jim Wood**, now with 1 Sig Bde, **WO2 (SSM) Kenny Sykes** and **Sgt Martin Jeanes**. Sadly the 'Old Daddy' of the game, **WO2 (SSM) Rod Oakley,** has had to concentrate on resettlement as he's leaving the army shortly. One of the early high points of the season was the inter-troop competition, the Leicester Trophy, which runs throughout the year in a variety of sports. This year's event was a standard cross-country event with three courses, ranging from 4km to 5km in length and of varying difficulty. A team's overall time was calculated from the best three individual times on each of the courses. Individual results are as follows:

A Course	1st	**Sgt Jeanes**	63mins 45 sec Regt Champion
	2nd	**SSM Sykes**	63mins 49 sec
	3rd	**Sgt Evans**	70mins 38 sec
B Course	1st	**Sig Argyle**	42mins 03 sec
	2nd	**WO1 Algar**	47mins 07 sec
	3rd	**Sgt Hudson**	48mins 31 sec
C Course	1st	**Sig Hatchard**	38mins 16 sec
	2nd	**Sgt Yeomans**	39mins 27 sec
	3rd	**SSgt Hawkins**	41mins 30 sec

As for the team results, congratulations go to Comms Troop, 252 Signal Squadron for winning by a clear 70mins over the second place team from Forward Support Troop, 255 Sig Squadron. A special thankyou goes to **Maj Wood** for setting the course and controlling the start/finish point on the day and to newly promoted **Maj Bell,** for the overall control.

EXERCISE MAGNUM SPIRIT 1998

On the 19 November 1998, three teams from the Regiment deployed to Osnabruck to take part in Ex Magnum Spirit 1998. The Exercise is organised by the British Army Motoring Association to test the driving skills, navigational ability and endurance of crews. The competition is divided into three separate events, namely, a night navigation phase (200km), a large section to test driving skills, and finally another night navigation Exercise (200km). After much hectic vehicle preparation, and a last minute dash to the LAD for **Sgt Jason Goldsworthy** to repair the electrics on his Rover, we set off for Osnabruck. On arrival, all vehicles were inspected. Unfortunately, **Sig Ross** 'The VM' **Turner** reported that his rover had failed inspection due to 'an oil leak from the fuel pump' - to our knowledge this is a first ever in vehicle faults! With the inspections over, we booked in and were issued our maps for the Exercise, which we proceeded to mark with the relevant information. The VM amused everyone when he asked 'Do you just cut the maps so they fit onto the map board then?' Well done **Ross**!

Team No 39, **Sgt** 'Kit' **Knight** and **Cpl Dave Sawyers** were the first of the 16 Sig Regt teams to depart. Followed 30mins later by Team No 64, **Sgt Jason Goldsworthy** and **LCpl Chris Hoggard**, and then by **Sig Ross Turner** and **Sig Gaz Restall** 5mins after that. The first stage was the night navigation Exercise. This proved rather more difficult than first expected with several checkpoints in well concealed positions. **Sgt Knight** and **Cpl Sawyers** finished the first night in a very healthy 36th position, followed closely by **Sgt Goldsworthy** and **LCpl Hoggard**, two places behind them. Unfortunately, **Sigs Restall** and **Turner** were disqualified for finishing over the time limit. The second stage consisted of an orienteering phase and a water-carrying phase, but due to administration problems, not everyone completed this phase. The final phase was another night navigation Exercise, again checkpoints were plotted and the route was planned. We set off for the final phase in abysmal weather, minus 5 degrees and fog visibility down to 40m, after a 'dear diary' night of map reading, the overall results were as follows:

1st Royal Signals team	**Sgt Knight/Cpl Sawyers**, team 39
2nd Royal Signals team	**Sgt Goldsworthy/LCpl Hoggard**, team 64
9th Unit team	Teams 39 and 64

230 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj J. L. Smart**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) A. F. Churchward**

TRUNK NODE 014 - LONG LOST WALLET

Tp Comd	**Lt L. Thirsk**
Tp SSgt	**Sgt R. White**

On Friday 13 November, **Sig Steve Welsh** and **Sig Daz Kirby** were volunteered to translate for a Second World War veteran named **Thomas Keff**, who, towards the end of the Second World War, found a wallet belonging to a young German soldier in the undergrowth of the Black Forest. It was **Thomas's** dream to be able to hand the wallet back to its rightful owner. Unfortunately, the German soldier was pronounced 'missing in action' in Northern France a year before the end of the war. However, **Thomas** did manage to trace the sisters of the German soldier, and with the help of the Regiment, **Thomas** and his daughter **Rosemary Hastings** flew over to return the wallet to the rightful owners.

Sig Welsh and **Sig Kirby** met **Thomas** and **Rosemary** at the airport, escorted them to their hotel and entertained them for the evening. On Saturday morning the German newspaper, TV and Sixth Sense reporters all turned up to interview **Thomas**. The wallet, which contained photographs of **Josef** (the German soldier), was then returned to **Josef**'s sisters. The German family spent the rest of the weekend entertaining **Thomas** and **Rosemary** with a tour around the village castle, a meal in the local hotel and finally a trip around the village graveyard and a German poppy day. **Sig Welsh** and **Sig Kirby** made such an impression on both families that they have been invited to visit them for New Year. The German family and **Thomas** have decided to keep in touch and have promised to visit each other every year. **Thomas** and his daughter were very grateful for the Regiment's assistance, as were the German family concerned.



Thomas and his daughter returning the long lost wallet to the German sisters, with Maj Turner's help

TRUNK NODE 015 - EXERCISE ARRCADE FUSION 1998

Tp Comd	**2Lt S. Gladwin**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt K. Marshall**

Ex Arrcade Fusion started on the 6 October 1998. However, the Technical and Line Dets of 230 Signal Squadron had started the Excon build some two weeks prior. The Team headed by **SSgt (FofS) Jamie Harper,** set about installing the 75 subsets and drop leads around the Excon hangar, along with access points for the ADC1S and BATES users. Several kilometres of quad lay later, and with the comms assets in place, the Techs and Linemen sat down, to await the arrival of the Staff. True to form, the Staff arrived and promptly explained to the FofS how Excon really should have been set up! Once the FofS had recovered from his coronary, the subsets and leads were moved (again) and the hangar was ready.

For the next ten days Excon was a hub of activity, throughout which the occasional fault was enough to drag those on shift away from the television screen. The most bizarre type of fault were the seven quads which had a habit of mysteriously coming apart at night. The fact that the CO was in the location each time led to a great deal of discussion. Throughout the Exercise the faults were minor and easily repaired keeping 'subset down time' to a minimum. SW 014 was its usual 'set-your-watch-by-it' reliable self. It managed to crash daily, three minutes before the CO's conference call. Still towards the end of the week the Switch and Relay Operators could implement the TACE patch plan within 10 pico seconds!

Heartfelt thanks go to Kowloon Tp for the loan of **Sig** 'Late again' **Cole, LCpl** 'VTC' **McKenna** and **LCpl** 'Sleepy' **Frazer**. Their sterling work and effort throughout the Exercise was much appreciated. The award of 'Golden Blanket' goes to **LCpl Burgess** who was always complaining of not being able to sleep when off shift. Congratulations go to **Sig** 'I don't like heights' **Langley** who spent most of the build 30ft off the ground laying the quad. The biggest thanks, however, go to the Excon Chefs who yet again did us proud by providing the best food any members of the Team had ever seen on an Exercise. Once Endex was called, whilst a rather noisy tear down took place, the Staff got in the way during their debrief. Any rumours you may have heard that 230 Sig Sqn did such a good job and that they are in the frame for the same job next year are totally untrue.

TRUNK NODE 016 - EXERCISE BURNING HARMONY

Tp Comd	**Lt P. Connor**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt N. Fisher**

Ex Burning Harmony, otherwise known as Ex Burning Bale by our Ops team or Ex Groundhog Day by those who deployed, was a three-week NATO Exercise carried out at the Warrior Preparation Centre in Kaiserslauten. It was a high level CPX of which our beloved ARRC was only one of the four Corps players. We were tasked with providing a COMMCEN facility for the duration of the CPX, with our main role being to act as an 'air interface' between the CRONOS and TARE circuits. This proved very demanding as, on some days, up to 15 messages needed transferring. Exhausting work for a mere crew of nine! (In truth we were under-worked because amazingly none of the systems crashed, otherwise it would have been hectic. Honest.)

However, slow the work, the facilities provided were excellent. All personnel were accommodated in single rooms with double beds, mini-bar, microwave, TV and video as well as an en-suite bathroom. Slightly better than the 9x9 and roll-mat which the Americans would get if they came on Exercise with us. When off shift, there was a multitude of activities to keep our idle hands busy. **Sig** 'Kingpin' **Sanders** and **Sig** 'Bullseye' **Mettham** defended Britain's sporting reputation against International opposition, albeit badly, while **Sigs** 'Shop 'till you drop' **Simms** and **Taylor** spent more time in the PX than in the COMMCEN. The rest of us seemed content to frequent the Irish Bars of Kaiserslauten, except for **Cpl Musgrove** who preferred the 'frozen microwave meals for one' section of the Commissary. All that remains now is to sweat off three weeks worth of Burger King and Guinness, which is easier said than done!

252 SIGNAL SQUADRON - ARMISTICE PARADE IN YPRES

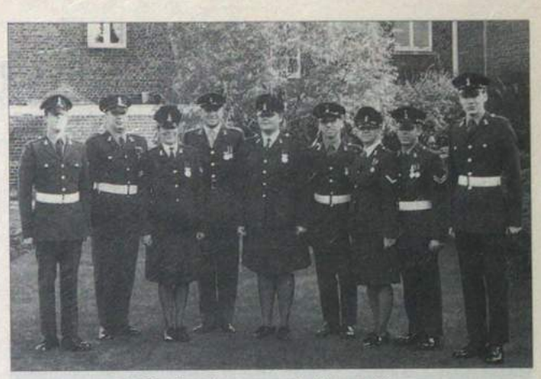
by LCpl Lisa Paul

Sqn Comd	**Maj A. Thomas**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) K. Skyes**

The time has come again for us to remember those lost in the search for peace. Over the years millions have died and it is our duty not to forget. Every night in the Belgian town of Ypres at 2000 hrs, under the arch of the Menin Gate, the Last Post is sounded. Come rain or storm they remember . I was honoured when I was asked by my Troop SSgt to parade in Ypres with our colleagues from SHAPE. He has attended the ceremony for the past five years and said that it was a very moving event.

We assembled on Tuesday 10 November with brasses and boots gleaming. There were 10 members in total: **Capt** 'Cindy' **Crawford, SSgt Nick Hawkins, Sgt Chris Neison, Cpl Trish Cox, Cpl Andy Paul, Sig Sam Hindson, Sig Mark Milne, Sig Pete Beardsley,** myself **LCpl Lisa Paul** and **Sig** 'Tommo' **Thompson**, who was acting as our driver and photographer. The journey to SHAPE was long, but we busied ourselves perfecting our rendition of 'Roll out the Barrel', which apparently is an essential number when meeting the old comrades and members of The British Legion, which we would be doing after the parade. No amount of practice, however, would make our singing perfect! We booked into our accommodation at SHAPE and, following one trip to the cookhouse, there were many cries of, 'How do you get a posting here?' After a few sociable drinks in the bar we all retired to our beds for a good night's sleep, it would be an early start in the morning. Once we had all consumed a hearty breakfast, we loaded up and were once again on our way. As we neared the town, **SSgt Hawkins** gave us an insight into the history of the area.

There were four major battles at Ypres in the Great War and the British alone sustained over 50,000 casualties in the Salient, the town itself was reduced to a pile of rubble. We drove down towards the Menin Gate Memorial, past the infamous Hellfire Corner where so many soldiers fell. After dropping our kit off at The Cloth Hall, **SSgt Hawkins**, still acting as our guide, took us on a whistle-stop tour of the parade route. He must have looked quite the professional as, at one stage, we acquired two Japanese tourists who thought that they were getting a freebie tour! Back at The Cloth Hall with everyone suitably attired we assembled outside to be sized off. Once everyone was in their respective ranks we marched off to join the parade. I don't think I have ever felt so proud to wear my uniform, standing in awe of the old soldiers that had come to pay their respects to their friends and comrades, many of whom were weighed down by their medals of courage. We paused along the route to pay our respects at the Belgian Memorial, it was a very moving moment as the band played 'Abide with Me', and friends and family once again said goodbye to their loved ones. The procession continued through the town up to the Menin Gate where the wreaths were to be laid. The feeling was very sombre; the Memorial itself is inscribed with the names of all those lost in the Ypres, Salient section of the Western Front who perished with no known grave. Words can not describe the feeling when you stand inside the Gate - too many names! The service was conducted in both Flemish and English and was very fitting. I was so moved when the voices of the male voice choir echoed around the Memorial as wreath after wreath was laid in honour and respect. Thousands of poppies sailed from the sky and once more the Last Post was played. We marched back from the Memorial with heads held high, proud to be members of the British Army. Following the parade we met up in the British Legion bar for a few drinks and a sing along, something the old comrades looked forward to every year. The bar was packed full of friends that annually make this pilgrimage, how sad though that each year their numbers become fewer. **SSgt Hawkins** came prepared this year and to ensure that no one forgot any words he arranged song sheets with classics such as 'Roll out the Barrel' and 'Maybe its because I'm a Londoner'. With beer in hand and hot soup in our stomachs we were happy. It was nearly time to leave our friends and put the war stories on hold for another year, but not without the presentation of our Regimental plaque and a heartfelt thanks for their hospitality. The hardened few moved on. The town was now thriving, with hundreds lining the streets to catch a glimpse of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and the King and Queen of Belgium who were due to follow our route up to the Menin Gate to pay their own respects. By this time we had lost **Sgt Nelson** and **Cpl Cox** who were apparently nabbed for an interview with a Belgian TV company (keep your eyes peeled for that one!) The rest of us were ensconced in the back room of a local hotel to continue singing and reminiscing, our thanks must also go to a young Belgian man who came to buy us all a drink, his father had served in the World War 1 alongside the British. After a last walk to the Gate for one final tribute and to once again witness the sounding of the Last Post, it was finally time to go home. We will remember and we will return - that we can promise.



16 Sig Regt's representatives at Ypres
1998 Remembrance Day Parade.
(L-R): Sig Beardsly, Sgt Nelson, Cpl Cox, Capt Crawford, Sig Hindson, SSgt Hawkins, LCpl Paul, Cpl Paul, Sig Milne

255 SIGNAL SQUADRON - EXERCISE TRUK BACKSTOP

Sqn Comd	**Maj A. Ross**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) R. Oakley**

Considerable sub-aqua diving training has been carried out by members of 16 Sig Regt and 255 Sig Sqn during the year. This started with members of the Regiment completing Novice Diver courses, organised by the Rheindahlen Sub-Aqua Club, using the Blue Pool on camp. Having qualified as basic divers, it was off to Gibraltar on Ex Wreck Backstop organised by **2Lt Caroline Odebar** and **Major Alistair Ross.** Here, as well as progressing to the next diver grade, all experienced deep wreck diving. **SSgt Willy Ryan** enjoyed controlling all the girls on the expedition, while **Sig Kerry Sims** won the award for underwater dancing and **Sig** (now LCpl at last) **Dave Storey** got everyone very worried when he turned green with sea sickness.

Following on from the expedition in Gibraltar, Ex Truk Backstop was a Joint Service sub-aqua diving Exercise to Truk Lagoon in the South Pacific Federated States of Micronesia over the period 25 September - 7 October 1998. Truk Lagoon is where the US Navy executed Operation Hailstone on the 17-18 February 1944. Operating from nine aircraft-carriers, wave after wave of aircraft rained a devastating combination of ordnance onto the Japanese Armed Merchant Fleet in this deep water anchorage and in two days sank 180,000 tons of shipping. In total almost 50 ships were sent to the bottom of this clear tropical lagoon during the battle and today they are described as a 'Wreck Divers Heaven'. Many of the wrecks are intact and their holds contain complete Zero fighter aircraft, mines, arms and ammunition, and various war supplies. The wrecks are not war graves as such, but there are still human skeletons and remains to be found, which can be a very eerie and sobering diving experience! Both expeditions gained funding from the Corps that enabled this progressive training, culminating in a very adventurous and ambitious Exercise, to take place.



Flying the Flag for the Corps
A diver, at night, wearing Royal Signals tracksters

MAN TROOP - ARMISTICE PARADE IN COLOGNE

Tp Comd **Lt S. Hutchinson**
Tp SSgt **SSgt S. Crawford**

This year, 16 Sig Regt were invited to provide the Guard of Honour at the Commonwealth Remembrance Parade held in Cologne. Twenty-six members of 230 Sig Sqn provided the guard along with wreath bearers and poppy sellers. The morning began smoothly - except for one small detail. Until arrival at the cemetery everyone was oblivious to the fact that the Guard Commander was absent, left waiting for the transport in the Guard Room back at JHQ. Obviously, 'If you're not 230 you're not coming,' was the motto of the morning! Despite their best efforts he managed to get there in time to do his bit. The parade was a success, attended by representatives from over a dozen commonwealth states including the British Ambassador, **Sir Paul Lever**. Next year's parade will be in Berlin. It is hoped that 16 Sig Regt will once again be requested to provide the Guard of Honour.

FORWARD SUPPORT TROOP
EXERCISE ARRCADE FUSION 1998, GREECE

Tp Comd **2Lt E. J. Bruce**
Tp SSgt **SSgt W. Ryan**

On 1 October, 21 members of Fwd Sp Tp and a crew of four party led by **2Lt Bruce**, prepared to deploy SAN 872 to Greece in order to provide comms for 2 Greek Mechanised Division. The SAN deployed on what was to be a six-day drive, a first for many members of the Troop. The drive was broken up by several stops, the first an overnight stay at Manheim, a US Army Camp close to the German-Swiss border. The next stage was a 14hr stretch through Switzerland to Italy with many breath-taking views on the way. The Carabaneri, the Italian Military Police met us at the Italian Border, which was an intimidating experience. They were to escort the convoy through Italy to the next port of call, stopping for nothing or no-one including traffic lights, until we reached an Italian Army Camp in Solbiate Olona where we stayed for two nights.

The next day we continued our journey to Ancona where we joined our ferry to Greece. At the port we were met by six members of a US Satellite Det and were then ready to board the ferry. The boarding itself provided some hair raising moments for those with trailers as we had to reverse them on with the help (or hindrance) of Greek guides! During the 24hr crossing we were able to relax and let our hair down in the bar and the casino, although some like **Sgt** 'brews on, fags out' **Partridge** and **Cpl Richie Turnbull** never found their sea legs! We finally arrived at Igoumenitsa in Greece. It was warm and the sun was shining, but we still had a 12hr drive through Greece with some heart-stopping mountain peaks and crazy Greek drivers to tackle before reaching our final destination. The Greek Army escort saw us safely all the way to Kalenzou Camp, Edessa - our home for the next two weeks.

An early start was made setting up the SAN and the Greek HQ with an IARRCIS cell and Ptarmigan facilities for the Greek Staff Officers. Once set up, we established a link over the Sat Det back to Germany, with an E1 link as a standby. Ptarmigan and Hermes were linked together by the Tactical Interface, and the Rad Det, from Man Tp, provided HF comms. **WO1 (FofS)** 'Bobby Womack' **Lewis** and **2Lt** 'How Bizarre' **Bruce** were constantly observing the set up. With language problems and a few comms problems the Exercise became challenging for all concerned, but the Greeks appeared very grateful for all our hard work and our tolerance of the cook house food - if you could call it food! At last, the long two weeks were over and the Greeks sent us on our way with a little party, speeches of thanks, several photographs and a bottle of ouzo each (which the OC banned opening until return to JHQ - as if we would Maam!) If we thought the drive was hard the Exercise proved a lot harder, so when it was time to drive home we were certainly looking forward to it - and with the news of two days R&R in Milan for our efforts who could complain!

REGIMENTAL TRAINING WING
EXERCISE LADY WARRIOR 1998

OC Trg Wng **Capt P. Stoddart**
Trg YofS **WO2 (YofS) S. Hartshorne**

It is a dark, rainy morning and Krefeld Lines resounds to the sound of marching feet. This sound, however, is not generated by soldiers for this is Saturday October 10, and the start of Ex Lady Warrior 1998. An Exercise for the wives of 16 Sig Regt to experience army life in general, and that of the Royal Signals in particular.

To set the ladies off on the right foot, the Exercise commenced with drill, where, under the watchful eye of **WO2 (SSM) Paul Fleming,** the ladies executed a myriad of movements around Krefeld Lines. Then it was onto the coaches and off to RAF Bruggen for some driving training. Here, under instruction from the ever calm **Cpl Dave Sawyers** and **LCpl James Womble,** the ladies enjoyed some cross-country driving over, under and around the Hill-60 area. The fastest lady on the solo run was **Mrs Heather Fleming,** wife of the MTWO - it obviously must run in the family. The defensive driving period involving a spin in a skid car was, said the ladies, good practice for the snow and ice to come. The afternoon saw the ladies on the Small Arms Trainer. Under the gentle coaching of **Sgt Ollie Oldroyd** they engaged the enemy in a number of scenarios. The award for best shot went to **Mrs Debbie Prowse.** Next stop was Arsbeck Army Training Area and a lecture by **Cpl Jan Nicholas** on the delights of DIY accommodation for the night (to the uninitiated that's basha building). **WO2 (Yofs) Stu Hartshorne,** highlighting along the way the differences between the officer and the other ranks ration packs demonstrated catering in the field. It was the bottle of Chardonnay in the officers' pack that made a few of the ladies just a little bit suspicious! After a pleasant supper, Menu A was very popular, a Night Navigation Exercise (in torrential rain) made the night's sleep that little bit more restful.

Sunday morning and it was time for the natural-born leaders to come to the fore. Command tasks, under the critical eyes of **Lt Lucy Thirsk** and **2Lts Simon Gladwin** and **Mark Crinnion,** left the ladies with a completely different opinion of ropes, benches and medicine balls! The tempo continued apace as the ladies, in two groups, then commenced setting up a Radio-Relay detachment, with just a little assistance from **SSgt Neil Fisher** and his team. Unfortunately, the radio path between the two vehicles could not be established before it was time to get back to JHQ and the delights of an indoor assault course. **SSgt (SS1) Jan Klisby** had set-up a most demanding course. Firstly, however, there was a little warm-up to get the bones moving again. All of the ladies gave the assault course their best effort, with the fastest lady being **Mrs Manuela James.** Then, it was time to go to the Wall and Willow for a well-earned drink, buffet and the prizes, including the best individual won by **Mrs Irene Geere,** presented by the CO, **Lt Col James.** Many of the ladies were asking, 'What does next year hold?' That would be telling wouldn't it?



The Commanding Officer presents the prize for 'Best Individual' to Mrs Irene Geere

DON'T BE DISAPPOINTED

COPY MUST BE RECEIVED SIX WEEKS BEFORE THE PUBLICATION DATE

21 SIGNAL REGIMENT (AIR SUPPORT)



REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS

CO **Lt Col John Terrington**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) John Williams**

REGIMENTAL BATTLECAMP
EXERCISE TARTAN BEAUFIGHTER 11 - 24 OCTOBER 1998

Ex Tartan Beaufighter took place in the Inverness area over the period 11 - 24 October 1998. The main body departed Colerne at 0700hrs Sunday morning for a coach journey, that lasted 12hrs, to Cameron Barracks, Inverness, which is a strong contender for the coldest place on earth. Battlecamp started in earnest on the Monday morning at 0600hrs with a nice spot of PT just to get us in the mood. The first week was spent dry training and live firing on a wide variety of weapons, including; AK47, Simonov, Browning 9mm, GPMG and the Sniper Rifle. The prize for the sniper of the week had to go to **Sig Turner**, who from a distance of 25 metres managed to hit the target a mighty 19 times from 50 rounds. Just the sort of guy to have on your side when the going gets tough!

Saturday morning came and along with it, the march and shoot competition which was won by Section 6, under the leadership of **LCpl Daz Daniels**. This was followed by a very demanding afternoon, a visit to the Glenfiddich Whiskey Distillery, where we were given a guided tour and shown a bottle which retailed at over £5000. Everyone showed great determination, however, and completed the gruelling event none the worse for wear. The following day the Regiment played 1 BW at both football and rugby. We're still not sure which team **Sig John Marlborough** was playing for as he scored one of the greatest own goals ever witnessed when he threw the ball into his own net! After finishing our live firing phase, early in the second week, we moved into the final Exercise. It was now that all the training we had done was put to good use in the dreadful conditions (I'm sure they booked the weather especially for us-as they say, 'if it ain't raining then it ain't training'). All in all it was a hard but very enjoyable two weeks and a great parting gift from **WO1 (RSM) Chris Laycock** who has moved to Blandford to take over as the Corps RSM.

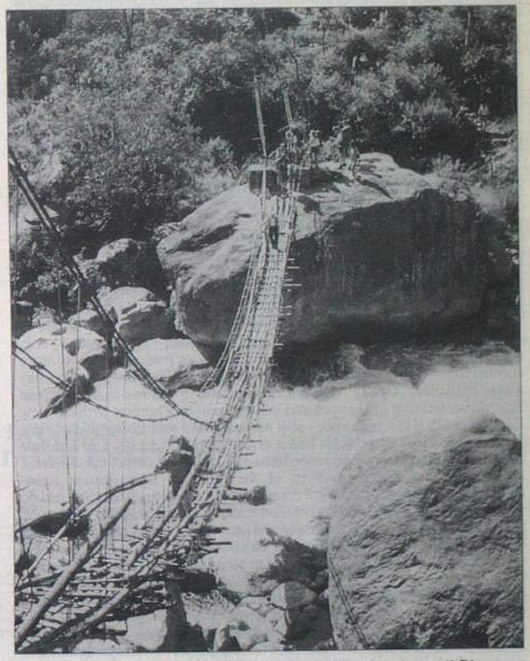
EXERCISE FISH TAIL IRON

Ex Fish Tail Iron was a 21 Sig Regt (AS) adventurous training expedition that took place in Nepal over the period 4 - 28 October 1998. Ten members of the Regiment took part in the expedition to circumnavigate the Annapurna Massif in Nepal, a trek called the Annapurna Circuit. The route totals 250km and ascends a total height of 30,000 feet reaching a maximum altitude of 17,750 feet. The trek was completed on foot in 80 hours, over 17 days continuous walking. The team of 10 was fully self-supporting, each individual carrying a Bergen of at least 35lbs in temperatures ranging from +30 to –10 degrees centigrade. The route travelled through primary jungle, the Trans – Himalayan zone to glaciated arid terrain. The following extract from an individual's diary describes the day the Team ascended to the Thorong La Pass. 'It is dark and our head torches provide us with the light required for our slow steps. After two hours the steep gradient flattens slightly. There follows a further two hours of false summits. Finally we near the top of the pass just as the sun is rising over the Chulu Mountains and Genjang Mountain. The view is awesome as we are also surrounded by Yakawakang Mountain to our North and Khatung Kang and Saya Gang Mountains to our South. The pass is marked by prayer flags and a large cairn. It is bitterly cold and the wind has picked up and we do not spend long at the top once the high point of the expedition is reached. The descent is severe and it takes two to three hours to descend to a more agreeable gradient for the knees but the views on the descent are very different to those we have enjoyed so far. The mountains appear very brown and stretch out before us as far as we can see. They point towards the country of Tibet and the terrain makes us appreciate what a hardy race the Tibetans are. Muktinath is a welcome sight.



LCpl Mike Napier looking up towards Gangapurna

SSgt Paul Duke, Lt Owen Finnie, Sig Ian Blair and **Sig Al Taylor** arrive after seven hours and quickly set about refuelling empty stomachs. The last of the Team come in after 10 hours and everyone is exhausted but extremely satisfied. Individuals recount that today has been one of the most physically demanding of their lives, in summary, an outstanding expedition. Thanks to all in the Corps who have contributed to make it possible.



SSgt Paul Duke leads the Team over the Marsyangdi River



SSgt Paul Duke trekking towards Tatopani

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj Chas Dale**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Nick Organ**

After several long months the offices of SHQ have now been filled with the appropriate personnel, much to the relief of the over stretched (according to him) 2IC, **Capt** 'lots of hats' **Richards**. If nothing else, the SQMS **(SSgt Phil Fluck)** will be able to concentrate on his primary duties of fund raising and dodgy dealing.

TM TROOP

Tp Comd **WO1 (FofS) Martin Drake**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Nige Roberts**

TM Tp welcome new arrivals **SSgt Nige Roberts** from JCUNI and **Cpl** 'Polly' **Poulson** fresh of his T1 course. Congratulations go to both **LCpl Ed Chwieseni** on his recent promotion and **Cpl Shaun Allsopp** on passing his T1 entrance (for the second time!) Well done. The arrival of SNCO's, and concentrated training has increased the technical ability within the Troop to a level not seen for a long time, indeed the 'Baby Techs' now understand that to get the best results, they need to connect a power supply to the equipment before switching it on. They all had their military skills and perseverance tested to the full on Battle Camp, except for **Cpl Shaun Allsopp** who decided that he would sit his T1 entrance examination at the 'right time'. Individuals of note during the Exercise were **Sig Nicki Ryan** who unfortunately fell down a rabbit hole (how unlucky can you get, MEDIVAC from both the Cadre Course and Battle Camp). Also there was **Cpl Dave Clayton-Batty** and **LCpl Mark Taylor** who upheld the good name of the Troop by spending the two weeks as administrators (pan bash).

MOTOR TRANSPORT TROOP

MTO **Capt Guy Richards**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Mark Sala**

MT Tp like every other military organisation are now dealing with TQM, ISO 9000, IIP, and anything else anyone wishes to throw at us and have a philosophy of 'panic before an inspection'. The immediate action as always is the same, dash, down, crawl, sights, observe, and rush around to get it right on the day. And then the LSI was upon us. The Master Driver (a nice man) from Div HQ, arrived, inserted his cassette and started to question the systems and principles that 'worked for us'. On questioning, **Cpl Howie** (the POL expert) explained that, those that asked nicely were entitled to draw fuel and that yes it was all there, at least it was on the day it was delivered. **Cpl O'Neill** our driver training professional explained that 'driver training did happen and yes we went on Exercise with our new Landrover HS (HS - high spec - still no radio) and as a matter of fact (in a very proud voice) all vehicles had a driver'. On MT details **Cpl Eskdale** explained the concept of no procedures and out dated vehicle documents. Amidst the chaos and mayhem of the day the 'management team' (maintaining a low profile) were deciding which of the statements 'lets do it' or 'can do, will do' would become the new Troop mission statement. Having made light of a difficult day and hard inspection it should be noted that the report was satisfactory, so either the systems in place or the explanations worked. Congratulations to all of those personnel involved.

HEADQUARTERS AND FAC TROOP (VOLUNTEERS)

OC FAC Tp (V) **Maj P. Cawkwell RA**
OC HQ Tp (V) **Capt D. Allen R. Signals**

Due to the TA SDR we who are currently in Trowbridge are due to move to Bath in the near future, the good news is that the ever loyal and very supportive TA soldiers will move with us. Despite the failing accommodation and rumours of close down our membership remains excellent and we are fully recruited. In fact attendance on training nights and weekends are ever increasing.

As a direct result of full integration with the regulars **SSgt Jackie Herbert** has fulfilled a life time ambition to join her husband as a regular soldier and has become the first TA soldier to join the Regiment under the FTRS scheme. Congratulations.

Throughout the year we have completed a variety of training and fulfilled many tasks in several countries around the world. 621 FAC Detachment commanded by **Maj David Bird** PARA deployed to Canada on Ex Western Vortex with a detachment consisting of, **Cpl Speed**, **Cpl Tony Welling** and **LCpl Alan Mitchell. Sgt Graham Anderson** and **LCpl Ross Pierson** deployed to Denmark on Ex Flying Rhino in support of JFACTSU. On a more normal training note our summer camp was deployment to the north of England with the regulars on Ex Rustic Reiver in support of Support Helicopter Force RAF.

Fully supportive of town activities we were all pleased when **LCpl Margie Gilbert** was crowned Carnival Queen of Trowbridge. She is now involved in many of the town's social events along with her TA pay duties, two young children and a college course. Well done.

On the sporting scene we have had several successes, particularly in the field of Cross-Country Running. **Sig Emma Flaherty** came third overall in the TA National Cross Country Championships with her mother, **SSgt Jackie Herbert** coming in third vet and the team achieved a creditable third overall placing. Congratulations go to the mother and daughter combination who were both awarded their TA national colours for Cross-Country.

WHAT IS THE ORIGIN OF THE CORPS CAP BADGE 'JIMMY'? FIND OUT AT
www.royalsignals.army.org.uk/museum

43 (WESSEX) SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

Sqn Comd **Maj Craig Treeby**
PSI **SSgt (YofS) White**

The report this time covers major elements of activity during the periods both training and social. However, a special mention needs to be made of the official recognition for outstanding service to the Squadron by **Capt David Sleigh** and **Sgts Mick Franks** and **Tim Cox** who were recently awarded the Lord Lieutenant's Certificate, congratulations to all three.



(L-R) Sgt Mick Ranks, Captain David Sleigh and Sgt Tim Cox

EXERCISE RUSTIC REIVER

Ex Rustic Reiver took place in the Carlisle and Otterburn areas in September and was originally the NATO OPEVAL for the SHF, RAF. 43 Sig Sqn deployed on the Exercise and several members of the Squadron took the opportunity to deploy and in the process qualify for Annual Camp. The Exercise proved to be testing for all concerned as the Squadron maintained control of communications for a large part of the Exercise. The Exercise started with a drive of 10hrs to Carlisle in torrential rain and our first location was extremely wet. The Exercise was busy and we were faced with a number of scenarios generated by the EXCON team. The most notable incident involved a civil disturbance at one of our locations in which shots were fired. Several lessons were learnt but we all now fully appreciate the complexities of ROE. The whole Squadron worked hard during the exercise to integrate with our Regular counterparts and make it a success. Our training standards have improved and it would be fair to say that our camps have changed dramatically over the last couple of years. We are now providing a good level of service to the SHF as part of the only joint Regular and Territorial Regiment.

DRIVER TRAINING.

The Introduction of the new Landrover (or TUM HS) has given the Squadron the opportunity to undergo some worth while and mandatory conversion driver training. A number of weekends were used to put the vehicles and drivers through their paces over the Braunton Burrows, a sandy terrain with good steep climbs and descents. The Squadron is indebted to **Sgt Rick Tapley** for his work in organising the road and off road driving.

220 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj Andy Williams**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Jed Robinson**

BBC CHILDREN IN NEED

Upon arrival at the Marina Centre in Great Yarmouth the producer told us that at 15.30 there would be a sea dash, which would involve us running into the sea in boots, lightweight trousers and tee shirts, then running back out again. When we asked why this was necessary, considering there was a freezing horizontal November wind coming in off the murky and polluted North Sea, the producer said it was to see how wacky we were. Interesting, normally eight pints of bitter and a couple of inflatable condoms would have provided a better manifestation of these sort of attributes! The time arrived and accompanied by some equally unfortunate civilians, we duly obliged for the cameras, coming out of the water faster than we entered, heading as a squad, off up the beach to the changing rooms to avoid exposure. Once the transmission was under way, we managed to present the DM 4,500.00 Squadron cheque live on air. Although we had been promised a national slot, it was transmitted only to BBC Southeast viewers during the local TV opt out, so none of the people back in Germany saw it. Still never mind, it's all in a good cause. Thanks to everyone who took part or helped us.



The Squadron team at Great Yarmouth outside broadcast waiting to present the huge cheque held by LCpl Singleton live on air during the programme

NEWS FROM THE FALKLANDS - 220 SIGNAL SQUADRON JCUFI DETACHMENT

(Good grief! A set of notes from the South Atlantic, well done down there, obviously 'Cas' is angling for the job of Unit Press Officer now that **Capt Knight** has been posted to 1 Mech Bde).

The Crew: **Sgt Dave Cascarino, Cpl Alfie Mangera, LCpl Martin Ferguson, Sig Bev Smith**.

We have all said our goodbyes to **LCpl Marc Quinn** and **Sig Kerry Stewart**, gone but definitely not forgotten. We warmly welcome **LCpl Martin Ferguson** and **Sig Bev Smith**. As usual, work is piling up, but the Telemechs who wear the 'Red Beaufighter of Courage' are more than up to the task. Things down here in FI have presented a steep learning curve for us all, but with the issued crampons we are scaling the heights with plenty of style. One of the most amusing elements down here has been getting used to living with the Squadron of a Divisional Signal Regiment, especially the PT. The onset of summer was boosted by the arrival of **Cpl Alfie Mangera**, he is still attempting to improve his sun tan by burrowing out of the cable ducts in the Theatre Operations Centre. Whilst **LCpl Martin Ferguson** has been crawling about on all fours in their Alternative Theatre Operations Centre, both are part of the many projects going on at the moment. **Sig Bev Smith** is finding her feet, which when she draws herself up to full height, aren't very far from her head. As IC works orders, she has taken on the task of installing the trunking and routes in the accommodation. The boss **Sgt Dave Cascarino** is having kittens planning the rewire of the TOC, which is planned for mid January. On the social front, **LCpl Martin Ferguson** and **Sig Smith** have fitted in very well, taking on the section ethos of trying to drink the Stanley Globe Tavern dry. Finally, we wish all of you back at the Squadron a very merry Christmas and best of luck for 1999, see you all in February, take care.



The Crew including Cpl Pete Richards from 259 Sig Sqn

31 (CITY OF LONDON) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

RHQ

CO **Lt Col Linda Harrison TD**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) Hall**

THE MAYOR OF WANDSWORTH'S CHRISTMAS CHARITY BALL - 5 DECEMBER 1998

The Mayor of Wandsworth, **Cllr Professor Elizabeth Howlett**, invited the CO, **Lt Col Linda Harrison** to attend her Charity Venetian Ball in a plush marquee in Battersea Park on Saturday 5 December. The Commanding Officer, in her infinite wisdom, kindly invited the rest of the RHQ rabble in the form of the Trg Maj (**Maj Alfie Brand**), QM (**Maj Ken Clark**), Adjt (**Capt Mel Rayner**), RSM (**WO1 Hall**) and their respective partners to be her guests. All attempts at an incognito appearance were foiled when the Mayor announced that she wanted us to attend in Mess Kit. Considering the guest list included all the local councillors, dignitaries and businessmen we decided that it was too good a PR opportunity to miss and dutifully obliged. A splendid night was had by all and thousands of pounds were raised for the Mayor's nominated local Charities.



The Commanding Officer and her husband Alisdair with the Mayor of Wandsworth and her daughter the Lady Mayoress

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON - SOUTHFIELDS TAC

Sqn Comd **Maj Chris Mahony**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Pete Lovett**

NEWS FROM THE SQUADRON

After Regimental Annual Camp, the Squadron has continued with collective training organised by both the Squadron and the Regimental Training Team. Potential recruits continue to enter our TA Centre. Numbers are now at the best they have been for quite some time. **Cpl Tanya Campbell,** under the leadership of **Capt Dave Parr** and **WO2 (SSM) Harding,** heads up the Southfields Recruiting Cell. Despite the demands of the job, she is producing excellent results as the recruit figures suggest.

Promotions - The Squadron is pleased to announce the promotion of **Sig** 'Mac' **McKay** after serving several years as both an Infantry and Royal Signals soldier. Mac's dedication to the Squadron is beyond reproach, very well done **LCpl McKay** and keep up the good work.

Regimental Trade Training - 6/7 November 1998 - After arriving and getting the lay of the land, the Regimental Yeoman of Signals, **WO2 (YofS) Simon Tyler,** decided to deploy all the operators to one of the many training areas used at both Squadron and Regimental level. The two Squadron Detachment Commanders were **Cpl Becks Strickland** and **LCpl** 'Small One' **Ogle**. Other members of the team included **LCpl Si Roberts**, **LCpl** 'Mac' **McKay**, **Sig Bob Plant** and **Sig Andy Pollard.** The PSI was impressed with the overall standard of trade training (is that because he **(SSgt Bruce)** has conducted all the training and instruction?). The deployment and set-up were executed to a standard that would put any other unit to shame. The Exercise was greatly appreciated by all those who took part. The Yeoman went away with plenty of ideas and plans for training for the next year. Several valid points were raised by the troops in an open forum at the end of the training.

Liaison Visit by Col Titus, Commander 1108th US Army Signal Brigade 19-23 November 1998 - The Bde Comd, **Col Titus** and his Ops Offr, **Mr David Graham** arrived in UK on Thursday 19 November to commence a five-day visit. By Saturday they had already been briefed at Bde HQ in Corsham, visited Windsor Castle and Stonehenge and called in on a Comms Exercise in Pippingford Park. On Saturday night it was the turn of the Officers' Mess to host the visitors. To mark the visit in appropriate style, the Officers' Mess held a dinner night at the rather impressive Worshipful Company of Innholders' Hall near Mansion House. The Master of the Innholders', **Mr Tony Lorkin** and the Bde Comd, **Brig S. G. Hughes** were also on the guest list. The Hall is steeped in history and dates back to the 16th Century. It undoubtedly provided a very fitting location for the Dinner. The end of the dinner was marked by the exchange of gifts between the CO, **Lt Col Linda Harrison** and the US Bde Comd.



Col David Titus presents Lt Col Linda Harrison with 1108th US Army Sig Bde Plaque



Maj Alfie Brand, Col David Titus, Brig Hughes, Mr David Graham, Lt Col Linda Harrison

It goes without saying that the subalterns were on fine form and continued the party in the Officers' Mess at Mercury House, Duke of Yorks' Bks well into the wee small hours. On his arrival the following morning, the RSM, **WO1 Hall** really did not need to be greeted by **Lt Scott MacSween** in his boxer shorts! Well done **Scott**.



Lt Liz Fitzpatrick, Capt Stephen Ong, 2Lt Kieran Francis, Lt Scott MacSween

Having got through Saturday night (only just in some cases!), the schedule for Sunday was a whistle stop sightseeing tour of London. The tour guides for the day were **Capt Mel Rayner**, **WO1 (RSM) Hall** and **SSgt Craig Bruce BEM.** The tour began with a visit to the forecourt of Buckingham Palace for an inside view of the Changing of the Guard. This was organised by **Capt Paul Samways** who liaised with the Lord Chamberlain's Office, and the RSM who touched base with the RSM of The Duke of Wellington's Regiment, **WO1 (RSM) Dowdall.** The Duke of Wellington's was the oncoming guard and their RSM was able to give a running commentary of the proceedings and the traditions involved. This greatly impressed our American visitors and we are thankful to the RSM for his assistance. Other sites on the tour around the Capital included St Paul's Cathedral (just in time for Choir Practice!), Westminster Abbey, The Tower of London, Covent Garden and Trafalgar Square. **WO1 (RSM) Hall** had obviously read and digested a London Guidebook and was the fount of all knowledge! Having successfully purchased traditional English Teapots as souvenirs the day finished off with a 'handover/takeover' of the guests to the CO, **Lt Col Harrison.** She whisked them of to the final port of call that was The Waldorf Hotel for the Sunday Afternoon Tea Dance. The CO and Adjt had entertained the idea of attempting to 'trip the light fantastic' but upon seeing the rather professional dancers twirling around the dance floor, **Lt Col Harrison** and **Capt Rayner** decided the best option was to keep quiet and carry on munching sandwiches! It certainly turned out to be a very fitting end to an excellent day. A big thank you goes to the RSM and **SSgt Bruce** for doing such a fine job as Tour Guides and to **WO2 Brenda Prater** for disguising herself so successfully as a London Cabbie! The Americans departed on Monday morning with promises of reciprocal visits to their HQ in Maryland and further visits to London. Without doubt the visit had been a storming success.

ARMY INDIVIDUAL & INTER CORPS ORIENTEERING
28-29 NOVEMBER 1998

With their sanity well and truly remaining in Southfields **Capts Sarah Streete** (56 Sig Sqn) and **Mel Rayner** (Adjt), **Sigs Chris Cox** and **Chris Hanlon** (HQ Sqn) departed RHQ on Saturday morning bound for a chilly Sennybridge and the Army Combined Night and Day Orienteering Championships. What else would you rather be doing on a Saturday night than running around the Welsh hillsides trying to find little white and orange flags! Up to your knees in water, falling over in the darkness and becoming lost again - sounds much better than a night down the pub! Having just about recovered from the night event we headed off to Methyr Common for the daytime activities. What joy, visibility of more than 1 metre, but what a barren and featureless landscape it was. Commiserations to **Sig Cox**, who after an eventful night managed to twist his knee on the day event and had to limp home. Congratulations to **Capts Streete** and **Rayner** who formed half the Corps Team that finished runners up in the Inter Corps Championship to a rather swift AGC team. The two other members of the Corps Team were **Maj Jean Payne**, HQ 11 Sig Bde and **Capt Sam Harrild** JSSU Digby.



Hurry up - it's cold out here!!
The Corps Team: Maj Jean Payne, Capt Sam Harrild, Capt Sarah Streete, Capt Mel Rayner

41 (PLK) SIGNAL SQUADRON - COULSDON

Sqn Comd	**Maj Steve Baker**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Watson**

HELLO

Welcome to **Lt Scott MacSween** who has just returned from Bosnia where he served with 3 UK Div HQ & Sig Regt. He will be the new Troop Commander of J Troop. We wish him all the best with his new appointment.

TROOP WEEKEND 17-18 OCTOBER 1998

Led by their illustrious OCs (**Lts Beth Pollard** and **Debbie Speakman**) K and N Troops deployed on a Troop Activity Weekend 17/18th October. N Tp deployed to Organford campsite near Poole, Dorset, where they discovered **Sgt Brian** 'Scouse' **Traynor** had already found a short cut to the local pub - albeit via a ditch! After a night of gales and storms (who was it that ended up in the dodgy tent?), the Troop set off on Saturday morning to walk sections of the South-West Coastal Path. Teams kept in radio contact with each other (who needs a control station anyway?) and had a mini trivial pursuits competition over the net along the way. On Sunday the Troop attempted the Burnbake Ropes Course. A series of challenges designed to encourage teamwork and confidence. Some took the idea of team bonding a bit too far - **Lt Debbie** 'I'm in charge' **Speakman, Sgt Amy McAuliffe, LCpl Julia May** and **Sig Vanessa Coles** may never be the same again!

K Troop deployed to Gibraltar Barracks on the Saturday morning where they put the Sandhurst horses through their paces, (some fine horsemanship in action). In the afternoon they visited the Gurkha Museum at Winchester. On Sunday the Troop had fun in the swimming pool at Gibraltar Barracks, and the weekend was rounded off by a ride in a

Gazelle to conduct a recce on Pippingford Park. Several members of the Troop were regretting the previous night's beer intake so I heard.....The teams on the 618 det have been active again, conducting comms training with the US 1108th US Army Sig Bde. Their Bde Comd has been visiting the Regiment recently to get the perspective of the other side.

REMEMBRANCE PARADES

On Sunday 1 November members of the Squadron attended the PLK Remembrance Service at the Duke of York's Barracks in Kensington. Members of the Princess Louise's Kensington (PLK) Association, many of whom fought in the Second World War, accompanied them. The service was made more poignant by the fact that the PLK Regimental Colours and Drums were on display. The following week the Squadron was on Parade in Coulsdon for Remembrance Sunday. The Squadron marched from the TA Centre to Old Coulsdon Church, where **Canon Stephen Maslen** presided over the service. **Capt Steve Jones** laid a wreath on behalf of the Squadron, having paid our respects and completed the formal part of the day, we marched back to the TA Centre for a curry lunch.

56 SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS) - EASTBOURNE

Sqn Comd	**Maj Brian Howe**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Kevin Godden**

NEWS FROM THE SQUADRON

Still riding high after the successes of Annual Camp, 56 Sig Sqn (V) launched into its autumn training programme with customary enthusiasm. In fact, three members of the Squadron were so inspired by two weeks in Dartmoor and Sennybridge that they decided to volunteer for something a bit more long term and are now serving six month tours somewhere in Bosnia. (Where hopefully the weather will be a bit better than the average day in Sennybridge!) Our best wishes go to **WO2 Jim Paine**, and to **Sigs Richard Baldwin** and **James Coleman-Brown** and we look forward to their return in February. These were not the only moves. Congratulations go to **Capt Tony Potter** on his recent commissioning and appointment as Comd 858 Tp. We would like to thank him for all he did as SSM. He can rest assured that that job is in safe hands with **WO2 Kevin Godden** to whom we also offer congratulations on his promotion and good luck in his new appointment. Well done, too, **LCpl Jo Reader** for passing her PTI's course and gaining promotion. Congratulations also go to **LCpl Mick Childs** on his recent promotion. Finally, a warm welcome to **2Lt Kieran Francis** who has joined us from Edinburgh UOTC and taken on the job of Comd 857 Tp. We are now in the happy (or not, depending on your point of view!) position of having a full complement of officers.

LORD LIEUTENANT'S MERITORIOUS AWARDS

The annual Lord Lieutenant's Meritorious Awards Ceremony took place on 27 October in Brighton. The Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex, **Admiral Sir Lindsay Bryson KCB**, presented awards to TA soldiers and cadets from all over the county. Our CO, **Lt Col Linda Harrison**, and OC, **Maj Brian Howe**, were present to see four members of the Squadron receive awards. **WO2 (SSM) Godden** received his TEM and a Lord Lieutenant's Certificate for Meritorious Service. **Sgt Dickie Bonner** also received his TEM and a Lord Lieutenant's Certificate for Meritorious Service. **Sgts Robert Cooper** and **Martin Cooper** were presented with their TEMs. Congratulations to all concerned!



The Proud Recipients
Back Row: Sgt Cooper, Sgt Bonner.
Front Row: WO2 (SSM) Godden, The Lord Lieutenant, Sgt Cooper

EXERCISE RED RAG I

The final Squadron Exercise of 1998 took place on Pippingford Park training area. Detachments deployed to various locations for a tactical HF Comms Ex. Having left the TAC at dark o'clock that morning, the sight of the Master Chef, **WO2 Fred Bramble**, greeting the Squadron with a hot breakfast at Pippingford Park was a welcome one indeed. Breakfast over, and it was time to set up for the Exercise and prepare for the visit of **Col David Titus**, Comd of the 1108th US Army Sig Bde. Of course, there was no extra pressure to make sure that the Exercise was executed with even greater precision than usual. After minimal moving of detachments from location A to location B and back again, the complex was set up in record time. Even the Sqn Comd, **Maj Brian Howe**, and the SSM, **WO2 Kev Godden**, were heard to compliment the troops. By 1145 everything was ready for the VIP who arrived with the CO. Suitably impressed by the Squadron's demonstration of its role, **Col Titus** then moved on to our FRT618 det that was one half of a trans-Atlantic long range HF comms link with Signals units based on the east coast of America. The Colonel was able to talk to his 'boys back home'. Meanwhile, much to the disbelief of all present, out of the trees emerged a group of American GIs. Having chatted to them, the Bde Comd felt reassured that he was not actually starring in a remake of 'Back to the Future', but had in fact come across members of a WW2 re-enactment society out for a Sunday stroll! As the Bde Comd settled down to a splendid lunch in the field courtesy of **WO2 Fred Bramble** and **Cpl Steve Howell,** little did he realise what the Regt FofS and YofS had been up to. **WO2's Bob Wymer** and **Simon Tyler** had been helping to extinguish a bush fire - are there no limits to the talents of the Ops Team! Fortunately they managed to complete their stint as Fireman Sam and get to lunch in time (funny that!). FofS - next time wash your face first please! Lunch was followed by a tour around the complex led by the OC Sqn. The Bde Comd had a thoroughly enjoyable visit, seeing for the first time a British Royal Signals (TA) unit deployed in the field. He kindly handed out Comd Coins of Excellence to a few of the fortunate personnel on duty. It was noted however, that **SSgt Willie Loch**, the Sqn PSI, did not receive one.

CEREMONIALS

The Squadron was involved in two ceremonial occasions in November. A pleasingly high number braved the lashing rain and wind to attend Eastbourne's Remembrance Parade where **Maj Howe** laid the Sqn's wreath. The following weekend seven members of the Squadron travelled up to London to form part of the Regiment's guard of honour outside the Royal Courts of Justice during the annual Lord Mayor's Parade. By all accounts, a great day out was had by all!

83 (LONDON) SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS) CHELSEA

Sqn Comd	**Maj Mike Jackson**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Jim McMahon**

LORD MAYOR'S SHOW 1998

The 83 (London) Signal Squadron (V) detachment of drill pigs left the Duke of York's HQ, on the evening of Friday 13 November, to rendezvous with the remainder of the Regiment at the London UOTC TAC in Russell Square. After some quick revision on weapons drill, which never goes amiss, it was either in the bar, or for the more adventurous amongst us to O'Neill's, an Irish Watering Hole within staggering distance of the TAC. **SSgt Dez Eldridge** got the first round in for a change, (must be Christmas!). The RSM, **WO1 Hall** got chatting to one of the locals. He was quoted as saying 'This bar is the canines privates, we were here last year, it was a jolly good night out' or words to that effect. 'Oh I'm glad to hear that. I'm the owner' retorted the listener, slurping over a Bacardi Breezer, or something of a similar Southern shandy drinking beverage! Well after a hard night out it was into our maggots for a good nights sleep. Five minutes later (or so it seemed) we were woken up by the RSM. 0530 hrs is not a good time to get up on a Saturday! After breakfast, more drill practice then the usual hurry up and wait until the parade at approx 1100 hrs. For the mathematicians amongst you, we had 5 hours from the time we got up until the parade started! - Thanks RSM. The parade had its usual display of spectacular floats. Needless to say we were thankful of something to look at, as our particular role was to stand still for what seemed an age as the Guard of Honour for the Lord Mayor. After a successful parade (albeit numb limbs and sore heads!) it was back to the TAC for fine food and a hair of the dog for those chaps who don't know when they've had enough. Well done to **Capt Steve Ong,** the Parade Commander, for a stirling performance. However, next year Sir, can you please give the command to Change Arms either before or after the Band of the Household Division go trundling past - not during! We might be able to hear you then! Well done to the following members of the Regiment who participated in a successful parade:

Capt Steve Ong, WO1 (RSM) Duncan Hall,
WO2 (SSM) Jim McMahon, WO2 (SSM) Godden,
SSgt Craig Bruce BEM, SSgt Dez Eldridge, SSgt Jackson,
SSgt Willie Loch, Sgt Bonner, Sgt Mat Cahill,
Sgt McGinnis, Sgt Stanton, Sgt Trav Travis,
Sgt Martin Oliver, Cpl May, Cpl Joe Samuel,
Cpl Becky Strickland, Cpl Martin Woodhouse,
LCpl Laurel Allott, LCpl Gardyne, LCpl Grieves,
LCpl Ogle, Sig Farquarson-Roberts, Sig Plant.

32 (SCOTTISH) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO — **Lt Col A. C. C. Lapsley TD**
RSM — **WO1 (RSM) J. McLachlan**

EXERCISE TARTAN CHARTER–MISSION:
TO GET THE BOAT FROM OBAN TO WALES IN 6 DAYS
EXECUTION - What Actually Happened .....

Waiting on the A82 by Loch Lomond for the crew to pick me up, I noticed that it was not raining – could this be summer about to happen was our indent for good weather being actioned? The mini bus was crammed full of rations, sailing bags and sleeping bodies – no one stirred. **Cpl Carruthers**, our driver greeted me, stowed my gear onto the bus and I jumped aboard. So far so good. Dunstaffange was reached on time and the crew awoke for coffee and bacon rolls at the Wide Mouth Frog. Boat taken over by 1130hrs with the help of a helibourne - CoS **Maj John Montieth** and then the serious business began.

Safety Brief - The 'inherent danger to life and limb' brief or Adventurous Training, unstable decks Fire, Gas, Explosion, Drowning, Sea, Wind, Tides, Monsters of the Deep

Mundane Matters - Personal fitting of Harness/Life Jackets, airing of foul weather gear. Familiarisation with the boat sea cocks, heads, lights, sails, ropes, location of gas bottles, fire extinguishers etc.

The weather was now suspiciously good – sun, wind, blue skies the lot. The outline plan was confirmed – three days workup and then the dash South.



The Crew

THE CREW

Maj J. D. B. Chown AGC (V)	Watch-Skipper JC - Rtd Chap - Driver
YofS A. R. Rathmell R Sigs	Port Bosun Tony - Wind Surfing Expert
SSgt S. Shaw R Sigs	Stb Mate Sam - Curry Expert
SSgt J. Thomson R Sigs (V)	PortPurser Jean - Medic/Insurance Dept
Sgt M. M. Murphy AGC (V)	Stb Asst Purser Margaret-Morale Booster
Sig A. James R Sigs (V)	Port Chief Stoker Ann - No 2 Engineering Offr
Sig G. Gray R Sigs (V)	Stb Foredeck Gillian - Toast Expert



The Crew

STATS

2 x Regular Soldiers	3 Males	1 Offr	1 x Coastal Skipper
5 x TA Soldiers	4 Females	6 Ors	2 x Day Skipper
			1 x Comp Crew
			3 x Novices

THE VESSEL - *LIGHT INFANTEER*

She is a 34ft, Auxiliary Bermudan Sloop built by Sadler Yacht and commissioned in 1995 for ISA, is in extremely good condition with an excellent sail wardrobe, good systems documentation, fully functional navigational aids and the best set of chart folios outside a RN warship (Compliments to her bosun). My own vessel, a Westerly Conway ketch is a nimble old lady but this vessel was a joy to drive – a pure bred racing filly. (for the novice - a sloop has one mast, the ketch, two). An unforgettable experience and an achievement to be proud of, well done shipmates. Final tally 390 miles at sea with 20 hours at night and a lot of fun. No damage to life or limb but the question is posed - who shot Jack Sound? Answers on a post card.

52 (LOWLAND) SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd — **Maj Sutherland**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) Swan**

SQUADRON LIFE

After returning from Camp the Squadron has been getting round to the yearly preparation for inspections and has started to build up towards next year's military skills based annual camp, with the Squadron training weekend, 'Weekend Warrior' in late October. The weekend began with the Squadron deploying to a hide in the woods outside Edinburgh, where thankfully the weather gods looked favorably on us and let up on the rain that had washed through the country in the preceding week. After a good nights sleep under the stars - only rarely interrupted by the odd enemy attack and the road works 300m away, it was time for ranges. As background activity **Maj Roddy** 'Call me Biggles' **Sutherland** arranged for most Squadron personnel to get a trip round Edinburgh by Gazelle, with a select few flying off on a two hour recce of Garelochhead training area. As tradition would have it the weather that stayed kind to us on Friday night broke for the ranges, with a howling gale and torrential rain adding the customary dampness to proceedings. To round the day off a party was held in the Edinburgh Squadron's TAC and thanks go to the Capital Squadron for giving us 'soap-dodging-weegies' a roof for the night. A late start on Sunday morning was followed by a few hours practicing off road driving, where **Lt Milne** 'I'm off to Oz' **Weir** the new ICP Troop commander took the opportunity to introduce himself to the Squadron by pranging his rover on the route.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations go to **Sigs Ward, Finnigan**, and **Augusto** on their promotion to L/Cpl. Congratulations also go to **WO1 Terry McVey** and **WO2 Karen Swan** as they keep it in the family with **Karen** taking over from **Terry** as Squadron Sergeant Major as he takes over from her as Recruit Training Warrant Officer.

61 (CITY OF EDINBURGH) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)
NOVEMBER 1998

Sqn Comd — **Maj B. Shankland**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) G. Garland**

SQUADRON ACTIVITY

The most noteable event in the post-summer period was, of course the highly anticipated and often fraught involvement in Annual Camp. Things got off to a cracking start when, as the engines roared at the start line in a effort to get going, **SSM Gary** 'London's Burning' **Garland** set out to prove that a trailer (with a little assistance) could go faster than the towing Landrover. **Cpl** 'Aint no mountain high enough' **Fair** completed the mayhem by breaking down at Chesser Cresent gates. The 'vehicular' theme continued at camp with **Cpl Paula** 'Postman Pat' **MacLean** being required to explain her 'excessive' speed within Deverrell Barracks to the Royal Engineers and **Cfn** 'Wes' **Florence** finally earning his licence after having been 'done' for driving without an er...um...licence. The Squadron had the opportunity to indulge in a spot of Adventure Training which, inevitably included abseiling. The occasion was remembered more for **LCpl** 'Jamsie' **Costello**'s remarks about the effects of the harness on the posterior region, than by any standard of vertical descent. Once again **Sgt Martin** 'Stars in their Eyes' **Garner** won all the Karaoke prizes going, and was particularly pleased to dedicate 'Splish Splash I was taking a Bath' to the Soap Dodgers who managed to make it out on Exercise for a change. (Careful explanation was required in order to tell them the difference between cam cream and soap). Following the chaos of camp, a cloud of mystery descended on the Squadron as, during the first post-camp weekend **Maj Brian** 'The truth is out there' **Murray** was responsible for the instigation of a nationwide search following his strange disappearance during a food foraging Exercise by the Squadron officers in the local village. A very worried Squadron 2IC reported the loss of his traffic officer to the CO and was then told 'search the village, alert the police'. All local shops and hostelries were visited and a description issued, small man, mid fifties, moustache. The most amusing response was, 'Oh dear, wandered off from a home has he?' One hour after disappearing the bold

Major was found in the dining room of a local hostel. His greeting for the 'rescuers'? 'Where have you been? These gammon steaks are lovely!' The mystery continued as a male and female soap dodger were later found locked in the Armoury (Why was **Mrs Fair** one of them we ask ourselves?) On a more exotic note **Lt Phil** 'Sans Pantalons' **Donegan** selflessly volunteered for a two week stint with the United States Army Reserve in Louisiana, USA during July/August. Despite being assigned to the wrong unit he still managed a bout of heat stroke, Karaoke in New Orleans and an interview with the anti-terrorist police at Heathrow (Something to do with a hand-grenade we hear).

CONGRATULATIONS

A special congratulation for the elevation of **Maj Brian** 'The merciful' **Shankland** to OC Squadron. Responsibility beckons! Gone now are the days of rolling around on the grass outside the Squadron CP. Well done also to **Cpls Davidson** and **Park** for their completion of the Det Commanders Course and subsequent promotion. Promotion also came at long last to **LCpl** 'Victor Meldrew' **Robertson**, proof that patience does pay off in the long run! Wedding fever hit the Squadron in August. First off the blocks was **LCpl Betty Saunders** who had her particulars taken down by her fiancee **Constable Ian Robertson**. Confusingly we now have two **LCpl Robertsons**, although thankfully they look completely different (**Betty**'s not balding yet!). Next up was the joining together of two of the Squadron's most valuable assets **Capt Domhnall** 'Doddsie' **Dods** and **Capt Jackie** 'Four foot and a fag-end' **Lockhart** in holy matrimony. Training Major take note, Married Quarter Accommodation required for annual camp next year. Well done indeed to **Sig Anderson** for completing her recruits course - welcome to the Squadron! **Sgt John** 'Recruiter specialist' **Faichney** is to be congratulated (?) for earning his PTI's swords, please report to the stores for your triangular body and 'norman-nae-mates certificate'.

EMIGRATIONS

In July, the Squadron bade a fond and tearful farewell to the outgoing OC **Maj Fiona** 'Farquhars' **Farquharson** who leaves after three years at the helm. The greatest tears came for the 'bad back sufferers' who were bemoaning the passing of a free physio service. We wish **Fiona** well in her post at the Territorial Commissions Board. Also departing was **SSgt John** 'Calm Down' **Leach** our reliable PSI. His farewell dinner must go down as being unique in Corps history as, among the attendants were his predecessor, successor and a few 'bewigged scouse gits' (No thefts were reported after the dinner).

IMMIGRATIONS

Possibly the best transfer acquisition of the year was **Sgt Ian Stallard**. His arrival represents a huge increase in 'value' training within 61 Sig Sqn as there's nothing he doesn't know about everything. (What end do we hold the rifle?) He has quickly learned however that TA soldiers are all too willing to leave as much as possible to the PSI and is rapidly learning not to take on too much of their work. The Squadron welcomed **Lt Patricia** 'The Stripper' **Baird** back to the TA after an extended absence. The absence can apparently be accounted for by the length of time it took to get rid of the grime acquired from her previous stint with the Glasgow Squadron. Another convert to soap arrived in the form of our new PSI **SSgt Steve Harrison** who is here to find all the televisions reported missing during his predecessor's stint. A hearty and Capital welcome is extended to you all.

REMEMBRANCE PARADE

61 (City of Edinburgh) Sig Sqn were again honoured to participate in the annual Remembrance Parade held at the local Stenhouse church. A simple but nonetheless touching service was conducted by the Minister who predicted a happy outcome for the Squadron under the SDR - the benefits of a direct line to Higher Command? One of the few occasions when we can be publicly seen parading the local streets and this time in step. The absence of a piper might have had something to do with that.



During the service the Squadron laid their customary wreath at the Church memorial which boasts a very local Victoria Cross award. The wreath bearers this year were **Cpl David Crampton** and **LCpl** 'Victor' **Robertson**.

MILES FOR SMILES

Several Squadron members successfully completed a 93 mile sponsored walk over the very reputable West Highland Way. This well known Scottish path starts just South West of Glasgow and Fort William through some of the most beautiful geography in the UK - dependent on the weather. For their efforts they managed to raise the sum of £1102.50 for The Royal Sick Children's Hospital, Edinburgh which the Squadron have adopted as their 'personal' charity.



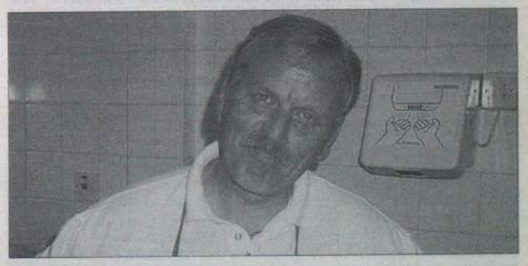
The Team



Here the OC **Maj Brian Shankland** is proud to present a display cheque (as well as the genuine article) to **Ms Maureen Harrison** of the Friends of the Sick Kids. Congratulations to all concerned in raising this splendid amount.

SPOTLIGHT ON PERSONALITIES

Over many weekends we have all enjoyed what pleasures the TA has to offer. All too often the 'Service Support' elements which work behind the scenes go unmentioned in despatches. We are please here to feature two of our most important 'Support' personnel.



Sgt Andy Crawford our erstwhile cook



LCpl Lynn Drummond the most essential 'pay clerk'

33 (LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO **Lt Col R. J. Steed MBE**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) K. C. Hallett**

Life in 33 Sig Regt (V) continues to move along at a frantic pace, but all is not lost. Reinforcements have arrived in the shape of **Capt John Harrington** who has recently returned from his sunshine tour in Turkey (where's the tan?). Outgoing Adjt, **Capt Nick Range,** is currently handing over the reins and showing **John** the seedier side of Liverpool. Also joining us are **LCpl Karen Ballard, Sgt Alan Townsend, LCpl Stephan Piper, LCpl Craig Robertson** and **Cpl Craig Stevens**. A warm welcome to you all. Finally, a big thank you and goodbye to **WO2 (SSM) McGarry** who departs for 2 Sig Regt. Good luck for the next tour.

REGIMENTAL TRADE TRAINING DONNINGTON OCTOBER 1998

The Regiment held its second Trade Training Camp at Donnington over the first two weeks in October. The overall organiser of this devilish scheme was the Regimental Yeoman **WO2 Nick Nicholson** who devised the training so that soldiers could be trained up to class 3 standard in their respective trades over a two week period which would count as their annual camp. The following Trade Courses were run: Tele Op Sys (Access), Tele Op Radio Relay, Tele Op Radio, Driver Electrician, Driver Lineman.

Also a Driver Training Course was run by the MTWO, **WO1 Ian Thorneycroft** for all those soldiers who required the correct driving qualification for their trade.

The Tele Op systems (Access) Course run by **Sgt Tony Hartley** was in depth, and the two students **Sig**'s **Dave Halsall** and **Sharon Halden** have now full working knowledge of the SAS/MC. The Instructors have quite a few headaches after the amount of questions asked by the students, especially in the revision periods set aside in the evening. Hopefully these question and answer sessions ironed out any problems, which occurred during the daytime classes. **Sgt Tony Hartley** will now be allowed to go for a shower in peace. Congratulations to both students in achieving their class 3 in trade all they need now are their driving qualifications. Special thanks to **LCpl Paula Scully** who ran around trying to do eight jobs at once and putting everything she has learnt with the Regulars into practice (if in doubt make the Yeoman a cup of tea).

The Tele Op Radio course was run by **Sgt Ade Hamilton. Cpl Steve Peters** was able to bewilder the two students **Sig**'s **Farrow** and **Wright,** especially the lessons on BATCO and ensured they used it at every possible moment. Operating the different Clansman radio stations, fault finding, installing radio equipment into FFR's and the numerous VP Exercises were all covered on the course along with all the visits that occurred during the weeks training. At the end of the week both students were relieved to have passed the course, and so were the over-worked instructors. We wait to see if all the training will pay off on the next Regimental Exercise.

The Tele Op Radio Relay course run by **SSgt Jim** 'Get off my train' **Eddowes** had the honour of having two students from 35 Sig Regt (V) in the form of **Sig**'s 'Alexi' **Sales** and **Phil** 'Trainspotting' **Williams** as well as **Sig Hitchen** from the Regiment. All three soldiers learnt everything that they needed to know from the two main instructors**, Cpl's Steve** 'fuzzy eyes' **Davies** and **Keith** 'Monotone' **Langan**. Hopefully the lads from 35 Sig Regt will have gone back to their Regiment with a whole new meaning to the words Radio Relay. If anyone has seen the Chief Instructor can they point his train in the general direction of Liverpool.

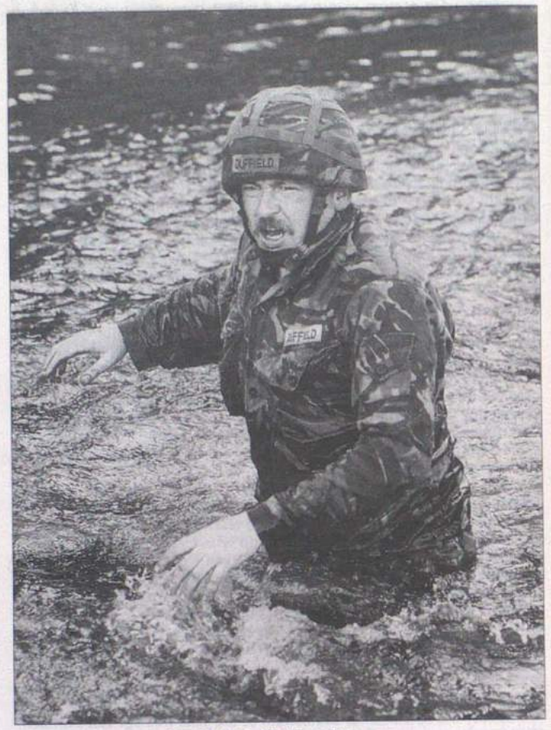
42 SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

Sqn Comd **Maj I. J. Kelly TD KINGS**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Paul Williams**

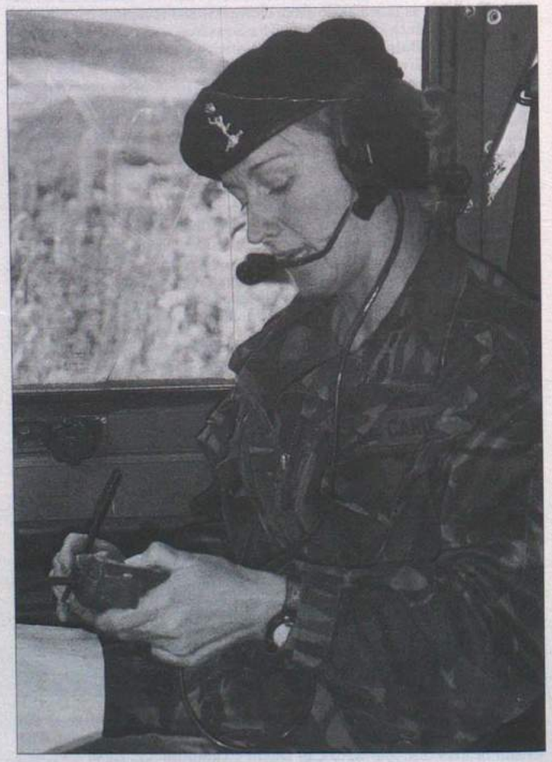
At the Manchester outpost of 33 Sig Regt (V) life continues to be as busy as ever, We have emerged relatively unscathed from the Strategic Defence Review (SDR), having suffered regrettable cuts to our Regular man power, but fortunately not to our TA strength, and we are now actively recruiting from the luckless units that have been disbanded. This has not proved to be as successful as expected due to the relatively small number of local units affected compared to the rest of the North West area. Around Manchester only the QLR in Bolton, 3 Cheshire in Macclesfield and 75 Engr Regt, Oldham detachment, have been unfortunate enough to be closed down.

This reporting period commenced with a bracing military skills weekend at Warcop (17-18 October). Here the weather was atrocious in the main, although 'sods law' dictated blue skies and sunshine when it was time to go home, and where the CO's mandatory test of map reading was made just slightly more difficult by driving rain and howling gales. Anyone who found the wooden classroom, from the multitude of similar huts which abound in the Warcop Training Camp, and where the theory part of the map reading test was due to take place, was awarded extra points by an amazed 42 Sqn PSAO, **Capt Gerry Whelan**, who had been confidently expecting an undisturbed snooze in between reading the daily paper.

PRE followed swiftly on the heels of Warcop, to be precise the day after our return, and the Cumbrian mud was frantically hosed off in time for the arrival of the intrepid men from 42 Bde at Preston. The next weekend saw elements of the Squadron deploying to Thorney Island near Portsmouth to Exercise with 63 (SAS) Sig Sqn. This proved to be well worth the nine-hour drive down and gave those involved an interesting insight into the SAS world while at the same time providing valuable training in their trades.



Sgt Bob Duffield at Warcop
'According to my map this river shouldn't be here'



LCpl Helen Carden showing the SAS how it's done

EXERCISE WINTER EAGLE–20 - 22 NOVEMBER 1998

The main event of this period was Ex Winter Eagle that took place in and around the North West of England. This was a Brigade level communications exercise linking the rest of 11 Sig Bde via the new kilo-stream pick-up point at the Altcar Training Area. The Exercise was very well attend with the Squadron fielding a variety of installations including the Trunk Node, Access Node and a Central. After a hard working weekend with plenty of moves the Squadron returned to barracks early on Sunday morning, with the exception of those lucky enough to man the mini node that was set up on the aptly named Winter Hill. This provided links for all Regimental assets as they moved back to TA Centres. **SSgt Maurice Aarons, Sgt Lesley Deakin** and **Cpl Doreen Stringer** provided a cheerful welcome to the returning members of the Squadron by serving up a superb Sunday lunch and rounding off a highly successful weekend on a high note.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

The Squadron marched through Manchester, headed by **Maj Ian Kelly,** the Sqn Comd, to take its place at the Cenotaph during the Remembrance Sunday service. After the parade a curry lunch took place in the Norman Road TA Centre to which the Squadron had invited a number of civic dignitaries including **Mr Duncan Lawton**, Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Greater Manchester, **Cllr Tony Burns**, Deputy Lord Mayor (and Lord Mayor designate) and Assistant Chief Constable **Malcolm George.**

CONGRATULATIONS

A number of congratulations are due. The first and warmest are to our Recruiting Sergeant **Sue Edge** on the birth of her daughter **Georgina** at Warrington Hospital on Tuesday 24 November 1998. Congratulations also, to the following individuals on their recent promotions: **Sgt Tim Mounfield, Sgt Hazel Trotman, Cpl Duncan Anderson, Cpl Ken Bryan, Cpl Mick Hanna, LCpl Karl Bartlett, LCl Paul Bennison, Officer Cadet Curtis-Rouse** and **Officer Cadet Williams.**

WELCOME

Finally, we extend a warm welcome to our latest Regular soldier posted in from 21 Sig Regt, **Sig Julie Houghton**, whose claim to fame is that she is the only female Driver/Electrician in the Corps. We wish her an enjoyable and successful tour with the Squadron.

59 SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS) REMEMBRANCE DAY

On Sunday 8 November the Squadron paraded in Liverpool City Centre as a part of the Remembrance Day celebration. Ably led by **Maj Chris Heaton**, the squad that had been put through its paces by **WO2 (SSM) Bob Patterson** the day before, paraded in No 2 dress for the very first time. This is by no means a small feat for a TA unit and much credit must go to **SSgt (SQMS) Frank Hale** for his endeavour and resourcefulness.



59 on parade at St George's Square Liverpool.
WO2 (SSM) Patterson leading

SPORT

The Squadron played in the semi-final of the TA soccer cup for the North West of England on Sunday 19 November. Although soundly beaten by 238 Squadron RLC a good effort to progress so far, and an even bigger effort to drink the bar dry afterwards. **Cpl Gaz Hayhurst** has asked that the other Corps footballers do not know he was playing.

80 (CHESHIRE YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

Another year rapidly came to a close and the millennium breathing down our necks. For 80 (Cheshire Yeomanry) Signal Squadron the past year has been a mixture of consolidation and change with a sprinkling of the unusual thrown in for good measure. In January a dozen members of the Squadron went to Austria for a week's skiing while the remainder made final preparations for a Squadron Exercise in Catterick. The aim of the Exercise was to practise basic military skills and learn some new ones. We are fortunate to have in our midst two ex members of the Brigade of Guards in the form of the PSAO, **Capt Chris Hopkins**, and the SQMS(R) **SSgt Sammy Collister**. Their combined knowledge of Infantry training and exceptional level of physical fitness ensured a thoroughly testing, but at the same time, enjoyable weekend for participants.



In March six squadron stalwarts, led by the OC, **Maj Stan Fitzgerald,** joined other members of the Regiment to deliver much needed aid to hospitals and orphanages in Odessa in the Ukraine. This has become an annual pilgrimage for the unit and close ties are being forged. Annual Camp this year took place in Germany. The remainder of the year was taken up with Squadron, Regimental and Brigade Exercises interspersed with training, maintenance and competitions. **Maj Stan Fitzgerald** led a team of young enthusiasts up and down Ben Nevis, Scafell pike and Snowdon over one weekend while our two aforementioned intrepid NRPS took part in the Army and European Quadrathon Championships as well as a myriad of other equally lunatic activities. The OC is now affectionately known as 'The Grand Old Duke of York'. This year we dined out **Maj Chris Fidler**, the outgoing OC, and welcomed **Maj Fitzgerald**. We have also recently been joined by **Capt Wendy Kirby**, who is to become the Squadron Ops officer. She is an ex-regular who should bring considerable expertise to the unit.

SATISFIED SOLDIER SCHEME

- *Are you a satisfied soldier?*
- *Would you like to be attached to your home town ACIO for 5-10 days?*
- *Would you like to visit your old school and ACF to tell them about life in The Royal Signals?*
- *Would you like to help in recruiting soldiers into The Royal Signals?*

YES!!!

Then contact your Troop Office for details of
THE SATISFIED SOLDIER SCHEME

XXXV

35 (SOUTH MIDLANDS) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

THE DASH TO RAISE CASH - THE RACE TO THE FINISH

The Regiments association with and assistance to the Birmingham Childrens Hospital is now legendary and we continue to be heavily involved in the hospitals fund-raising efforts. These efforts were duly rewarded on the opening of the new hospital (now renamed 'Diana Princess of Wales Childrens Hospital) when the Regiment was invited to provide escorts and stewards for the official opening ceremony on Friday 30 October. The actual ceremony was performed by **Her Majesty the Queen** and **His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh.** On arrival the Queen and Duke were received by the Chief Executive of the Hospital, **Mr Colin. Hough** and the Chairman of the Trust, **Judy Clements**. In attendance was the Secretary of State for Health, **Frank Dobson**. Her Majesty and His Royal Highness were then invited to sign the visitors' book, which was in the safe custody of **Sgt Dean Nicol** and **Cpl Carl Rossall**, before starting their tour of the hospital. Prior to the tour a special reception was held in the hospital's Victorian Conservatory. Here the Queen and Duke were presented to groups of supporters, which included the CO of 35 Sig Regt, **Lt Col Miles Stockdale** and his wife. At this stage of the visit His Royal Highness took the opportunity to chat informally to the RSM, **WO1 Kev Winkles** and to **SSgt Ed Perry** who explained the Regiment's long term commitment to the Hospital. The Regiment was immensely honoured to be part of this very special and historical occasion and all those involved can be proud of the contribution they made no matter how small.



The fundraising team from the Regiment and Hospital in front of the Diana Memorial Window

It will undoubtedly provide many happy memories and conversation pieces for years to come. Especially for those members of the Regiment called upon to help and in particular to **Capt David Brough,** who was so overcome by the occasion he forgot to put a film in his camera as well as forgetting to put on his Corps tie! Our happy and productive association with the hospital continued to develop in December when 48 Sig Sqn hosted the Ward 9, Children's Christmas Party at Sparkbrook TA Centre on Sunday 6 December. The Children and their parents and helpers were treated to a festive feast and were entertained by an inspired magician who left the children in stitches (sorry) with a unique blend of magic, comedy and tenderness. Santa also made a pre Christmas stop with presents for all the delighted children.

During a short break in the festive fun and the face-painting the CO, **Lt Col Miles Stockdale** welcomed all the children and parents and together with **Lt Carolyn Daly,** presented a cheque for £1000 to the Ward sister, **Michelle Snipe.** Once again a special thank you is reserved for **SSgt Ed Perry** and his team of helpers for transforming the Drill Hall and turning it into an enchanting and delightful fairyland that ensured a successful party. The laughter of the children and their shrieks of joy are still ringing in my ears.

EXERCISE WINTER EAGLE

Opinion is generally divided as to when you can expect the best support for an Exercise -is it the depths of Autumn or is early Spring a more favourable time; is the weather a factor or perhaps more significantly the final sprint to complete mandatory days before bountiful time. Either way even though I always favour the latter my attendance predictions are usually way off course and I am always proved wrong.

Winter Eagle was no exception, the weather forecast was dire ranging from bitterly cold to freezing conditions and attendance was bound to reflect this - who on earth would voluntarily give up a comfortable weekend at home just to suffer inhospitable field conditions with an SDR briefing thrown in. Thankfully the CO's confidence in the dedication and tenacity of the TA soldier paid dividends and he was rewarded with an excellent all round attendance and despite one or two minor hiccups the Exercise was hugely successful. During the weekend the GOC 5 Div, **Maj Gen R. V. Searby** visited the Exercise area and, despite **Sgt John Scotts** cautious insistence for a password before he would let the GOC on site, was clearly pleased by what he saw. Following a Regimental briefing given by the Adjt, **Capt Andy Talbot** and the Trg Maj, **Maj Tudor Hill,** the GOC toured the Regimental assets located at Chillington Hall and chatted to many members of the Regiment. Following his tour the GOC took time out to present **Maj Ivan Thomas** the clasp to his Territorial Decoration and presented Efficiency Awards and clasps to **WO2 (SSM) Bill Macquire, Sgt Kevin Hand** and **Sgt Nigel Knowles.**



The medal recipients pictured with GOC 5 Div

After the presentation the GOC congratulated and thanked all the recipients for their long and valued service and then joined all ranks for a special lunch before returning to Shrewsbury. The Exercise ended on a high note with the CO briefing all ranks at Swynnerton Training Camp on the results of the SDR and the good news that the Regiment had survived with only a few changes to endure, including an impending move of the RHQ to pastures new in Coventry in the New Year!



A scene from the Exercise!

THE FIRST STEPS INTO CHRISTMAS

The Christmas festivities this year once again started with the acclaimed Council House Dinner which was held on Saturday 28 November. This elegant and sumptuous event provides the highlight of the year for the Officers Mess whose members and guests once again celebrated Christmas in style until the early hours in the magnificent, auspicious and celebrated surrounds of the City of Birmingham Council House. Distinguished guests at this prominent function included **Cllr David Roy** who was deputising for the Lord Mayor of Birmingham, the SOinC (A), **Brig J. H. Griffin** ADC and Comd 11 Sig Bde, **Brig J. R. B. Cook.**

Guests were greeted by the CO, **Miles Stockdale** and the Hon Col, **Brig Ian Sim.** Music was provided by the Corps Band. During the function the CO presented **Lt Peter Ayre** with the Dobson Cup which is presented annually to the 'Best Young Officer' in the Regiment. Once again many old friends joined the Regiment at this grand occasion which again was expertly organised by **Capt George Cairns**. The Council House Dinner tends to kick start all other Regimental functions and following in hot mince pie and cream pursuit the first off the ice cream block was the Permanent Staff lunch hosted by RHQ on Friday 4 December. Dish of the day was a rather festive turkey curry - a simple case of starting where you usually finish!



A scene from the Council House Dinner

A day later 48 Sig Sqn enjoyed their Christmas Function with a reported shortage of Christmas Belles (or was it bells) but nonetheless an excellent party. Hot on 48 Sqn's heels was 89 Sig Sqn's Victorian Banquet held in their TA Centre, on Friday 11 December, which was transformed by **SSgt** 'If I can find it I'll scratchit' **Walker** and his talented team to match the theme. Singled out for special mention are **LCpl Liz Judge** and **Sig Jane Bell** for producing such excellent props and backdrops and for not losing their sense of humour. As we make our way towards that well earned Christmas Break the Sgts' Mess, HQ, 95 and 58 Sqn will be holding their functions in their respective TA Centres before the closedown. Once again a busy but often uncertain year has ended on a positive, reassuring and relaxing note!

NEWSROUND

Here is a quick round up of newsworthy events that have taken place throughout the Regiment during the past few months. On Tuesday 17 November Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for the County of Warwickshire, **Mr Martin Dunne JP** visited 89 Sig Sqn in Rugby. The Lord Lieutenant was met and escorted throughout the visit by the CO, **Lt Col Miles Stockdale** the Sqn Comd, **Maj Steve Pell** and the Deputy Secretary of TAVRA, **Lt Col Dennis Kane.** Following the visit the Lord Lieutenant joined all ranks in the Sqn Club for a curry supper. Here he took the opportunity to chat to many members of the Squadron. The visit was a resounding success and prior to his departure the Lord Lieutenant remarked on how impressed he was with the efficiency, proficiency and dedication of Warwickshire's TA soldiers.

A rather sad event has also taken place recently with the departure of perhaps the most resolute PSAO in the Brigade. After a remarkable total of 46 years service **Maj Roger Breese**, PSAO of 58 (Staffordshire) Sig Sqn since 1986, finally retired from the Corps on 6 November. **Roger** was one of the Corps stalwarts and true characters and his fondness for storytelling and his presence will be sadly missed by all ranks as will his humorous antics. Fortunately **Roger** has no plans at present to move from the area and we hope to see him at many future functions - keep the handkerchief handy **Rog!** A special warm welcome has also been extended to his replacement, **Capt Mike Gleeson** and his wife **Barbara**. We wish them both a happy and rewarding time with the Regiment and Squadron.

To end on a light note 95 Sig Sqn also made the headlines on Friday 6 November with their involvement in restoring the Wrekin Beacon on top of the famous Shropshire landmark. It was for the first time in over 30 years that this much-loved 'friendly light', which was a sign of home to generations of Salopians will have shone from the Wrekin. Members of 95 Sqn took the new beacon to the summit and after **SSgt Derek Adams** and **Sig William Aston** gave it a final wipe down the beacon was switched on for test transmissions. Thankfully the light in 95 Sqn's life has now been fully restored!

71 (YEOMANRY) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO — **Lt Col C. H. Turner**
RSM — **WO1 (RSM) M. Godwin**

68 (IC&CY) SIGNAL SQUADRON
WHIPPS CROSS AND LINCOLN'S INN
Sqn Comd — **Maj Rupert Sawyer**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) L. Evans**

LORD MAYOR'S SHOW

Once again, the Squadron was honoured to be invited to enter a mounted contingent into the procession of the Lord Mayor's show – the annual celebration for the inauguration of the Lord Mayor of London. Selected from a cast of many willing volunteers, the participants had undergone some training before the day of the parade, courtesy of the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment. They had also had their No 1 Dress uniforms tailored to perfection under the watchful eye of their former Coldstream Guards PSAO, **Capt Ian Wadley**.



The 68 (IC&CY) Sig Sqn contingent in the Lord Mayor's Show



Smiling cheerfully after the lunch stop
Cpl Lewis, Sigs Hodder, Crispin and Stubbington



Cpl Lewis poses with his son

The day itself started extremely early. The riders and support team paraded at Knightsbridge Barracks to be issued with their chargers for the procession. To say the horses are enormous would be no exaggeration, and it was only due to the presence, on horseback, of the RMO, **Capt David Thompson**, that several cases of vertigo were avoided. Having settled down, and collected accoutrements such as lances and swords, the party set off in file through the streets of London to the assembly point. The weather, although cold, was dry, so they remained in high spirits as they waited to set off. The parade was extremely well received with thousands of people on hand to cheer them on their way and revel in the spectacle.

The only significant highlight of the morning was when one of the horses took fright at a balloon being waved from a nearby float, almost unseating his rider. Fortunately, however, the disaster was averted and everybody made it intact to the lunch stop. Having been in the saddle for over four hours, it was a welcome relief to reach the grounds of Middle Temple where a well-stocked Mess tent was set up. After a reasonable break and a pause for photographs, the contingent then remounted, to continue the second half of the procession. This part went as successfully as the first, and the riders had returned to barracks in time to catch a glimpse of the fireworks after nearly eight hours in the saddle.

FESTIVAL OF REMEMBRANCE

The Squadron was further honoured by being asked to participate in the televised Festival of Remembrance at the Albert Hall. Six members of 68 (IC&CY) Sig Sqn were joined by two members of 265 (KCLY) Sig Sqn in commemorating the nation's war dead. Having been fitted with No 1 Dress Uniforms to the satisfaction of the PSAO, they had a couple of rehearsals at Lincoln's Inn, prior to the full dress rehearsal on the day before the event. Their efforts were well recognised by the Garrison Sergeant Major who complimented them on their drill and turnout. A Coldstream Guardsman, he does not give praise lightly, so every credit goes to those who took part. The praise was received with considerable relief – at 6ft 7', the GSM is not a man to mess with!

70 (EY) SIGNAL SQUADRON - CHELMSFORD AND HARLOW

Sqn Comd **Maj Simon Palmer**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Paul Humphreys**

FAREWELL

Prior to this year's Remembrance Day Parade, the Squadron said farewell and thank you to the Squadron Honorary Colonel, **Brig Colin Brown**. **Brig Colin** has given the Squadron tremendous support throughout his tenure in the post.



Maj Palmer presents a farewell gift to Brig Brown

His final act with the Squadron was to assist the Mayor of Chelmsford in taking the salute during the Remembrance Day March Past, and then presenting Territorial Efficiency Medals to **Sgt Tony Perry, Sgt Nick Wilks** and a First Clasp to the Efficiency Medal to **WO2s Mark Bell** and **Richard Pieper**.



Awards recipients – Sgt Malyon, Sgt Wilks, Sgt Perry, WO2 Pieper, WO2 Bell

WELCOME

At the same ceremony, the Squadron welcomed our new Honorary Colonel, **Col David Casstles TD DL**. **Col Casstles** is well known to the Squadron. He was a former Squadron Commander from 1972 – 1980 and later commanded the Regiment, taking over from **Brig Colin Brown.** He is Deputy Lieutenant for Essex and has in previous years kindly presented HM Lord Lieutenant's Certificate of Meritorious Service to Essex to members of the Regiment. This year, **Col David** presented the award to **Sgt Brian Malyon**.



The new Essex Yeomanry Honorary Colonel, Col Casstles, presents the Lord Lieutenant's Certificate to Sgt Malyon

BTEC NATIONAL DIPLOMA IN PUBLIC SERVICES

At Chelmsford we are fortunate in having a strong connection with the local Chelmsford College and the department organising the BTec National Diploma in Public Services. The Diploma in Public Services is a two year course and is equivalent to A Levels for male and female students who wish to join the uniformed services, military, fire, police or ambulance. **SSgt Liz Murphy**, in her civilian occupation with the college, is the course leader and has encouraged her students to join the Squadron. We currently have eight course members on strength, and in the past members of the course have gone on to join the Army and the Metropolitan Police. A former student who is still with the TA is currently serving with 1 (UK) Armd Div on Op Palatine. The students use the facilities at Chelmsford TAC twice a week, and naturally receive assistance from the Squadron, when required.

265 (KCLY) SIGNAL SQUADRON
BEXLEYHEATH AND BRIGHTON

Sqn Comd **Maj Hugh Robertson**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Keith Wrate**

SQUADRON REUNION

Thanks go out to the SSM, **WO2 Keith Wrate** for organising an extremely successful inaugural Squadron Reunion, which was held in November at Bexleyheath. Over 130 people attended, with some guests dating back to the Sixties. Three previous Sqn Comds, (**Majs Simon Malik, David Hannam** and **David Hewer**) and two previous SSMs (**Mark Penny** and **Danny Farmer**) were also present. This was a long overdue event which was enjoyed by all concerned, both young and old. It is hoped that this will now become an annual bash, provided we can obtain sufficient sandbags to sit on and enough lanterns to swing. However, we may have to outlaw the phrase 'Do you remember…?' as this was being used to excess, with tales of derring do, mostly involving the harassment of the vertically challenged **Sgt David** 'Heed, Weeman' **Whitehouse.**

OTHER NEWS

The Squadron was more than happy to hear that there is no change to their establishment post SDR and that we can now knuckle down to the new Trade Training season with renewed vigour, as well as the seemingly endless round of Christmas get-togethers. We would like to welcome back **SSgt Steve** 'Razors' **Shelley** after a stint in Bosnia, with enough stories to see us well into the new millennium.

EXERCISE STREET FIGHTER

Eastmere OBUA village was the setting for the 887 Tp Exercise where, under the watchful eye of the range staff and our instructors from B Coy Londons, our FIBUA skills were carefully honed to make us the promised lean mean fighting machines.

Most of us, having recently watched 'Saving Private Ryan' had a better insight to what support would be expected, but Eastmere having very little in common with Hollywood provided us with Chorley grenades and battle sims. The weekend culminated in, surprise surprise, a dawn attack where **Cpls Andy Wilton** and **Andy Keeler** led their respective sections in their well rehearsed drills. Things were going relatively smoothly until **Sig** 'Mad Dog' **Williams** (clearly having watched too many Arnie movies) abandoned his buddy, **Sig Tracey MacKenzie** (despite unprintable threats) and single handedly attacked a three storey house through a first floor window. Fortunately it didn't come out in the video, and even more fortunately **Sig Williams** was only attached to the Troop for the weekend.

After successfully clearing the houses and just before the tea and medals bit, the weekend's final activity was the confidence course which if you survived would definitely give you confidence. Fortunately, we all did survive and a fantastic weekend finished up.

NEWS FROM THE SQUADRONS

ALTERNATE WAR HEADQUARTERS COMMUNICATIONS SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj P. M. Kelly**
FofS **WO1 (FofS) K. Dodd MBE**

KVCC AWCS DEPLOYS AGAIN

In addition to our indefinite presence in SFOR, an AWCS Mobile Communications Module (MCM) has deployed to KUMANOVO in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as part of the Kosovo Verification Coordination Cell (KVCC). Aboard two C17 globemasters travelled the OC, **Maj Kelly, SSgt Andy Chalmers, Cpls Billy Eckett** and 'Caz' **Castle** and **LCpl** 'Doc' **Savage**. These five R SIGNALS soldiers were the first British personnel on the ground which in time will see the KVCC dealing with KOSOVO verification matters and co-ordinating the activities of the French led Extraction Force comprising French, British and German helicopters and infantry. AWCS provided access via satellite and switching facilities to link KVCC with HQ AFSOUTH and SFOR.



First British soldiers in the Kosovo Verification Coordination Cell (KVCC) arrive via C17 in Skopje
(L-R): LCpl 'Doc' Savage, SSgt Andy Chalmers, Maj Paul Kelly and Cpls 'Caz' Castle and Billy Eckett



The Commander of Central Region Signal Group and the OC, Maj Kelly visit the Sarajevo MCM for one last time

EXERCISE OR DIE

Burning Harmony is now just a pleasant memory of an event that occupied us for seven weeks in five locations throughout The Netherlands and Germany. R SIGNALS **Capt Martin Fielding** exclaimed, 'Thank God I have the best soldiers in AFCENT' to which **Cpls Harry Harris** and 'Slasher' **Heron** enthusiastically agreed whilst working the night shift in MAIN. In fact the Exercise was so enjoyable that **Sgt Andy Butler** pined to join his HICOM switch and flew in from Sarajevo just to be with his pride and joy.



Exercise Burning Harmony - AWCS HQ Signal Troop providing all CIS for 1200 staff in Brunssum, The Netherlands

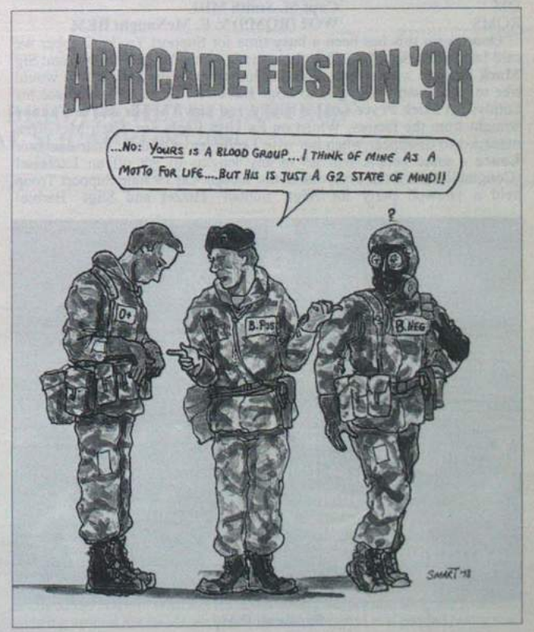
AWCS ON SAFARI

Capt Martin Fielding led a merry band to Zimbabwe in October where all had a thoroughly good time. A big red maple leaf goes to **Cpl Billy Eckett** who got more that he bargained for. It's only fitting that **SSgt Andy Chalmers** deployed on the KVCC two days after Zimbabwe, though he looked well tanned in anticipation of the delights of Skopje.

ALAS FAREWELL

We lose with this issue an OC, **Maj Kelly** who is off to be COS, 2 Sig Bde as well as **SSgt Keith Carter** who is taking his first steps towards civvy life. Leaving on promotion are **Cpls** 'Slasher' **Heron, John Mcloughlin**, 'The Knife' **Ibinson** and **Billy Eckett**.

Thank you, good luck and farewell.



4 ARMOURED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (204)

Sqn Comd — **Maj A. H. Campbell-Black**
RSM — **WO1 (RSM) D. Craig**

PAPA TROOP
by ***Cpl Pearsall***
Tp Comd — **2Lt Dave Hills**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt Norman Finnegan**

The troops returned from Poland after vanquishing the evil orange forces forever (or at least until the next Exercise). After tea and medals we looked forward to a quiet time, a wind down period before we all depart on leave for Christmas and the New Year. This time was only interrupted by a few minor events, such as our LSI, 2nd line inspections, PRE and PRE monitoring team visit, HASAW inspections, Ex Magnum Spirit, JOTES exam and practical, squadron plug-ups and JRDF mobilisation practice. Not forgetting of course the ongoing programme of servicing and inspections and normal detachment maintenance drills. In the two or three weeks in which all the above happened there are certain troop members who, due to their outstanding efforts truly deserve a mention. **Cpl** 'I'll just take the day off' **Steve Heywood**, who made the Troop store look like a Troop store again, finding the anchor of the *Mary Celeste* at the same time, as well as Lord Lucan's slippers. **Sigs Glen** 'ears' **Hislop** and **Mal** 'I had two' **Pattinson** for slaving away on the entire rover fleet and getting them through all their inspections with respectable results. **Sig Neil McElhinney** for winning the coveted 'Best Marshall' award, although how? and why? are the questions on most peoples' minds! The second lines went nearly according to plan with the lads putting in the effort and consequently getting the reports that they deserved, especially **Sig** 'Franz Klammer' **Stanton** and **Sig Paul** 'sleeping bag' **Henderson**, both managing to keep the 'A' job sheet clean.

On the JOTES side of things **'Lt Rupert Walsh'** is to be commended on his valiant effort to try and wind our new boss up.....unfortunately a valiant effort was all it was because he wasn't having any of it. Never mind there's plenty of time yet sir.....Sadly we have had to say goodbye to some valued Troop members. Departing to pastures new are: **Cpl** 'Dinger' **Bell** and his wife **Jo** who are leaving us upon promotion for good old Blighty. **LCpl Andy** 'Parky' **Parkinson** and his wife **Marie** are both off to the Royal School. Last, but not least we say goodbye to **Lt** (now Capt) **Andy Hopcraft** who leaves us for the warmer climate of the Ops Office as he takes over as the new Squadron Ops Officer. We all wish you all the very best of luck in your new postings and appointments. At this stage we welcome into our midst **2Lt Dave** 'bit of a bayonet' **Hill** who joins us straight from his Troop Commanders course, and **Sig Glyn Hayes** who also joins us straight from the factory.

SUPPORT TROOP
QM — **Capt M. Smith MBE**
RQMS — **WO2 (RQMS) V. E. McNaught BEM**

Once again this has been a busy time for Support Tp. In October we said farewell to **Sgt** 'Taff' **Doughty** who is posted to sunny 1 Div, and **Sig Mark Bryden** who is now enjoying himself in Civvy street. We would like to say a warm welcome to **SSgt Dave** 'Tit for tat' **Patrick** and his family, **Sgt Mick Pryce** and his family, and **Sigs Thewlis** and **O'Connor** straight from the factory. Whilst on Ex Ulan Eagle **Sgt Titch McGiffen** managed to disappear when his wife **Lesley** gave birth to their daughter **Laura** - some people will go to any lengths to get off an Exercise! (Congratulations from everyone in the Troop). On 19 June Support Troop held a farewell party for **SSgt** 'Suntan' **Hizzet** and **SSgt** 'Barbie' **Saunders** that was organised by **LCpls Paul Creeley** and **George Callander**. The evening was well prepared and organised apart from the weather, but what's a drop of rain compared with the water tank that both members ended up in by the end of the evening. The Bunjee run and sumo's made the evening a night to remember.


Farewell Party

EXERCISE WET RAT 17-23 OCTOBER 1998
by ***Sig Lee Slater***

With the planning and organisation complete, it was time to head off to Keil for seven days adventure sail training around the Baltic Sea. With a motley crew of six, we set sail for Marstal, our first destination. Whilst underway we had a general shake out and tried to get to the boat, which seemed to have a mind of it's own, despite the amount of experienced crew that we had on board. As we were to find out experience counts for very little when **Capt Andy Hopcraft** and myself spent the best part of the day hanging over the side and Technicolor yawning in unison. With not one jot of sympathy for the two temporarily indisposed crew-members, we crept into the harbour at Marstal under cover of darkness. After turning the boat around it was full steam ahead, off into the town, led by our trusty skipper **Cpl Stu Reynolds**, to sample a bit of Danish culture. Egos were bruised when the pick of the local female population brushed aside the younger, more sprightly members of the crew and flocked to our older and apparently more stylish skipper who handled the matter with tact, diplomacy, and subtlety and sent them packing. Cheers **Stu**!

It was to Farborg that our journey took us next. After spending the previous day settling in, it was time to get down to some serious sailing and teaching the two novices, **Sigs Jim Findlay** and **Tim Stanton** what it was all about. What the different parts of the boat are, how each part works, how each piece of kit made the boat move differently and all other basic aspects of sailing. It was a tired crew that pulled into Harbour that night, but for **Cfn Phil** 'Trucker' **Taylor** the day was not over. We had engine trouble, and being our resident mechanics expert as well as day skipper, it was down to him to try and sort it out. With only a few spare parts and a bit of inspiration, an hour later the yacht, *Kittywake* was seaworthy once again.

The following day was harder still, but our spirits weren't subdued. We took it in turns at the helm and sail changing and generally putting the boat through its paces, catching some excellent waves and putting the boat on its side. Although we assumed everyone had settled down **Capt Andy Hopcraft** proved us all wrong, by saying hello again to at least one meal a day. It turned out that Sonderborg was to be our last port of call and happened to be our home for the next two nights due to severe storm warnings. Even though the weather restricted us to the harbour area, the next day we still made use of the time and took to learning knots and the ropes that go with the job. An early finish allowed us to look around the town and a chance to do some quick shopping as well as the obligatory night life recce.

A cooked breakfast for the rest of the crew and a quick clanking of the kettle, which was the only thing that would motivate our skipper, was what saw us off the next day. As well as feeling a touch on the rough side, we had to cope with the sea, which, although calmer than the previous day was still quite rough. It was a long sail and some of the crew tried to get themselves below for a quick siesta before docking at Damp for the evening. To put our minds at rest as to who copped for pan bashing that night it was decided that we should go out for a quiet meal before turning in for some needed rest. Our final leg took us back to the port of Kiel, where, once docked it was time to clean up the boat and hand back all borrowed equipment and head off to camp. After what turned out to be an interesting and enjoyable week, everyone was glad to be back on dry land permanently, especially **Capt Andy Hopcraft** who could at last start eating properly again!

EXERCISE ULAN EAGLE
by ***Sig Nicky Moxon***

This was the third time that the Squadron had been to Poland in a year - but it was the biggest exercise by far - a Brigade FTX to test us all and it was hard work. People were tired, including myself, and levels of morale varied throughout! Most of the Squadron travelled to Poland by train which took about 24 hours and was the opportunity to get plenty of sleep as we knew that the next two weeks would be tough, but it was also an excellent opportunity to catch up on sleep on the way back. I was located at ECH CP after a rather 'pleasant' trip with the not so cautious 432 driver, **Sig Tim Stanton,** from which my nerves eventually recovered. The first few days were difficult getting into the routine of shifts and remembering things that were not new to me, but needed a bit of practice. The Comms Tps were busy in the main complex and alternate, the constant change and moves making everyone really tired, however the work rate and standards remained the same throughout. Everyone, no matter what their role put in 100% effort. That is why I think that the Exercise was beneficial to the Squadron as everyone at every level learnt something. That said, I was glad to hear that brilliant phrase 'ENDEX', but feel that I achieved a great deal as I am sure most of the Squadron would agree.

7 ARMOURED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (207)

As an extremely busy year draws to a close, the Squadron is looking forward to a well deserved break. In the period since the last edition we have supported a number of Exercises as well as the normal routine of inspections and military training. The change from training support role to training in 1999 will be welcomed by all and will provide a whole fresh set of challenges. Now, on with news from the Troops. . .

ALPHA TROOP
Tp Comd — **Lt Helen Murphy**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt James Runchman**

The Troop has had an extremely busy time of late with Exercise upon Exercise being slotted in between the usual daily tasks and inspections and we are now looking forward to a well earned rest over the festive season. Ex Ulan Eagle saw the Troop deploying to Poland in support of 4th Armoured Brigade at the end of their training year under the command of **Lt Helen Murphy** and **SSgt James Runchman**. **Sgt Tony Ward** unfortunately had to give Poland a miss due to injury and commanded the Alpha Troop rear party that consisted of **LCpl Bernie Clifton** (how the time flew for the Tp Sgt). On the return from Poland, the Panzers underwent a major re-furbishment with all radio equipment and furniture being removed from them before everything was cleaned, serviced, painted and replaced, all under the watchful eye of the Complex Cpl, **Dave Langridge**.

It hasn't all been hard work though and the Troop has managed to deploy on a few social trips as well. **Lt Helen Murphy**, **LCpl Gaz Woolley**, **Sig** 'Rossy' **Ross** and **Sig** 'Des' **White** went running off to Prague for the weekend along with other Squadron Members - a good time was had by all. Some members of the Troop, along with a few wannabe's from Bravo Troop trucked up to Berlin for an evening of entertainment and culture, being kindly accommodated in a local Bundeswehr Camp - again, a good time was had by all.

We would like to welcome to the Troop **Sgt Tony Ward,** his wife **Anja** and their two sons who join us from 15 Sig Regt, we hope you enjoy your time in the Troop. Sadly we must bid farewell to **LCpl Gaz Woolley** who leaves us in January for 1 Signal Squadron and to **Sig** 'Jock' **Devaney** who also leaves in January for 1 Mech Brigade, the Troop wish you both well in your future careers. Finally, congratulations go out to **LCpl Ginty McTurk** on being selected for promotion to Cpl, to **LCpl Dale Petty** on his recent engagement and to **Cpl Phil Jenkinson** on his forthcoming marriage and honeymoon in the Carribean.

BRAVO TROOP
Tp Comd — **Lt Adam Corkery**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt Dave Sloane**

The last month or so has been a very busy period for the troop. Firstly we would like to welcome **Sig Andy Barker** straight from Blandford and **Cpl Jim Bean** and his wife **Sharon** from 2 Sig Regt. Congratulations also to **Sig** 'Bob' **Zimmerman**, **Sig Greg Dick**, **LCpl Chris Moore** and **Cpl** 'Jonah' **Jones** on selection for the BAG football squad for a tour in Denmark. Since Ulan Eagle the Troop has been to Sennelager on a BBGT Exercise and then supported Alpha Troop on Ex Sheldrake Sword (due to a lack of good tradesmen of their own?) The Troop has also been busy with 1st lines where some quite impressive reports were achieved. We would like to say congratulations to **Sig Ian Danter** and his new wife **Stephanie** on their marriage and to **Barny Beevers** on his promotion to LCpl. Finally some farewells. Firstly to **Cpl Damon Walmsley** and his wife who has left us in favour of 1 ADSR and also to **Sig Laura Cummings** who is re-badging to the AGC. Good luck to both of you.

OPS/ES TROOP
Tp Comd — **Capt Jason Gray**
Yeoman — **WO2 (YofS) Parsons**
Foreman — **SSgt (FofS) McCullum**

Finally the end of a very busy year is drawing to a close having just finished BBGT and Ex Sheldrake Sword, with the Troop performing outstanding feats of engineering and battling the elements to provide technical assistance to the Brigade complex. To say that we spent the majority of the time playing cards in an air conditioned ERV is just a blatant lie! Massive congratulations must go to **Sgt. Jules Thorne** who, whilst trying to bluff **SSgt (FofS) 'Mac' McCallum** on the qualities of the new test rig, completed spec testing on a VRC 353 to prove his point only to be told by Mac that he hadn't even turned the set on! Nice one Jules! **Cpl Richie** 'Scratchy' **Brown** has discovered that perhaps he is not quite ready for his class 1 as he was having difficulty accepting that 18 months was 1.5 years - never mind **Richie**, you never were very good at arithmetic! Lastly a fond farewell to **Cpl Tony Thirlwell** who is off to NI (Maybe to do some work??) and a big hello to our newest recruit, **LCpl Roger Mortimer**, I hope your time here will be as enjoyable as ours.

SUPPORT TROOP
QM — **Capt (QM) Drain**
RQMS — **WO2 (RQMS) Cowan**

The Troop has been busy since returning from Ex Ulan Eagle 1998, packing and sending the worlds biggest supply of tentage back to Dulmen. During October we provided admin support for HQ RA on Ex Shelldrake Sword. Once again **LCpl (GWA) Rowles** declined the offer to join us on Exercise, using his promotion on posting to 4 Bde as an excuse. Good luck to him, or is that 4 Bde?

Congratulations to **Capt (QM) W. J. Drain** who is posted on promotion to 7 Sigs as OC HQ Sqn and to **Sig Robinson** on promotion to LCpl (and already wearing it). We are all looking forward to a well earned Christmas break before preparations start for the forthcoming LSI in February.

19 MECHANISED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (209)

ALPHA TROOP
Tp Comd — **Lt J. S. Griffiths**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt G. Steel**

It has been a while since Alpha Troop had an input into the 'Corps Mag', so there is a fair bit of news to be reported on. After a rather hectic few months following summer leave, which included numerous exercises, a Staff College Demo, a Brigade CAST (BBGT to older members), an ATD camp and RSIT, it was time for us to get away for a few days as a Troop. We embarked on a Troop Range Camp, on the north east coast, for a few days, to Whitburn Training Camp, near Sunderland. After arriving, the first days activities eventually started once the keys to the target shed were found in **SSgt Gaz Steel**'s pocket (apparently he forgot that he'd signed for them 30 minutes beforehand). The first day consisted of zeroing the rifle 5.56, and then an introduction to firing automatic, with mixed results. Put it this way, the fish won't swim so close to the beach in future. Day two we fired LSW & GPMG, and with more than 400 rounds per person on the GPMG, it was surprising the barrels stayed straight! On the third day, we had a demonstration of non-service weapons courtesy of the Durham Constabulary Fire Arms Squad, including sawn off shotgun, Uzi, sniper rifles, and the majority of issue service weapons dating back to the nineteenth century. This was followed by a march and shoot competition. Of course, there were 'extra-mural activities' during the evening which all contributed to an excellent week away.

HELLOS & GOODBYES

Finally, we would like to welcome the following to the fold; **Lt John Griffiths** from 216, **Sgt Neil Hunt, Cpl Jones** from NI, **LCpl Monty Monteith, Sigs 'O' Kay**, and **Hermitage** from 2 Sig Regt, and **Sigs** 'Unlucky Alf' **Moore** and **Sig** '21D' **Rakocevic** from the factory, hope you enjoy Catterick (By the way, we now have 3-man crews). Fond farewells go to **Lt Mike Wong** to 216, and **LCpl Nick Ions** to RMA Sandhurst, hope you enjoy your new postings. All in all, a busy period, we now look forward to winding down for Christmas. Bye.

BRAVO TROOP
by ***Signallers Whatmough*** *and* ***Banks***
Tp Comd — **Lt J. E. Toze**
Tp SSg — **SSgt M. O'Brien**

On the 8 November, two lucky members of Bravo Tp, 19MBSS, **Sigs Eddy Banks** and 'Flymo' **Whatmough**, joined the crew of HMS *Monmouth* for a week with the boys in blue. HMS *Monmouth* being a type 23 Frigate whose primary role is to hunt submarines. She is the only member of the fleet to show the black flag, as Duke of Monmouth was a traitor. The JOCOMEX exercise involved establishing a RATT link between 19 MBSS and HMS *Monmouth.* We were the 'Lucky' individuals chosen to stay on the ship, which meant we had almost a whole week at the hands of the NAVY. With stories about lonely sailors and long sea journeys swirling around our heads we bid farewell to the land and headed out to sea.

On our first day we were issued with our seasickness pills and as we bobbed around on the waters of the Channel we were told 'Ne bother lads, just a millpond this. Be rougher later on in the week.' Words which were still with us as we crawled into our tiny beds that night. We were given a guided tour of the ship by the Yeoman and told that we could visit any part, and would have the opportunity to work in the different sections. The first of these was the ops room where we were introduced to L.O.M. 'Taff' **Ford** who showed us his radar, and how the ship tracked aircraft, boats and submarines. He also told us about the weapon systems and how they worked. That night after a few drinks from 'THE FRIDGE' in the mess, which we shared with 37 other members, it was time to hit the sack.

By Sunday it was getting rougher and it took all our concentration to walk up the stairs and corridor to the comms room to meet our naval counterparts where OMC, 'Stan the man' **Felton** showed us around. The only familiar thing was the radio operator's log, which hung uselessly on the wall. Basically the ship works with signal messages from the land, via a satellite link, as well as an HF voice link when manoeuvering close to other ships. The brief tour of the comms room over Stan took us up to the bridge where we had a good view of the steadily roughening sea. With the Engine Room beckoning in the morning it was time to hit the fridge in the mess with our other 'shipmates'.

Monday brought the stokers and their engines. The ship runs on four diesel engines and two powerful gas turbines similar to jet plane engines. These required a lot of maintenance and we spent our time scuttling in small holes trying to find them. As we passed through the Orkneys we were thrilled as the waters quietened and the ship steadied. Another trip to the comms room which we now knew as the MCO (Maritime Communications Office), and we were introduced to OMC 'big Steve' **Hacking** who went into greater detail. He explained how officers could send messages from most parts of the ship, they could also pick up their messages by entering their passwords into the consoles scattered around the ship.

1400hrs on Monday and we were at anchor off North Scotland. 24hrs later and we were refuelling at Loch Ewe, and this gave our land loving Signaller's time to stretch their legs in the far north of Scotland. Back on board, the ship was refuelled and ready to go. We sailed passed 'Anthrax Island' which, as we later found out was where the British tested their biological weapons during the second world war and headed back out into the Northern Atlantic and more rough waters.

At 0811hrs the teleprinter jumped into action and we received the first test from Catterick. The link was strong and stayed almost unbroken for 48 hours. A few different conversational subjects were encountered throughout the night, but still the link held. Friday morning and it was land ahoy as we docked at Faslane. Our transport was waiting for us and we bade farewell to HMS *Monmouth* and headed, on dry land, back to Catterick.

We would both like to thank the Captain of HMS *Monmouth*, as well as the whole of the Ships Company, especially the 39 Man Mess and the staff of the MCO for their hospitality and efforts in making us feel part of the crew.



1 MECHANIZED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (215)

Sqn Comd **Maj P. J. Davies**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) D. Skimming**

BENGAL TROOP - BRIGADE MAIN HEADQUARTERS

by Sigs Chris Elliston and Andy Campbell

Tp Comd **Lt Andy Stead**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Dave Gosney**

A warm welcome first of all to our new arrivals: **LCpl Spaerpoint** from 249 Sig Sqn and **Sig Foster** from RSS Blandford. A sad farewell to **LCpl** 'Willy' **Wilson** moving to 15 Sig Regt **and LCpl Kev Bickford** on the move to 16 Sig Regt in Germany, good luck to both in their future careers and postings. The Troop has continued in its busy month with deployment on Ex Certain Death II, a Troop level shake out of the Brigade Main HQ. A highly enjoyable and constructive exercise for most, the exception being **Sgt Spence** 'Pathfinder' **Wolf**, he decided to take a short jolly around Salisbury Plain to complete what should be a ten minute journey in only a few hours, things look good for the forthcoming Sgt's Course **Spence**! The Troop is now looking forward to the Squadron Xmas 'Bad Taste' party and of course Xmas leave after another hectic year in Tidworth.

SABRE TROOP - BRIGADE FORWARD HEADQUARTERS

A farewell goes to **Cpl Tony Rosen** good luck in Herford and then there's a hello to **Sig** 'I'm too posh' **Dunn** and **Sig** 'Swiller' **Latimer** recently arrived from RSS Blandford. The Troop has carried out a number of individual tasks that deserve comment. **Sig Chris Elliston** spent a busy week with his father, **Sgt Gary Elliston**, and **Cpl Dave Penelton** recruiting for the Corps. Based in the Bath area they visited schools and taught up to 300 pupils to ride 80, 125 and 200cc motorbikes. A highly enjoyable and constructive week for themselves as well as the Corps being well represented. **Cpl** 'I've upgraded my RAM' **Williams** and **LCpl** ' The Colonel' **Shaw** spent summer leave in the COMCEN at Batus, unfortunately though it was great fun, they won't be getting the leave back, sorry boys!

EXERCISE BLACK SABRE II

The last chance to practice Troop and Squadron SOPs prior to deployment to Bosnia in March 1999. With renewed vigour the entire Troop threw themselves into vehicles ready to face the world of the renowned quagmire, that is Salisbury Plain in winter. **Lt** 'FA Cup' **Muir**, the illustrious Troop Comd had obviously spent many a night in the Mess planning this little gem of a training programme. The vehicles departed on Day 1 to the armoured vehicle maintenance stand and the self-proclaimed armour king **Cpl** 'Big Norm' **Crook.** Assisted by **SSgt** 'TinkyWinky' **Rutland** who did his utmost to persuade **Sig Kinsella** that he was enjoying the experience and comments of 'I'll stick to my rover if it's all the same,' would not pass as a valid excuse not to take part. A hectic programme followed, the Tidworth Nav-ex Rally commenced with **Sig** 'Chest Prodder' **Russell** breaking down only 1km from the start, the eventual winners turning out to be the Tidworth Orphan duo of **Sig Campbell** and **LCpl Knowles.**

Not to be outdone on the recruiting the Troop then hosted Tidworth CCF, eager to learn more about the Royal Corps and army life. **LCpl** 'Sheepdog' **Simpson** frantically herded the cadets to the waiting arms of **LCpl** 'Cam them up' **Saunders** and an introduction into high tech world of the Clansman radio. Somewhat shell shocked they then moved to see that black magic known as the Ptarmigan equipment. This was too much for them to take, as it was for most of the Squadron who also believe Ptarmigan to be a small scary, rather rare, animal and not a form of communication. Next came **Sgt** 'Ginger Princess' **Storey**'s last surprise, the CS Chamber. The NBC Instructors shenanigans were too difficult to avoid and it was with slightly puffy eyes that the Troop once again set off into the next convoy drills session, luckily this time reaching ENDEX. The relief was obvious, whilst some simply collapsed under the emotion of it all, **OCdt** 'Barry' **Jeffrey** took the moment to quickly reflect on how not to run any more generators on Kero! At last back to camp for the turnaround and the debrief in the relaxing surroundings of the pub for the informal PXR points that ensure the Troop remain at the cutting edge of the modem communications world. Next stop Bosnia 1999, no more Salisbury Plain for at least a year, can it really be true?

MOTOR TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT

MT SSgt **SSgt Forrester**
SNCO **Sgt Smith**

A busy time in the MT, but firstly a welcome to Support Troop MT, **Sig Steers, Sig Davies, Sig Turowski** and **Sig Tucker** from Blandford. Congratulations on coming off the Corporals Promotion Board, **LCpl Andy Pursglove, LCpl** 'Salty' **Towner** and also to **Cpl Chris** 'Colonel' **Umney** who successfully passed his Corporals Course and is keeping the MT in shape, and **Sgt** 'Smudge' **Smith** who has at last passed his Motor Bike Course. After returning back from Ex Lion Sun the MT has started the role of Pre Bosnia Training and getting the vehicles ready for deployment, which will be taking place March 1999.

QUARTERMASTERS DEPARTMENT

QM **Capt Phil Abbott**
RQMS **WO2 (RQMS) George Crozier**

Since returning from Summer Block Leave, it has been a very busy time in the QM's Dept with the Unit preparing for Ex Lion Sun, the annual LSI inspection and the usual handful of PRE's. But despite these side issues **Sig Debi Heath** found time to get married to **LCpl Scott Lewis** of 3 (UK) Div Sig Regt, so congratulations to her and also **Sig Ann-Marie Read** on the arrival of a baby boy. Also many congratulations to the QM on being selected for a time extension to his SSC (LE). Most of the Department deployed to Cyprus. The prize for the best tan goes to the Quartermaster and his FAN ASSISTED HAT! **SSgt Forrester** was seconded to the QM's Dept to act as RQMS, and after some rudimentary training by **Cpl Brad Bradley** and **LCpl** 'Cheesy Fat Cat' **Deas**, settled into the job very well.

Despite the restrictions put upon exercising units, **Cpl Bradley** and **LCpl Deas** managed to be socially active throughout. **Sgt Brown** managed to gain some valuable training for his impending Sgt's Course, which must have paid off because he has now successfully completed the course. **LCpl** 'Rat Boy' **Jones** and the Siggies stayed behind with the RQMS and did a complete clean up of the office and stores areas, not very exciting when the majority of the Unit where 'relaxing' in Cyprus. After everyone returned from Ex Lion Sun the Department started preparing for the impending inspections and prep for Op Palatine, Bosnia 1999. Sadly a few people will not be coming with us, so we say farewell to **LCpl** 'Rat Boy' **Jones**, who is off to 19 Mech Bde at Xmas. It is also farewell to **Sig Ann - Marie Read** and **Sig** 'Brew Assassin' **Carter** both of who leave the Service in early 1999.

Good luck to all of these and every success in the future. The Department welcomes **Sig** 'Smudge' **Smith** from Blandford, we hope he has a successful tour with the Unit. The Support Troop commitment to the Tidworth Community Action Plan continues in the form of providing assistance to 1st Tidworth Scout Troop in their efforts to build a new Scout hut. Thanks to the efforts of the QM and RQMS the car boot sales to raise money for the new Scout Hut continue to be a great success. The hut is at last starting to take shape in that the concrete foundations have been laid and for this a big thanks goes to 22 Engr Regt for their efforts. The next stage is the arrival of the pre-fabricated building which, with a bit of luck, should be on site at the beginning of the New Year.

TECHNICAL WORKSHOPS

Tp Comd **SSgt Watson**

It's been a busy period for the Tech Wksps, with many commitments such as Ex Purple Sound and Cambrian patrol safety comms. We have also had a few postings in and out of the workshops.

Firstly, and with regret the Workshop lost **Sgt Reg Ebanks** to the School of Signals, a character in his own right and the only mobile ES library in the British Army. Good luck for the future **Reg**! The long awaited arrival of the Tech SSgt was next when **SSgt Bob Watson** came to us from 37 Sig Regt (V) and immediately developed a nasty back strain. Whether this was due to the workload or a batman costume is unknown at this time. **Sgt** 'Chicken' **George** is still sowing his own brand of chaos and mayhem, although we have found that he seems to function better with his beret on! **Cpl Colin Hooson** is now well and truly settled in the Squadron, and is looking 'un' happier every day. **Cpl Mark Murphy** has been so busy representing the Squadron in various competitions that he frequently forgets his way to work. Both **Cpls Jelley** and **Paul Faizey** are counting down the days to their postings, only a few weeks to push now and sunny Tidworth will only be a warm memory. **LCpl Stu Rowbottom** remains as ever at the bottom of the food chain but with all the departures and operations looming he hopes to gain advancement.

EXERCISE LION SUN 1998

On 10 September, 215 Signal Squadron set off on Exercise Lion Sun. The aim was to develop the command skills of Junior NCO's. The secondary aim was to win the sun-tanning contest! The Exercise was split into three phases - the Live Firing Phase, Infantry Training Phase, and the Final Exercise. The phases were interspersed with adventurous training that included a medley of water sports ranging from dinghy-sailing to sub-aqua and water-skiing. There was, of course Rest and Recuperation that produced wide and varied memories, though none were sufficient to get us an early flight home.

A cross-section of rouges from the Royal Scots, A&SH, Artillery and Engineers gave us an excellent Live Firing package, really stretching the skills of all that participated. After mastering CQB ranges and live fire-team attacks, the grand finale was a live section attack through a parched valley. The GPMG sent rounds thudding over the heads of the sections whilst they destroyed an enemy tank using LAW 94. Sections then descended into the dustbowl for some hard fighting; with skills and drills honed by a week of build up training the results were impressive. After the re-org, sections tabbed back for a well deserved ice cream from 'Toni Bell', who had the knack of knowing our next location before we did!

Next came the Infantry Training Phase, a four day round robin spent in the field. The knowledge gained here was to see the troops through the Final Exercise, so OP's, Ambushes and Map Reading had to be covered. The OP's were characterised by the stars and moons seen through the CWS and NVG's. Troops learned to receive and deliver orders here and on the Ambush stand. On the Ambush stand the anticipation of triggering off their first ambush was enough to keep many eyelids open, and the results were good. The map reading was completed with comments like, 'You must be joking!... it turned out that the locals had been out and 'removed' the markers - great! However, everyone realised that if they were to get anywhere on the final Exercise the map reading would have to be spot on.



Sgt Storey and Lt Stead Live Firing GPMG (SF)

Ex Trojan Patrol, the Final Exercise was devised along the lines of a Cambrian style patrol. Patrol teams deployed on Rigid Raiders and once ashore set off in search of patrol B20 a lost Special Forces patrol (corny, but fun!) After finding the remaining patrol members and performing life saving first aid, patrols set off with a box of equipment to the next grid. This 'ammo-box' race was testing, with teams not only battling against the tough terrain but also the rising heat. After resting through the mid-day sun (there were only mad dogs out this time) teams continued on to a heli site but not before crossing a 'dangerous ravine' in the form of a command task. The patrols swarmed from the helicopter and were immediately faced with a gruelling map reading challenge before some well earned rest.



LCpl Shaw about to put a stop to Richard Branson's latest balloon challenge

Over the next night the patrols carried out Op's onto Paramali Village. The RAF unsuspecting of the eyes trained on them throughout the night. The final task was an ambush for which the patrols came together into Platoons. The now toughened soldiers were so exhausted that they had to adopt the buddy-buddy system to keep each other awake. After slaughtering the Rambo style enemy, all that remained was the extraction tab to the beach. The consensus was that Ex Trojan Patrol was hard; but that was good because it gave everyone a sense of achievement.



For Rest and Recuperation the majority of the Squadron descended onto Paphos for wild nights and hazy days. The local night clubs were inducted into the novelties of toga parties, though not all will adopt the idea! Others caught the ferry to Egypt and had a whistle stop tour of the Pyramids which was thoroughly enjoyed. After R & R the only thing left to do was to pray for rain in rainy England - and I can assure you that our wish came true!

Change of Address?
Write and let us know!

5 AIRBORNE BRIGADE
HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (216 PARACHUTE)

Farewell to **Maj Olly Halstead** and hello to **Maj Scott Workman** on his return to 216 as the new OC Sqn. Good luck to **Capt Rob Anderton-Brown** as he departs for JCSC and greetings to **Capt Roddy Wilson** as he takes on the role of Ops Officer.

ALPHA TROOP

Tp Comd **2Lt T. W. Day**
Tp SSgt **SSgt K. Read**

What was to be a relatively quiet period in the Squadron's calendar, and thus an opportune time for members of the Troop to attend courses, transpired to be an active few months with various commitments. Ex Lanyard II saw a rapid deployment of TALO Tac by C-130 Hercules from South Cerney on to Watton Airfield, closely followed by Para 1 HQ with the Rapid Air Land. Support for 1RGR during the Exercise was minimal, with the result that we found ourselves extracting by C-130 after a matter of hours on the ground.

During November, the majority of Alpha Tp took part in several days of troop training on a number of local training areas. A short comms phase, was quickly followed by 48hrs of military skills training which included, patrolling, close target recces, night orienteering, first aid, cross country driving and a sniper exercise. **Cpls Ted Page, Paul Coxon, Dave Briscoe, John Hilton** and **Rob Dawson** were, amongst others, responsible for running the Exercise which culminated in a Troop Barbecue. In **SSgt Read's** absence, **Sgts Sid James** and **Craig Dudley** headed up the Troop's responsibility of organising this year's 'All-Ranks' dinner, which was an outstanding success. A piper, a comedian and the traditional after-dinner skits represented the evenings entertainment, with special mention going to **Cpl Rob Dawson** for his impersonations of the RSM. The remainder of the period saw members of the Troop away on Rigex 1998, **2Lt** 'Doris' **Day, Cpl Eddie Cochran** and **Sigs Nic Hillyard, Steve Jones** and **Keith Williams** on Cambrian Patrol 1998, **SSgt Kev** 'Kebabs' **Read** on his EFP and **Cpls Paul Clancy** and **Mark Wyldes** on CIS conversion training in Blandford.

Congratulations go to **Sigs Brett Appleyard** and **Keith Williams** on their return from Brize Norton and earning their military parachute wings and to **Cpl** 'Dog' **Barker, LCpl Scott Finn** and **Sig** 'Dangerous' **Armstrong** on passing P Coy. Hello and welcome to **Cpl** 'Dog' **Barker, LCpl** 'Archi' **Archibald** and **Sig Dan Fallows**. The Troop says hello again to **Sigs Andrew Crabb** and **Dave Reid**, who recently returned from Batus, and farewells to **2Lt Olly Gardner** who has headed for Blandford to begin his troop commanders course, and to **Sig Gordon** 'Flash' **Wilkie** who has headed for Northern Ireland with 2 Para. Finally **Sgt Sid James, LCpl** 'Pommie' **Pearson** and **Sig Dan Fallows** recently represented the Army at Wembley for the 50th Anniversary of Scrabble Championships. They are now beginning a prolonged period of training in preparation for world domination in 'pass the parcel.'

BRAVO TROOP

Tp Comd **2Lt M. Wong**
Tp SSgt **SSgt S. Gorton**

Despite being busy with various Squadron commitments we have still managed to find time for members of the Troop to disappear off on courses. Congratulations to **Sigs Steve Andrews, Lee Bourne, Mike Allan, Russ Fyfe** and **Stu Yates** on passing P Coy and to **Sig** 'Smudge' **Smith** for gaining his military parachute wings at last! Welcome back to **Sig** 'Melv' **Melville** who has tried to short cut his way to getting to jump out of planes by spending his R&R after his attachment to 1PWRR on a civi parachute course. **Cpl** 'Nosher' **Brown** returns to these shores after a brief spell in Bosnia to have his long awaited knee operations – timing! **Cpl Si Barker** and **Sig** 'Foxy' **Fox** visited Slovenia with 249 AMF (L) Sig Sqn and **Sig** 'Shez' **Sherrington** leaves with 2 Para bound for the sunny climes of NI. 30 Sig Regt were subjected to intense preparation for combat survival by **SSgt** 'He's been scalped' **Weaver, LCpl** 'Digger' **Barnes, LCpl** 'Colonel' **Sanders** and **LCpl** 'Zero to Hero' **Witham,** who was taking a break from arresting criminals. Fair dues to **Sig** 'Delbert' **McDowell** was awarded his Army colours for Tae Kwon Do, **Sig Blackmore** for being the 'SUPER TOM', **LCpl** 'Daz' **Barnes** for getting married, **LCpl Attwell** for getting married as well and also being voted the best tradesman. Congratulations also go to **Cpl Bruce Thornton** for winning the prize for the 'Best all-round Sqn contribution for the last year! Finally welcome to **SSgt Steve Gorton** who takes over from **SSgt** 'Wav' **Weaver** who leaves us to hunt and fish in Germany.

The Squadrons annual 'Super-Tom' competition, aimed at discovering the Signaller in the Sqn with best all-round military skills was organised by **Sgt** 'Chimp' **Oliver** and was a rousing success. Sigs from across the Squadron battled through 24hrs worth of stands on the local training area, in a bid to prove their ability in a variety of areas including map reading, NBC, recognition, military knowledge and a physical phase. Good luck to the Squadron boxing team, as they put the finishing touches to their training for the Army Boxing Semi-finals on December 14th.



Members of the Squadron on the 'Super Tom' Competition

CAMBRIAN PATROL 1998

*by **Sig Hillyard** and **Sig Jones***

Patrol: **2Lt Tom** 'the bad back' **Day, Cpl Eddie** 'slow down' **Cochran, Cpl John** 'navigator' **Fawcett, Cpl Paul** 'amphibious' **Maguire, LCpl Kev** 'Sniper' **Dade, Sig Spence** 'Yomp' **Blackmore, Sig Nic** 'Batco' **Hillyard, Sig Steve** 'Wake up' **Jones**. Reserves: **Sig Justin Dine, Sig Keith Williams**.

Following a month and a half of training and preparation, including a two week training package in Sennybridge, we finally travelled up from Aldershot to Cwrt Y Gollen camp at Crickhowell on Wednesday 28 October, for an early start the following morning. At a secure holding area in the early hours of Thursday, **2Lt Tom** 'Boss' **Day** received a set of orders whilst the rest of the team were subjected to a thorough kit inspection. Following a set of patrol orders by **Mr Day** we eventually arrived at a DOP at 1300hrs to begin the patrol phase.



LCpl Kev Dade and Sig Spence Blackmore in an attempt to prove that landrovers float

We tabbed all afternoon to reach our first task which was a quick recce of a building and after half an hour we proceeded on our way when we were contacted by a patrol equipped with tracker dogs and found ourselves split up for a short period. We dodged the headlights of various rover patrols before regrouping and heading off to meet an agent. On route to the agent, **Cpl** 'Spud' **Fawcett** took various detours down unseen drops of up to 30ft. We were tasked by the agent with conducting a quick recce on another building, the suspected location of an enemy arms cache which we tabbed through the night to reach, eventually getting eyes on target as the sun rose. Patrolling through the entire morning we eventually reached our next agent, who gave us various grids, requirements and timings for the next task, a route recce and anti-armour ambush site recce. A transit van took us to our next DOP where we conducted the recce of the route and ambush site, before going to ground in a concentration area to complete a patrol report detailing our findings so far.

It was then a race against time for the patrol, keen to make progress over a long stretch of high open ground before night fell, making navigation difficult. Inevitably, night did fall and slow our progress, however we made it to the agent RV by the river, expecting a task that would involve getting wet. Prolonged heavy rain and mass flooding meant that instead we were directed to a bridge and instructed to head for the partisans HQ situated in a quarry nearby. Some confused instructions from the agent resulted in the patrol heading for the wrong quarry, by the time we realised the mistake and corrected it we were several hours behind schedule. The patrol now beginning to feel the effects of some 48hrs worth of intense patrolling began to negotiate two steep climbs to get back on route. Resorting on occasions to sledging on our Bergans, and following **Cpl** 'Magoo' **Maguire** through raging rivers we eventually reached the partisan HQ and an NBC scenario. Whilst the boss received further orders, the remainder were required to conduct confirmatory NBC tests and questions. The patrol then received a set of QBOs from **Mr Day** for a farm clearance. Instructions then arrived for the patrol to board a transit van to take us to our HQ.

On arrival at our HQ we were processed through a check of the patrols equipment, to determine the effectiveness of the patrol for future operations and to ensure that we were operating without any compromising material in our possession. There followed a patrol interview, to enable extraction of information gathered during the patrol. In a dark, cold underground room, it started to become difficult to respond to questions as some individuals eyelids began to droop. Endex followed the examination of the patrol and we were transported to Sennybridge Camp for showers, food and beer. Despite confusion of the location of the partisan HQ and subsequently excluding two stands, the Patrol received recognition for the high standard it had maintained up to and including its final agent contact resulting in the team being presented with a SILVER AWARD! Special mention should go to those who assisted in the training of the team prior to the event, but particularly to **SSgt Jack Hawkins** for overseeing the entire training and for his painstaking attention to detail.

238 (LONDON) SIGNAL SQUADRON

SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS

Sqn Comd **Maj Steve Hunt**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) 'H' Wells**

Promotions, big congratulations to **LCpl** 'Gibbo' **Gibson** and **Sig Mick Breydin** on coming off the board, at last. Congratulations are also in order to the OC, **Maj Steve Hunt,** for finally getting his ACSM (only ten years late sir!) he is no longer a ching free zone.



Sgt Wilf Kempton being presented with his 'Horseguards Photo' by the Sqn Comd

GOC LONDON DISTRICT VISIT TO THE SQUADRON

Maj Gen Webb-Carter visited the Squadron on 22 October 1998 to see what the Squadron was doing in terms of the Army CIS Group. After taking an in depth look at the Squadron, he presented a LS and GC medal to **Sgt George Roper** and a UN medal for service in the FRY to **Sig Jenny Mills**



The Sqn OC wondering if the GOC has crashed the helpdesk terminal! Mr Martin Bryant leaps to the rescue



GOC presents the medals
Back row: Capt Levins, Maj Hunt, Maj Gilchrist
Front row: Sgt Roper, GOC, Sig Mills

SOINC'S VISIT TO THE SQUADRON

Brig J. H. Griffin and the new Corps RSM, **WO1 (CRSM) C. Laycock**, visited the Squadron on Monday 16 November 1998. The SOinC had not previously visited the Squadron in any capacity, and it was the CRSM's first day in the appointment. However, a day out in London seemed a good idea and we were able to work in the sights of the capital with a brief on the various aspects of the Squadron.



Cpl Spiers briefs the SOINC on the ACISG aspects of Mike Troop

EXERCISE BLAZING BRUNO 1998
2(NC) SIGNAL BRIGADE BATTLE CAMP
*by **Sig G. Burgess***

Ex Blazing Bruno was this years' 2 (NC) Sig Bde Battle Camp held at Sennybridge from 4-9 October 1998. It all began at a horrendous hour on the morning of 4 October 1998, when Ex Blazing Bruno burst into life. The first step we had to overcome was getting everyone loaded onto the DAF's, no mean feat with the night-clubs having not long been shut. The first DAF left about 0445 driven by **Sig Mags** 'Mind the Gate' **West,** followed shortly by one of our Civvy drivers **Mr** Alan 'Brake Pumper' **Slack.**

We eventually arrived in Sennybridge seven hours later and it was straight into the programme with an excellent Pyro Demo by the two dangerous brothers, **SSgt** 'Fuse Bar' **Hadley** and **Sgt** 'Schoffs' **Schofield** who gave a perfect re-enactment of the TV Fuse Bar advert. We also had lessons on cam and concealment with **LCpl Lee** 'Uncle Fester' **Lester** who didn't quite grasp the fact that your war paint doesn't go on with a paint roller. The week progressed with first aid taken by **Cpl Paul** ' we need more blood' **Crabb** and **SSgt** 'Resusci Annie' **Smith** and patrolling/field craft taken by **SSgt Bob** 'Bundline' **Lawrence**, also several range days were included in this package. The week culminated in a dawn attack on a series of skills houses, this was the biggie, the final push and the DS threw everything at us. Casualties were taken during the final attack in the form of **Sig** 'Ouch' **Ford** who discovered it wasn't in his best interests to grab the barrel of an SF role GPMG after letting of a thousand rounds.

Hats off also to **Sig** 'Ever So' **Slight** who, after seeing **Sig Ford** burn his hand, thought he would have a bash to escape the assault course. He unfortunately came away a bit luckier with nothing but a carbon mark on his hand (Subtle Hint) next time try it while the barrel is still glowing a bit). After the attack we moved to Sennybridge assault course and took part in an inter-section competition that was triumphantly won by 2 Section. All in all an excellent week had by all.

GOC'S SPORTS DAY

On a cold and wet day in October the Squadron was fully committed to winning the GOC LONDIST Sports Day. The Squadron entered all events, Cross-Country, Rugby, Football, Badminton, Squash and Basketball. After a long day and much battling the Squadron came away with a creditable position and some silverware from the Badminton court, much to **WO2 (SSM)** 'H' **Wells'** delight in the bar afterwards.



GOC's cross-country team
(L-R): Sgt Fergi Anderson, LCpl Bill Wizz Pond, Cpl Paul Bone, Cpl Steve Hook, LCpl Gibbo Gibson, Sig Mick 'wait till I am a PTI' Breydin

238 CHALLENGE CUP 1998

Event	**Winners**
Basketball	Mike Troop
Rugby	Mike Troop
Potted Sports	Oscar/SHQ Troop

Just the Sportsman's Dinner to be held in the Mercury Club, Duke of York's on 11 December to complete this year sporting calendar. Mike Troop have won this years' competition and seem to be smarting but remember SHQ were part of the early Mike Troop wins!

Final Postions:

1st	Mike Troop	32pts
2nd	Oscar / SHQ Troop	22 pts
2nd	Radio Troop	20 pts

CORSHAM OPEN DAY

Members of the Squadron combined with 243 Sig Sqn personnel to present a stand at the Corsham Open Day. The day started with **Brig Hughes** giving a presentation to some 60 high ranking officers, using the 238 Sig Sqn PA system, complete with sound effects, provided by **Mr John Aked** and his team. Delegates then moved around a series of stands demonstrating the capabilities of the Brigade. The final stand showed the range of skills to be found in the Army CIS Group. Whilst 243 Sig Sqn provided a trencher, fibre optic splicer, CAT 5 cabling and a PA system, 238 Sig Sqn were able to show off the discrete radio equipment used for ceremonial and state occasions and the Pan European motorcycles used for Buckingham Palace dispatches. It seems that at the end of the day, all the delegates had a much clearer understanding of the skills on offer to them through the six Regional Signal Squadrons.

MIKE TROOP

Tp Comd	**Maj Richard Howes**
Tp Sgt	Vacant

The Troop welcomes **Cpl Dean Spiers** from Germany, **LCpl Mick Ambler** from N.I. and **Sigs Stew Blevins, Keith Ford, Chris McGuire** and **Ayesha Muhammed**, all of whom have arrived from the joys of Blandford. The Troop says farewell and good luck to **SSgt Dave** 'Strawberry Blonde' **Purver** who has made the reverse journey to Blandford. Also to **Sgt** 'B & H' **Kempton** (Cyprus)**, Cpl. Andy Thompson** who has found himself an excellent job in the Far East, **LCpl Daz Mark** (Civvy Street) and **Sig Jimmy Wilson** to 220 Sig Sqn. The whole Troop has been very busy lately. The Systems Techs have been dealing with the increased workload from ACISG, whilst Radio Section, ably assisted by some members of Systems Section, have had various 'ceremonials' to deal with - Remembrance Sunday, the State Opening of Parliament and various State Visits - all of which passed off without incident. PA Section has been kept incredibly busy as well and is anticipating next weeks Subbuteo competition in the Line Stores. Finally, congratulations go to the entire Troop on our glorious victory in the Squadron's Challenge Shield. Dedication, power and commitment were just three of the qualities on show by the Mike Troop Globetrotters!

OSCAR TROOP

Tp Comd	**Maj Dave Gilchrist**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Karen Ripley**

The Troop would like to say goodbye and good luck to **Sgt George Roper**, **Cpl Dave Housley** (after 22 years service), and **Sig Nadia Mitchell** who have left to join civvy street, and farewell to **Mrs Tracy Harrison** the CO3 from London Central COMMCEN who is off to pastures new. A Hello goes to **Sgt Sandra Thompson** who joins the Troop from NI.

RADIO TROOP

Tp Comd	**Capt Kerry Levins**
Tp Sgt	**Sgt Scoffs Schofield**

Yet again life in Radio Troop moves from the sublime to Full Throttle hold on tight. During the month of November Radio Troop was a blur, with Remembrance Sunday, Prince of Wales's Birthday, State Opening Of Parliament, Diplomatic Reception and a State Visit in the same month. Things could not have been busier. If any one has a slight clue on the amount of effort planning and rehearsals that go into these events then the post of Troop Commander comes up soon. All CV's to Troop Sergeant Please.

Remembrance Sunday and the timing of firing the cannon with Big Ben's first strike of eleven, was the job of **Maj Gilchrist** and **Sgt Simon** 'where's the lift then' **Schofield**. They would like to say farewell to **Brian** 'the Clock' **Davies** who is retiring after many years service and giving the same tour every year as we climb the 292 steps to the clock room. We noticed the rest breaks became longer and more frequent each time we went up the tower.

On the 13 November we were summoned to Buckingham Palace for the Prince of Wales's Birthday to assist the dignitaries and guests to their cars. This is not usually a problem, but on this occasion we had to compete with a full choir, a drunken Charlie Chaplin staring up your left nostril and dodging the Fire Breather. All this and you still had to be diplomatic with the guests, also how many other people can say that they have had sausage beans and chips at the palace. This event was followed closely with the State Opening of Parliament. There was a Three o'Clock Parade for an Early Morning Rehearsal. Mention must be made of **Sig Baz** 'Mickey Mouse' **Maitland** who had to be retrained in the art of speaking, as no one could understand him over the net when he used the new covert harness. That evening we were again at the Palace for the Diplomatic Reception where **Sig Mags** 'who is William Hague then' **West**, called over the PA system for all to hear 'Car for the BATACAN' and had to be reminded by the Ambassador that it was in fact the Vatican. Lastly The State Visit of the President of Germany at Windsor this time with a Two o' Clock Parade for an Early Morning Rehearsal. On the actual State Visit **Sig Baz** 'approximately two over' **Maitland** distinguished himself in front of **Her Majesty the Queen** when he snapped to attention in true Military fashion and one of the lenses of his glasses fell out.

The Troop would like to welcome **Cpl Steve** 'Bart' **Storey** and his wife **Elaine** and say farewell to **Cpl Jon** 'I'm going to be a copper and nick all of you' **Rowe** and **Sig Andy** 'Bouffant' **Birt** who with a new career at McDonalds should be a General by Christmas.

If responding to any advertisements in *The Wire* please mention that you saw it in your Corps magazine

242 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Since our last article, several years ago, much has changed in this 'Fixed' Signal Unit. Many personnel have come and gone and we are now, primarily, a civilian manned unit with a nucleus of military personnel. We now have:

OC	-	**Maj N. S. Stevens (Ned)**
21C	-	**Maj (Rtd) G. A. Carmichael (George)**
TOT	-	**Capt (TOT) L. F. Brown (Lee)**
WOIC H Tp	-	**WO1 (FofS) Alexander (Dave)**
FofS	-	**SSgt (FofS) O'Donnell (Jim)**

AND - yes for those of you who have served here the Chief Clerk is **Jean Livingstone**. We have recently added the range at Kirkcudbright and the Scottish 197 Help Desk to our tasking. Unfortunately a change in role for the RA Range, Hebrides has meant us no longer manning the St Kilda Detachment as it is now a DERA responsibility. Added to this we are to leave the island of Benbecula on 31 March 1999 and H Troop will cease to exist. An article by **Sgt Chris VDK (Van den Kerkhof)** on St Kilda is below. Some things do not change and we continue to lend intensive support to the Edinburgh Military Tattoo that takes up our time from the middle of July, when we start to build, to the middle of September, when we have recovered all equipment, annually. This takes two teams of six who do night on/night off for the 24 performances during August. One team is pictured below.



L-R: Iain Ingham, Stuart Gordon, Alan Douglas, Capt (TOT) Lee Brown, Sgt Mark Kane APTC, Sgt Van den Kerkhof

ST KILDA
*by **Sgt Chris Van den Kerkhof***

St Kilda is 42 nautical miles West of the Outer Hebrides and is the most isolated part of the British Isles. Being mainly cliff-bound and with great difficulty of access they have become nicknamed 'Islands on the edge of the World'. They boast the highest sea cliffs in Britain at 1400ft and the tallest sea stack at 676ft. The island of Hirta was inhabited until 1930 when the population was, by its own request, evacuated and since then it has been looked after by Scottish Natural Heritage on behalf of the National Trust for Scotland. The islands are popular for their remoteness, large colonies of sea birds and a primitive breed of wild sheep.

In 1957 the Army were granted permission to use three areas of Hirta. Two for radar tracking sites and one as a base camp. The radar tracking permitted testing of some of the larger Naval, Army and Air Force missile systems as well as the range based on Benbecula. To support this a military detachment, commanded by a Captain Royal Artillery, was stationed on the island of Hirta providing communications, power, water, heating, food, sewage disposal, medical cover and day to day maintenance. The R SIGNALS had an SNCO technician based on the island permanently who rotated through the Troop on Benbecula.

The role of the R SIGNALS personnel was to provide support to all aspects of communications including the microwave link to South Uist that carried missile telemetry, target TV systems, tracking data, telephones and the most vital of all the card-phone used by the detachment for the daily call home. Then there was the ISDX that BT was seldom able to attend, the coastguard and range safety HF radio and anything else on the island. All in all we were kept fairly busy. Sadly, after over 40 years, the Corps withdrew from St Kilda on 1 April 1998. Although many R SIGNALS will have memories of the island (some fond, some not so fond) no-one can beat the REME record of four years and six months continuous duty!



Back: Sgt Joe McGuinness, Mr (Ex SSgt) Nick Phillips
Front: Sgt Chris VDK, Cpl Euan Kinnear

The handover continues and on 31 March 1999 the Corps is to leave the Outer Hebrides for good. All members of the Corps, past or present, who served on Benbecula, S Uist or St Kilda are invited to attend the farewell day.



243 SIGNAL SQUADRON

EXERCISE BLAZING BRUNO 1998 - THE SEQUEL
*by **WO2** 'Paddy' **Morrow***

Just to remind those who missed out on Ex Blazing Bruno 'Part One', the Exercise was a combined Static Signal Squadron Battle-Camp that was conducted at Sennybridge over the period 27 September - 9 October 1998. The Squadron was overall responsible for the co-ordination and execution of the Camp. The events of Week One of the Camp were covered in the last issue of *The Wire* and went very well, culminating in a visit by the Commander HQ 2 (NC) Sig Bde. Fully revitalised after 36hrs R&R, **SSM** 'Paddy' **Morrow** and his merry band of DS eagerly awaited the arrival of the troops for week two of the Exercise. Surprisingly there was not as many dropouts as was in week one, with the Admin completed and the troops fully briefed the training commenced in earnest.

The Night Navigation exercise which was conducted on the Monday evening proved fun with the Junior Tactics Wing, ITC Wales providing recce patrols and ambushes in and around our check points. Day 2 brought the first of the injuries with **Sgt** 'Lofty' **Bartlett** injuring his knee during the Casualty Handling Exercise and **Cpl** 'Shorty' **Woodhouse** injuring his shoulder during a fieldcraft and tactics lesson. The weather for Sennybridge remained surprisingly good which kept morale high. The training went smoothly and was pretty much uneventful. 0615hrs on the Friday morning saw the final assault on Farm 13, it is thought that we used up the Corps entitlement of Pyro on that assault. Two of the exercising troops who shall remain anonymous went to the extreme to be excused the Assault Course by placing their hands on the barrels of very hot GPMGs, fortunately only minor burns were received. The exercise culminated with the Assault Course competition and the SSM receiving an early bath thanks to **Sgt Gaz Hinton** and friends. On returning to Sennybridge Camp, the weapons were cleaned and the Troops debriefed, then it was aboard the transport and home to the various corners of the UK, surprisingly the morale was still high as the troops departed, we must have been doing something wrong! Our thanks go to those personnel from 238 and 251 Signal Squadrons who formed part of the DS, for making the Camp such a success. We now look forward to the 1999 camp that is being organised by 238 Signal Squadron. See you there!



Sig Lanky Liddle hanging around



Sigs Jonna Jones and 'Lanky' Liddle trying to control their equipment



Cpl Shorty Woodhouse tunes into Sennybridge FM



LCpl 'Pugs' Powney and Sgt Gaz Hinton prepare for the off

GENERALS CUP ORIENTEERING

*by **Sgt Jim Robertson***

The Generals Cup Inter Branch Orienteering Competition at HQ LAND just happened to fall on Friday the 13th, the sky was dark and 67 runners were keen to get started. Team 6 consisted mainly of Signals and Artillery personnel, in particular were **SSM** 'Paddy' **Morrow, Sgt Jim Robertson** and **Cpl** 'Greggs' **Gregory** who finished joint second overall, finishing the 60 minute course in 48 minutes. Currently, Team 6 is leading the overall Generals Cup Competition with one sport remaining that is 'Superstars' (Whatever that is!)

LS&GC MEDAL PRESENTATION

*by **Sgt Ellie Pomeroy***

The Squadron Officers and Seniors assembled in the Sgts Mess at HQ LAND Comd on 17 November, in order to bestow the LS&GC medal upon **Sgt Pomeroy**. ACOS CIS, **Brig J. M. Shaw MBE,** kindly excepted our invitation to present the medal. The presentation was organised by **Sgt George Quar** under the watchful eye of the SSM. The only major decision the SSM had to make, leading up to the event, was whether **Sgt Pomeroy**'s husband would appreciate a bouquet of flowers or a bottle of Whiskey, a decision for the latter was made. The presentation itself was incident free and after a Curry Lunch everyone retired to the bar, where copious amounts of cheer were consumed and the old stories told, mostly by **Ellie Pomeroy** herself on how she managed 15 years of undetected crime!



Brigadier J. M. Shaw MBE and the recipient Sgt Ellie Pomeroy

249 SIGNAL SQUADRON (ALLIED COMMAND EUROPE MOBILE FORCE (LAND))

THE VISIT OF MAJOR GENERAL REITH CBE COMMANDER (AMF(L))

Maj Gen Reith (CBE) visited the Squadron on Monday 2 November whilst we were conducting our annual training programme prior to deployment to Slovenia. **Maj Gen Reith (CBE)** was met by OC Sqn, **Major Peter Holliday**, and the SSM, **WO2 Dave Cumming**, at SHQ where he was invited to sign the Sqn visitors book. Then, after a brief Squadron update by the OC, **Maj Gen Reith,** visited all the Sqn personnel who were on various activities.

Papa Tp was the first port of call, who were enjoying **2Lt Lindsey Calderhead**'s lesson on the Law of Armed Conflict, which he interrupted, by introducing himself and chatted to the lads. During this chat he asked if there was anything that they wanted to complain about, the state of single soldiers accommodation was top of the list. Included in the General's reply was the possibility of the Squadron moving to Germany, which brought a smile to some faces and a shock of horror to others! '

He then visited Support Tp who were on an NBC practical lesson and popped his head into the 12x12 were he found **Cpl Dean Wilson** in 3 Romeo having just lit his third CS tablet. Consequently, he received an unexpected mouthful of CS. Needless to say, the General was a little put out. The General then moved on to watch the Landing Point Commanders (LPC's) and the Rigger Marshallers battling it out whilst practising the rigging of trailers led by **Sgt Jase Raybould**.

Finally the General was entertained by the Seniors in the WO's and Sgt's mess where he presented **Sgt Phil Render** with his Long Service and Good Conduct medal.



LS & GC presentation

249 SIGNAL SQUADRON (AMF(L)) - KIWI TROPHY 1998

The Kiwi Trophy is the Squadron's annual march and shoot competition. It covers a distance of 22kms and involves carrying 301bs and a rifle and a ten round range shoot at a distance of 200 metres. This year the main competition took place on 29 October. The challenging course starts and finishes at the giant Kiwi, that is a chalk carving in the hillside above Bulford Camp in the shape of the New Zealand bird. It was first carved out of the hill after World War 1 by New Zealand Troops who were stationed near Bulford while they waited for their transport home. When completed, the Kiwi was 128m high and its beak 46m. It remains today as a major landmark that can be clearly seen across the Plain and the Squadron is responsible for the maintenance of the giant bird. This year the Kiwi clean up was carried out by Oscar Troop under the direction of **SSgt Chris Martin.**

The competition is a gruelling test of an individual's fitness, stamina and ability to shoot accurately. Competitors start in pairs at two-minute intervals and, as it is up to individuals to set their own pace, it is a great test of personal motivation. The course includes sections on metalled roads and on dirt tracks.

The firing range presented a major obstacle to most of the competitors as each shot missed resulted in the addition of a three-minute penalty to the individual's time. After the range only 3kms of the course remained and, for many, this was the hardest part of the route, particularly as muscle cramps had begun to set in after resting in the prone position on the firing range. The Kiwi trophy was this year won by **Cpl Dean Wilson** in a total time of 2hrs 18 mins. **Cpl Wilson** has won the trophy twice in the last three years.

The Barry trophy, which is presented in memory of **Lt J. Barry**, a former Troop Commander in 249 Sig Sqn (AMF(L)) who was killed at the Battle of Goose Green during the Falklands conflict on attachment to 2 Para is awarded to the individual with the fastest combined times for the Kiwi trophy and the 10km Nordic ski race, which is held earlier in the year, and was won this year by **Cpl Mo Pay.**



Cpl Wilson winning the event

EXERCISE CO-OPERATIVE ADVENTURE EXCHANGE 1998 SLOVENIA

On 14 November at, 'Oh my god o'clock' the main body of 249 Sig Sqn (AMF(L)) left Bulford for the snowy scenery of Slovenia. The flight was on time and all appeared to be going rather well until it was discovered that, in the hectic collection of vehicles at the port, one lone Land Rover appeared to have been left behind. So, the recovery party set off on the 5hr drive to the port. However, on reaching the Rover it was discovered that the keys for the fuel tank remained in the pocket of **SSgt (YofS) Gaz Currie.** But **SSgt Ken Marsh** and **Sgt Jase Raybould** didn't mind the drive (much).

The Squadron was dispersed to all four-corners of the Exercise area, the two principle locations were the echelon at Cerklje airfield and the Radcon element, as part of the TOC, at Brestinica. In addition the main part of the Squadron was deployed to CP and RRB locations to provide full communications facilities for the exercising Troops.

It seemed as if we had been in Slovenia for a week before the exercise had even started but that is because we had. **SSgt (YofS) Gaz Currie** had been particularly busy attempting to teach other nation's watch-keepers (AMF(L)) voice procedure. He also convinced himself that he was the reason that the girls from Alpha Troop insisted on doing day shifts.

As the Exercise progressed the voice procedure did improve especially after **Sgt Ady Simms** (I am putting weight on honest) realised that in fact he was not the GOCC! **LCpl Johnny Whitrow** managed to convince the German NBC Platoon that the blown up bridge was just exercise play! Meanwhile **SSgt** 'Saddam' **Marsh** shared his culinary knowledge with the Americans, as his new friend **Marty** insisted on his advice for the banquet for the visit of the Belgian princess. We managed to stop them serving Brussel sprouts. As **Marty** was so generous with his chocolate and cereal donations, **SSgt Ken Marsh** didn't have the heart to tell him that he was not in fact the Squadron's Head Chef.

What better way to finish an Exercise than with a march and shoot competition? The NATO Challenge Cup this year was over a distance of between 8.5 and 9.2 miles (allegedly) and, during the team briefing, the event was likened to a CFT. Some CFT! The route included sections going up waterfalls and down near vertical slopes and in total took approximately five hours. The whole team worked extremely well, but a mention must be made of **Sig Adam Rudge** and **LCpl** 'Buz' **Bury** who both did good 'crazy leg crane' impressions - some people will do anything to get rid of their Bergen's. The team finished in third place overall and a sterling effort was made by all with everyone who started completing the route and it was with smiling faces that we received the results and found that we had beaten many infantry units including 3 Para.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please advise the Subscriptions Clerk, at RHQ, IN WRITING, of any change of address.

This information should not be telephoned.

264 (SAS) SIGNAL SQUADRON

EXERCISE BIANCO DRAGON 2 - 12 SEPTEMBER 1998

Seven members of 264 (SAS) Sig Sqn recently returned from an Alpine Mountaineering Expedition to the French and Italian Alps. The primary aim of the expedition was to climb Mont Blanc the highest mountain in Western Europe at 4807m. After travelling by road to the chalet at Servoz, in the Chamonix-Mont Blanc Valley, training and acclimatisation was undertaken. This comprised of a traverse of the Aiguilles Crochues (2840m), glacier training on the Mer de Glace and a night in the Albert Premiere Hut (2702m) on the edge of the Glacier du Tour.

The following couple of days were spent in Italy climbing the Gran Paradisio (4061m). This mountain is situated in a national park and the walk up to the Chabod Hut (2750) was very scenic. This particular hut served splendid pasta (for carbo-loading) and a very fine red wine to wash it down. An early start the following morning in poor weather conditions, led through moraines, up a crevassed glacier and finally to a rocky summit tower. This achievement was everyone's first alpine 4000m peak. There was then a long descent via the Victor Emmanuelle hut.

The following day we started our ascent of Mont Blanc using a cable car and mountain railway, then walking for a couple of hours to the Tete Rousse Glacier. We now had to negotiate the Grand Couloir, this is very exposed to stone fall, thus requiring the sprinting speed of Linford Christie to cross it. The route then climbed a rocky rib for 600m to the Gouter Hut. Starting at 2am the next morning we walked for several hours in the dark until reaching the steep and narrow Bosses Ridge, which due to icy conditions over the previous fortnight had been the scene of over a dozen fatalities. Fortunately, the fresh snow made the ascent of the ridge safer. It was now only a short distance to the summit and shortly after dawn on 9 September all seven members of the expedition stood proudly on the top of Mont Blanc. After admiring stunning views of the Alps we descended via the same route, reaching the valley at 5pm, a very long but satisfying day.

The Matterhorn looked like a nice mountain to climb next, one thing is for sure, Pen-y-fan and the Brecon Beacons aren't going to seem very big for a while.

EXERCISE WINDY DRAGON
VIEW FROM STC 1 - A LIFE ON THE OCEAN WAVE

Following my little weekend sailing excursion back in June of this year, I decided to take the bull by the horns and go for a whole two weeks. We were never too far from a port in case of trouble therefore it wasn't too bad and we were alongside every night so we weren't bobbing about too much in our bunk beds. This time we took a slightly bigger boat, a Victoria 34, which had seven berths, as there was only five of us on this boat we had plenty of room. We picked up the boat from JSASTC in Gosport. Once we had taken on board all the compo, fresh rations and waterproof kit, it was time to get the boat ready for our first passage.

Even though it has been three months since I had been anywhere near a boat, remembering what you had to do with the foresail and main sail and which rope went where came back quite quickly and it didn't take too long to get back in the swing of things. The weather was pretty good to us for most of the time so shorts, t-shirt and trainers seemed to be the dress for most of the two weeks. Over the two weeks we managed to log about 212 miles sailing, going from Gosport to Lymington to The Folly on the Isle of Wight to Southampton to Beauliea to Cowes to Hamble to Gosport, to The Folly, to Hythe and finally back to Gosport. Therefore we managed to practise all the skills that we'd learnt on the first weekend and develop a few more. I even managed to remember the names of the ropes and different types of sails.

Over the two weeks travelling from place to place we all took it in turns steering and changing the foresail and mainsail in all sorts of weather conditions. Most of the time however it was nice and sunny, despite a few days when it rained and was a bit windy. It's amazing how good the promise of hot cup of tea and a hot meal seems when you've been sailing in the wind and rain, when you know that when you get into port you still have to put the boat to bed. We managed to get this cracked by splitting the crew into two watches. Although whilst we were actually sailing everyone took part, when coming into a port one watch would be below deck getting the tea and evening meal started while the other team would bring us into port. Then we'd all pull together and put the boat to bed so that we could all sit down to the evening meal as a crew. We would have dinner and then depending on where we were and how tired everyone was, we'd either go out to see what that particular town was like or just stay on board and have a few glasses of wine. This time we all had our own log books, so at the end we managed to get them signed to say that we can actually sail a bit. All in all it was a great two weeks and you never know maybe next time it will be somewhere nice and hot with blue skies, clear blue water and golden beaches, (Yeah right if you look quick you might just catch Nessie swimming past!)

COMSEC MONITORING TEAM (UNITED KINGDOM)

Sqn Comd — **Capt T. C. Crosby**
YofS — **SSgt (YofS) Hogan**

Congratulations (twice!) and goodbye to **LCpl** (now Cpl) **Geoff Wilman** and his wife **Jo** on their recent marriage, posting to 21 Sig Regt (AS) and **Geoff's** promotion. Having been on his Class 1 course and moved house three times in the last four months, I'm sure he will be happy to settle down. Also out of the lucky bag were **LCpl Scottie Hoffman** and **Sig Rennie Stuart** (now LCpl), both selected for promotion. We also say half a farewell to **Tracy Hogan** who is now on her PC Plod training up in Oxon. Finally, about to leave us is the OC, **Capt Terry Crosby** and his wife **Trudy**. They are bound for HQ MND (C) in Rheindahlen in February 1999. We wish them well, at least the orienteering hotline will quieten down!



Team photo
Back standing (L-R): LCpl Renne Stuart, Sig Kurt Muller
Front (L-R): Sig Krik Krikorian, Cpl Iain Duncan,
Capt Terry Crosby, SSgt (YofS) Hogan, LCpl Scotty Hoffman

FROM AUSTRALIA TO WALES TO SCOTLAND..... OH AND CANADA

Never let it be said that the Team doesn't travel. Whilst the OC swanned off to BATUS with half of the team, **SSgt (YofS) Mark Hogan** was busy climbing the Sydney Bridge in Australia. The sight of the bridge suddenly reminded him that he hadn't ordered any tickets to get across the Severn Bridge for a forthcoming Exercise and promptly faxed the Team from his hotel to remind us! Sad isn't it. Less than 12 hrs after getting off the flight from Australia, the YofS was off to Wales (bridge tickets et al!) with augmented mapower from 14 Sig Regt (EW). **LCpl** 'Elts' **Eltringham** and **Sig Phil Lee** moulded in so well, the latter even won an all expenses holiday for two in Antigua for performing the best 'full Monty' at a local night club! Wind swept from Wales, the Team set off for Scotland only for **Sig Kurt Muller** to firstly bog one veh in at 45 degrees and then to have its gear box seize on the homeward leg. It broke down near Carlisle - guess where he lives? Meanwhile blissfully unaware in Canada.....



The BATUS Boys
(L–R): Capt Terry Crosby, LCpl Scotty Hoffman and
LCpl Renne Stuart

NEWS FROM THE TROOPS & UOTCs

ARMY ELEMENT AIR WARFARE CENTRE RAF WADDINGTON

Well, we finally decided it was about time we let ourselves be known to the Corps and the outside world! The Army Element here at the Air Warfare Centre (AWC) is some 15 strong, comprising of 10 Royal Signals (nearly all Tele Op (Spec) bar one Tele Op (Data)), 4 Intelligence Corps and our 1 (token!) Army Air Corps representative. Having previously been named the Army Electronic Warfare Operational Support Unit (Army EWOSU) at RAF Wyton, we now operate from the Thomson Building, home of the AWC, located at RAF Waddington just outside Lincoln. Personnel are fully integrated into a tri-service environment and are dispersed throughout the building on various flights and sections, working shoulder to shoulder with our RAF and RN counterparts. The Army are actively involved in maintaining and updating the live UK Defence EW Database and also in support of Electronic Warfare (EW) equipment used by the Army Air Corps, Royal Navy, Royal Marines and our very own 14 Sig Regt (EW).

ARMY SUPPORT SECTION, LAH (EW) PROD FLT

Priding ourselves on being the only true Army 'section' in the building, we are nicely tucked away in a green corner of a mainly blue flight. Under the leadership, (is that what you call it), of newly promoted **Sgt Danny O'Neill**, we program, test and validate all Pre-flight messages (PFM's). These are used on Radar Warning Receivers (RWR's) fitted to Lynx and Gazelle helicopters of the Army Air Corps and Royal Marines and Sea Kings of the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm. We also program mission libraries for the ESM systems of 226 Sig Sqn, 14 Sig Regt (EW). The past few months have been a fairly busy period. In between knocking out streams of PFM's and libraries for the users, members of the section have been busy on their travels. The ongoing support of Op Palatine has seen **Sgt O'Neill, Cpls Lee** 'Goatie' **Ghaut, Andy** 'Bushy' **Bush** and **LCpl Ray** 'Karl Marx' **Chrispin** at some point spend a week or so on holiday in Bosnia. One memorable trip saw **Danny** 'look I can select all the gears now' **O'Neill** drop the gear box out of a land rover which was on loan from the Gurkhas. This left the team stuck in Gornji Vakuf but **Martin** 'My name is Sgt....' **Gill** came to the rescue, and with one swift phone call a Royal Navy Sea King was on its way, specially tasked to pick us up and take us back to Split. We also managed to drink more Fosters ice than is probably recommended. **Sgts O'Neill** and **Gill** (EW Ops) also 'deployed' to China Lake, California for what they claim was a terrible five weeks of hard graft in support of the Royal Navy Sea Kings on Ex High Rider 4. In between, we have been blessed with our regular jaunts down to 14 Sig Regt (EW) at sunny Brawdy, just to keep in touch with the real world and see how things are done at a proper Signals Unit!!

SPORT & SOCIAL

Despite being small in numbers we do manage to keep the Army flag flying very high on the social scene (mainly down to our two social hand grenades, alias **Gill** and **Bush**!). **Cpl Lee Ghaut** organised a highly successful Air Warfare Centre sports day in which the LAH team romped to victory, captained by **Cpl Andy Bush** (it was the tins of Carling that kept him going!). We recently said farewell to **Maj Dave Luckett.** He is posted to JSSU Oakley and we wish him well in his new surroundings. One outgoing Major means one incoming and we welcome **Maj Dave Dolling** and his family to Lincoln and the Air Warfare Centre (we're still waiting for the house warming drinks by the way). Also leaving us is 'Mr' **Ray Chrispin**. He has completed 12 years of glorious service and takes his soapbox with him into civilian life! All the best **Ray**, no doubt you will keep in touch, even if its just to give **Martin** an ear-bashing every now and then, I'm sure he'll miss it! We have also managed to make our presence felt outside of the AWC around the station. Our Intelligence Corps contingent, **Sgts Andy** 'Barbie' **Barber** and **Mark** 'Tug' **Wilson** continue to represent the Station Shooting team, **Cpl Bush** has run for the Station Orienteering team and **Sgt O'Neill** plays for the Station Football team.



Back Row (L-R): Sgt Barber, Cpl Bush, Cpl Leggett,
Sgt Eizzard, Sgt O'Neill
Front Row (L-R): Sgt Wakeling, Sgt Gill, WO1 (Supvr R) Reehal,
Maj (Tfe (R)) Luckett (R Signals), Sgt Pyemont, Sgt Wilson

600 SIGNAL TROOP

Tp Comd — **Maj Alan Eames**



OC 600 Signal Troop Maj Alan Eames surrounded
by (L-R): SSgt Chris Gouldson, Sgt Tim Mayner,
SSgt (FofS) Chris Wilson, Sgt Dave Doody,
Sgt Kev Wosika, SSgt (Yofs) Nige Richards
SSgt (FofS) Dave Petty

RSSST (UK)
PTARMIGAN SECTION

The most recent trip for the Section was to send a team to Shrewsbury for the annual screening of 35 Sig Regt (V). The team consisted of **WO2 (FofS) Mick Cambell, SSgt (FofS) Dave Petty, SSgt Keith Mardling, Sgts' Dave Doody, Kev Wosika** and PTO, **Mr Garry Annetts.**

We arrived in Shrewsbury just before the River Severn burst its banks, and awoke the next morning. Not only were we and the town isolated, our transport was stranded on its' own island. The team involved itself in MACC by helping the hotelier rescue his furniture, but unfortunately he couldn't find the generosity within him to give us a discount. Eventually the team and transport were reunited and the trip cut short, with a promise to return on a not quite so rainy day. On a more serious note, **Garry Annetts** is about to leave on promotion to HPTO and a new job in Abbey Wood, and **SSgt Keith Mardling** is leaving the Army on completion of 22 years service (will he come back as PTO?) We wish them and their families well in their new jobs.

SATCOM/EUROMUX SECTION

There have been two changes in personnel within this section of RSSST (UK). The first to go was **SSgt Nige Quaile** after completing 22 years service.



SSgt Nige Quaile delivering his speech at his dining out much
to the amusement of WO1 (YofS) Bleddyn Williams (now Capt)

SSgt Ian Munford replaced him and found that his first duty was to arrange his predecessor's dining out from the Sgts' Mess. The second change was for **SSgt Max Inman** to be posted to Army Mail (the building next door), to be replaced by **SSgt Chris Gouldson** from RSIT (in the same building). Meanwhile, **SSgt (FofS) Chris Wilson** and PTO, **Mr Charlie Cave** have been on several courses to try and keep up with ever moving technology, and ever increasing commitments.

PCGC

SSgt (YofS) Nige Richards ably supported by his team of **Sgt Steve Pope,** CO4 **Mrs Sara Clayton** and PTO **Mr Campbell Hamilton** (yes he is a Scot), have continued carrying out the task of keeping the Ptarmigan world equipped with all the software required to work. PCGC is in the unfortunate position of only being noticed if we make a mistake. What is even more unfortunate is that we are often the only ones that notice our mistakes, especially regarding the switch database. Who realized that there were no ULSIE channels for node commands for two versions of the database? Or that Air Defence Regiments were deleted from the database for three years (before my time, I add hastily)! If you are constantly having to create or amend records then please inform us, we are only a 'phone call away.



PCGC staff all agree that the wine is fine
(L-R): CO4 Sara Clayton, PTO Campbell Hamilton,
Sgt Steve Pope and SSgt (YofS) Nige Richards



The women in our (working) lives
(L-R): CO4 Mrs Sara Clayton, AO Mrs Mary Scott
AA Miss Lyn Goodchild

CDPT

The Comsec Data Production Team is a two man team, responsible for the production, distribution and accounting of the Corps 'Communication Information Packages' (CIPs), (if you use them you will know what they are)! The arrival of **Cpl Jase Wells** who joined the Troop on promotion from 30 Sig Regt, was most welcome, as he succeeded **Cpl Matt Petts** who had left five months previously for the twilight world of 264 Sig Sqn, a 100% increase in manpower overnight, thank you ACM Glasgow.

EMAN HEADQUARTERS LAND COMMAND

*by **WO1 (FofS) Harris***

When I arrived in this post in July, all seemed quiet and calm, with the outlook the same. Then August arrived and the words Spectrum Pricing and IIP became known, and the deeper you dig the bigger the hole you create. So I began to fill the hole with paper on the two subjects, and at the moment IIP is winning on the paper output side. Having reached the point of desperation, I accepted a week's break in Texas, courtesy of G6 HQ Land to find out how the Americans account for their frequencies. Finishing on Spectrum Pricing, you will all become involved in this sooner or later, the bottom line is, if the frequency is popular then it will cost a lot of money.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON OFFICER TRAINING CORPS

PERSONALITIES

Tp Comd	**Capt Joel Curry**
PSI	**WO2 (SSM) Mark Tivey**

EXERCISE PURBECK CHASE – 3/4 OCTOBER 1998

*by **WO2 (SSM) Tivey** PSI*

Following a well deserved Summer Break 12 Troop ULOTC set off on the first Special to Arms Training Weekend of the new term. The weekend was the brainchild of **Capt J. Symmons** (Late ULOTC - now DLO Banja Luka!). The Saturday was spent roaming Dorset looking for checkpoints expertly hidden by **2Lt Johns** and **WOCdt Swatridge** (Tp 21C). The Voice Procedure left a lot to be desired but we did manage to successfully negotiate a long and arduous course without over running into valuable socialising time. Sunday comprised of everyone volunteering £15 to undergo a civilian high ropes course, most found it fun and challenging with great spirit being shown, especially when it took a great Troop convincing effort to coax **Miss Philp** back down! In summary an excellent weekend was had by all and a big thank you must go to the organisers - **2Lt Johns** and **WOCdt Swatridge.**

EXERCISE FIRST LOOK (BLANDFORD) 1998

On the 30 October the Troop departed on it's Annual visit to Blandford to introduce the Second year Troop members to the home of the Corps and give the Third Years an excellent opportunity to catch up on a few old friends in the Officers Mess. Due to inclement weather Saturday was spent in the classrooms where the Troop were given Death by VP! (Judging Purbeck's efforts this was well needed!). The evening was spent being hosted by the Troop Commanders in the Officers Mess for a Halloween function as usual a fantastic night was had by all and thanks must go once again to **Capt** 'Dish' **Dave Duggan** for hosting and organising the event. Having been sponsored by SORLS for the whole weekend we thought it was only right to drag the new boy, **Capt Allan Gaffett**, out of bed to put the Troop through its paces on the Command task course. Hopefully having completed the course with **Megan** as the chief instructor this will stand us in good stead for the forthcoming Lightning Strike this year. Thanks **Megs** and your dad!

VISIT BY HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS ROYAL CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON UNIVERSITY OF LONDON FOUNDATION DAY 18 NOVEMBER 1998

On the 18 November 1998 **WO2 (SSM) Tivey** and the Ceremonial Squadron were requested to provide the Guard of Honour for the University of London Foundation Day held at Senate House London in the presence of **Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal** The University of London Officers Training Corps Honorary Colonel and Chancellor of the University of London. On arrival **HRH** was invited to inspect the Honour Guard by **WO2 (SSM) M. S. Tivey** - Royal Signals PSI. The Guard of Honour was a Tri-Service Guard provided by the University of London Officers Training Corps, The University of London Royal Naval Unit and the University of London Air Squadron. The evening was an outstanding success. A great deal of effort was put in by members of ULOTC, who provided the Guard of Honour and proved to be a credit to their Unit.



WO2 (SSM) M. S. Tivey PSI invites Her Royal Highness
The Princess Royal to inspect the Guard of Honour



Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal inspects and meets members of ULOTC

SOUTHAMPTON UNIVERSITY OFFICERS TRAINING CORPS

*by **JUO Samantha Yardley***

SIGNALS TROOP - SARAWAK 1998 - 1999

Tp PSI	**WO2 Bob Pye**
Tp Comd	**JUO Matt Carter**
Tp Sgt	**JUO Samantha Yardley**

Last year was again a very busy training year for the Troop. We worked hard and had lots of fun. The Troop is responsible for Military Training Qualification 2, signals training within SUOTC. Last summer four officer cadets visited Blandford to complete the UOTC Signals course and two more members of the troop are attending the next course. A trip to Blandford Forum was arranged early this year that proved extremely interesting and informative. We had a tour of the camp, then a visit to the Museum that was fascinating and everyone agreed it is one of the best Museums they have ever visited.

An escape and evasion weekend was organised in March this year based in Swanage and Lulworth Cove. This involved a sea move for the 'evaders' on HMS *Blazer* and an RLC landing craft. They had to make a train journey where tickets were obtained from various agents. MoD guard-dogs had a role to play in chasing and frightening the 'evaders'. Apart from one cadet taking it too seriously and going missing, (twice!), everything went smoothly.

Summer Camp 1998 was a very active time for Sarawak Tp. It was two weeks of intensive training, based in Thetford. We had some of 14 Sig Regt from 226 Sig Sqn (EW) Troop attached to us for the duration. Their Tp Comd, **Lt Charlie Roberts** a former member of SUOTC, returned to reminisce and spend summer camp with us. We were lucky enough to have their fleet of new Wolfe Landrovers to test out. We had the opportunity to split into Detachments and to put our theory into practice. With help from 14 Sig Regt the Troop learnt how to set up and site det's, use REBRO's, HF and lay line. Also how important it is to keep the generator topped up with fuel at HQ.

A number of the Troop were deployed into the field as platoon signallers and also operated in the coy HQ. To ensure more realism there was frequent moving of det's and changing of security codes. 14 Sigs also played enemy for our final attack. During camp, the Troop learned convoy drills and various skills. We visited RAF Conningsby, to see 'the Battle of Britain' exhibition. The trip also involved a practice at fire fighting.



On our R&R day we decided to descend upon Great Yarmouth! Some of the Troop and most of 14 Sig Regt soon cammed up in Union Jacks and wore silly hats to match making the locals even more wary. As usual many pubs were on the agenda. Daz and Stan decided it was worth spending a week's pay on alcohol for the night and a long taxi ride back to camp. Annual camp 1998 has been very successful and enjoyable for Sarawak who came away with improved knowledge, ability and confidence. Much fun was had by all. A big thank you to all of 14 Sig Regt who joined us. After summer camp we said goodbye and thanks for all your hard work to **WO2 Roberts** who has gone to 3 Div at Bulford. Also welcome to **WO2 Pye**, who doesn't yet know what he has let himself in for!

Forthcoming events include Ex Lightning Strike, in March, the UOTC Signals Troop competition at Blandford where we hope to do well. This weekend is renowned for bringing the different signals elements of the OTC's together and is an excellent opportunity for inter OTC competitiveness, not only in the field but in the Mess also where everybody applies themselves to the task of meeting and greeting with ardour. Many members of the Troop have moved of late. We say hello to **Liz Allen** who is at Sandhurst, and hopefully will join the Corps. Many thanks to **Sonia Taylor** who was the Tp Sgt last year and played an invaluable role on summer camp; who has now left us to play nurses!

ACF CCF CADETS NATIONAL RADIO NETWORK

The origins of the ACF/CCF Cadet National Radio Network are obscure, but it is known that after the Second World War, ACF and CCF - units were issued with WS12 and R107 sets. These sets augmented by WS19, WS22 and WS 62 were used widely on ACF/CCF networks run by the various UK Army Commands. In the 1950s a cadet ***National*** Radio Network for voice and CW was organised and sponsored by the Corps. This network, now including data, has operated ever since and very many Royal Signals personnel have obtained their first long distance HF radio-experience as cadets operating on the allotted frequencies. Adults have always monitored the net, some of them additionally being registered amateur radio enthusiasts. Amongst the monitors has been **Capt Jack Hargreaves MBE**, formerly Signals Officer at Brighton School CCF. **Capt Hargreaves** was awarded the MBE for services to cadet Signals training and was active on the National-Radio Network frequencies until 1997.

The photograph below shows **Maj Mike Vokes TD**, currently County Signals Officer, Hampshire & Isle of Wight ACF handing over a plaque to **David Walker** of the Royal Signals Museum. It bears a suitable inscription and QSL card confirming radio contacts in 1997 between **Capt Jack Hargreaves**, **Lt John Wresdell**, the current Signals Officer, Bridlington School CCF and **Maj Mike**, whilst Hants & Isle of Wight ACF were at camp in Crowborough. **Maj Mike** was himself a cadet operator at Peter Symonds School CCF, Winchester in about 1958, **Capt Hargreaves** first took up his appointment as the Senior Net Monitor. **Lt Wresdell** learnt his operating skills at Bridlington School CCF from **Capt Hargreaves**.



Maj Vokes presents the plaque to Dave Walker
at the R. Signals Museum

ACF/CCF Signals units now use PRC 320 equipment, displayed elsewhere in the museum. This equipment is a far cry in size and performance from the WS12 and R107 used almost fifty years ago. Due to security of premises and other constraints on cadets free tune, activity is perhaps not quite as prolific as it was 40 years ago, nevertheless three competitions still take place annually with as many as 20 - 25 participants. Some lunchtime and Saturday activity remains and the adult monitors try to persuade ACF units to join up on Thursday evenings at 2000hrs.

If any of the readers has precise information regarding the formation of the National Radio Net, would they please forward it to either: **Maj Vokes**, 21 Hocombe Drive, Chandlers Ford, Eastleigh, Hants SO53 5QE (01703 262551): or to **Capt Mike Buckley**, Senior Net Monitor, 12 Ramnore Ave, Croydon, Surrey CR0 5QA.

THE ROYAL SIGNALS INSTITUTION JOURNAL

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Object: To foster the professional and technical interests of the Royal Corps of Signals

For details of membership of the Institution contact Colonel A. F. Carter MBE, RHQ the Royal Corps of Signals, Blandford, Dorset, DT11 8RH

A TOUR OF DUTY
SOUTHAMPTON UOTC

News of my posting to Southampton UOTC seems like a lifetime ago! That happy day dawned in Sipovo, central Bosnia when the pace of life with 4 Armd Bde ensured that no real consideration was given to what lay ahead. Having returned to Osnabruck there were two pieces of advice which I remembered. One was from the QM, **Capt Douglas**, who said that I was to go away, get stuck in and have a good time - or words to that effect! Another set of adjectives came from the 2IC who said, 'Enjoy two years off' I wish! My predecessor was WO2 'H' Wells, a fine man who had done a fine job. His hand-over/take-over was fast efficient and he got out of the way quickly! His departure was the start of a well founded telephone 'Hot Line' brought about by two things. The first was my appreciation for the total lack of comment, during the hand-over, on personalities within the unit. He obviously presumed it was better to find those sort of things out for myself, he was right. The other was a dire need for informed knowledge on all manner of topics, often on a weekly basis.



The SUOTC Management Team – Ex Topham Hatt – July 1997



JUO John Cload on the lighter side of life – September 1997

The unit in Southampton was well situated, being physically attached to two pubs. There were also some 20 drinking establishments within a couple of hundred yards, although I would doubt any had the licensing hours the unit had! With the city just next door and military vehicles and other training facilities miles away it took a little getting used to. Having just completed an operational UN/NATO tour I was launched into a unit with irregular hours no prospect of the sight of troops for another 14 weeks. This was together with continual offers of days off. At the other end of the building was this pipe smoking grey haired 'middle-aged' man who kept saying take more days leave Sergeant Major; when the students get back, you won't know what's hit you! He was the Adjt, **Maj Derrick Heffron MBE RLC**, who had been in the British Army for far too long and in the unit for longer than I had been in the British Army. Having enjoyed a busy career, including Previous time with the TA, I thought I was ready for anything; I was not ready for the Officer Cadet, in Southampton's case 130 of them with a sprinkling of TA officers and SNCOs. The largest dilemma was working out who they were. Officer Cadets, students, officers, potential officers, soldiers, civvies, military fanatics or just plain alcoholics? I soon learnt that it was best to look at each case and score the individual on merit, at the bar!



The 14 Sig Regt 'Enemy Force' at Eastmere village, Thetford (Summer Camp 1998)

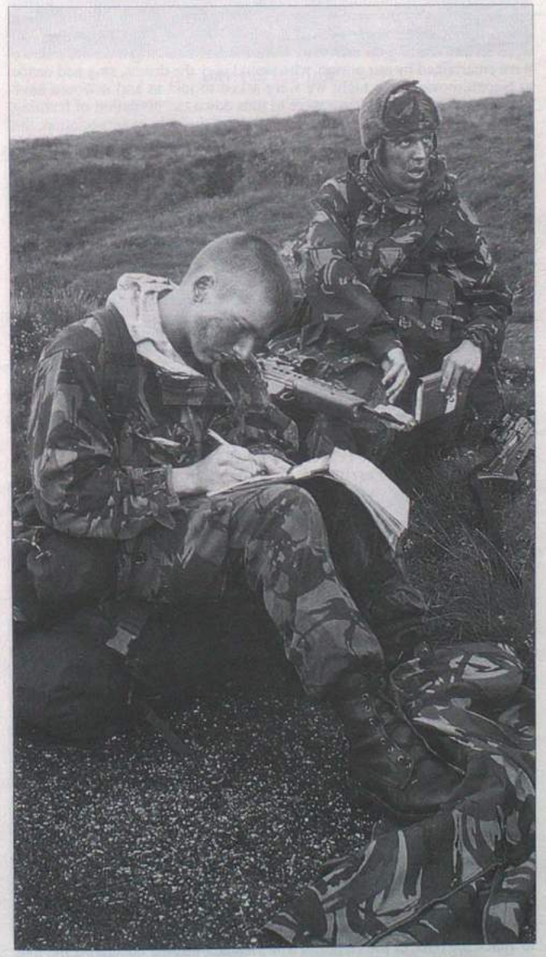


Sarawak Troop – Mast training on the Dorset coast (September 1997)

The Adjutant was right with his wise words and as soon as the Troop returned from their many summer adventures it was time to get stuck in. Drill Nights became known as National Nightmare Days. My role from the start was to look after all signal aspects within the unit. In reality that has involved training at the three different Military Training Qualification levels, supervision of the radio stores and equipment, and the major task of equipment nationalisation, from external sources, for major unit exercises. Each member of staff is also challenged with any number of other tasks. For me, that included taking up to 120 individuals away for an adventurous training week at Sennybridge in Wales each Easter. The complement of other minor tasks included maps, video support library and the management of unit training publications. The latter took three solid months to sort out -but that's another story. The interesting fact here is that I did not have to look after MT; welcome my replacement **WO2 Bob Pye** from HMS *Collingwood* - he does!



SUOTC Airhead – Summer Camp 1997



Cambrian Patrol Orders – Summer Camp 1997

It clearly became apparent that assistance from external units was essential. There were two R SIGNALS units with which we had affiliation. The first was 202 Sig Sqn, part of 3 (UK) Div at Bulford and also 63 SAS Sig Sqn (V) at Thorney Island. Over a period of two years we used all my favours in many corners of the country, more specifically:

3 (UK) Div Sig Regt. Manpower, RRB dets, generators.
14 (EW) Sig Regt. A whole Troop!
21 (AS) Sig Regt. RRB Det.
1 Mech Bde Sig. Sqn manpower, RRB det, generators
5 (AB) Sig Scla, Instructors, generator
238 Sig Sqn Instructors.

The list is not conclusive, and the opportunity is taken to thank all members of the Corps who assisted Southampton UOTC during the recent two years.

Southampton is one of the few OTCs to be blessed with a dedicated Signals Troop. There is a rank structure consisting of a Troop Commander, Sergeant and a number of Junior Under Officers (JUO's). Soon after my arrival I met **JUO's Natalie Zimmer**, **Matt Carter** and 'Taff' **Davis** who were to form the backbone of my first year in Sarawak Tp. Having been referred to as the poor relation of the other Advanced Wing Troops, namely Imphal (Infantry) and Elbe (Engineers) it was clear that either some hard graft or some good PR was required.

A clear characteristic in the average cadet is enthusiasm; lots of it! I have been privileged to serve two years in a Troop that has been blessed with many keen people, many of whom have been happy to stand up and teach. This has set the way for a steady improvement in many comms practices across the unit. At the top end, the introduction of a more formal EXCON function has resulted in standard command and control tasks are now performed by the Troop as a matter of course. The net result has also enabled Troop personnel to be marching men, and women, and play a full part in the unit as a whole. Assistance from our sponsor unit continued and we were pleased to take **Sigs Grifiths** and **Hall** from 3 (UK) Div Sig Regt on Summer Camp to Tregantle Fort. The line exercise was good fun, a function only surpassed by drinking skills and skits on the final night.

Having settled into the Unit it was clear that more fun was to be had in the second year. The summer period was spent on the Swanage Railway during Ex Topham Hatt with 16 Officer Cadets and a number of regular soldiers. Over a four-week period the team, with the help of staff at 11 Sig Regt, managed to rescue 160 soldiers, from Charlie Tp (now Kohimia Tp) and show them another part of Dorset. By October the hierarchy of the Troop had changed and **JUO Matt Carter** took over as Troop Commander assisted by **JUO's Sonia Taylor, Matt Hall, Matt Denby** and **Zoe White**. Autumn saw the annual presentation by the Signal Officer in Chiefs Recruiting and Liaison Staff. During this we were pleased to welcome the Regt Col, **Col Walters**, **Lt** (now Capt) **Parkinson** from 3 (UK) Div Sig Regt and a member of 63 (SAS) Sig Sqn (V). The visit served to further enhance interest in the Corps, although it has to he said that some of those interested have since fallen by the wayside.

In February the Regimental Colonel made a return visit in order to present the Sigs PSI with his LS&GC medal and as was likely all the sordid tales of Christmas trees to come to the fore. It was excellent to see 35 or so serving and ex-members of the Corps at the event including **Capt John Mackay** who had flown in from Bosnia, **Sgt Tony Ward** who flew in from elsewhere and former members **Dee Brooking, Lee Hilligenn, Mick Nevill** and **Andy Sinclair**. The event concluded with an 'in your face band' during which **Capt Scott Youngson** managed to scupper the Regimental Colonel's taxi arrangements. He eventually left at about three in the morning; the Officer Cadets were amused as they had never seen a real Colonel out so late before!

MASH 1998 was to see the Unit with 90 Officer Cadets in Wales engaging in adventure training activities. **JUO Matt Carter** assisted the PSI Sigs as Exercise 2IC, and **JUO Zoe White** took on mountains of stores. Grateful thanks are extended to **Capt Kerry Levens** (238 Sig Sqn), **Lt Steve Short** (216 Sig Sqn) and **Sgt Mick Openshaw** (11 Sig Regt) who assisted in the entertainment, on all fronts! Possibly the biggest coupe was the deployment of 20 members of the Radio Troop from 226 Sig Sqn, 14 Sig Regt (EW) on this years Summer Camp (held at Thetford in Norfolk). Under the Command of **Lt Charlie Roberts**, himself an ex member of the Unit, the team arrived with **SSgt Paul Jude** after an 11hr arduous drive from Brawdy (all noted the absence of **Lt Roberts** in the arrival party). Sarawak Troop, with its complement of 'wah' regulars deployed during the first week and were busy with many tasks. The dilemma during the training phase was one of balance; whether to teach **JUO Carter** about a Bde HQ and its moves across the countryside, **Sig Mel Satmon** how to tune a VRC353 or **Sig Al Copestake** how to look after the OC's weapon. Perhaps even **Sig Jonah Jones** on how to shoot. **Cpl** 'Daz' **Mordeacai** how to drive or **LCpl Matt Quinn** how to keep a driving licence! Anyway we had a plan. It involved HF training, a trip to the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight at RAF Conningsby, some convoy instruction, fire fighting with the RAF and a navigation quiz on the way home (to a field) for another barbecue. So well done to **LCpl Jeff Fawcett** for leading his team through the assessment points and **Cpl Si Quinlan** for showing the Cadets how to lose a teddy, professional style.

A long report, but then it has certainly seemed like a long tour; it was extremely enjoyable, but also hard work. Before I was posted **Lt Col Chris Melhuish** enquired whether a Technician would be well suited to the post. The answer - yes, but do a Yeomans course first or simply accept the verticle learning curve. Some of the things I will miss; Southampton, long Summer holidays, the enthusiasm of the Cadets, honest opinions, offers of help from buzzing individuals and the Adjt, **Maj Derek Heffron** who retired on the day I left after 42 years and finally of course, my Troop. Things I will not miss; Batco, equipment acquisition and National Nightmare Day on Wednesday!



EXERCISE ANNAPURNA BACKSTOP

*by **Sig Adam**, 7 Signal Regiment*

After months of planning and a lot of hard work, ten young-keen-fit soldiers, an officer and a SNCO, from the Army Youth Team in York, embarked on a journey of a lifetime to the roof of the world, Nepal. Much fund-raising went into the expedition, which included a 100km walk in the Bavarian Alps and a cocktail party held the night before we left. The 12 members of the Annapurna Backstop team were **2Lt** 'Doc' **Farrimond**, **SSgt** 'Paddy' **Hammil**, **Cpl** 'Rob' **Murray**, **LCpl** 'Ken' **Barlow**, **LCpl** 'Jo' **Cooper**, **LCpl** 'Lindsay' **Kinghorn**, **LCpl** 'Mick' **Walker**, **Sig** 'Claire' **Adam**, **Pte** 'Leane' **Dick**, **Sig** 'Bibbs' **Bibby**, **Sig** 'Kate' **Leaning** and **Sig** 'Q' **Qualtrough**. Our aim on the Exercise was to trek an arduous section of the Annapurna Circuit up to Annapurna Base Camp in order to develop fitness and enhance interdependence, endurance and self-reliance. These were all achieved so read on to find out more.

On Sunday 25 October we made our way to London Heathrow by public transport. It was quite a scene with all of our army issued rucksacks trying to scramble onto the London Underground. We checked in at the terminal and realised that we were the only Westerners on the flight, hardly surprising considering we were flying Biman Bangladesh airlines. The upholstery on the plane was like something out of Austin Powers! The music and the films on the plane put us in the mood for a taste of Nepal. 10 hours later we landed in Dhaka, Bangladesh. We then had more than enough time to have a snooze, to pluck one's eyebrows and to freshen up before our next flight. Blaming it on jet lag of course Sig Adam and Pte Dick decided they would use the water to brush their teeth. It is a 10-day incubation period for worms. They were warned! We landed in Kathmandu mid afternoon. It was amazing. The noise of the horns, the smell of open sewers on the street and the little cafes selling 'fine English breakfast, only 70 rupees'. Most of all we noticed, these people had nothing but would do anything to make the tourists welcome. We were treated like royalty almost all of the time. We spent a day here getting organised and then it was off for a 6hr-bus journey to Pokhara where we would begin our 12-day trek.

On the Wednesday night we stayed at the British Gurkha Camp, it would be our last night of luxury. Early Thursday morning we set off from New Bridge to Tikhedunga. It was a short 3hr walk to acclimatise and to get used to carrying our rucksacks that would be on our backs for the next 11 days. Each night we stayed in teahouses. Our JSMEL, who had been before, said that we would be living on dal bhat for the duration. This would make it easier for the meals to be prepared and considering that the cooks basically worked in the dark on small gas stoves it would make it easier for them. But, oh no, not 12 soldiers. **Sig Bibby** with his chips and omelettes and **2Lt Farrimond** eating six meals at one sitting, we just knew that we would have to allow at least two hours stopping for each meal!

We continued to make our way around the circuit we had chosen to do, all the time knowing that we had to get to Annapurna Base Camp situated at 4170 metres above sea level, bearing in mind that we had started off at1300 metres. The weather was hot, the sweat poured off us, we drank gallons of mineral water, but still we kept plodding. We moved further up through the valleys, onto Ghorepani, Poon Hill, Tadapani, Ghandrung, Chromrong, Himalaya and finally arriving at MBC (3700m) on Wednesday 4 November. Only another 500 metres to climb and we would have achieved our aim. We were woken at 4.30 in the morning to begin this final climb. It was a cold-crisp autumn morning and we started a slow but steady trek up the mountain. When we arrived the sun was just starting to come up over the Annapurnas. It was a glorious sight. The sense of achievement was felt between us all. We had made it in one piece, with all of our kit and with all the members of the team. From where we had started the trek, the Annapurna mountain range had seemed so far away from us and yet here we were on Thursday 5 November standing right in front of them. The feeling is so hard to explain.

We then began our descent back to Pokhara. It had become an enjoyable routine of walking, admiring the view, taking a cold shower and using the 'hole in the ground' toilets, particularly for **Cpl Murray**. During the day however, he saw a lot of the trees and the bushes! Very few injuries occurred during the trek that was quite surprising. However, Sig Leaning had an accident in the toilet and **2Lt Farrimond** fell down a sewer- what a combination. On the return journey we thought we would be going downhill but at one stage we had to climb 2020 steps to Chromrong. We were all still smiling on arrival at the teahouse. Each night on the trek we were entertained by our porters who would play the drums, sing and dance to Nepali music. Each night we were asked to join in and it would have been very disrespectful if we were to turn down the invitation of learning more about their culture. On our final night of the trek, in appreciation, the porters and our guide Babu Ram decided that it was their turn to cook us a meal. So they made us a curry and a massive chocolate cake. It was definitely the best food I had tasted on the trek. We could trust the meat as we had seen the chickens being killed. We celebrated with the new friends we had made by drinking rum tea (later forgetting about the tea) and beer, and of course not forgetting our nightly dancing and singing.

On Monday 9 November we concluded our trek in the Annapurna Region and made our way back to Pokhara. Here we had a days rest. Relaxing by the lake, sightseeing, shopping for souvenirs and probably the most memorable part was eating at the Everest Steak House. Here they served buffalo steak, which was superb. We left Pokhara on the Wednesday as it was now time to head off for the white waters of Nepal where we spent two exhilarating days rafting. We rafted from Malinga to Fishling, here we stayed overnight on the beach in tents. In the evening we sat round a big fire and chatted about the expedition so far. This was also the start of a touch of food poisoning for the group, still nobody really knows what caused it, however it was nothing serious. The next morning the males in the group decided that they didn't want to shave in the freezing cold river and so begged to wait until the sun came out. However, being an officer, **2Lt Farrimond**, decided to show the guys how brave he was by shaving. Not so that day! Today was the day that 'Bob' decided to join us and we then realised we had some stiff competition. 'Bob' was a dead human floating harmlessly down the river. Not really what you expect to see two metres in front of you while shaving! The rapids were sometimes small however we did experience some fairly scary moments. We did a lot of swimming and jumped off rocks. For some of us a little helping foot was needed by **LCpl Walker** - cheers Mick! We concluded the white water rafting phase at Panchkilo where we had lunch on the beach. We then headed off to the bus once again and travelled on for Phase 3 - Chitwan National Park.

The heat was even more intense here. Our journey into the Park was by a small wooden boat. It took four trips to get the team and the belongings across. We stayed in tents that were similar to 12 by 12s with a thatched roof. Once at Chitwan we went for jungle walks. We were excited at the thought of this as we were expecting lions, tigers and bears. Instead we smelt tiger wee, looked at rhino poo and ate leaves from a tree. However, later that day we rode on elephants. It was magnificent. All of a sudden the elephants would begin to make a lot of noise and start charging in to the bushes. The elephants had surrounded a rhinoceros and were chasing it into the water. It was great to see wildlife in its natural habitat. But the worst was yet to come. The elephants went wild again. This time they had spotted two bears. In 1993 the park decided to name them the Sloth Bear. These bears are extremely dangerous and kill a handful of locals every year. Three elephants decided to surround the bear, it ran towards us but soon backed down. It was easy to see who the King of the Jungle was now. Later the rest of the group came across the bears. This time the bear went to attack the back of the elephant. The elephant pushed up against the tree temporarily crushing Cpl Murray's legs. Additionally while we were in Chitwan we took part in elephant washing, and went on a boat ride during which we saw five crocodiles. On the final afternoon we visited a local village and met some of the locals. It made everyone appreciate what life is like in a third world country, especially since most of the group had never left Europe.

On Sunday 15 November we travelled for eight hours on the bus back to Kathmandu where we spent the last two days. During that time we went sightseeing with our guide. He took us to Durbar Square and the Royal Palace in the old part of Kathmandu. We ate out in all the lovely restaurants and of course we had to try out some of the bars, just as a small wind down of course. Wednesday 18 November was probably the saddest day for everybody, as we had to leave a beautiful country where we met so many special people. We had all realised that there is a lot more to life and that everybody has got so much to give.

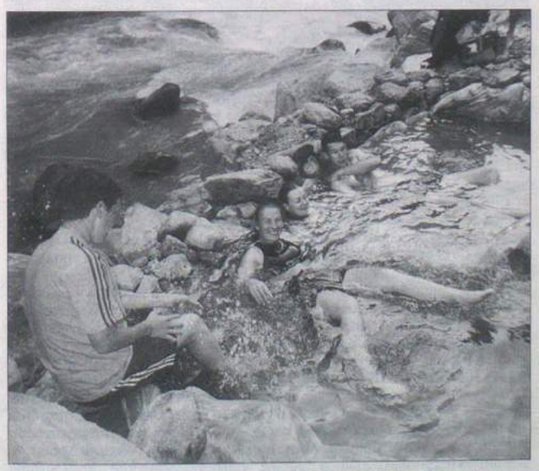
The whole team loved this expedition to Nepal, we can't just put it down to one thing. It was everything. The only way to realise what its like is by going there, and ask any of us, it is worth the world ten times over.



Day 1 of the Trek



The Team at Annapurna Base Camp



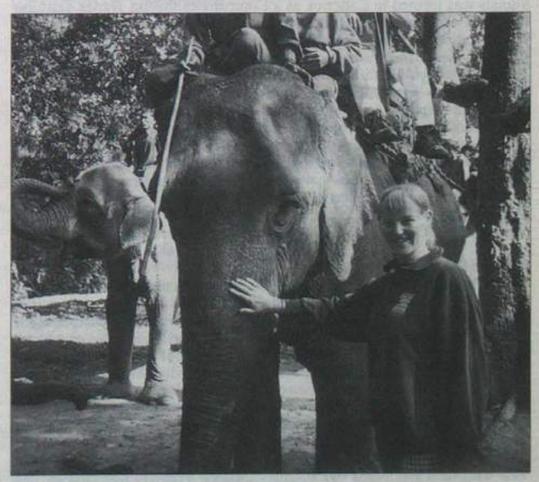
Sig Bibby, LCpl Cooper, Pte Dick and 2Lt Farrimond enjoy the Hot Spring



The Never Ending Staircase



2Lt finally discovers what a Trunk Node is!



LCpl Kinghorn finds a friend

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BOY ENTRANTS TO THE ROYAL CORPS OF SIGNALS

by Lt Col D. P. Herring, R. Signals

FOREWORD

It must be borne in mind that during the period covered by this article the school leaving age was 14 years and children of that age were expected to earn their keep, even or especially when living at home. Apprenticeships were not easy to obtain, were poorly paid, and conditions were hard. It was not uncommon for children as young as 10 years old to start their military careers in earlier times by carrying the armour and weapons of soldiers on campaign. Many of them were the sons of soldiers whose families followed the army. Wives of soldiers killed in battle were often taken over by other soldiers or cooked and cleaned for them. There were many drummer boys and buglers killed in the course of battles prior to 1914 Most of the soldiers killed in both the Great wars were young people under 25 years of age. From this it will be understood that the offer of a career with an apprenticeship was sought after and this was recognised by the government of the time as a good investment. They could afford to be selective.

PRE 1939

In 1919 the Signal Service Royal Engineers was located at Maresfield Park, Sussex. However, in 1921 this unit became the Corps of Signals. The Signal Service RE had at that time a number of boys who were being trained as Signal Mechanics, Operators and Trumpeters. The latter were also trained as Wheelwrights and Smiths; this was later changed to Despatch Riders.

In 1921 these boys were transferred to the newly formed Corps of Signals and thus began the tradition of Apprentice Boys in what became the Royal Corps of Signals.

In 1923 the War Office introduced a policy for the recruitment of boys aged between 14 and 15 years of age. Entry was by competitive examination, 60% of which would be trained as operators, 40% Instrument Mechanics and 10 Trumpeters. Education would be aimed at the Army Second Class Certificate and some up to Army First Class Certificate.

NB: in those days a second class certificate was required for promotion up to sergeant and first class to Warrant Officer.

In 1925 the Signal Training Centre moved from Maresfield Park to Catterick

In 1926 occurred a redesignation of Company names, which were lettered A B C etc in those days. At that time the boys were trained alongside the Adults in their Companies but the decision to segregate them was made and F Company became boys only with a Cadre of adults for training and administration. Thus the first Royal Corps of Signals Boys Company formed to train boys from the age of 14 years to 18 years in the trades required by the Corps.

In 1933 the Education Centre at Kemmel Lines, Catterick was constructed specifically for the educational training of boy soldiers in F Company. It was considered that selected boys were an excellent source of tradesmen required by the modern army. It was a condition of their recruitment that these boys would continue with their formal educational training. For many it was a second bite at the cherry.

By 1939, at the onset of the Second World War, F Company consisted of 180 Apprentice Boys and 10 trumpeters. 60% of which were under training as Operators, 20% as Instrument Makers and 20% Electrician Signals. Operator boys spent 18 months at the Post Office School in the middle of their course. After this they did a considerable amount of lineman training. Poor operators were mustered as linemen. Recruitment of boys was stopped probably because all available resources were required to train adults.

POST 1942

By 1942 there remained some 50 F Company Boys who were due to pass out into mans service in that year. The War Office decided to recommence the recruitment of boys and so the Boys Company Royal Signals was formed in Catterick as a Company of the 1st Trades Training Battalion, Royal Corps of Signals. In those days the Corps was formed into Battalions as if it were an infantry unit and companies were called A, B, C. etc. Hence the pre-war name of the Boys Company was F Company. To this day boys who trained pre 1939 are known as F Company Boys. The change to Squadrons occurred later when it was decided that as the Corps was originally a mounted unit and had its origins in the Royal Engineers, they should properly be called Regiments and Squadrons. In April 1942 the first of the new generation of Apprentice Tradesmen, called Boy A/T's arrived in Catterick to start their training firstly as soldiers and secondly as tradesmen. They were greeted by a number of F Company boys who had been recruited in 1939 and were still too young to go to war. These F Company Boys became the barrack room NCO's of these new recruits who were no doubt made aware of their inferiority.

RECRUITMENT

All Boy entrants were recruited through the normal recruiting offices using the competitive exam system first used in 1921, throughout the country. They were required to meet certain educational standards and sat an examination at the Recruiting Centre. This was no simple exam as I recall and most of the boys were of Grammar School standard. They were to be between the ages of 14 and 15 years, no older. About 1943 it was decided that older boys could be accepted into the army up to the age of 16. These boys were classified as General Duties Boys (G/D Boy) and they were to be trained in the lower skills of lineman etc. In fact many of them were trained in the higher skills and did equally well in their chosen career. As these G/D boys arrived at irregular intervals they did not fit in well with the established twice yearly intakes, Many joined courses late whilst others attended specially adapted courses. All entrants were required to sign on for eight years with the Colours and four years on the reserve from after the age of 18 years. They were committed on entry.

TRAINING

Education - All entrants were required to complete a six-week Drill and Duties course under their drill sergeant, (they could be returned to civilian life but this was quite rare). They were also required to attend education classes in English, Mathematics, Geography and Map Reading, to prepare for sitting the Army First Class Certificate of Education. It was arranged to be taken over two years, half of the subjects were taken in each year and examined separately. On completion of the exam the certificate was awarded. This qualification was required for promotion to Warrant Officer. Those who completed the First Class Exam were further trained in French, English(C), Mathematics (B) and Physics (E&M) which comprised the Army Special Certificate of Education This certificate was required for entry to Commissioned Officer Rank.

Trade Training - At the beginning Trade Training was undertaken with the adults but gradually the Company obtained its own facilities and eventually became completely separate from the men. All entrants were required to train as Operators Wireless and Line (OWL) for their first year of service. At that stage they were able to send and receive Morse Code at up to 20 words per minute, although the actual trade test was set at 12 WPM. Voice procedures were also taught and tested as a part of this training. During this first year the entrants were given aptitude tests to enable them to be graded for the next stage of their training. These Tests were called D & SP Tests and were early attempts to assess intelligence. On completion of the first year the intakes were divide up into different squads by trade and completed their training over the next two years. Training for the technician trades was restricted to those who expressed a desire to become technicians and who had performed satisfactorily as operators. The trades which were taught were as follows:-

Operator Wireless and Line (OWL B11)
Operator Wireless & Keyboard (OWK A111)
Operator Keyboard & Line (OKL B11
Radio Mechanic (RM A111)
Telegraph Mechanic (TM A111)
Line Mechanic (LM A111)
Lineman PL
Lineman Field

NB: The designation A111 reflected the pay scale of the recipient who were able to progress to A1 the highest rate for the trade. B trades were paid on a lower scale.

Before leaving the Company all boys were taught to drive cars, trucks (3Ton) and motor cycle and took a driving licence examination. At 18 years they were ready and willing to get out there and practice their trades. Many of them left the army after eight years and led successful lives in the community as civilians.

It is worthy of note that many of those remained for a full career of 22 years whilst others were commissioned, one of the ex F Company Boys reached the top of the tree and became Signal Officer in Chief (Major General) whilst others were brigadiers and colonels. A large number became Quartermasters in the Corps and specialist Officers such as, Technical Officers Telecommunications (TOT), Traffic Officers (TO) and MT Officers (MTO). Today these appointments still exist and are filled by Late Entry Officers; the current designation of those commissioned directly from the ranks. In 1948 those boys remaining in Catterick were transferred to the AAC Harrogate. They took with them the traditions of Royal Signals and for some it was not a happy marriage. Their esprit de Corps went with them and they acquitted themselves well in all fields until in the fullness of time they all passed out into the Corps. By 1945 there were some 350 boys under training.

POST 1948

In 1948 the MoD made a decision to combine all Army Apprentice training for the army at a new facility in Harrogate. This meant that all of the Corps who had apprentices had to send them there for training. The Army Apprentices School at Harrogate was given to the Royal Army Education Corps to run and the military side was handed over to the Guards. Naturally that was the beginning of the end but it was not to last as before long the RE and REME decided to take back their boys and the AAC became Royal Signals only. The original concept of a school of 1000 boys was dropped and in 1987 the AAC closed. The remaining boys were sent to Blandford to be trained there, but shortly after it was decided that there was no need for apprentices as the school leaving age was 16 years giving insufficient time to train the boys at a special establishment. The decision to set up a combined Regiment for all the Corps at Arborfield with a squadron for each arm was made with training as adults after completion of their induction courses. For the moment that is the status of apprentice training. They are back where they started in 1929 being trained with the adults at Blandford, the new home of the Royal Corps of Signals, after their basic training at Arborfield

OTHER BOYS ORGANISATIONS IN THE ROYAL SIGNALS

There have been other boys training schools set up for the army and in particular R Signals. These were for Junior Leaders, boys who were too old to go to AAC Harrogate, but before AAC there was a Junior Leader Squadron at Beverley, Yorks. This Squadron moved to Newton Abbott in Devon. There was also a Junior Leaders Squadron at Ouston, Northumberland. All these boys entered the Corps at 18 and were trained as tradesmen with the adults at Catterick.

EXERCISE ZAMBEZI BACKSTOP

by Sgt S. Nice Royal Signals

A grey cold Saturday 3 October saw a group of ten AFCENT personnel assemble in Brunssum, Holland for transport to whisk them away toward Frankfurt airport and then on to Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, to take part in Ex Zambezi Backstop. The group, led by **Capt Martin Fielding**, and made up of eight other members of the Royal Signals plus one member of the RAF, had been in training for the expedition since May. The training had involved Kayaking, PT sessions and treks; we were now going to see if it would pay off.

SUNDAY 4 OCTOBER

After 15 hours of flying the team finally arrived in Victoria Falls. Following a trip to the Bureau De Change, where we discovered that we were all now, what could only be described as very wealthy. We were then taken onto what would be our base for the next two weeks, a basic but comfortable backpackers lodge on the edge of town. Whilst some members of the team went off to carry out recce's for the various activities and discover how great African bureaucracy can be, the remainder spent some time acclimatising and discovering the charms of the town. After twenty minutes the main charms had been discovered in the shape of Explorers bar and the Downtime club as well as local specialities sampled (well, local beers anyway!)



The group at the Livingstone statue
Back Row (L-R): SSgt Sean Alexander High, LCpl 'Scouse' McLoughlin, Sgt Si Nice, SSgt Andy Chalmers, Cpl Chris Eckett, Cpl Phil Heron, Capt Martin Fielding (OC exped), Sgt Rob Ash
Front Row (L-R): Cpl Billy Gilroy (RAF), Sgt Jon Hatch

MONDAY 5 OCTOBER

Our first full day, more acclimatisation, and forced changes in our plans. We agreed to meet for lunch at what can only be described as a shining example of colonialism. The place: The Victoria Falls Hotel if you have the means I'd recommend it. Sitting on the patio sipping cocktails with our food, we were told of the changes to our trek plans. Once we moved away from the delights of the hotel some went to check into kayaking, others to look at the falls or around town. It was at this point our RAF team member chose to show his true colours and bought himself a safari waistcoat which when worn gave him a certain resemblance to Christopher Biggins.

TUESDAY 6 OCTOBER

Trek Day One: At 9:00 am packs loaded, large amounts of water being carried we set off on the trek with our guide named okay, (whose sense of timing was out as everywhere was just 15 minutes away). For some reason he seemed to think we were on a CFT or so it felt with the pace he was setting. Once out of town we moved off the roads and into the bush. With the temperature already into the thirties the going was tough and water consumption very high. As timing goes, this was probably the worst moment to start experiencing food poisoning, as **Billy** 'Biggins' **Gilroy** became the first of four to complain of stomach problems caused, apparently, by the local Vumba cheese! After four hours hard walking we finally reached the top of the gorge and we were greeted with a spectacular view of the river. The descent into the gorge was at best treacherous with a series of steps and ladders held together by pieces of wire and stakes, which had often worked loose. **Cpl Chris** 'Don't like the sun' **Eckett** now became the second victim of stomach problems during a knee hammering descent. On reaching the bottom of the gorge the group split into two for the next leg that was to a campsite for the night with the packs of **Billy** 'Buzz Light Weight' **Gilroy** and **Chris Eckett** having to be carried by **SSgt** 'Quarke' **Alexander-High** and **Sgt Rob Ash**.



A quick water stop on the trek. Nice hats lads!

The conditions in the gorge were beyond anything we had expected with no shade and no path, just an undulating line of boulders to scramble over. With temperatures now into the high thirties and heat reflecting off the rocks the going, to say the least was tough. After another break which saw **Sgts Jon Hatch** and **Si Nice** going through the 'Vumba' motions we finally reached a campsite by the side of the river and pitched camp for the night. After a quick dip in the river, during which **SSgt Andy Chalmers** scared all wildlife away by going natural, dinner was eaten by the then tired and hungry team and all settled down for the night, only to be regularly disturbed by **Chris Eckett** and his impression of a man about to die, end of day score: Zambezi Backstop 0 Vumba Cheese 4.

WEDNESDAY 7 OCTOBER

Trek Day Two: An early start at about 5:00am. **Chris** had made no improvement on his condition overnight and we soon realised that we would have to split his pack up between the rest of the team. By 9:00 am the sun had hit the gorge and the heat was becoming a relentless force to contend with. The terrain once again hindered us and we were covering ground at a much slower rate than planned, around 1km per hour, with plenty of stops required. After 7km we reached rapid number 18 the aptly named Oblivion, and rested up for a few hours. Due to **Chris**'s condition the decision was made to end the trek early and leave the gorge. The walk out was by no means easy for anyone, even those who hadn't eaten the cheese. We were met at the top by transport, which carried a very tired and relieved group back to Victoria Falls.

THURSDAY 8 OCTOBER

Trek Day Three (Well it should have been): Originally planned as the final day of the trek; a change of plan was undertaken to fill what would have been an idle adrenalin free day, with a moment of sheer terror-a bungi-jump off the Victoria Falls bridge! One hundred and fourteen metres straight down, with only knicker elastic to keep you alive. Before heading out to the bridge where the jump takes place, the Zambezi Backstop Golf Classic was played on the beautiful Elephants Hill golf course. The result being that the OC expedition won the match, but only after he insisted on having a 28 shot handicap for 9 holes. Eventually we trooped out onto the bridge, and made our leaps of faith. The OC, of course, led the way (the draw for jump order wasn't rigged) and like lemmings the remainder followed. A special mention must be made of **LCpl** 'Scouse' **Mcloughlin** and his attempt to fly. No matter how hard you flap those arms you will still go downwards.

FRIDAY 9 OCTOBER

Rest Day: Everyone took advantage of the day to rest and sort their kit. Followed in the evening by a game viewing cruise down the river. Unfortunately some one forgot to tell the game. Each time we got close to any animals they made a sharp exit, but aside from that a pleasant evening was had by all. Watching the sunset as we drifted down the river whilst enjoying a beer or two.

SATURDAY 10 OCTOBER

Almost Kayaking: Having found out late the previous day that we would not be able to get the required kayak equipment for the day, a day's safari was arranged in the National Park. A morning game drive following the line of the Chobe River gave us all the chance to see plenty of wild life up close in their natural surroundings, a definite improvement on Chester Zoo. After lunch it was all on board for a game cruise, where this time we saw plenty, managing to get right up to a Hippopotamus. This prompted plenty of comments to **Sgt Jon** 'Hippo Hunter' **Hatch** about his previous night's conquest.

SUNDAY 11 OCTOBER

Kayak Familiarisation: After having to bodge some repairs onto the kayaks we had hired (die black nasty tape always comes in handy) we found ourselves at rapid three for the day, getting use to the high volume of water. Under the guidance of our resident experts **Rob Ash** and 'Buzz Lightweight' **Gilroy**, even such kayaking novices as **Si Nice** managed to stay upright temporarily. Longest swim of the day to **Sean Alexander High** who was last seen floating toward rapid four with his kayak doing a good impression of the *Titanic*. Most stylish kayaker goes to **SSgt Andy Chalmers** who seemed to be wearing a tutu as opposed to a spray deck.

MONDAY 12 OCTOBER

Kayak Phase Day One: The start of the main kayaking phase opened up at rapid number four. A gentle grade three to start the day, which was just enough to give a taste of what was to come. Some of the highlights of the day included rapid number eight with two possible lines. We all seemed to lose control of our senses at this point and chose to take the 'go big' line known as Star Trek. With just the experts making it through, the remainder decided to try it from other angles (generally upside down). This turned out to be an excellent test of our buoyancy aids. Once you've been thrown around a few times under water, up can be a difficult direction to find. The next rapid called 'commercial suicide' turned out to be an excellent test of our sandals as we took the sensible option and walked around. A name like that is only gained through good reason. The rest of the day saw us through such aptly named places as the Devil's Toilet Bowl, the Washing Machine, Three Sisters, the Mother and the legendary Oblivion. Which is made up of a sharp drop and three very large waves, one of which is bound to get you. A mention must go to **Billy Gilroy** who achieved the fastest ejection ever while in a Duo (a type of two-man kayak), leaving **Si Nice** at the front of the kayak to shoot the remainder of Morning Glory underwater. Kayaking novice **Cpl Phil Heron** showed us how its done by being one of only two people to complete number twenty three upright, the other being resident Kayak guru **Rob Ash**. Rapid twenty-three also saw the end for the day and time to camp up for the night.

TUESDAY 13 OCTOBER

Kayak Phase Day Two: The day saw a much more leisurely day with long slack areas of water to follow as the gorge opened up into Crocodile water. Not the best place to practice rolling a Duo, **Rob Ash**, especially if you don't achieve it. There were some slightly more technical rapids; as well as longer rapids such as Narrows One, Two and Three. Due to the size



Cpl Phil Heron riding his luck through rapid number twenty three

of some of the rapids, portage around was required. Though **Rob Ash** and **Billy Gilroy** were usually willing to play with the big water. The final rapid of the day gave some close calls due to the tightness of the line and the rocks on either side, which seemed for a few a little too close for comfort. The day finished at a proposed dam site for the Zambezi with a long walk out to our campsite for the night where the OC had arranged for beer and food to be dropped off for us. A fitting end to the kayak phase, as we swapped stories and watch the sun drop below the surrounding hills.

WEDNESDAY 14 OCTOBER

Return to Victoria Falls: An early pick up from our campsite saw us back to our lodge for lunch, after a bone-shaking ride. Once showered and suitably refreshed the group went to view the falls and have the obligatory *Wire* photo taken. The falls themselves are an awesome sight, even though they were not in full flow at the time.
(Editor: What happened to the 'obligatory' WIRE photo?)

THURSAY 15 OCTOBER

For our final day we decided to get back on the water, and this time white water raft down the river for the morning. The raft guides Sven and May, seemed to think that they were on some sort of mission to traumatise the whole group. This generally involved turning the raft over as often as possible in as big a water as possible. Perhaps this was the reason **Andy Chalmers** seemed to spend the morning hiding in the bottom of the raft, though how **Billy Gilroy** could fall out with the slightest ripple of water remains a mystery. After the lunch stop we changed to Body Boards to try and 'surf the river. An experience well worth trying but very tiring all the same. Going into the third wave at Oblivion was compared to running head on into an All Black fullback, a description that didn't seem far from the truth. By the end of the day we thought we were more proficient than we actually were, though I'm convinced our Barrel Rolls were pretty impressive.

FRIDAY 16 OCTOBER

The final day found us with just enough time to souvenir shop and to have a last couple of cocktails and lunch. Some more than others, or perhaps it was just jet lag that affected **John Mcloughlin** on an internal flight! It was soon time, to move and make the return trip to Holland where it was only as we expected, cold and grey. A great experience was had by all and Zimbabwe is highly recommended as an expedition location. It just remains to thank **Capt Fielding** for arranging the expedition and all others who supported us and helped make the expedition a success.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

A unit perspective to gaining the award

*by **Maj S. C. Green BSc (Hons), MIIE (Elec), TEM***

WHAT IS IIP ALL ABOUT?

I first became aware of IIP whilst casually reading 'Focus', the MOD Journal. In it was a list of the latest awards for Investors In People (IIP) and third from the top was a Territorial Army (TA) unit which sparked a casual enquiry that became a route to my Regiment joining a select few Army units. This was in early 1997 and 16 months later, 34 (Northern) Signal Regiment (Volunteers) has gained IIP accreditation for its TA, Regular, and Civil Service staff covering five TA Centres (TACs) across the North East of England.

The first point of contact was the local Training & Enterprise Council (TEC), in our case this was the Tees Valley TEC. Each TEC has an IIP advisor who is there to promote the standard within their region. Initial meetings and a visit to the Regiment by the advisor gave encouragement and an early realisation that IIP really is about people and their part in the 'corporate goal'. IIP is intended to focus Training & Development (T&D) within a business organisation ultimately towards greater profit, output and competitiveness. For a military unit this business output equates to Military Capability (MC) and, as the Army generally considers the soldier its most valued asset, the standards seemed ideally suited to improving unit standards. The Army, The Royal Corps of Signals and the Regiment had so many different systems already in place, it was difficult to see where we might be going wrong - if at all. The first step was to see how the unit measured up against the IIP standard that is measured against 23 different indicators, in the areas of Commitment, Planning, Action and Evaluation.

THE PRINCIPLES OF INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

The IIP standard is based on four principles:

COMMITMENT to develop all employees to achieve the organisations goals and targets.

PLAN and regular review of the training and development needs of people throughout their employment.

ACTION to meet the training and development needs of people throughout their employment.

EVALUATION of the organisations investment in training and development to assess achievement and improve future effectiveness.

MOTIVATING FACTORS

A more detailed investigation of the indicators revealed that IIP is largely common sense and good leadership - qualities that should abound in plenty in any Army unit. For a TA unit conducting all of its Class 3 and 2 trade training in house, much of its recruit and promotion training, and all of its continuation training, it was a good method of self-evaluation and of focusing meagre resources more efficiently. In addition TA units undertake their own publicity, advertising and recruiting, therefore IIP would provide another avenue for raising awareness with local employers and potential recruits. The annual turnover of personnel within the Regiment was around 20%, some of which is quite normal and healthy, some of which could possibly be eliminated by more effective training and career management. At this time, the MoD was still defining its own policy regarding IIP, so no guidelines existed, and more importantly no rules existed to prevent the unit commencing accreditation. I consider the main benefits to be gained by IIP are at unit level. Whilst it could be argued that the Army or MoD, as a corporate body, would provide the best top level solution, the higher up the chain-of-command IIP is applied the more removed from the workforce the principles become, and some of the potential effectiveness is diluted.

AUTONOMY AND AUTHORITY

An initial hurdle to be overcome was to prove that the requirements by IIP(UK) for both authority and autonomy were satisfied. A short justification was submitted to the TEC advisor who supported the Regiment's application. As a subordinate unit, we were granted written authority from both OPCON and ADMINCON Brigade Headquarters. Although the case for both authority and autonomy is, I agree, debatable for a unit, in broad terms we satisfied sufficient criteria (only 3 from 5 are required) as follows:

Mandatory

- The unit had a separate written but flexible plan that set the unit's goals and targets.
- Devises and implements its own plan for the T&D of staff and has authority to change it.
- Controls resources that support T&D within the unit.

Other Organisational Features

- Has separate financial and management accounts.
- Has a branding identity that is separate from any parent organisation.
- Is the main focus for loyalty for its staff.

ROUTE TO ACHIEVEMENT

As a benchmark exercise, to determine how close we were to meeting the standard, the TEC offered a model questionnaire for Managers (Sergeants and above) and Employees (all ranks), this was completed by 120 members of the Regiment during a PTARMIGAN Deployment Exercise in April 1997. The advice and bench marking are all conducted free of charge by the TEC, so this offered the unit, at the very least, a method of determining the current effectiveness of our T&D, effectively an external audit. The results were very encouraging, quoted as 'the best initial survey results the Tees Valley TEC has ever seen'. From a standing start, and using a questionnaire in IIP terminology, we were about 80% effective at meeting the standard. The results, however highlighted the following areas for improvement, which from previous ADTN articles appear common to many:

- There was a lack of readily available information on T&D
- The civilian staff felt woefully neglected.
- Some managers did not want to take responsibility for T&D matters for subordinates.
- There was a general feeling that individuals did not appreciate their position and contribution towards the 'mission'.
- There was a lack of communications in the internal chain-of-command.
- There was a very distinct difference of perception between employees and managers - the workforce was not as well looked after as the managers had thought!

In terms of the four areas, we were certainly lacking in the amount of evaluation we were doing, at the three constituent levels: individual, squadron and regimental. Most of those surveyed thought the unit was committed, but there was some uncertainty about how this was planned and what action was related to improving standards. The detail provided from the evaluation of the results meant that problem areas could be related to sites, such as squadrons or troops; groups of individuals, such as managers or employees; and types of employees such as civilian, TA or Regular.

As a method of providing incentive to the dispersed squadrons the results were promulgated to squadron commanders for their own evaluation and to encourage 'problem ownership'. Although the initial aim was to develop squadron action plans many of the problem areas were so common to each site it was decided to have one basic regimental plan. The Regiment is dispersed over five geographical sites at; Middlesbrough, Darlington, Leeds, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Hull. For the unit to gain accreditation, assessment would have to be undertaken on individuals at each site. Though evidence of compliance is submitted as a portfolio, an on-site assessment is also carried out on at least 10% of the workforce. Providing unrestricted access to an external assessment body on a random selection of the soldiers under command could be the Commanding Officer's ultimate test - or nightmare! From this initial evaluation an action plan was devised, each serial specifically targeted at one or other of the 23 indicators. Some of the primary means used to improve our T&D are outlined below:

- **Regimental Training Instruction.** A baseline document that specified both the Regimental frame work and the CO's annual training plan was lacking as a formal document. The Regimental Training Instruction published the guidelines, from sources such as the Signal Officer-in-Chief (Army) Policy Directives SOinC (A) PDs and Royal Signals TA Training Objectives (TATOs). In addition this framework document was used to introduce Systems Approach to Training (SAT) techniques for the much needed post-training evaluation. For any Training Officer the Management of Training Course (ADP Code 5767) at the Army School of Training Support is a highly recommended qualification. In addition to conducting the unit's own Internal Validation (INVAL), a form was introduced to justify both the need for specified courses and to evaluate the benefits gained from specific training 2 months after its completion. Chapters covered training systems for Officer & Soldier Careers, Management Training, T&D Policy and Structure, Trade Training, Recruit Training, Continuation Training (ATDs etc) and Adventure Training (AT). Distributed widely and hung on T&D Notice Boards, there was no excuse for not having access to the information considered missing during the initial survey.

- **T&D Notice Boards.** At each TAC a large notice board was found in a prominent place, to act as the focal point for course information, trawls for assistance to Regular units and operational tours, Post Exercise Reports (PXRs), and also the sub-unit record of training achievement. A Royal Signals specific Training matrix was modelled showing the sub-unit's nominal roll vertically against the ideal career path horizontally. By using a simple model to show career progression and the course or training required to attain the next rank it quickly gave a graphical representation of the unit's T&D state. Someone had to be reading it, as several inked-in corrections appeared. In essence this illustrated the formal training required to progress from the bottom rung of signaller to the top of being the Squadron Sergeant Major.

- **Promotional Publicity for T&D.** As internal communications were so vital, and in some areas were so lacking, several methods were employed to promote T&D. The unit issued to every soldier the annual training calendar of events and bright colourful Regimental Mission Statement posters were displayed everywhere in the unit lines and communications vehicles. In addition, personal ATD record cards were produced and individually issued. All meetings and briefings were 'encouraged' to have a T&D aspect. After 6 months to overhear a young soldier say to another - 'Oh that's to do with Investing-in-People' was joy indeed to the Training Major's ears.

- **Induction and Indoctrination.** As part of an overall change to the culture of T&D all aspects of presentational material was examined for quality, accuracy and relevance to the Mission. Special relevance is placed on sub-unit recruit rooms at each TAC and to the indoctrination packs issued to all potential recruits. In addition the Regimental Yeoman of Signals completed a review of all trade training courses, some 1,270 x 30 minute periods (a task delegated to nine Trade Co-ordinators) with special importance placed on emphasising career structure and future development opportunities.

- **Use of Existing Systems**. Many other reporting systems were also factored into the IIP process, the bi-annual Measurement of Fighting Power (MFP) as a final action has been incorporated into a detailed Regimental Training Report, specifying the unit's T&D health against the many measures of performance in the ADMINCON and OPCON Brigades' plans. Monthly financial planning tools such as TA Management Information System (TAMIS) were used to measure progress and determine value for money in broad terms.

THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Once the Action Plan had been agreed in consultation with the TEC, the Regiment signed its formal commitment to the IIP process and Certificates of Notification were posted at each TAC. The plan was then distributed and a settling-in period of eight months was established with progress meetings held every two months. In particular Regimental events, such as exercises and centralised trade training, were used as vehicles to indoctrinate the T&D ethos. During this period a portfolio building software package was obtained from the TEC and work started on compiling the portfolio. The package's front end has a 'story board' questionnaire requiring the user to show evidence of compliance against the 23 IIP indicators and successful completion of this was used as one of the final quality control measures just prior to confirming assessment dates. At the same time a second employee/manager survey was undertaken. This time a guided questionnaire, using familiar military terminology was used, leading the employee to the means by which the indicator topic should have already been achieved. Though this might be considered 'cheating', it had two benefits, firstly to teach those who may have been missed and secondly to remind others prior to assessment of T & D activities. The final survey was very good, and did show genuine improvement, in all but one of the 23 indicator areas where action was still on-going relating to Regimental level evaluation and feedback.

Up to this point the Regiment had had no financial support and achieved and met the standard at no real cost; certainly a few hundred hours of my time had been spent, but only about 12 TA Man Training

Days (MTDs) for one project officer had been used. The final assessment is priced at £550 per day, with the TEC granting a subsidy of £200 per day. An organisation of 400+ personnel would take 5 days to assess 10% of the employees across 5 geographical sites. As the end of the financial year was approaching our Regional ADMINCON Brigade, 15 (North East) Brigade granted financial support to this and the unit's National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) programme.

The final portfolio was kept within the 30 pieces of evidence suggested by the TEC and special attention paid to both relevance and brevity, both of which were to be commented on favorably by the assessor. An assessment programme was agreed with the assessor, spread by rank, location, gender and employment, as follows:

THE ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE AND TIMETABLE			
Date	Event/Location	Assessment Personnel	Remarks
18-20 Apr 98 (Week end)	Ex Spring Eagle (Field locations)	49 Sig Sqn (V) 745 Sig Tp (V)–Hull 742 Sig Tp (V)–Newcastle	3xOffrs 1xWO 5xSNCO 3xJNCO 9xOR
21 Apr 98 (Drill Night)	Darlington TAC	50 Sig Sqn (V)	1xOffr 1xWO 2xSNCO 2xJNCO 5xOR
23 Apr 98	Darlington TAC	Civil Servants	3xstaff
25 Apr 98	Brambles Farm TAC	HQ & 90 Sig Sqn (V)	2xOffr 2xWO 3xSNCO 4xJNCO 6xOR

The first day of assessment was a bright and breezy day on a PTARMIGAN field deployment in the Yorkshire Wolds. Filled with apprehension the assessor was collected from a prominent RV - the Little Chef on the A64 and taken to the first location. Personnel were then selected at random from the nominal roll with the first interview lasting some 45 minutes! The exercise was actually used by the assessor as a vehicle to measure the four IIP component areas of commitment, planning, action and evaluation, and also provided an excellent audit trail for the final report. As the week progressed it became apparent that the worries of assessment were unfounded, as the assessor was very good at drawing out information from the interviewees, and the soldiers were confident, well trained and motivated. Many of the qualities taken for granted by the military, such as morale, team spirit and loyalty, are often missing in large civilian companies - this proved an outstanding feature and an asset in achieving the IIP standard. The final report and presentation were put before the Awarding Board by the Assessor and on the evening of 28 May 1998 the Regiment was finally accredited with the IIP award, some ten months after commitment date.

The report was very detailed and has provided the unit with areas for improvement, many of which are to provide individuals with better goals, targets and objectives for training and for formal courses. Some of the benefits have already been felt in the short term whilst others will only become evident in the long term, such as improved retention and better recruiting. Some of the benefits are shown below:

- Reduced wastage of training resources, Man Training Days (MTDs) etc.
- Enhanced quality of training provided to TA soldiers especially with internal trade and career courses.
- Improved motivation and commitment brought about by career structures and better counseling.
- Public recognition of quality training with local employees and potential recruits.
- Better retention rate - more satisfied soldiers, brought about by NVQs and high quality training.
- Structured T&D leads to better quality control and training standards across a dispersed regiment.
- Improved unit pride and morale.
- Focus on 'core business' of providing Military Capability.

PUBLICITY

The TEC provided both the copy-writer and photographer, for their internal publicity material, and for future case studies in their promotional material. A Media Plan was completed and the unit's sources for recruiting material targeted in addition to several additional educational and employment publications identified by the TEC. At this point it certainly proved very helpful having one of our TA JNCOs working in the publicity department of the TEC! Although the Regiment was not been the first TA unit to gain accreditation, it is the first in The Royal Corps of Signals and was only the 40th establishment in the MoD, so has joined a relatively select few. Now that the MoD has developed its own IIP policy directing Divisions and Brigades to achieve IIP status, the Regiment has acted for both its parent OPCON and ADMINCON Headquarters, 11 Signal Brigade and the 2nd Division, as a pilot unit feeding in experience and its action plan to assist their IIP Project Officers.

CONTINUOUS REVIEW

Once the unit gained the award the report from the IIP assessor provided a base for the continuous review. A TA Officer was appointed as IIP Project Officer, to sustain the standard and provide continuity to the ever changing Regular Training Major. The direction in future is to complete a new revised rolling programme suggested by the Tees Valley TEC for reviews every 12-15 months, as opposed to a full assessment every three years. Another option may be that the unit now gains re-accreditation through its parent OPCON Brigade, ensuring an economy of effort and funds. It is also reassuring from an Army corporate perspective that many recent initiatives such as the new open reporting system for all Service officers and initiatives for a TA all ranks appraisal report, are IIP compliant and complement the unit's continuous improvement plan.

LOOKING BACK

At any level in the Army if a unit is working well it should be meeting the IIP standard. A unit such as a TA regiment is specifically suited to internal improvement with regards to recruiting, retention and training. The Forces have a generally high standard of training and this linked to morale and team spirit fosters the type of ethos that can be lacking in a commercial business. Although IIP was introduced to promote business improvement by valuing the people delivering the product or service, the essence is identical for the military. The key in using IIP for the military is not to progress into business practice, principles or jargon, but to retain what is well established and measure a unit against IIP standards, adapting it where applicable. Looking back some of our experiences are summarised below:

- Not as painful as might be expected - retain military culture - it works!
- Be pragmatic and common sense should prevail, keep in military terminology - it's familiar.
- Evaluation & feedback are vital at all levels (unit, sub-units, detachment and individual) for all activities (courses and training events).
- Everyone in the team must 'Know their worth' and contribute to the Mission Statement.

Do you want to help the Corps to recruit more soldiers?

SATISFIED SOLDIER SCHEME

* Are you a satisfied soldier?
* Would you like to be attached to your home town AFCO/ACIO for 5-10 days?
* Would you like to visit your old school or ACF and tell them about Royal Signals?

YES?

THEN CONTACT YOUR SQUADRON OFFICE FOR DETAILS



The Teeside TEC Awards Dinner
(L-R): Mr John Bennett (Chief Executive), WO2 (YofS) Jim Thompson, Maj Simon Green, Lt Col David Hargreaves, Lt Steve Wayman, Guest Speaker Peter Goss

HIKE IN THE TIEN SHAN MOUNTAINS OF KAZAKHSTAN FOR MENCAP

*by **Capt R. C. Gamble** Royal Signals*

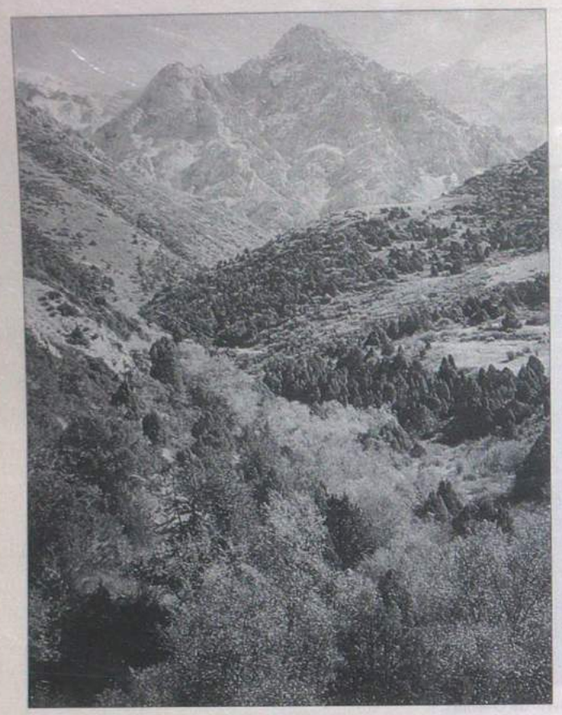
It was in late March 1998 that I first saw the advertisement to *'Walk in the Shadow of the Hindu Kush for Mencap'*. At that time I had no real idea of what Mencap was but the thought of trekking somewhere so remote and unspoilt fired my imagination. I quickly discovered that all I had to do was promise to raise £1,950 in sponsorship for those with a learning disability (Mencap), pay £300 to cover my own costs and get a Visa from the Pakistani Consulate in London. If all went well I could then expect to join a bunch of like-minded persons for the trek of a lifetime. Although I formulated a good plan for raising the required amount, the easiest part of all turned out to be paying my own £300! Anyway, American Cruise Missiles flying across Pakistan to targets in Afghanistan served to prompt the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to deter UK citizens from visiting the Hindu Kush of Pakistan and so, at the eleventh hour, an alternative location had to be found. This is how I came to trek for eight days in the Tien Shan of Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan is a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States and lies between the Caspian Sea to the West and China in the East, with the Russian Federation to the North and Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in the South. It is a large country given in equal portion to mountains and a wide expanse of rolling grassland, the ubiquitous Russian Steppe.

DAY 1 - Heathrow to Tashkent. The first day of our trek saw us meeting at the Uzbekistan Airlines check-in at London Heathrow Airport Terminal 2, on Tuesday 29 September 1998. Never even having heard of Uzbekistan Airlines was enough to fill our minds with the dread of ancient Aeroflot flying coffins. It was with considerable peace of mind therefore that we eventually boarded a modern Airbus A310 for our six hour flight to Tashkent in Uzbekistan. This flight will remain with me for many years, as I sat next to a bearded Sikh Preacher who, though resplendent in flowing white robes, insisted on hawking and clearing his throat every 10 or 15 minutes...

DAY 2 - Tashkent to Camp 1. Having crossed Holland, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Russia, and Kazakhstan we eventually landed in Tashkent to find the sun had been up for about an hour, and was serving to make last night's rain glisten where it lay, lending an air of antiquity to this once regular stop on the Silk Route to the East. Completing the Customs Declarations that were presented on cheap green paper in size 7 font, and in Russian, caused quite a headache for our single interpreter. It was the lucky ones who cleared this bureaucracy early and were able to while away the three hour wait in the sunshine outside the terminal building, sampling the local Water Melon which was both very juicy and inexpensive. After what seemed an eternity, we eventually boarded three large German coaches for the next leg of our journey. About half an hour after departing the Airport we negotiated the border into Kazakhstan and then spent the next four hours crossing the treeless rolling landscape that we came to know as the Steppe. The blazing sunshine, fatigue and the repetitive monotony of this vista served to transport us all into a state of profound slumber. We woke to find ourselves coming to a halt alongside the Saryaygir River where half a dozen small battered Buses and what was obviously an army surplus six wheeler with a box body on top were parked. The plan, we were told, was to get into our walking kit with Day Sacks and put our Bergens on the truck. We would then be transported up the Saryaygir Valley to a drop off point from where we would walk the final six kilometres to our first camp. It was a very British group who undressed at the roadside in order to get into shorts and boots, an event not lost on the locals who obviously thought the English very comical. Once we set off again it rapidly became very obvious why the buses looked so dilapidated, as we spent the next hour bouncing around inside a metal box, with no suspension. This, on an unmetalled road, that was full of potholes which varied in depth between several inches and a couple of feet. We were certainly all loosened up by the time we debussed and prepared for our walk into the foothills in search of Camp 1. This initial walk, though all up hill, gave us a chance to both stretch our legs and fill our lungs with beautifully clean mountain air. The campsite was situated on a low meadow adjacent to a stream a few hundred metres short of its confluence with the Saryaygir River, and it was immediately obvious that the military had been at work here. The two-man tents were neatly laid out, as were ablutions, lavatories, mess tent and kitchen. As all this administration had to be man-packed it was of necessity spartan, though nonetheless very functional. Most of the locals employed by the trekking company (Across the Divide Ltd) to act as guides, porters, cooks etc, had obviously done National Service. One particular guide of the lean and mean variety sported a Special Forces style blue and white striped singlet atop his combat trousers!

DAY 3 - At Camp 1 (1,700m). The next day we were woken at 6.30am to discover the sky was clear with the sun almost over the hills and into our valley. To say this scene was idyllic would have to be an understatement, it just took your breath away. Where the Steppe had been treeless, the valleys in the Tien Shan were thickly covered in both coniferous and deciduous trees, with wild flowers, brambles and Broom in abundance. It quickly became apparent this whole area was untouched except for the very few who were fortunate enough to live in the area.

The routine for this and the next six days would be similar, with a morning call at 6.30am, Breakfast 7.30am, Stretches (warm ups) 8.30am and departure at approximately 8.45am. Breakfast was served on a long low table in the mess tent at which we sat on tiny plastic stools with our knees almost around our chins. On this and all the days to follow we were served with Porridge or Semolina (made from thick sweet milk and sugar), Bread, Salami, Cheese and Green Tea. At a conservative estimate



The valleys in the Tien Shan were thickly covered

Breakfast was easily in excess of 2,000 calories, and there were those in the party who had to be convinced of the absolute need to consume all that was available. It is worthy of note that as the days progressed there was no one to be found who would give up their morning porridge. Indeed this excellent diet was to give us the energy to spend many hours climbing, and we would all return to the UK surprised that a couple of inches had gone from our waists. Group 3 was formed with guides **Andre** at the front and **Alexis** at the back and we set out up the valley for a 6km 'Shake Out'. This may not seem far but we had climbed up to 2,100m by the time we stopped for lunch and we were all feeling weary from the altitude and the heat, which at midday was above 40C. For lunch on this and all consecutive days we had tinned Pilchard or Herring in oil, Bread, Salami, Cheese and Green Tea, all consumed by the side of a mountain stream. By the time we returned to camp we all understood the need to ensure our boots were good and tight, as ankles were to take a hammering as we moved across both uneven ground and scree. Dinner was served at 7.30pm and it was with deep joy we discovered the greasy watery soup and the greasy watery stew were not only accompanied by bread but half litre bottles of Vodka. This beverage you would certainly not find on a supermarket shelf in the UK (unless in the motoring section under Antifreeze), but on a starless freezing cold night in Northern Asia, it served to warm those bodies furthest from the campfire whilst ensuring a good nights sleep for all.

DAY 4 - Camp 1 to Camp 2 (1,900m). Another gloriously sunny dawn heralded the arrival of Day 4 and the trek over the Bezimanniy Pass to the Sayramsu River. Following a long slow plod we eventually reached the Pass at noon, and from its 2,300m vantage we looked over the foothills and out to the Steppe to the Northwest and to the East, the Tien Shan massif. Having lunch amid this gorgeous scenery, with fantastic views all round, was so much like being in a Swiss Alpine meadow, that none of us would have been surprised if Julie Andrews had appeared to a refrain from 'The Sound of Music'. Sadly it was to be after this lunch break and whilst climbing down a pretty severe gully that Anne, a member of Group 5, fell and received a nasty compound fracture to her lower right leg. Our group had reached Camp 2 by the time this happened and so were not involved in the drama, but suffice to say, the 2 Team Doctors and Russian stretcher-bearers did a fantastic job of recovering her from an extremely difficult position. We heard that evening that Anne had been taken by helicopter to Tashkent Hospital, and from there to the Airport to meet an Air Medevac which flew in from Calcutta and on to Heathrow just for her. This sad event served to remind us of our mortality, and we went to our tents that night thankful for the comprehensive trekking insurance policies we had initiated prior to departing the UK.

DAY 5 - Camp 2 (1,900m). Just one or two very small clouds marred an otherwise perfect start to Day 5, and it was obvious (to us later) that from talk at breakfast, none of us except the Russians understood the significance of those few small clouds. The plan for Day 5 was to walk up the Sayramsu Valley to the headwaters of the Sayramsu River. This was to be the longest day's walk so far, with the groups departing as normal just after breakfast and reaching 2,500m for lunch before pressing on to the high lake at 2,700m.



Looking Southwest down the Sayramsu Valley from the headwaters of the river

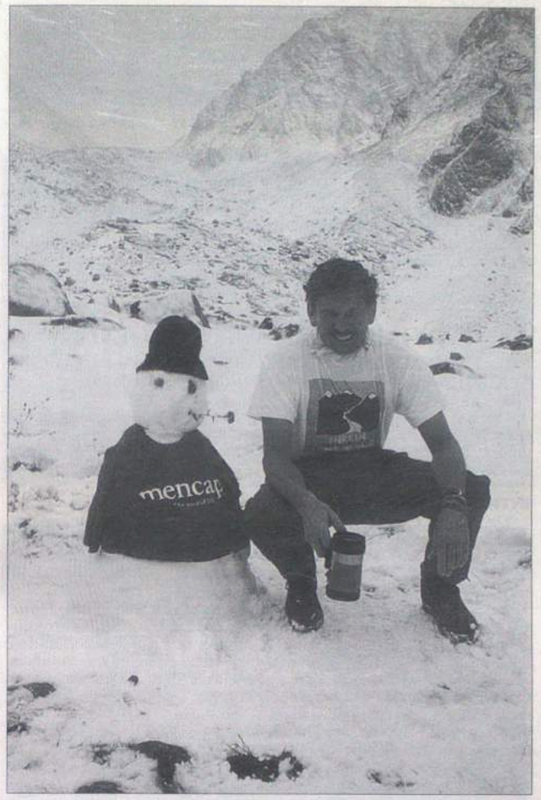
One or two stalwarts stripped off and swam in this glacier cold lake before we all started back down the way we had come, returning to camp just as night fell, and very much looking forward to dinner and bed.

DAY 6 - Camp 2 to Camp 3 (2,800m). We had been briefed on the evening of Day 5 that today's walk would be a pretty severe uphill slog, with Camp 3 being established below the Sayramsky Glacier. The camp was to be relocated with the aid of a helicopter (MI 8 Hip), if the weather was good enough for it to fly, a subject open to much speculation as yesterday's few small blobs of cotton wool were today's partial overcast. By mid morning the cloud had burned back and we departed the Sayramsu Valley on time, and were soon as foretold, slogging up a winding ridgeline with the Sazanata River below us to the North. There was not so much talking within the group now as we were becoming more and more preoccupied with our apparent inability to get enough air into our lungs to provide the energy for the next step. It was with deep gratitude we eventually made camp and, devouring dinner and Vodka, settled down for a good rest before attempting the glacier tomorrow. Sadly, for some the good rest was not to be had, as the evening brought with it very high winds which filled the night air with a cacophony of noise. Our tents were taking a real beating in the face of winds so strong you had to take care not to be bowled over as you staggered to the latrines.

DAY 7 - Camp 3 (2,800m). Day 7 dawned overcast and dull, and forsaking a shave in deference to the cutting wind, we were never more appreciative of either our morning bowl of porridge or steaming mug of Green Tea. Today we would attempt the Sayramsky Glacier and more than one anxious glance was given towards the heavens. Departing camp at the normal time we soon found ourselves climbing over huge banks of scree covered Lateral Moraine, which served to severely hinder our progress upwards. By late morning it had started to snow and by noon we had got to about 3,700m when, in near blizzard conditions, a temporary base was established. While our Russian friends prepared lunch we launched ourselves up and across the final snowfield barring us from the top of the Glacier. It was a race against time as our guides were keen to get us off this particular face of the mountain as soon as possible, and certainly before dark, when any movement would certainly guarantee a fall and injury. Try as we might we could not rush this final leg as our breathing became more and more laboured, and then after what seemed an age, we suddenly found ourselves at the top, and at a height of 3,800m celebrated our achievement. After a few minutes of furious picture taking amid swirling snow, we quickly dropped down to our temporary forward base and, just as quickly, chomped through our snow covered salami sandwiches. It was obvious to everybody that the important thing now was to gain the shelter of Camp 3 before we lost the daylight, and so, helping our injured, we retraced our route back down the way we had come.

Apart from a couple of sprained ankles, we all made it down safely and discovered that in our absence the wind had totally destroyed one tent and severely mauled a couple of others. Following the necessary re-shuffling of bodies it was not long before we were able to toast our day's accomplishment with Vodka, over a meal of lovely, hot, greasy and watery stew. That night tucked up warm in our sleeping bags we were dismayed to hear the sound, both of the wind as it rose and the unmistakable patter of frozen snow being driven before it. Needless to say not a lot of sleep was to be had as we were constantly outside removing the snow as it drifted against the weather side of our tent.

DAY 8 - Camp 3 to Camp 4 (1,900m). Our second Tuesday dawned heavily overcast, and we emerged from our tents to discover a world of white, with snow at depths of 6 inches where it was flat, to a couple of feet where any slope allowed drifting. There were several unfortunates among other groups who had not heeded the advice of the guides and their tents were barely recognisable as such under a blanket of white. The Mess tent and kitchen areas had been severely affected by the weather, with tentage ripped and equipment buried. Breakfast was therefore eaten standing in similar fashion to that adopted by Penguins in the cold, with us all huddled together munching on, joy of joy, hot Frankfurters a complement to our normal Salami and Cheese.



Looking East up towards the Sayramsky Glacier from Camp 3

Camp was broken early this morning, with everyone carrying all they could in order to ensure a clean exit from this high and dangerous place. We set off in orderly fashion and re-traced our steps of Sunday (when we slogged our way all day up this same ridge line), and despite being all down hill, it was still mid afternoon before we came once again to the Sayramsu River. It was really amazing to find that at this lower altitude the sky was clear and the sun shining, but a glance back over our shoulders was all that was required to confirm the Sayramsky remained wreathed in cloud. This our final camp was on the site of a summer hikers rest area, and came complete with quite a few metal TIR containers which some of us were able to utilise in order to save on tents, a lot of which were still on the mountain behind us. We had barely established ourselves when our guides informed us the helicopter could not fly, and asked for volunteers to go back to Camp 3 and help bring down the residue of stores. Despite the fact that our Camp Staff continued to shuttle stores down the mountain well into the night, dinner was nonetheless put before us on time. It was during this meal that word was passed to the effect that a Sauna existed in the trees only 300m away, and it would open tomorrow at 8am. One of our group immediately made contact with the bearer of this news and negotiated for the Sauna to open at 7am, a gem of information we kept to ourselves.

DAY 9 - Camp 4 (1,900m). Only a few scudding clouds marred an otherwise perfect start to Day 9. Our group met at the Sauna at 7am as arranged and, following a good Beeching from an athletic and enthusiastic Russian, had the luxury of a shower and shampoo in ice cold water. It was not to be until after breakfast that the soporific effects of this super sauna were to be realised, and by then it was too late, as we were preparing for the final walk which would take us up to the high ground right in the centre of our previous seven days endeavours.



The Sayramsu River and the Tien Shan

It was late afternoon when a bedraggled and thorn torn Group 3 crossed the Mencap Finish Line, receiving our medallions and mugs of Champagne from the Mencap representatives, along with their thanks for a job well done. Apparently our combined efforts had seen sponsorship in excess of £250,000 raised for Mencap. The evening meal was consumed to the accompaniment of more local champagne as we sat in our group and reflected on all we had done. Not only in raising the necessary sponsorship, but also the achievements of the past week when we had helped each other over some very impressive terrain.

DAYS 10 AND 11 - Camp 4 to Heathrow via Tashkent. Our return to Tashkent went by in a blur, mostly brought about by the tiredness to be associated with trekking for 8 consecutive days over rough, steep and sometimes hazardous terrain, exacerbated by sleepless nights lying on the hard ground. Retracing our steps we stayed overnight in a Hotel where we had our farewell party, which in the way of such things, was a huge success. The following morning Tashkent was in the middle of a blizzard and it was obvious to all that Winter had arrived. Nonetheless we set out to purchase our souvenirs prior to being ferried to the Airport in time for our 6pm departure for Heathrow. It was a sombre Group 3 who stood around the luggage carousel that Friday evening at 8pm in Terminal 2. Having agreed in principle to a reunion in either November or December and having had a volunteer come forward to organise it, we shouldered our Bergens, said our last goodbyes, and disappeared one by one into a dark rainy Heathrow night.

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SPORT

BADMINTON

INTER-CORPS BADMINTON TOURNAMENT

The Inter-Corps Badminton Tournament took place at Perham Down during the 27-28 November 1998. Five Corps entered the competition, only the Infantry was missing from last year. The teams varied in strength due to 'Operational' and other commitments. This, unfortunately, destroyed the R. Signals preferred squad, however, as the Corps has much strength in depth, albeit not at the highest standard, we were able to field a reasonable team.

The first match was against the R. Engineers, a grudge match, as they were last years winners, having defeated R. Signals, (in the last match, last game, last point). The Engineers were missing a key player for this match, but thought they could win the match without him as they had already had a warm-up match against the RLC. The plan did not go well for them, as the R. Signals team had a better balance between their pairings and were eventual winners by the odd game. The second match was against a very strong REME team and after only winning two games in the first six games, R. Signals conceded the match in order to save themselves for the next match against the RLC. This proved to be the case, as R. Signals won the match 7-2.

The last round of matches saw the RE v REME and R. Signals v AGC. These were to be the deciding games which meant the difference between a 4-way tie for first place, a 3 -way tie for second place or places would be decided if certain teams won the matches. The AGC, had the strongest team in the competition and easily won the match 8-1 which meant that the R. Signals team were hoping that the REME would beat the RE who had gained their extra key player. The match went to the last game and REME won 5-4. The final positions were as follows:

1st Place - AGC 8pts
2nd Place - REME 6pts
3rd Place - R. SIGS 4pts
4th Place - RE 2pts
5th Place - RLC Opts

This was an excellent performance by the R. Signals team despite the setback of players being injured, not being released from courses and Operational commitments. Dare I say it, 'Maybe next year?' The Corps runs it's own competition each year for players of all standards and new players are welcome either as individuals or as a member of a team. If there are any 'closet' players out there who wish to join the 'Elite' players of the Corps, contact **Capt Inman** on Blandford Mil (737) Ex: 2661.

RUGBY

The Royal Signals RFC V RMCS 2 December 1998, the fixture took place at Shrivenham, the Corps dominated the scrum and line out but did little to turn this advantage into points. Whilst there was an abundance of determination, from the Corps side, there was little structure or consistency in their game. The score at halftime was 15-12 to the Corps. A number of substitutions at halftime slightly improved the situation with the Corps producing some good running, but it was thwarted at the last hurdle by RMCS defensive play. The final score was 22-20 to the Royal Signals.

OFFSHORE SAILING 1999

Following the Yacht Club AGM a programme was developed for offshore sailing during 1999. The aim of the programme is to introduce more of the Corps to offshore sailing, provide basic training to Day Skipper level, and compete in the ASA Regatta. The programme will be run to meet demand; sailing officers and individuals are requested to contact the organiser to register interest. The flagship event will be the Royal Signals Sail Training Week (STW) run from Kiel. This builds upon a number of successful events and a wealth of support. Already five of the nine available boats have firm charters. The overall programme, with points of contact, is as follows:

May (dates TBC)	5 day training course	Solent Malvern South 6799	**Capt I. Gray**
May (dates TBC)	weekend social sailing	Solent Malvern South 6799	**Capt I. Gray**
	(to follow the qualification course)		
4-6 June	Rally	Solent Bulford 2252	**J. Grierson**
9-19 July	STW	Kiel Malvern South 6799	**Capt I. Gray**
Sep (dates TBC)	weekend social sailing	Solent MOD MB 82678	**Maj T. C. Wadey**

I will also be looking for skippers and crews to enter two boats in the ASA regatta, probably during early July. If any one is interested would they please contact **Maj T. C. Wadey** on MOD MB 82678. As already stated these events cannot run without active participation. The organisers are looking for skippers and crews of all abilities from beginner upwards. They do, however, offer members of the Corps a very good way of trying and then learning more about a sport with growing civilian popularity. It will also offer the opportunity for more Corps members to sail and get to know the Corps Yachts based on the South Coast.

Continuing in the Corps tradition, **ex-WO2 (Supvr R) Cas Hayes** has received a bravery award from the Chief Constable of the Nottinghamshire Constabulary. On leaving the Corps in 1994, after completing twenty-two years service **Cas Hayes** joined the Nottinghamshire Police Force, where he serves in Newark as a response driver. The Chief Constable, **Mr Colin Bailey**, said, **Constable Hayes** is to be commended for his courage and bravery, in disarming and arresting a violent, drunken and unstable man, brandishing a large butchers' knife. Thus bringing a potentially life threatening incident to a satisfactory conclusion.

SWIMMING & WATER POLO

ROYAL SIGNALS VICTORIOUS AT INTER-CORPS SWIMMING AND WATER POLO CHAMPIONSHIPS

Report by ***Maj T. P. Langford***

The Royal Signals achieved the impossible at the 10th Inter Corps Championships by taking all three titles; a feat never achieved before and unlikely to be repeated. The selection and training of all teams had a rather indifferent start .....

INTERNAL CORPS COMPETITION

The Internal Corps Competition was conducted at Colerne on Tuesday 27 October 1998. The Competition is 'fought' between UK, Germany and ITO. It was obvious from the start that a very weak Germany Team would achieve very little this year and the Trophies and Medals would be between UK and ITO.

The first race of the day, the 100m Freestyle, was won by **Sig James Greenlee** from ITO in 61secs, UK were 2nd and Germany 3rd. UK won the 50m Freestyle with **Sig Scott Miller** recording a time of 29secs. The first female race saw **Sig Helen Stanyer** win the 50m Freestyle for Germany in 33secs. ITO returned to their winning ways in the fourth event as **Sig Craig Chilvers** won the 50m Backstroke. **Sig Chrissy Tilley,** for Germany, won the female 50m Backstroke in a time of 37secs. The 50m Butterfly, with an older competitor or two **(Maj Tim Langford** and **WO2 Danny Thornton)** saw ITO win again with **Sig Ollie Smith**. The 50m Butterfly gave **LCpl Lisa Gibbons** the opportunity to display her class as she won by over 2secs for UK. In the 50m Breaststroke events **Sig Sean Peart** won again for ITO in the male race and **LCpl Sarah Lee** was victorious for UK in the female race. As we began the all important relays the scores were:

UK - 21
ITO - 18
GER - 15

The first relay was the male 4 x 50m Freestyle which saw UK win in a time of 2min 21secs, Germany were 2nd and ITO third. The 4 x 50m Male Medley Relay was won by ITO in 2min 16secs and the final event, the Female Medley Relay was won by UK. The final positions were:

UK - 29 points
ITO - 23 points
GER - 20 points



UK Swimming Team



Cpl Fiona MacCarthy being presented with the Swimming Trophy by Lt Col J. A. Terrington

The Water Polo was always a two-horse race. ITO and UK both beat Germany comfortably; 11-5 and 13-6 respectively. The final between ITO and UK was a very close contest with neither team managing to assert themselves until the third quarter. In this quarter **WO1 Pete Griffiths** in the ITO goal denied three 'certain' chances and ITO managed to open up a three goal lead at 5-2. In the last quarter UK could only score once with ITO managing a further two. ITO was victorious at 7-3 and won the competition.



ITO Water Polo Team including Griff Minor



Sgt Pete Taylor being presented with the Water Polo Cup by Lt Col J. A. Terrington

INTER CORPS PREPARATION

Selected individuals then remained in Colerne for training. **SSgt Paul Gorman,** from 11 Sig Regt, constructed a good swimming programme and **Mr Mick Flaharty,** from the Gymnasium in 11 Sig Regt, (ex Navy and Combined Services Water Polo Player) coached the Water Polo Team which embarked on a hard programme of matches.

On the evening of Tuesday 27 October we travelled to Cheltenham to play their Juniors who had three Under 18 Internationals. They were superb which was reflected in a 26-4 defeat for the Corps. Wednesday 28 October saw us in Bovington playing our Coach's Civilian Team Wessex who are based in Weymouth. In a narrow pool the score was always going to be tight and we managed a 6-4 victory. On Thursday 29 October we moved to HMS *Collingwood* to play a RN Portsmouth team. We played well and our superior skill and experience ensured an easy 16-5 victory, **Cpl Rob Love** scored 9 of our goals. The Bristol Harlequins entertained us on the Friday 30 October in the Bristol South Swimming Pool. After our initial concern as to the probability of our transport being stolen whilst we played, we enjoyed a very close match. We were finally defeated 12-9 but we played well and felt we were playing better as a Team. On Tuesday 3 November we returned to Cheltenham and managed a better score line losing 25-4!! The Wessex Club was our 'enemy' again on Wednesday 4 November at Bovington and we beat them again, this time 5-2. With six 'practice' games behind us, some highs and lows, we eagerly looked forward to the Inter Corps Competition.

INTER CORPS CHAMPIONSHIPS

In the swimming events we were defending Champions in both the male and female competitions; indeed the girls had won the previous three years. The first event was the male 4 x 100m Freestyle Relay where a very strong RLC quartet won by nearly a length, we finished 2nd with APTC 3rd and REME disqualified, **Sig James Greenlee** swam our anchor leg and recorded a time of 60secs. The second event was the female 4 x 50m Freestyle Relay where REME won, RLC were 2nd, we finished 3rd and AGC were 4th. The third event was the Male 4 x 50m Breaststroke. The team of **Capt James Langley, SSgt Bas Ward, Sig Craig Chilvers** and **Sig Sean Peart** won comfortably with **Sig Sean Peart** recording a 33sec leg. REME were 2nd, RLC 3rd and APTC finished 4th. The next event was the female 4 x 50m Breaststroke. Our best Breaststroker and Team Captain, **Cpl Sarah Lee,** was injured. However, the Team of **Sig Helen Stanyer** and **Sig Nikki Fallows, Sig Chrissy Tilley** and **LCpl Naomi Wilson** were victorious in a time of 2mins 53secs. AGC finished 2nd, REME were 3rd and RLC were last. The fifth race was the male 4 x 50m Freestyle where the strong quartet from the RLC were again winners, REME were 2nd, we finished 3rd and APTC were last. The final female race was the 4 x 50m Medley, the scores going into this event were:

REME 6 points
R Signals 6 points
RLC 4 points
AGC 4 points

As you can see by the points above any team was capable of winning the Trophy and a disqualification was suicide! Our girls were superb, **Sig Chrissy Tilley**swam the Backstroke leg, **Sig Nickki Fallows** the Breaststroke, **LCpl Lisa Gibbons** the Fly and **Sig Helen Stanyer** the Freestyle to win easily by 7secs and retain the title. AGC finished as runners-up. As we entered the final male event, again the Medley Relay, the scores were tight:

RLC 10 points
R Signals 9 points
REME 6 points
APTC 4 points

Any of the top three teams could win. However, our squad of **Capt Ian Hargreaves** on the Backstroke, **Sean Peart** on the Breaststroke, **Sig Stuart Reid** on the Fly and **Sig James Greenlee** the Freestyle, won by an amazing 6/100th of a second with **Sig James Greenlee** recording a 27sec 50m Freestyle. Brilliant, we retained our title with RLC as runners-up.

The Water Polo only had three entries this year ourselves, REME and the defending Champions APTC. Each game was 7min quarters which we were more than happy with after our intense build up. We were drawn against APTC in our first game and defended the deep in the first quarter. It was a very physical game and in the first quarter **SSgt Bas Ward** in defence and **WO1 Pete Griffiths** in goal were magnificent. We finished the quarter without either team scoring, we were happy! Defending the shallow in the second quarter we expected to build a lead. Again it was very hard and goals from **WO1 (RSM) Gaz Johnson** and **Cpl Rob Love** gave us a 2-1 lead. In the third quarter our fitness and tactics began to tell and goals from **SSgt Graham Weavers** and **Cpl Rob Love** stretched our lead to 4-2. In the last quarter **Maj Tim Langford** and **SSgt Graham Weavers** both scored with no reply to secure a 6-2 victory. Onto the REME. Again we defended the deep in the first quarter and built up a 2-0 lead. After this quarter it was all down hill. We finally won 9-0 with **Cpl Rob Love** (4), **SSgt Graham Weavers** (2) and **Cpl Andy Carneigne, Capt Darren Cooper** and **WO1 (RSM) Gaz Johnson** with one apiece scoring our goals. We were Champions.

It was a memorable day with the Royal Corps of Signals winning all titles. This was the 10th Inter Corps meet and no Corps has ever achieved all three titles before and I suspect this will never be repeated.

My thanks to **Lt Col J. A. Terrington** and 21 Signal Regt (AS) for all the support we were given. Also my thanks to all units that allowed their Officers and Solders the opportunity to represent the Corps and a special note of appreciation to **SSgt Paul Gorman** for training the Swimming Team and **Mr Mick Flaherty** for coaching the Water Polo Team. The Internal Competition will be held at Colerne on Tuesday 23 November 1999 in preparation for the Inter Corps on Thursday 2 December 1999. Anyone interested in representing the Corps can contact **Maj Tim Langford** on Thorney Island Mil (729) Ext 8258, lets do it again!



SSgt Bas Ward being presented the trophy for Royal Signals Best Player- Well done Bas!



Inter Corps Water Polo Champions

THE ROYAL SIGNALS ASSOCIATION

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Association Office, RHQ Royal Signals, Blandford Camp, Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 8RH. Telephone: Military System 737 2090 or 01258 48 2090. Welfare Secretary Telephone: Military System 737 2089 or 01258 48 2089.
All contributions for *The Wire* should be addressed to the Editor and any queries referred to him on extensions 2079 or 2085.
Internet: www.royalsignals.army.org.uk/museum/rsa.htm

The Association communicates with its branches and individual members through the pages of The Wire, *which contains accounts of Branch affairs as well as a forecast of Association events.*

Branch Secretaries are asked to check that their Branch members receive sufficient copies of The Wire. *Association HQ can arrange for copies to be delivered in bulk to Branch Secretaries for further distribution if this is convenient: it helps us save on postage.*

Dates of Branch events can always be published in The Wire *and should be submitted to the Editor. We also welcome letters, requests to contact old comrades and announcements of births, marriages and deaths. We hope that each Branch will contribute a short account of its activities, preferably with photographs, at least once a year.*

NOTES FROM THE AO's DESK

Branch Affairs. Mr Peter Dooley has been elected as the new Hon Secretary of the Southport Branch. **Peter** can be contacted at 17 Cavendish Rd, Southport PR8 4RT. Tel: 01704-569083. **Brian Podmore** has resumed the office of Hon Secretary of the Shropshire Branch. **Brian**'s new address is; 22 Westwood Court, North Str, Leek, Staffs. Tel: 01538 381695.

Cenotaph Parade. There were 14 or so members who marched in the Corps section of the leading column at last November's Remembrance Day Parade at the Cenotaph, Whitehall. However it was noticeable that there were many more who marched in other parts of the parade with other organisations; i.e. Korean Vets, Burma Star etc. Whilst respecting their right to march with any group, may I invite those members to consider joining their old Corps at the next parade. Tickets to march with the Corps section, will be available from this office, please let me have your name if you would like one. Those members who plan to attend should look out for, and fall in under, the board marked 'R SIGS', on Horseguards Parade - again a volunteer to hold the board will be called for in due course. My thanks go to **Bud Abbot** (ertswhile RQMS at the School of Signals), who kindly sent me a smashing 1999 calender of scenes in Oman, where he now works. Much appreciated **Bud.** Also many thanks to those who kindly sent Christmas greetings cards to us here in Association HQ.

Star & Garter Home and **Chelsea Hospital.** The Rep Col Comdt, **Maj Gen S. R. Carr-Smith** and the Regimental Secretary, **Col A. F. Carter** visited the Star and Garter Home at Richmond, Surrey on 17 December. There they met former members of the Corps; **Maj John Cox, Claude Allen**, and **Frank Martin. John** handed to **Col Carter**, the absolutely fascinating memoirs of an Old Contemptible, handwritten by a sapper signaller in two exercise books with over 36,000 words. Far from just being stored in the Museum Archives, I understand that plans for this story include serialisation in *The Wire*. Prior to that the General and the Colonel had visited the Chelsea Hospital to have Christmas lunch with our 20 former Corps members. They found them in good spirits and enjoying life to the full.

Corps Carol Service. Nearly 100 members (plus the choir of 36) attended the Corps Carol Service at Westminster on 17 December. The readings were by **Brig J. H. Griffin SOinC (A), Capt A. J. Mould** of 71 Sig Regt (V), **Capt M. C. Brookes** of 34 Sig Regt (V), **Sgt S. M. Thompson** of 238 Sig Sqn, **Sig G. Plumb** of 31 Sig Regt (V) and **Maj Gen I. O. J. Sprackling Master of Signals**. Our thanks once again go to **Lt Col John Chambers** for his organisation of the event and his hard work as Master of the Choristers. Many thanks to those who travelled from far and wide to attend, including dear **Ida Harvey** all the way from Manchester, plus **Lt Col David Hargreaves** and **Capt Mark Brookes** from Middlesbrough. Those who live within reach of Westminster and never attend this lovely service are missing out - so make a note of this year's service; 16 December.

GOOD NEWS TRAVELS FAST!
Publish it in The Wire
The Editor is always pleased to receive interesting articles

New Life Members. The following recently enrolled Life Members are welcomed to The Association:-

Rank	Name	Branch	Served
LCpl	Dennis Turton	East London	1948-50
Sig	L. Cotterell	RHQ	1942-47
WO2	Tony Curnow	Poole	1959-81
Maj	Adrian Scott	N Ireland	1960-87
WO1	Jim Cameron	N Ireland	1947-67
WO2	Brian Chambers	N Ireland	1964-78
WO1(RSM)	Reg Norris	RHQ	1950-75
LCpl	Barry Jervis	Manchester	1964-70
Sgt	Allan Rayner	RHQ	1938-46
Sig	Walter Hosken	RHQ	1947-49
WO1	John O'Donnell	Bath	1975-97
Cpl	Gordon Rodie	RHQ	1974-98
Sig	Bertie Littman	Bath	1940-46
Cpl	Frank Reynders	Bath	1944-52
LCpl	Jim Wilson	RHQ	1989-98
Sgt	Peter Heaton	RHQ	1951-56
Dvr	George Simner	East London	1952-54
Sgt	Paul Anderson	RHQ	1983-98
SSgt	Peter Ridlington	RHQ	1974-98
Sgt	Bernard Mee	RHQ	1975-98
Sig	Donald Shewring	Cardiff	1944-46
Sgt	Mike Prince	RHQ	1989-98
Lt Col	Pat Kington	RHQ	1967-98
Lt Col	Ron Abbott	RHQ	1967-98
Sig	D. J. Waters	South Staffs	1953-55
Wpte	I. Thornton	South Staffs	1953-54
Lt	Eddie Gibbons	RHQ	1939-46
Pte	Tim Eggett	Bedford	tbc
Wpte	D. Eggett	Bedford	1978-81
Sgt	Lou O'Dell	Bedford	1943-47
WSgt	Karene Johnson	RHQ	1982-94
Cpl	Harry Pridmore	RHQ	1941-46
Cpl	Syd Rouse	RHQ	1940-46
LCpl	Rob Ingram	RHQ	1988-95
Sgt	David James-Bailey	Southampton	1952-76
Cpl	Douglas Pepper	RHQ	1989-98
Sgt	Chris Braid	RHQ	1975-98
Cpl	B. Goode	Cardiff	1952-55
Lt Col	Andy Forster	RHQ	1974-98
Sgt	Pat Price	RHQ	1944-47
Cpl	Jason Medcraft	RHQ	1990-97
Cpl	Stuart Constantine	RHQ	1988-98
Cpl	John Kendrick	RHQ	?-1978
Sgt	Albert Moffat	RHQ	1943-46
WO2	Jim Brebner	RHQ	1975-98
Lt	Tommy Tomlin	RHQ	1942-45
LCpl	Sid Lonergan	RHQ	1943-47
Sgt	Andy Armitage	Dorset	1975-99
Cpl	Cliff Marker	RHQ	1988-98
LCpl	Alex Howell	RHQ	1987-98
W/LCpl	Jill Young	RHQ	1992-98

ALDERSHOT BRANCH

It is with great sadness that we report the death of **Maj Neil Horler**. From the time that the Branch was reinstated to its present success **Neil** has been a most energetic and dedicated Member. Friends from other Branches and many still serving will remember the very enjoyable Quiz Nights that he organised and conducted so ably. His Branch Standard was carried at the funeral, attended by many friends from the Corps. A Corps trumpeter sounded Last Post. Our deepest sympathy goes to **Gill** and her two daughters. We hope they remember they still belong to our Branch.

On a bright though chilly day in November Members of the Branch were joined by **Ron** and **Pat Killer** on a visit to Denbies Wine Estate. **Maj** 'Dusty' **Miller** is Chairman of the West London Branch and we were delighted to see him and **Pat**. We toured the cellars, tasted the wines, then relaxed over a light lunch in the restaurant.

November was a busy month for our Standard Bearer, **Fred Bridges**, who paraded our Standard at Aldershot on Remembrance Sunday and at the Canadian service at Brookwood on Armistice Day. In April 1949 **Gen Fladgate** and 'Dodger' **Green** formed the Aldershot Branch and this year on Friday 9 April we are holding a very special Celebration Dinner, details of which appear elsewhere in this edition of *The Wire*. Musicians from the Corps Band will play throughout the evening. We hope that many friends will help us enjoy it.

BATH AND DISTRICT BRANCH

The Bath and District Branch members are so far-flung, coming from Wootton-Bassett, Warminster, Trowbridge, Bradford-on-Avon, Frome, Chippenham, Bath, Bristol, Portishead, Bridgwater, Taunton, Wimborne Minster and all points in between, that we are unable to meet as a group as frequently as many Branches can. However, we do enjoy those occasions when we do meet. This year we have had a well-attended Curry lunch in May and a Barbecue in August, held at Pockeridge House, Corsham: courtesy of The Officers' Mess 2 Sig Bde. Next we had our Annual Luncheon in October held at Azimghur Barracks, Colerne, Wilts; courtesy of the WOs' & Sgts' Mess, 21 Sig Regt (AS). This last was particularly well-attended and we were honoured to have as our guests **Lt Col J. Terrington**, CO 21 Sig Regt, **Maj R.Thomas**, Chief-of-Staff 2 Sig Bde; **WO1 (RSM) D. Laycock** and **WO1 (GSM) C. J. Dubique**. We think we are particularly fortunate in being able to hold our functions at serving Signals Establishments: it gives a real feeling of belonging. At the Annual Luncheon, as a gesture of thanks to the WOs' & Sgts' Mess 21 Sig Regt, the Chairman of the Branch, **Lt Col Geoff Oakley**, presented to **RSM Laycock** a framed print of a painting of a Field Communications Site.

We also held our Annual General Meeting at the same mess in April. Unfortunately the turnout for this was rather disappointing. When the Committee met in November we decided that the reasons for this might be that we hold the AGM in the evening; members have to travel so far: and because so early in the year the weather is highly unpredictable for driving home in the dark (and, alas, usually rain). Therefore it was agreed that the Chairman would approach the Messes to find out if it is feasible to hold the AGM at lunchtime.

As usual the Branch was represented at the War Memorial in Bath on Remembrance Sunday, in the presence of the Lord Mayor. The Chairman, **Lt Col Oakley** laid the wreath and the Secretary, and Committee Member **Mr Roy Platten** also attended. Our Standard Bearer was unable to attend and a brand-new member, **Mr Neil Stewart**, with only a few minutes instruction in the nearest car park, paraded the Standard. He did it beautifully but what courage: The Secretary and **Roy Platten** also attended and paraded at the War Memorial in Combe Down, Bath on 11 November.

We were pleased to see the splendid picture of **Edgar Harrison** who was our last Chairman, in the article in *The Wire* about the Ceremony of Remembrance for the Battle of Karamate.

BRIGHTON BRANCH

Well what can your poor, humble scribe tell you? Was it a success? It was a smashing success. Then was it a sell-out? It was indeed, 107 sat down to dinner – absolute capacity. Thank goodness they did not all try to get on the dance floor at once. Point taken where was it? Brighton of course. OK, what was it? It was the Annual Dinner of the Brighton Branch of the Royal Signals Association 1998.



Brigadier Hughes, Dee Barber, Liz Hughes

Was there a splendid speaker? Yes, not only did **Brig Hughes** make a splendid speech he is also a poet. Yes a poet, Joe Soap said he was being nominated for Poet Laureate, but there was a snag – it appears that the new Poet Laureate would have to live in Barbados. Possibly the Brigadier would not want to live in Barbados. Was there anyone with him? Yes, of course, his charming wife **Liz**.

Tell us more. Such as? Who were the other two guests on the top table? Ah! You must mean **Peter Cuckow** and his charming wife **Sheila**. Where did they come from? Some place called Blandford. Where is that? Oh it is in some primeval part of Southern England. Whereabouts? Well as far as we know it is between Brighton and Landsend but we are not really sure exactly where. Well how will **Peter** and **Sheila** get back? No problem, they will get the 11 o'clock Camel Train. Camel Train? Oh it is much better than the Donkey Post. What about a train? What Train??

Any sad points? Yes there was one, our popular President and his charming wife were unable to attend. You mean **Brig Colin** and **Heather Brown**? Correct. Does anybody need thanking? Good heavens yes, the officers, the committee and a host of helpers. Without them we could not have had the dinner.



Alan Foot, Bill Daley, Joe Morrison

To go back to Blandford; Yes? What is it like? Well a year or two ago it was like a bomb site. And now? Very smart, very smart! What about the people there? Smashing, just smashing. How is that? Because they are the same sort of people as the Brigadier and us. They are all Royal Signals!

DERBY BRANCH

September 1998 - Four members of Derby Branch, **WO2 (Retd) Dorothy Williamson, Sgt (Retd) G eoff Allman, Sgt (Retd) Jim Haynes** and **Mrs Joy Elliott** were invited to spend a few days with 46 (City of Derby) Signals Squadron at their Annual Camp near Weymouth. We were regally entertained by all members of the Squadron and were privileged to be present, along with The Mayor of Derby, when three of our Derby Branch members - **Sgt D. Snow, Sgt C. Ryan-Gilbank** and **SSgt P. Burns** were presented with their Long Service and Good Conduct Medals. Visits were made to Poole, Weymouth and Portland Bill accompanied by our Vice-Chairman, **SSgt Alan Landsborough** SQMS 46 Signal Squadron. Visits were also made to the Tank Museum at Bovington and The Royal Signals Museum at Blandford, which all found very interesting.

November 1998 - Our Remembrance Day Parade again took place at the local Drill Hall by The Memorial in front of a cross placed there by Derby Branch in remembrance of all who gave their lives in the service of their country. 25 World War 2 Veterans of the Royal Artillery who served in the siege of Malta and for whom the Drill Hall where we hold our Parade was built joined us. Wreaths were laid by both retired and serving members of Derby Branch and by the Royal Artillery Association. **Col A. Hawksworth TD DL**, President of the Derby Branch and **Capt R. C. Ward**, one of our Vice-Presidents, took the parade. A Salvation Army bugler played the Last Post and Reveille. 46 Signal Squadron provided an excellent lunch after the parade. Our grateful thanks are extended to the OC, **Maj Flanagan** and all members of 46 Signal Squadron who support us in our effort to continue this tradition for our members.

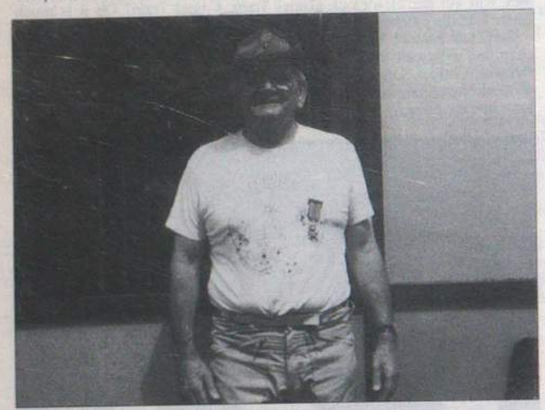
NEWS FROM MEMBERS

Congratulations to the following members who were married this year. **LCpl Tracey Cordon** and **Sig Simon Houchin, Sgt Darren Snow** and **Cpl Leanne Eley, WO2 Alan Whittaker** and **Tracey Waring.** We wish them all every happiness for the future. Congratulations and welcome also to the 'new arrivals' Twin boys for **Capt** and **Mrs David Tomlinson** and a son **James** for **WO2 Jim Batchelor** and his partner **SSgt Jane Atherley.** Our best wishes are sent to **Maj Pam Kettle** a long time member of the Derby Branch who has been unwell for some time. Our Treasurer, **Capt Williams** visited her recently in Wafton Hospital Chesterfield and took a small gift. He spent an enjoyable afternoon talking over old times. We wish her a speedy recovery. We also said goodbye to **Mrs Olivey (Sgt (Retd) Irene Knutton)** who died on 22 September 1998. Two Committee members attended the funeral in Derby on 1 October 1998. Our sympathy is extended to her family. Her son and daughter also served as members of the Royal Signals. Our Senior Members were again taken out for a Christmas Lunch at a local restaurant. This is now an annual event which all look forward to. The Committee and all members wish to extend their

sincere thanks to the WO's and Sgts Mess at Derby for allowing us, over the last 12 months, to use the Mess facilities for our meetings and for social events. Thank you to all who have supported the Branch throughout the past year, and we look forward to a successful 1999.

ANOTHER SUCCESS FOR A DERBY BRANCH MEMBER

Mr Dewi Treharne a life member of the Association has notched up a further notable success in July of this year by completing the Nijmegen Marches. The Marches are held each year in the City of Nijmegen over a period of four days, participants walk 25 miles (40 kilometres) per day. The photograph shows **Dewi** after being presented with his medal on completion of the four-days march.



This was the second Nijmegen march that **Dewi** has completed, his first was in 1954 when he was a corporal technician attached to 22 LAA Regiment Royal Artillery in Germany. **Dewi** said that it took him 44 years to forget the pain and hopes that he will be fit enough to do it again after another 44years. He also thinks that he may have been the first Royal Signals member to complete the march, not counting the ones that did it for real in 1944/45. He may also, at the age of 63 (going on 33) be the oldest Royal Signals member to complete the march.

Dewi works as a lecturer at the number one Radio School RAF Locking Weston-Super-Mare and was sponsored by the Station to the sum of £224 that was collected for the RAF Benevolent fund.

EAST KENT BRANCH

Forty four members and **Frank Castle**'s grandson met for an excellent lunch at the Manston Airport departure lounge restaurant on Sunday 11 October 1998, after or before which many went to the Spitfire Museum a takeoff's length away. Out through the picture window could be seen an array of monster aircraft, some of Russian descent, but interestingly enough, there was no activity around any of them. We can recommend the cuisine and the Museum, which is desperately trying to improve on volunteer funds. It is worth a visit for the history in pictures alone.

REMEMBRANCE DAY PARADE SUNDAY 8 NOVEMBER

Once again the Branch produced a larger contingent (other than the serving elements) than anyone else. Moreover nearly everyone had sensibly brought a black umbrella but being typically British, these had to be carried rolled 'at the port' even though it was teeming. **Col Mike Barrett** and the Hon Sec were seen conferring upon a modification to their bowler hats that would allow the water which was overflowing from the upturned brims to be provided with a down pipe which would carry it out of harms way! The party in the Cathedral numbered 28 for a moving service, one of the most poignant parts being at the very end when the choir sang 'We will remember them' set to Edward Elgar's music.

The 13 strong marching contingent behind the Standard carried by **Keith Chamber** and under command of the Chairman, **Trevor Allison**, marched past the Lord Mayor (again in pouring rain). Our breasts filled with pride as the spectators seemed to burst into applause as we marched past them. However, we discovered this was largely due to our supporters club (the wives) who positioned themselves at intervals and started to clap as we approached which was taken up by the public around them! Brilliant! Donald Crisp's cartoon depicts conditions.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Eadie Thomas has been in Kent & Canterbury Hospital for further treatment, pleased to say she is now at home and recovering. **Edith,** in her eighties still likes to organise the Branch raffles and is a staunch supporter of the Royal Signals Benevolent Fund. Thank you **Eadie** for all your efforts. **Donald Crisp** is now a SSAFA caseworker, so this will give the Branch added support for its Welfare cases. **Peter Foakes** has won five more Gold Medals in the inter service swimming but despite this, he allowed the Navy to win. Six Members, **Fred & Joan Oaten, Alan & Clare Sunnucks, John & Gillian Badcock** found themselves together in Leicester on Halloween Night for a Reunion Dinner of the High Speed Wireless Squadron in Ceylon during the war. **Fred** and **Alan** served in it and **John** was their OC.



NEW MEMBER

We are delighted to welcome **Mr Andy & Mrs Eva Aston** of Littlestone, Kent to the Branch. **Andy** served from 1945-48 with 18 Air Formation Signals, in Egypt, Palestine and the Sudan.

GLASGOW BRANCH

Branch members with family and friends managed to attend the Beating of Retreat, by the massed bands of the Royal British Legion (Scotland), on the esplanade of Edinburgh Castle. A meal was arranged at an Edinburgh hotel before the ceremony. It was a worthwhile trip enjoyed by all, with all the colourful plaids, kilts and headgear of the pipers. The only snag was to find toilets on the homeward journey. It being a Sunday evening the cafe on our side of the motorway had closed down for the night. A mad dash over, the foot bridge to the cafe on the other side of the motorway, (which fortunately was open), saved a lot of embarrassment to one and all, and we didn't even buy a cup of tea.

Our monthly meetings are well attended and we have gained a few more members since our last contribution to *The Wire*. The Annual Dinner and Dance was held on Saturday 28 November, in the Drill Hall of 32 (Scottish) Sig Regt (V) with the kind permission of the CO of the Regiment, **Lt Col A. C. C. Lapsley**. The Branch President, **Maj Gen A. A. Anderson CB**, sent his apologies for not being able to attend, but wished all concerned a very enjoyable evening. The members and guests were greeted with a glass of sherry on arrival, before being piped in to a well set out dining area of the hall, decorated in the Corps colours with table mats, napkins and candelabras with candles in the Corps colours. A two foot high silver 'Jimmy' placed on the Top Table. All had been loaned for the night from the Regiment, signed for, and counted out by our Chairman.

A total of 85 members and guests sat down to an excellent dinner provided by **WO2 Master Chef John Wren** his Chefs and staff. Again the members wish to convey their thanks and appreciation for a first class dinner, combined with excellent service. My guests turned down an invitation to another function opting to accompany me, having enjoyed the 1997 dinner so much. Congratulations to you and your staff **John**, your fame has spread beyond the limits of the Branch. **Alistair Wilson**, (the newest recent member to join the Branch), was given the assignment to propose the Loyal Toast and the Toast to the Colonel in Chief, **HRH The Princess Royal. WO1 (SVWO1) Terry McVey** of 32 Sig Regt proposed the toast of the RSA Glasgow Branch. At the Top Table was **Lt Col A. C. C.** and **Mrs Ruth Lapsley**, the Branch Chairman **Bill Taylor** and **Mrs Betty Taylor**, Branch Treasurer **Eric McWaters** and **Mrs Annice McWaters**. The guests included **WO1 Terry McVey**, representing **WO1 (RSM) MacLachlan** who was unable to attend, **WO2 (SSM) Karen Swan**, **Sgt Jackie** and **Mrs Peggy Dollen,** of 32 Scottish Sig Regt (V).



Lt Col Lapsley with Mrs Ruth Lapsley and WO1 (SVWO1) Terry McVie

Lt Col Lapsley was asked to say a few words. He was able to update the company of the latest position regarding cut backs proposed by the Government. The effect on the Royal Signals Territorial units, with units merging, and few cut backs affecting the strength of the Corps Regular, or Territorial, was well received. **Bill Taylor** thanked the Colonel for his speech. He thanked all the members, family and friends attending the dinner, for their support. He also thanked the CO, and members of the Regiment, for their support of the branch at the monthly meetings and use of the facilities, and **Peggy Dollen** for tending the bar at those meetings. He thanked those who donated prizes for the raffle. **Bill** then requested everyone to go downstairs to enjoy coffee cheese and biscuits whilst the hall was rearranged for dancing. The Piper who had played several tunes during the meal then piped the company from the hall to the Messes downstairs. The band named Prime Time was first class, suitable to everyone, with the decibels at the right pitch. At the start someone let on that it was the scribe's 78th Birthday, so all sang, and I was dragged onto the floor at the beginning of the first dance. The raffle raised £142. Every lady present was presented with a fresh white carnation tied with a blue ribbon representing St Andrews colours.



Members and Guests at dinner

The Branch Committee put a lot of hours in preparing this event, so that everything is 'Alright on the Night'. Thanks to them everyone enjoyed a splendid evening. Finally I apologise to **QM Norma Sproule**, who, on our visit to Ripon also looked after our interests for which we thank her. I missed her name on my notes. Sorry **Norma** from a VERY OLD EX QM.

HARROGATE BRANCH

The first recorded meeting of the Harrogate Branch of the Association was held on Friday 16 November 1951. This meeting was held in the Drill Hall situated on Strawberry Dale and was attended by 19 members. The last recorded meeting was held on Thursday 10 October 1970. This was held in Hut 15 in Hildebrand Barracks with four members in attendance. On the 11 February 1971 an AGM was called, members present three. The meeting was cancelled and no further entries were recorded in the Minutes Book.

On the 28 March 1982 and 2 May 1982 meetings were held to discuss the re-establishing the Branch. These meeting were attended by **Lt Col (Retd) L. J. D. Davies TD**, **Maj (Retd) K. G. Doyle** and **Mr P. C. Wood.** The result of these meetings was that it was decided to have a reinaugural meeting on the 21 May 1982 in the Cpl's Club (the old Sgt's Mess) in Uniacke Barracks. The re-inaugural meeting was supported by 48 members and apologies were received from 9 others. Amongst those present to give their support and to answer any queries that may arise were: **Col P. Verden** Commandant of the Army Apprentices College, **Lt Col R. L. Murray OBE** General Secretary of the Royal Signals Association, **Maj (Retd) B. Edwards** President of the Leeds Branch of the Association. It is now 15 years since that re-inaugural meeting and the Branch continues to flourish with an average membership of 60. The Committee is guided by our Chairman, **Maj (Retd) J. Newman**. The finances controlled by **Brian** 'Paddy' **Black** and the work horses consist of **Jack Kendle** (who is now in his 11th year) and **Bruce Graham**. I ('Chippy' **Wood**), for my sins, carry out the duties of the Secretary. November is the month when the Branch is at its busiest. It starts with the Annual Dinner that is always held on the Friday preceding the Remembrance parade and culminates with the parade itself. From 1982 to 1995 the Branch Annual Dinner was always held in the Sgts Mess at Army Apprentices' College. With the closure of the College many thought having lost the use of that facility that finding a new venue for the dinner would pose a bit of a problem. However, these fears proved to be unfounded.

Our new venue is the Oakdale Golf Club. This year a total of 84 members and their guests were greeted with a glass of sherry and then sat down to a 5-course dinner. At the end of the dinner our President, **Maj (Retd) Chas Birchall**, gave the assembled members a brief on the current state of the Corps, interspersed with snippets about the two weeks reserve training he had just completed with 31 Signal Regiment, in Devon and Wales. After this the members adjourned to the lounge bar to finish the evening off with a disco. A report on the annual dinner would not be complete without mentioning **ex Sgt Brian** 'Paddy' **Black**. As is his wont he arranged to borrow some table furniture, organised the catering and the bar, printed the menu, produced the seating plan and paid all the bills. Others worthy of a mention were **Dave Aldous** who organised the Raffle and **Bruce Graham** who, amongst other things, was responsible for producing the professional looking place names. Once again this year the Harrogate branch annual dinner, organised by ex Corps members matched the Regimental Dinners of bygone days.

On Sunday 8 November 30 Branch Members paraded behind the Branch Standard and marched to the cenotaph for the Remembrance Service and the laying of wreaths. This year the Branch wreath was laid by our President, **Maj (Retd) Chas Birchall.** At the conclusion of the Parade 13 members and their wives returned to the Oakdale Golf Club for lunch.

During the remainder of the year the Branch is still active. The third Friday of each month is our social evening when members get together for a drink and a natter. We also run our own Golf Society this is supported by an average of 21 members who get together for matches two or three times a year. One of the highlights of our golfing calendar is playing in an 18-hole match play, knockout competition for the 'Tom Stoddart Trophy'. This trophy, which was presented by **Lt Col (Retd) Tom Stoddart MBE**, is a replica of the St Andrews Claret Jug. This for the last two years has been won by **Pete Shepherd**. Although we no longer have contact with the serving Corps we of the Harrogate Branch maintain the spirit of comradeship and endeavour to keep the Corps to the forefront in Harrogate. If you live in the area and wish to make contact, or, if you are visiting, you will always be welcome.

LOUGHBOROUGH BRANCH

Royal Signals Association, Loughborough Branch held their Annual Dinner Dance on 14 November 1998 at the Carillon Rooms, Loughborough. 76 sat down for dinner, which was followed by dancing to a live band. They came from all over England, (Cheltenham, Southport, Bristol, Bracknell, Derby) as well as our local Branch members and friends. The evening was a tremendous success and naturally there was lots of reminiscing amongst us all. We are all looking forward to next year's Annual Dinner Dance that is booked for Saturday, 20 November 1999. Anyone wishing to attend next year please contact the Chairman, **Ben Banyard**, Tel: 01509 557686.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH

Dear Mrs Herring,

In reply to your personal request in the October Issue of *The Wire*, made to 'Mr Apology' of the Newcastle Branch, for news of our Branch. I, as an ex-secretary of the Newcastle Branch, and as such having a little knowledge of joined-up, have taken it upon myself to answer your plea.

However, before I get down to news of the Branch, I must draw your attention to the most honoured and …….. yes privileged position in which you found yourself on that day in Blandford, when you met face to face with 'Mr Apology'. Let me explain. We of the Newcastle Branch, probably the oldest Branch of the RSA (just thought I'd pop that one in), have members in our ranks, who go back as far as Noah (000001 Sig Noah), who have never seen 'Mr Apology'. Although they have heard his voice when answering the phone on a meeting night saying, 'Please put in my apologies I can't make it tonight', in fact there are not many left who have not been 'apologied' on the phone by our 'Mr Apology'. Indeed some unfortunates have found themselves in this position more than once and as a result have been given counselling by our specially trained counselling team.

As you may have gathered, your meeting with 'Mr Apology', face to face, in a pub in down town Blandford (the city that never sleeps), details of which will never leave the tip of my pen, make you a member of an elite band of 'Apology Seekers'. I, myself have not only met him, but as his one time controller, also know his true identity. I have spoken to him about your meeting in Blandford and how close he had come to 'blowing his cover'. However, after a lengthy debriefing I am sure that his cover is still intact and have returned him to the field, where he can be best employed going around apologising for not being where he should be.

Enough of this frivolity and on with the news of the elite 'Geordie' Branch of the RSA. As mentioned, we do have our share of veterans. One in particular, I believe, deserves special mention. **Mr Sid Whitfield**, a member now for well over 50 years (Honour Badge awarded), who despite his health problems over the past two years, of which he has had many, continues to think of his fellow members first putting aside his own problems. Over the past ten or more years we have discussed, on various occasions, renewing our Branch Standard and the end result has always been that the Branch could not afford the cost and the matter was shelved. However, at our October meeting a large cardboard box took centre stage between the Secretary and the Chairman, on opening the box, yes you've guessed, a brand new standard was revealed, fully embroidered with the name of the Branch, paid for and donated by **Sid Whitfield** to the Branch.

Where was **Sid**? He was sitting at home, he had sent in his apologies saying that he was not feeling too good. Those of us who know **Sid**, also know that he just did not want to be centre stage that night or any other night, such is his nature. Our new Standard will require a dedication ceremony, probably at the RSA Reunion at Blandford in June 1999. Our old Standard, which has seen a great deal of history and many a 'campaign', Catterick reunions Remembrance Day Parades etc, will require a place of rest either in our own garrison church here in Newcastle or in the Corps Museum. These matters will be decided by our members prior to June 1999.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of all our members to say, Thank you **Sid Whitfield** for your unselfishness, dedication and generosity that you have shown to us all with this much appreciated donation. Also we hope that we have succeeded in embarrassing the hell out of you. Thanks **Sid**.

P.S: 'Mr Apology' sends his apologies for not writing himself but he is far too busy writing letters of apology!



This man was seen in Blandford on the day in question claiming to be 'Mr Apology'. Please rest assured this is an impostor and disregard any claim made by him as he can not be held responsible for his actions, due to an overdose of Newcastle Brown Ale. (**Guy Turnbull**, one of his henchmen in Blandford).

NORTHERN IRELAND BRANCH

It is time once again to remember those Comrades who are no longer with us. Our Branch was fully involved in various local functions during November. At Belfast City Hall Garden of Remembrance where the ceremony was led by the Lord Mayor and the Councillors of Belfast City, **Paul Robertson** and **Norman Coulter** laid a cross on behalf of the Branch. In Palace Barracks, Holyrood, Co. Down a service of remembrance and the dedication of a memorial stone in memory of those Royal Signals personnel killed in the Northern Ireland troubles was attended by **Col Walters,** the Regimental Colonel, our Branch was represented by **Lt Col (Retd) Terry Lightfoot**. On Remembrance Sunday there was a good turnout of Branch members for the church parade to St Marks Dundella, Belfast, as guests of 40 (Ulster) Sig Regt (V). **Billy Dickinson** carried the Branch standard. **Jim Reilly** once again laid the Branch wreath in the church. The buffet laid on by the Regiment afterwards was most welcome. At a Remembrance Parade and ceremony, organised by 85 Sig Sqn in Newtownards a wreath was laid, on behalf of the Branch, by **Chris Montgomery**.

The series of talks was continued at our November meeting. This time it was the turn of 66 Sig Sqn, when **SSgt Mark Barrass** brought us up to date in a most interesting way on the working of the Squadron. An unusual feature on this occasion was the practical demonstration given in the vehicles by **Cpl Dave Burgess** and indeed by our own Hon Sec, **Sgt Ian Wolfe**. A disco for the younger members and friends was organised in Clonaver TAVR Centre by **Ian** and **Debbie Wolfe**. It was very successful both socially and financially. The thanks of the Branch goes to all those who helped to make it a success and those who donated prizes for the draw.

Don't just read these notes. If you are in Northern Ireland, visiting, posted or living here come and meet us. We are not hard to find each third Wednesday of the month. The Officers and Members of the Northern Ireland Branch would like to thank the Chairman, Secretary, Admin Officer and all the Backroom staff of the RSA for the help they have given to the Branch during 1998 and we wish them a Prosperous New Year.

READING AND DISTRICT BRANCH

Our Year ended with a Christmas Social Evening at the Brock Barracks (which is still, after the big cuts, home of a small R. Signals TA Unit), where we all had the type of fun that one expects at a well organised 'do'. Nobody was disappointed. We all had our fill. Plus, we all remembered why 'Christmas'..... and we once again ended the evening with carols around the Christmas tree. The portable organ was again there. The past six months have been hectic with so many events organised, like Branch Meetings in pubs; Sandhurst - to see the final Rehearsal of Sovereign's parade/picnic, the Blandford Reunion, 'Scaleybacks', it was a super parade. Then there was a Barbecue, Informal dinners in a 'posh' restaurant, visits to neighbouring Branches as guests to their dinners, Chelsea Royal Hospital; Cenotaphs, and Museums. **Alan**, our Hon Sec also Hon Sec for one of our Steam Railways hosted a Christmas Dinner on 'his' train. Look out for the photographs. Just a quickie ... Next year's (29th) Annual Renuion Dinner is going to be on Saturday 20 March 1999. So hold back booking those holidays if you intend to come. For further particulars about our branch, contact:

Alan E. Foot, 96 Chiltern Crescent, Earley RG6 1AN
or : alanfoot@globalnet.co.uk
or : Tel/fax 0118 986 1130

WEST LONDON BRANCH

In October we held our Annual Dinner & Dance at the Civic Centre in Hounslow. Among the guests were friends from other Branches, whom we always are happy to see and it was a most enjoyable evening.

Our Christmas Party this year, with music for dancing, was at our new venue, the Infantry Barracks in Hounslow. We thank the resident unit for their hospitality and for arranging the buffet. The evening was enhanced by our President, **Maj John Daw** showing the video that he took of our annual church parade in September at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea. We were pleased to see **John** and **Margaret**, who came up from home on the Hampshire coast to be with us.

MALTA/LIBYA ROYAL SIGNALS ASSOCIATION OLD COMRADES BRANCH

A meeting was held at The Denbigh Arms, Lutterworth, Saturday 26 September 1998. **Roy** and **Pat Andrews, Les Blackmore, Betty** and **Peter Charles, Rita** and **Dennis Croot, Angela** and **Arthur Harris, Beryl** and **Dave Harvey, Maggie** and **Bill Lawrence, Billy Wild. Alan Wilcox** and **Harry Holberry** attended the Reunion on Friday 25 October but owing to other commitments left early on Saturday morning. A few members said they would be going to Blandford at the end of June 1999.



The Members
Standing (L-R): Pat Andrews, Les Blackmore, Roy Andrews, Billy Wild
Sitting (LR): Beryl Harvey, Dennis Croot, Dave Harvey, Maggie Lawrence, Bill Lawrence,Rita Croot, Arthur Harris, Angela Harris, Peter Charles, Betty Charles.

79 ARMOURED DIVISION SIGNALS OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

As is our custom, the members of this dwindling Branch of the Association met together for a weekend Reunion. We have varied the locations of our meetings over the years but for the first time, because one of our members is a fanatic, we went to the Island of Tresco in the Scilly Isles from 16-19 October. Sadly two of the seven remaining members could not be with us. However, **Capt Chris Denard, Capt Les Wardell, Capt Cliff Heap, Lt Jimmy Humble** and **Lt John Badcock** (Ranks at the time of serving!) met at Penzance Heliport late on Friday afternoon in pouring rain, gale force winds and low visiblity. The Siskorsky carrying 20 passengers and one dog flew 'blind' for the half hour flight to St Marys, where we then bussed down to the harbour for a three mile trip in an open boat in mountainous seas to the landing stage at Tresco. A tractor and trailer, the only permitted motor transport allowed, took us to our very comfortable hotel.

On Saturday and Sunday we were blessed with sunshine though on the first there was the continuing gales whipping up the Atlantic to crash in on a myriad of rocks and reefs and on the Sunday dead calm with reflections across the bays. We walked the coastline in stages on the first day with suitable refreshments at the only other inn and joined the numerous 'Twitchers' who were studying the bird migrations. The second day we joined a boat tour of the Eastern Isles with their sea lions and many sea birds calling in on St Agnes for a cuppa before returning to Tresco.



(L-R): Lt John Badcock, Capt Chris Denard, Lt Jimmy Humble, Capt Les Wardell and Capt Cliff Heap

On Monday we choppered back but this time from what is known as Terminal 1 on Tresco, a well appointed hut otherwise used as the cricket pavilion, to the mainland in a clear blue sky with SW England laid out before us. We felt that **Maj Denis Strange** and **Lt Robin Jennings** had missed one of our better reunions!

MIDDLESEX YEOMANRY ASSOCIATION

On 23 October veterans of No 4 Squadron, 2nd Middlesex Yeomanry, (22nd Armoured Brigade Signal Squadron) attended the unveiling ceremony of the Memorial to 7 Armoured Division (The Desert Rats) erected in Thetford Forest where the Division prepared for the invasion of Normandy in June 1944. The ceremony was performed by **Field Marshal Lord Carver** who was greeted by a fanfare of four trumpeters from The Blues & Royals. After inspecting the Guard of Honour provided by the lst Royal Tank Regiment, The Royal Yeomanry and Standard Bearers of the Royal British Legion, **Lord Carver** said, 'It's a useful reminder to people who come for walks in Thetford Forest that we were here during the Second World War playing a very important part in ensuring that people are free to walk here at all.' The memorial represents five years work by former Desert Rat, **Les Dinning,** who had the idea after visiting Normandy in 1993.



Middlesex Yeomanry, 7 Armoured Division Memorial
Thetford Forset

Christmas has gone, New Year's resolutions have been made and it's heads down for the year 2000, good luck everybody, keep your powder dry.

Since our last notes for *The Wire* we have paraded at St Paul's for Lafone Day. The Parade Commander was **Maj Mike Lansdowne**, with a very good turnout by all. Pre-Parade Lunch, with wine, assisted some members of the Association to swing their arms a little higher. Several members, including our Chairman **George Key** and Membership Secretary **Ted Hawkins**, attended the unveilling ceremony to the Armoured Division, of which 4 Squadron Second Middlesex Yeomanry were a part.

The Annual Dinner, at the Duke of York's HQ, was a success with a good number attending. Our Guest of Honour was **Col Ted Scarlett**, ably assisted by our President **Col Simon Beazley**.



Our President checking the bill

On Remembrance Sunday we again paraded with the Squadron at the Ruislip Memorial. The Association wreath was laid by **Maj** 'Dusty' **Miller**. After the parade the Squadron hosted us to a splendid curry, back at the TA Centre. The Squadron are to be congratulated for a very smart turnout and thanked for their generous hospitality.

Our next get together, other than our regular meetings at Knightsbridge Barracks, will be The Cavalry Memorial Parade in Hyde Park on 9 May 1999. Get out your Regimental Tie and polish your shoes, it's not to be missed. The massed bands alone are worth turning up for and are very good to march to.

31 SIGNALS REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

A Belated Happy New Year to you all and may 1999 be good to you. 1998 finished on a high note. A successful 'Cheese and Wine' party, organised by **Sally Bentley** and **Chrissy Mills**, was held at Mercury House, Duke of York's HQ. Two other hard workers, beavering away to make us all very happy were **Ed Bentley (Sally's** husband) and **LCpl Paul McGarrity**, our thanks to them all. The CO, **Lt Col Linda Harrison** was there to prove to three former COs, who were also in attendance that the Regiment has lost none of its social skills. These occasions are very good at attracting former members of the Regiment back to the social scene and this year was no exception. **Alan Parry** and his wife attended and boy did the lamp start swinging.

Unfortunately our Carol Service in December clashed with the Corps Carol Service which caused a few decisions to be made. Our Service was organised by our Regimental Chaplin, **Maj David Crawley**, who insists that he is in Sales and not Management.

Our annual trip overseas this year will be to the Somme and the V2 Rocket sites at La Cuople 28-30 May. By popular request we will have the customary singing of Tibetan sea-shantys on the coach, organised by our social secretary **Ron** 'Dusty' **Miller**. Anyone wanting further details of this trip should contact 'Dusty' on 01784 250756. A reminder that our Annual Dinner is on the 17 April, details can be obtained from our Secretary, **Henry Holman** on 0181 848 4597.

Congratulations to one of our committee members **Steve Bland**, who did a sponsored motorcycle ride from Lands End to John O'Groats, in aid of the Royal Signals Benevolent Fund. A sum of around £300 was very well received by **Lt Col Ian Hamilton** at the 56 Div City of London Signals OCA Dinner. Well done **Steve.**

56 DIV (CITY OF LONDON SIGNALS) BRANCH OCA

The Branch has again joined forces with other Branches at events like attending the Governor's Parade at Chelsea Hospital on 6 September (with 31 Signal Regiment Association and the West London Branch). Secretary, **Steve Bland** could not join the parade this year as he was riding his motorcycle on a charity run from Land's End to John O' Groats. One of the charities he sponsored was the RSA Benevolent Fund for which he raised over £300 from the generous sponsorship of members from 56 Branch and the newly created South London Branch. He took the opportunity to present the proceeds to Association Secretary, **Ian Hamilton**, who was Guest of Honour at the 56 Branch Annual Dinner held at the Union Jack Club, London on 13 November. Other guests were **Peter Cuckow,** the RSA Assistant Secretary, **Lt Col Linda Harrison** the CO of 31 (City of London) Signals Regiment (V) and **Capt Dave Thomas**, PSAO of 83 Signal Squadron (V), the successor Unit to 56 Div Signals.



Peter Cuckow looks on whilst Steve Bland presents the cheque to Ian Hamilton. 56 President Roy Hughes appears to be still tackling his dessert



Ian Hamilton appears to be complaining to President Roy Hughes about a violent attack on his left elbow by Chairman John Robson - to the amusement of Peter Cuckow

REUNIONS

THE 5TH (LONDON) CORPS SIGNALS OLD COMRADES ASSOCIATION

The 5th (London) Corps Signals Old Comrades Association held its 53rd Reunion meeting on 24 October 1998 with a lunch at the Duke of York's Headquarters Club in Chelsea. Over 80 members and guests were present, and following the previous 'theme' Reunions, covering North Africa, Italy and Austria, the 1998 Reunion celebrated 'Back Home' with a traditional English meal that, of course, included roast beef and Yorkshire pudding. The occasion was rather special. Not only had the Association Secretary, **Sid Prior**, mounted a fine exhibition about the National Memorial Arboretum, following the Association's presentation of a tree and a park bench in May, but the principal guests at the Reunion were **David Childs**, the Arboretum Appeal Director and his wife **Jane**. **David** gave the meeting a full and interesting update on progress at the Arboretum and developments planned for the future. Another event made the occasion rather special. In the course of the Annual General Meeting the Vice-Chairman, **Frank Reed**, made an announcement not on the agenda and certainly not expected by the Chairman, **Bob Roberts**. (Although it turned out later that it was not unexpected by his wife **Edith**). **Frank Reed** announced that is was **Bob Roberts**, 51st year as Chairman of the Association. He also presented **Bob** with a plaque bearing the 5th Corps sign (the Viking Ship) and an inscription together with a bottle of champagne and a promise of two further gifts to arrive at his home after the weekend, then he presented **Edith** with a box of chocolates. He went on to present the Secretary, **Sid Prior**, with an inscribed plaque that recognised his contribution to the Association, as a founder member, and his notable service in recent years as Secretary, following the death of the previous Secretary.



The Secretary, Sid Prior, displays his plaque with the Chairman beside him

Bob Roberts has been noted for getting through the Annual General Meeting with commendable brevity and speed but members were delighted not only at the recognition of his service but this time to be rather taken aback by the event. It had been a well kept secret. The 53rd Reunion was a happy occasion despite two less cheerful items. The Association's oldest member could not be present because of restrictions, following hospital treatment, but a card signed by all present was sent to him to mark his 95th birthday. The Association also said goodbye to **Louis Lilyveld**, the Headquarter's Club Manager and his Assistant **Pat Howard** who were retiring at the end of the year and who had provided for the Association's Reunions for 20 years. The future of the Duke York's Headquarters in Chelsea is now uncertain but it is hoped that the 54th Reunion can be held there in 1999. Once more 238 Signal Squadron provided an excellent service of amplification at the Reunion and the Old Comrades are very grateful for this help

ROYAL SIGNALS MILITARY TRAINERS 1st REUNION

The 23 October saw the first coming together of Royal Signals Military Trainers past and present. The day started off by personnel arriving from all corners of the globe, some spending their well earned cash getting to Blandford. A special thanks for their efforts must go to **SSgt John Laffey, SSgt Phil Hay, Heather** and **Liz** for their determination to attend the Dinner. Most people came down to the woods to see where the Squadron was put after it left Catterick, some not realising that we had spent time at Colerne. After spending a lot of time looking at all the old photos of the 'Staffies and Detties', off we all went to the Sgts' Mess for a Reunion Dinner and a few lemonades. All who attended will agree that the evening was a great success. **Capt Alan Hoensch** must be thanked for both the idea and the work involved before the Dinner. For the organisation of the accommodation and the Dinner all the credit and thanks must go to **WO2 (SSM)** 'Doggie' **Eaglesham**. Lookout for the excusive tie that was made for the reunion. (Only a few left, cost £7.50). Yes it was the first Reunion but it won't be the last. If you couldn't make this one then put in your diary 27 October 2000, this is a provisional date. The dinner is open to all instructors who have served with the Wing/Squadron.

On 1 November 1998 the Military Training Squadron lost its title and its link with 11 Signal Regiment and now comes under the command of the School of Signals. Our new title is NCO Training Wing, Command Training Group.

254 OBA CLUB REUNION

The ninth reunion of the 254 Club took place in the Tillington Hall Hotel, Stafford over the weekend Friday 30 October and Sunday 1 November 1998. This is something of a milestone when you think that, on joining as a boy soldier, you had EIGHT years to serve in the ranks AFTER completing your term of Boys' Service. At the time that seemed to stretch forever into the distant future and here we are fifty years plus on celebrating a NINTH reunion. A total of 154 attended comprising 90 ex boys and 64 wives.

Being the custom, Friday is the arrival day when everyone settles into their rooms and starts to get reacquainted with the others that they probably haven't seen since last year, or 10, 20 or even 50 years ago. Considering the weather with floods hampering progress both from North and South and the congestion on the motorways all attending did well to arrive at all, especially 'Deadly' and **Daphne Baker** who took over seven hours to get from Dover. **Terry Beare** from Australia (yet again), **Colin Williams** and wife from America and **John Dove** and **Anna** from Sunny Spain were the ones who had furthest to travel. They all combined their trip to the reunion with an extended holiday in UK.

For the second year, the event has been most excellently organised and attended by **Anne** and **Pat Fox-Roberts**, a lot of work but highly appreciated by all who attend. The reacquainting went on well into the 'wee small hours' of Saturday, but then that's what it's all about! It was nice to see first time attendees **Alan Crabtree** (haven't seen him since our commissioning day in April 1996) and 'Titch' **Spedding** (haven't seen him since I left X Watch War Office Signals in July 1948— over 50 years ago.) Saturday was devoted to a late start with a visit to the Wedgewood factory to let us see how the good things in life are made — one or two were able to try their hand at the art of potting. After lunch in the excellent restaurant at Wedgewood we all went to their Seconds outlet in Stoke on Trent where many were relieved of some of their hard earned Old Age Pension! It was then back to the hotel for a bit of R & R prior to getting ready for the now well established semi formal dinner. It took the usual format with **George Severs** in the chair who invited the **Revd Jim Ireland** to say grace. To round off the first part of the evening **Peter McNaughton** proposed the toast to all those Ex-Boys who are no longer able to join in our reunions — the roll of Honour now totals Eighty-Eight. After dinner the band got going in the ballroom and those who wanted danced the night away, others were content to sit, drink and natter. Eventually the hotel fell silent. Sunday dawned and after breakfast those who were leaving said their farewells with a promise to be back next year. There were a few couples who stayed on to take advantage of a third night in the hotel. The atmosphere at this reunion was excellent and everyone had a thoroughly enjoyable time.

Royal Signals Association
Aldershot Branch

50th Anniversary Dinner

to be held in the

Garrison Sergeant's Mess, Aldershot on
Friday 9 April 1999 at 7.30pm for 8.00pm

All inclusive price of £25 per head for drinks on arrival, wine at table and a five course dinner followed by coffee
The Corps Band will play during the evening
All past and present members of the Corps living in the area will be most welcome

Names please, with cheques, to: **Capt Peter Sharpe**
6 Rossmore Gardens, Aldershot, Hants GO1 13XF
Tel: 01252 333643

1ST ARMOURED DIVISIONAL SIGNALS IN AFRICA 1942/43

FAREWELL REUNION

The Farewell Reunion of the Officers of 1st Armoured Divisional Signals in Africa 1942/43 was held at the Naval and Military Club, Piccadilly on 4 December 1998.

The unit was commanded by the late **Brig W. R. Smijth-Windham CBE, DSO** during the Knightsbridge-Alamein-Mareth period of the 8th Army. The Reunion has been meeting annually since its inauguration in 1964. Numbers have of course been falling rapidly in recent years, but the five members shown in the picture were able to meet and enjoy this final occasion.



(L-R): John Chenevix-Trench (CRA's Signal Officer), Oliver Lebus (2nd Armd Brigade), Bobby Warren (2 RHA), Manley Bircumshaw (Cable Troop), John West (Adjutant).
(Appointments at the time of El Alamein)

LOST COMMS

The former service pals of **SSgt Michael John Palmer** are sought for a possible surprise reunion. In particular the following: **Dave Vince** (28 Sig Regt 71/72), **John Scurr** (233 Sig Sqn 73/74), **Bernie Cummings** (9 Sig Regt: 74), 'Mac' **Macdonald** (8 Sig Reg 75/76), **Derek Styles** and **Ali McKenzie** (28 Sig Reg 84/85), and **Norrie Ruddiman** (7 Sig Regt 87/88). **Mick** also served in the Junior Leaders Regt at Denbury, 4 Armd Div Sig Regt, 10 Sig Regt, at Wilton, 255 Sig Sqn Bahrain and 35 Sig Regt (V) in Birmingham. If anybody knows the current whereabouts of any of these, plus anyone else who remembers **Mick,** is asked to contact the RSA Admin Officer at Blandford.

22717342 Barrow J. M. National Service Group 52/18. Service with Betfor Signals 1953/4 would like to make contact with other RS personnel from that time period, for reminiscences and a chat.
E-Mail: jmbarrow@btinternet.com

Mr Geoffrey Lewis is seeking the present whereabouts of his former pal **Clifford Treadwell**. They served together in Egypt during the 1940s. Anyone who can help is asked to call **Geoffrey** on 01628 626545.

Tony Kitchener ex Northampton now living in Coventry since 1962 is looking for **Cyril Bridgestock** LKA, 29 Heston House, Tanners Hill, Deptford, London SE8, Approx1961. He was in the Royal Signals, Dvr MT Section, Saighton Camp, Chester and was demobbed 1957/8. Contact **Tony** on Tel: 01203 689048 or e.mail: Tony4679@aol.com or any one who served with him 1955/58. Catterick Gallowgate Camp, Rippon, Saighton Camp, Chester HQ sqn.

Mr E. F. 'Tommy' **Tomlin** is keen to hear news of his former pals from the Northampton Branch, from around 1946/47. In particular **Henry Knight, Ron Deacon** and **Bill Bruxby**. Anyone who can help is asked to call **Tommy** on 01495 220923.

24591622 Signaller Lee 'Sly' **Silvester**, having served in the following regiments between 1981/86, JRRS, OUSTON, 30 SIG REGT, 633 SIG Tp Belize, would like to contact anybody that knows him. He can be contacted on 01216017307 or email: LEE@lsilvester.freeserve.co.uk

Mr Dalton Spinola is seeking the whereabouts of his former pal **Graham Hyde**. They served together in 7 Signal Regiment, Herford in 1962 and **Graham** was a Tg Op. Anyone who can help is asked to call **Mr Spinola** on 01222 345962.

The SAS Association is seeking the whereabouts of the former Royal Signals **Sgt W. P. Duffy**. He was known as "The General" during his service with the SAS in WW2. He survived an attack on his jeep, which killed his OC. Apparently Sgt Duffy, despite being wounded, bravely returned fire and was only captured when the vehicle crashed into a tree. He later escaped from his POW camp and was later honoured for his actions by the French. **Sgt Duffy** would be in his 80s now and anyone with any knowledge of him is asked to call **Maj (Retd) Jeremy Whittaker** on 01428 712292.

Mr Ian Dunningham's father, **(Maj Stanley Dunningham),** was the manager of Mercury House (one of the Corps homes) in Florence Rd, Boscombe, Bournemouth, from 1948 to 1957. **Ian**, who was a lad at the time, has contacted RHQ saying that he would be pleased to hear from anyone who stayed at the home during that time. He can be contacted on 01454 312737 or by E-Mail ian@dunningham.demon.co.uk

Mr S. F. Rouse is seeking the whereabouts of his former colleague **Gerald McHugh**. Also his former OC, **Capt Oswald** (from Ireland) and **RQMS R. Townsend** (from Reading), both served with **Syd** in the Somaliland Signals in the 1940s.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of former **SSgt Ted Pearce**, who was the Chief Clerk in 1 Wireless Regt/13 Sig Regt around 1958/60, is asked to contact **Lesley Banyard**, Hon Treasurer of Loughborough Branch of the RSA on 01509 557686.

CORRESPONDENCE

A LETTER FROM *THE WIRE*'S CORRESPONDENT IN BARBADOS, CARIBBEAN, WEST INDIES

Dear Sir,

I thought your Wire readers would wish to know that the Barbados Branch of the Royal Signals Association was host to a recent long-range Signals Recce Patrol from UK. Details are sketchy but your cunning correspondent in the Caribbean came across some fascinating snippets of



Long-range Signals Recce Patrol Barbados 1998
Singing 'SAGA Calypso'

intelligence in early November as he was taking a stroll along a southern beach near Worthing close to Bridge Town.

It was early evening and the sun was setting into a calm rich blue sea leaving behind a stunning after-glow in a sky that formed the backdrop for a Bunch of Royal Signals Brigadiers and their Wives as they frolicked in the surf. I approached with caution. There was much merry-making and I recognised a recently retired Signal Officer in Chief trying to organise a 3 phase beach landing operation for his long range patrol. I lay low and hid between the folds in the sand. I sensed dissension in the ranks. There was much talk about Saga Sentries, Saga Sensors, Saga Calypsos and Saga Sensations. Could senior grown up Royal Signals officers really behave like this? I kept still. The beach landing was a farce. The patrol leader did a leopard crawl up the beach. The moon shone brightly. And giggling girls

emerged from behind big waves to create a bridgehead next to Sea Foam Haciendas. I watched and waited. The LRRP deployed inland to complete their mission - the capture of the World's largest Rum Distillery!



Brigadiers Wood,Wilcox, Waugh, Hughes
and Rev Maj Max Springer BEM and 'Mercury'

I checked the beach for some detailed information and found two photographs and some scraps of paper containing a SAGA Operation Order. The photographs are enclosed in the hope that you can publish them in *The Wire*. Many of your readers will recognise the high-spirited holiday makers. But I wonder how many recognise our Barbadian Host and Guide proudly holding MERCURY. The scraps of paper gave me some clues:

- He completed a full career in Royal Signals reaching the rank of Major.
- He served under the command of the 4 Brigadiers in the photograph.
- He is married to **Sybil** and he has a daughter married to a Corps Officer - **Captain David Sullivan**.
- He lives in Mercury Lodge close to the Airport in Barbados.
- He is Chaplain General to the Barbados Defence Forces.
- He is now in charge of a Church of England Parish in Bridge Town - St Ambrose.

He is **The Reverend Maj Max Springer BEM BA**. He and his wife, **Sybil**, send warm wishes to all their friends in Royal Signals. For those thinking about visiting Barbados I can recommend the **Wendy Wood** Saga Tours Holiday Company. With warm wishes from the Caribbean.

Certa Cito!
Jimmy Mercury
RSA Barbados Branch.

From: **Mr W. Wood**
25 George Road
Water - Orton
BIRMINGHAM
B46 1PF

Dear Editor,

For the past 14 years a party of ex-service personnel and members of their families, including myself, have annually made a pilgrimage to war graves in Holland and Germany, these being at Eindhoven, Arnhem, and the Reichwald Forest in Germany. I have always made a point of visiting the graves of Corps Members buried in these cemeteries, in particular the ones in the Oosterbeek cemetery at Arnhem. Where possible on these visits, I have always placed a Poppy or Remembrance Cross on these graves. Our annual visit this year took place from 8-12 October. Owing to a decline in my health, this year could be the last one I can go on, so to highlight it, so to speak, I decided to have a wreath made, courtesy of the Royal British Legion. It was made, as near as possible in the Corps colours, light and dark blue carnations with the Corps Crest in the centre, and finished off with a green ribbon and the following words in gold, ROYAL SIGNALS ASSOCIATION. On the morning of the 11 October, on the Airbourne Memorial at Oosterbeek, Arnhem, a fellow RSA member **Mr F. Bailey** and myself laid this. We were accompanied by a friend, an ex Guards Armoured member. Being a member of RHQ RSA, I took the liberty of laying the aforementioned wreath on behalf of RHQ, the accompanying card was made out to all Corps Members who lie at rest in that area, and laid on behalf of RHQ ROYAL SIGNALS ASSOCIATION. Thank You,

From: **Fran Meldon**
Lintley View House
Slaggyford
Carlisle
CUMBRIA CA6 7NH
Tel: 01434 381684

Dear Sir,

I am writing in the hope that you may possibly be able to help me in my search for a copy of a picture that was produced, and the scene set in Northern Ireland circa 1975 – 1977. My husband was promoted there during this period and obtained a copy of this print but unfortunately over the years it has been misplaced and I would dearly love to obtain another print for him.

My husband served with 39 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (Comms Troop) and the picture was drawn/painted as a whole picture but with smaller scenes, depicting different skills and aspects of the Royal Signals in Northern Ireland. I could greatly appreciate if at all possible any help you may offer or suggest.

Yours sincerely

From: **Christopher Barnes**
18640 Perego Way
Saratoga
California 95070
USA

Dear Col Carter,

Thank you indeed for making the arrangements for a trumpeter to play at my father, **Col B. H. P. Barnes,** funeral. **LCpl John Bilby** played beautifully was immaculately turned out and his performance was greatly appreciated by the family, as well as other former Corps members of my father's era who were present. My father, as a long time supporter of the Corps Band, would have greatly enjoyed it tremendously himself. Please pass my thanks to the trumpeter, **LCpl John Bilby**, and commend him for his efforts. I would like to show my appreciation further by making a special donation to the Royal Signals Association and I enclose a cheque accordingly.

Yours Aye

From: **Mr George Best**
9 Alamein Avenue
Chatham
KENT
ME5 0HZ

Dear Sir,

I am an ex-Territorial Soldier who joined the Royal Signals in May 1939 and was proud to think that I was a trained soldier when the war broke-out. I am now 78 and was saddened when I read in the newspapers that they are cutting down the Territorials and closing down lots of Drill Halls around the country.

So I wrote this little poem and I wondered if you would consider it good enough for publication in our *WIRE* magazine.

Yours Faithfully

THE T.A. ARMY

They are cutting down our T.A. Army, which I think is very barmy,
In fact I think it's quite the limit
So must the lads who are serving in it.
What the Government chooses to ignore is there could easily be another war,
In 1940 it wasn't fun when we stood alone to face the Hun,
But we had no need to despair because the T.A. Army was always there.

From: **Brig F. L. Clarkson**

Dear Editor,

There is a small error in your December 1998 issue on page 474 – 'The Corps Brooch'. The officer's name was **Fearfield,** not **Fairfield;** we were personal friends – his wife was called **Ros.** He and I passed into the RMA Woolwich ('The Shop') on 25 August 1939 – it closed a week later on 1 September 1939 because of mobilisation! We all went on to 151 OCTV in Aldershot and were commissioned in May 1940.

Yours sincerely

DONATIONS

39 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn	£70.00
East Kent RSA	£150.00
Salisbury RSA	£50.00
31 Signal Regiment (V)	£25.00
Mr G. A. Jenkins	£5.00
Mrs J. Greenstreet	£20.00
Mr J. F. Stuart	£10.00
Certo Cito Lodge	£10.00
42 Sig Regt Officers Club	£162.00
Southampton & District RSA in memory of A. H.Winter	£20.00
Mrs D. M. Allen in memory of Derek Allen	£50.00
Maj G. MacLennan in memory of Maj D. Allen	£15.00
Maj (Retd) E. H. Le Quesne in memory of Maj D. Allen	£25.00
Mr C. Barnes in memory of Col B. H. P. Barnes	£250.00
3 Div Sigs Reunion Club in memory of Brig P.H.F. Webb	£10.00
3 Div Sigs Reunion Club in memory of J. C. Thompson	£10.00

LAST POST

Allen – Maj D. Allen	Served 1953/82	Died 07/11/98
Barnes – Col B. H. P. Barnes OBE	Served 1935/66	Died 12/11/98
Beddingfield – SSgt W Beddingfield	Served 1950/72	Died 23/11/98
Bell – Maj H. Bell	Served 1948/83	Died 21/09/98
Carter – Maj A. E. Carter	Served 1931/66	Died 30/11/98
Child – WO2 A. J. Child	Served 1936/64	Died 06/12/98
Deighton – SSgt B. Deighton	Served 1952/77	Died 27/10/98
Dorman – Capt S. R. C. Dorman	Served 1942/65	Died 12/11/98
Dunning – Sig I. Dunning	Served 1945/48	Died 04/12/98
Eeckelaers – Maj A. Eeckelaers	Served 1937/68	Died 15/12/98
Ellis – Maj W. Ellis	Served 1935/69	Died 06/11/98
Gavin – Sig R. W. Gavin	Served 1954/56	Died 02/11/98
Gunning - John Gunning	Served 1939/46	Died 11/11/98
Horler – Maj N. A. Horler	Served 1961/84	Died 21/11/98
Jacklin – Sig G. J. Jacklin	Served 1950/52	Died Dec '98
Jordan – Maj K. W. Jordan	Served 1928/64	Died 18/11/98
Marlborough – Mr A. Marlborough	Served 1949/51	Died Recently
Rozier – David Rozier	Served 1952/74	Died 17/12/98
Standing – Mr E. H. Standing	Served	Died 12/10/98
Tees – Mr Samuel Tees	Served 5 years	Died 21/11/98
Thompson – LCpl J. C. Thompson	Served 1942/46	Died 18/11/98
Webb – Brig P. H. F. Webb	Served 1946/79	Died 14/12/98
Winter – A. H. Winter	Served 1932/46	Died 30/10/98
Worth – Sig G. R. Worth	Served 1940/46	Died 25/11/98

Deighton - former **SSgt Barbara Deighton** W/379206. **Barbara** served from 1952 to 1977 first with 15th. Ack Ack Signals until she retired in 1977 and then with 34 (N) Sig Regt TAVR, during this time she was with the Leeds Squadron that was 49 (WR) Signal Squadron. During her service and after she served on the committee of and always gave good support to all the Leeds & District RSA functions until through ill health she had to retire from the committee. The last year even though she was in a wheel chair she still continued to attend our socials and every one would make her very welcome as she was so well liked. It was sad when she departed from this life on the 27 October 1998. Our treasurer **Margaret Egan** seldom missed a day when she did not visit **Barbara** in hospital our thanks to you **Margaret**. Our condolences go to **Barbara**'s brother **Ron** and sister **Vera**.

Gavin – Sig R. W. Gavin – Bill maintained his contact with ex members of the Corps through his work with SSAFA. He was a caseworker and latterly Divisional Secretary

Winter – Alexander H. Winter died on 30 October 1998 aged 84 years. He served in the Royal Corps of Signals from December 1932 to February 1946 leaving with the rank of CQMS. **Alex** was with 43rd Div until 1942 when he was posted to 44th Div and later to 5th Div in Italy. He was a long serving member of the Southampton RSA and for many years was their Standard Bearer.

Child – WO2 Alfred John Child. Alfie joined the Signals in 1939 and went to France with the BEF. In 1940 he was taken prisoner and then spent until 1945 being transferred from POW Camp to POW Camp, ending up working on a POW Farm in Poland where he mastered the craft of making wood alcohol! In 1947 he joined 56 (London) Armd Div Sig Regt and rose to WO2 (SSM) serving at Atkins Road, Balham until the reorganisation in 1961 when he transferred to 39 Signals, at Worship Street in the City of London. He was a member of 56 Div (Signals) Association until his death on 6 December 1998. His funeral took place at Croydon Crematorium on 15 December 1998.

Bell – Maj (QM) Harry Bell. It is with deep regret that the death of **Harry Bell** is announced. **Harry** died after a long illness on Monday 21 September 1998. **Harry's** service record reads like a modern day travel catalogue: Catterick, Harrogate, Egypt, Dusseldorf, Sheffield, Singapore, Malaya, Brunei, Herford, Cyprus, Plymouth, France, Northern Ireland, Lippstadt, Gutersloh, Munchen Gladback, Belgium, Northern Ireland, Aberdeen, Denmark and Holland being his posting locations. He also had the odd spell in Sudan, Malta, Turkey and Penang. He enlisted at the age of 14 and served over 43 years before retiring to live at Fort Matilda Place, Greenock. **Harry** continued to keep in touch with the Corps attending the Quartermasters' Dinner until illness prevented him from travelling. He leaves a wife **Catherine** and sons **Duncan** and **David**, as well as many friends within the Corps who will be saddened by this loss.

Eeckelaers - Major (TOT) Albert Eeckelaers - died on 15 December 1998 at the age of 83. He joined the Royal Signals in 1937 as a Signalman; after his induction at Catterick he was sent to the North West Frontier in India during the 1939-1945 war. Returning to Catterick once again in 1945 his linguistic skills were used to train refugees from the Continent. He served two tours in Germany during the 1940s in Bad Lippspringe in 1946 and in Hannover in 1948. His unique skills at radio maintenance and languages were recognised by the serving Major at the time and he was subsequently recommended for a commission that was granted in 1954. He served tours in Dover, the Ministry of Defence in London (when he also worked on the communication systems of the Blue Streak Rocket at Woomera in Australia in 1956), and Aldershot. He was then posted for a three year tour to Singapore from 1958-1961 to serve with the Air Formation Signals in Changi where he also captained the regimental athletics team. Shortly after his return to the UK he was posted to Germany where he served from 1961/64 at St Tonis (near Krefeld) with 28 Signal Regiment and then with 16 Signal Regiment at Krefeld. He returned to the UK in 1964 where he was based at Catterick until his retirement in 1968. When he retired he became a sales representative for a new generation of computerised cash registers. This he did until the early 1980s. He married **Violet Ottmann** in 1942. She, his 11 children (3 sons and 8 daughters), 26 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren, survive him.



Rozier - David Rozier Served 08/01/52 to 15/01/74. It is with much sadness that we report the sudden and untimely death, on 17 December, of our much loved and esteemed comrade **Dave Rozier**. **Dave** had been Branch Treasurer of RSA Cardiff, for some years and as an ex-BBC operative had been instrumental in gaining our Branch the hospitality of the BBC (Wales) Social Club not only for our regular monthly meetings but also for the Annual Dinner and other social functions. After serving with distinction in the regular Corps in such widespread locations as Singapore, Borneo, Kenya, Northern Ireland and Germany, **Dave** rounded off his career with a posting to Cardiff as PSI to 55th Signal Squadron. Past members of 7 and 22 Signal Regiments who served with **Dave** in Germany will no doubt remember him with as much esteem as did we here in Cardiff where he and his vivacious and charming wife **Molly** decided to domicile themselves for a peaceful retirement. The obsequies, first at St. Peter's Church then at the Thornhill Crematorium were attended by a very large company of mourners both from the Cardiff RSA and the BBC Wales. At the Crematorium the standard of the Cardiff RSA was displayed with three others from associate units and a trumpeter from the Royal Regiment of Wales played the Last Post and Reveille. **Jimmy Lister**, President of the Cardiff Assoc, orated the "Exhortation" and **Eric Powell**, Branch Chairman, Read the Collect of the Royal Corps of Signals. **Dave** will be sorely missed by us all and our hearts go out to **Molly** and her two sons, **John** and **Christopher** at this most harrowing time.

Carter – Major A. E. 'Nick' **Carter. Nick** joined the Corps in 1932 when he was 16 years old, and became a Dispatch Rider. He served under **Montgomery** with the 21st Army during WW2. **Nick** remained with the Corps for more than 35 years, retiring as a Major. At the Queen's coronation, **Nick** was proud to be the RSM leading the parade of the Royal Signals and his skills as a rider made him into a key figure in the Display Teams at many Military Tattoos. **Nick** was actively involved in Church life during his Army days and his keeness in gardening led to not a bloom in his garden being out of place. **Nick** was a past Chairman and President of the RSA's Shropshire Branch until illness forced him to step down. The Branch Standard and many Branch Members were present at his funeral in December. Our condolences go to his wife **Louise**, to whom **Nick** was married for nearly 59 years, and his family.



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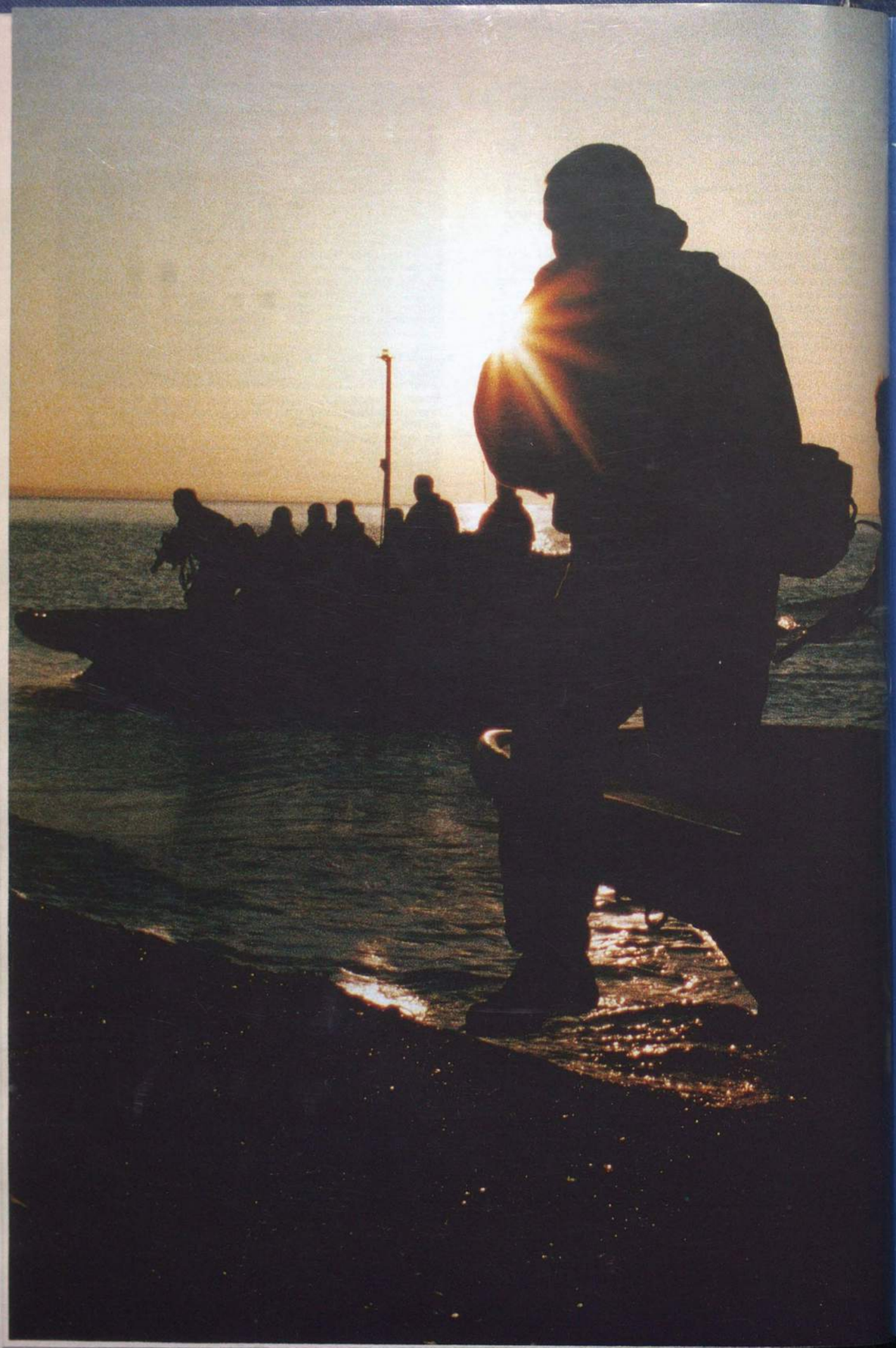

THE Wire

and the Journal

April 1999



The Royal Corps of Signals

RETIRE IN GOOD ORDER TO THE ROYAL HOSPITAL CHELSEA



For a comfortable and active retirement you can't beat being an In-Pensioner at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, a magnificent home for old soldiers founded in 1682 by Charles II and designed by Sir Christopher Wren. You'll be well dug in, with a room of your own, and in good company with former soldiers like yourself. The setting is idyllic: 60 acres close by the famous King's Road in the heart of London and near the Thames. Your every need will be met in a carefree life. You will eat in the Great Hall and relax in the In-Pensioners Club. There's a billiards room, a good library of books and videos, and an Arts and Crafts Centre and a Post Office. The Royal Hospital also has its own Chapel, as well as a Roman Catholic Chapel. A splendid medical service includes an Infirmary staffed by caring doctors, a matron and nurses. In addition, there are support facilities which include a chiropodist, a physiotherapy department and a fitness centre.

You are eligible to apply to become an In-Pensioner if you are:

- in receipt of a pension for Army service or disability due to military service; if you are an Officer on retired pay with at least 12 years in the ranks you may also apply
- 65 years or over; exceptionally, if you are between 55-65 with a disability pension you may apply if you are unable to earn a living because of disability
- able to look after yourself and walk around unaided
- free from obligations to support a wife or children
- passed medically fit for admission

Remember: the Royal Hospital is primarily a residential home, NOT a hospital.

CHOOSE THE GOOD LIFE!

SO DON'T LEAVE IT TOO LATE TO APPLY.



If you want to know more, contact
The Secretary (Room 6), Royal Hospital Chelsea, London SW3 4SR.
Telephone 0171 881 5204 Fax 0171 823 6871



The Royal Signals Magazine

April 1999 Vol. 53 No: 2

The Wire

(Incorporating the Journal of the Royal Signals Institution)

All correspondence and matter for publication in **The Wire** should be addressed to **The Head of Publications, The Wire**, RHQ Royal Signals, Blandford Camp, Blandford Forum, DT11 8RH Dorset. Tel No: Blandford mil 2079 STD 01258 48 2079

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Editor Lt Col (Retd) P. Valder
Assistant Editor Mrs J. A. Herring

The Wire **is a member of the Association of Service Newspapers**

KING HUSSEIN OF JORDAN 1935-1999

King Hussein bin Talal had a remarkable career. When he came to the RMA Sandhurst in 1952 he was already the Monarch of his country, but of that country little was known. The Grandfather whom he succeeded was known as a fine and brave man, and the Arab Legion, commanded and officered by the British had a colourful reputation somewhat like that of the French Foreign Legion.

By the time of his death King Hussein was known, loved and admired throughout the world and was a major figure in the politics of the whole of the Middle East. There was a magic about this man who could converse happily with people of any station in life.

He made a moving speech when taking the Sovereign's Parade at Sandhurst at the invitation of our Queen saying that he enjoyed true friendship in his time as a Cadet with Officers, Warrant Officers and NCOs as well as with the Civilian staff. There were a few in Royal Signals who were fortunate to become his close friend or forged the strong bond that is made between Cadets of the same Intake. Best placed of all was Major David Horsfield, Commander of Inkerman Company which 'Mister King Hussein, Sir' joined. The pupil set out to play the part of a cadet to the best of his ability and to enjoy the experience, succeeding fully on both counts. Now a retired Major General, David Horsfield reports:-

It was thought that King Hussein should be given some rather wider experience than that given to other cadets. The programme was prepared in conjunction with Professor Boswell, at one time my own instructor at the RMA Woolwich. Visits were made, for example, to *The Times* and a London Liveried Company. In more relaxed vein I accompanied him to the Motor Show, where he bought an Aston Martin. We also visited Goodwood for the motor racing. Here the interesting triangle developed where the Duke of Richmond called Hussein Sir, he called me Sir and I called the Duke Sir.

King Hussein had an exceptional capacity for friendship with all the advantages that brings in so many activities in life. There is much more I could tell but now is not the moment.

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Authors alone are responsible for the contents of their articles. The opinions expressed in the articles of this publication are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy and views, official or otherwise, of the Royal Signals or the Ministry of Defence. This publication should be treated with discretion by the recipient.

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FRONT COVER

King Hussein at Sandhurst - Cadet King Hussein of Jordan, with **Maj D. R. Horsfield** (R. SIGNALS), who commands Inkerman Company. The twelve Sandhurst Companies are named after famous battles and campaigns. Besides **King Hussein**, there are 71 cadets in Inkerman Company. *(Central Office of Information Photograph).*

WHAT IS IT?

The Royal Signals Museum would be pleased to hear from anyone who may be able to help in recognising this item. **Ex-SSgt John Hodgkiss** (Royal Signals) found it in a field at Furness End village, near Coventry, in July 1996.



The item is made of brass and appears to have had two pins protruding from the back of the plate, (located either side of the crown). The actual dimensions are 2mm thick, 50mm depth and 30 mm width. If you have any ideas write to **Mr Dave Walker** at:

The Royal Signals Museum
Blandford Camp
DORSET DT11 8RH
Tel: 01258 482683

THE ELEVENTH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE IN LONDON

Lt Col John Chambers once again organised the Annual Christmas Carol Service at St Stephen with St John Church in Rochester Row on Thursday 17 December 1998 the eleventh in the series. A choir comprising nearly 40 members of the Corps, their families and friends, was assembled to lead the Service and the six Lesson Readers were **Sig Plumb** of 31 Sig Regt (V), **Sgt Thompson** of 238 Sig Sqn, **Capt Mould** of 71(Y) Sig Regt (V), **Capt Brookes** of 34 Sig Regt (V), the **SOinC** and the **Master of Signals**. The congregation was a little smaller than in recent years. However, on the other hand we were well supported by vicars with **Revd John Scott** from 71 (Y) Sig Regt (V) and **Revd Peter Clemett** the Honorary Chaplain to the Royal Signals Association supporting the home team.

Although the pressures of work and long hours at Main Building prevented some from attending there was a good cross section of Branches present. It was also good to see representatives from Blandford and rural Dorset and from as far away as 34 Sig Regt (V). In addition to a good number of serving members of the TA there were several members of the 'Retired Corps' both Regular and TA including representation from 'industry' and the Association. The service was conducted at a cracking pace in order that we could move on to the mince pies and sherry at the Church Hall. The Choir still being in need of lubrication for their throats, a foray to a local hostelry ensued to round off a successful evening.

Please note, for your diaries, that the 12th Annual Carol Service will be on Thursday 16 December 1999 at 1800 hrs at St Stephen with St John in Rochester Row.

WHAT IS THE ORIGIN OF THE CORPS CAP BADGE 'JIMMY'? FIND OUT AT
www.royalsignals.army.org.uk/museum

BACK COVER

This photo comes to us courtesy of the R. SIGNALS Band and was taken whilst they were on tour in Bosnia. It shows some of the happy children in Sarajevo with members of the Band and two of the SFOR personnel.

ROYAL SIGNALS MUSEUM MEDAL PRESENTATION

The medals of **2325636 Corporal Steven Carter** R SIGNALS were recently presented to the Museum by his friend, **Mr Phil Hudson. Steve** recently died without a next of kin and **Mr Hudson** came to the Museum to make the presentation. Unfortunately, very little is known about **Cpl Steve Carter** as he was a very private person who kept very much to himself We are aware that he was entitled to The Indian GSM 1937-39, War Medal, and stars for Italy, Africa and 1939-45. He was also awarded the Greek Military Cross Class 3. Fortunately, the IGSM and Military Cross, with its certificate, have been found and presented to the Museum. We would like to hear from you if you know anything about the service of **Cpl Carter**.



Col Cliff Walters receiving the medals

CORPS BENEVOLENCE AND THE ONE DAY'S PAY SCHEME

All members of the Corps should be aware that one of the primary purposes of the 'One Day's Pay Scheme' is to provide support for needy members of Royal Signals both serving and retired, and this includes their dependants. The Royal Signals Benevolent Fund support to the needy is administered by the Royal Signals Association and readers will be interested to know that over £250K was given to those in need last year.

It may not be well known that the Corps has very close links with the Army Benevolent Fund, a very large charitable fund who also helps the needy. The Corps makes an annual donation to the Army Benevolent Fund of approximately £50K, however, last year the Army Benevolent Fund helped our needy with about £105K. This is in addition to the £250K the Royal Signals Benevolent Fund gave.

Maj Gen Alan Yeoman is the Chairman of the Royal Signals Association. He recently received a letter from the Controller of the Army Benevolent Fund thanking the Corps for its donation and in turn he, as Chairman of the Association, would like to pass on a big 'Thank You!' to all serving members of the Corps who subscribe to the 'One Day's Pay Scheme', for their support to a most worthy cause. He also adds, 'You never know, you might need help from the Corps in the future?'

The Wire
is YOUR magazine
Air YOUR views . . .
Share YOUR views

WILSONS HOGG ROBINSON

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO TODAY?

SIMPLIFY YOUR FINANCES?

CHOOSE A NEW CAR?

ENJOY A NEW HOBBY?

DO IT TODAY WITH A WILSONS' PERSONAL LOAN‡

‡Provided by CAPITAL BANK plc, a Bank of Scotland Group company.

- Apply for a Wilsons' Personal Loan and - with fixed rates from **12.9 APR** on loans over £10,000 - you could put your plans into action today.
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Pay off your outstanding credit

BEFORE		
Outstanding personal loan	Balance	£1,050
Credit Card	Balance	£688
Store Cards	Balance	£196
	Total	£1,934
Monthly Repayment	**Total**	£254.20

AFTER	
Wilsons' Personal Loan Amount	£3,000.00
New monthly repayment over 24 months at **18.9 APR**	£153.32
Cash left over after settling accounts	£1,066.00
Saving each month	£100.88**

Please note: this is an example of one way a Wilsons' Personal Loan could be used. It is not intended to imply any relevance to your own personal finances.

** Repayments are usually reduced by extending the repayment period.

RATES ARE FIXED FROM **12.9 APR** on loans over £10,000

No repayments until July 1999

APRIL Cheque issued. No repayments.
MAY No repayments.
JUNE Still no repayments.
JULY Repayments start.

CALL IN CONFIDENCE **01244 692 959†** Quoting your Response Code **APASNW**

Lines open: Monday - Friday 8am - 10pm, Saturday 8.30am - 6pm, Sunday 9.30am - 5.30pm.
Please have your Bank/Building Society details to hand when you call.

Loans are provided, subject to status, by CAPITAL BANK plc, City House, City Road, Chester CH88 3AN. Written quotations are available on request. You must be at least 18 and a UK resident (excluding the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) to apply. The APR will vary depending on the amount of the loan. Your repayments will vary depending on your chosen due date. APR and repayment details are correct at the time of print. Certain purposes of loan may be excluded or have limited repayment periods; please ring for details. On loans of £10,000 and over the minimum repayment period will be 24 months. **Data Protection Act:** Any information provided by you may be used by the Lender, and others for marketing (by post, phone, e-mail or fax), credit scoring and other purposes. *Delivery may take longer for weekend applications or in outlying areas. Please ring for details. †Telephone calls may be monitored and recorded to assist with staff training. 12.9 APR for loans over £10,000, 14.9 APR for loans of £7,501 - £10,000, 16.9 APR for loans of £5,001 - £7,500, 18.9 APR for loans of £2,501 - £5,000, 20.9 APR for loans up to £2,500. For Example: For a loan of £4,000 repayable by Direct Debit over four years, your monthly repayments would be 48 of £119.73 commencing three months after your loan cheque is issued. The total amount payable would be £5,747.04, **APR 18.9.** If you choose the optional courier service, an additional £35 will be payable one month before your first monthly repayment. The rate you are offered will depend on credit assessment procedures, your personal circumstances and other related factors.

HR HOGG ROBINSON Corporate & Employee Services

SQUADRON SERGEANT MAJOR JOINS THE SAFETY ELITE

David Rook of 225 Signal Squadron HQNI & 15 Signal Regiment has received the prestigious British Safety Council Diploma in Safety Management in an awards ceremony at Armourers' Hall, London. **Mr Rook** was among 48 safety professionals who were presented with their awards. They passed a 450 question exam in order to gain their Diploma.



In a message to delegates **Alan Meale**, the Minister with responsibility for health and safety at work said, *'Effective management is the key to improving health and safety standards in the workplace and preventing accidents. I welcome the commitment that you have shown and hope that you are able to build on your achievements.'*

Sir Neville Purvis, Director General of the British Safety Council, says, *'Good safety is good business and can save firms hundreds of thousands of pounds. In achieving the Diploma in Safety Management, **David Rook** has shown a commitment to improving health and safety in the workplace. Proper training for people at all levels of an organisation is vital, as accidents and illnesses at work cost this country up to £16 billion every year.'*

Diploma delegates study safety law, communications, advanced safety management, occupational health and hygiene and total loss control (risk management). The internationally recognised qualification also provides domain knowledge for the National Vocational Qualification in Occupational Health and Safety Practice at Levels 3 and 4, subject to an assessment of competence in the workplace.

CORPS LONDON DINNER

TUESDAY 11 MAY 1999

CAFÉ ROYAL – REGENT STREET

1900hrs for 1930hrs

All Royal Signals Officers, Regular or Territorial,
Serving or Retired
Plus
WRAC Officers who served with the Corps
Names to be sent to RHQ

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please advise the Subscriptions Clerk, at RHQ, IN WRITING, of any change of address.
This information should not be telephoned.

THE SPORTS TOUR OF SOUTH AFRICA

Many of you will have read the report of the South Africa Sports Tour undertaken by the Corps. We felt that you may be interested in one letter we received resulting from our visit to Soweto. Just after Christmas we received the following letter written by **Mrs Ivy Nkutha,** who was the social worker from Soweto who accompanied us during our visit there. She says:

Dear Sir,

Greetings!!! I am so sorry it took so long to write to you after our meeting at your tour of Soweto when you were here in South Africa visiting our military bases.

That was a wonderful experience. Meeting people who showed interest in our well being and growing. I thoroughly enjoyed spending that day with you.

My greatest hope is that you enjoyed the rest of your tour of the other parts of our country that you managed to visit. Meeting you was one of the most wonderful things that ever happened to me. Once again, I, now, together with the staff and children of Vulamazibuko Primary School, wish to express our warmest gratitude for the most wonderful present that you gave to us. 'The Soccer Kit'. Here is a picture that I took with the team, to show you how well it fits and those happy smiles. 'GOD BLESS YOU' for putting them there.



You asked me what my top priorities were concerning school developments and my answer was sports fields and facilities as we have absolutely none. I would be really grateful if we could get help towards that. Being involved with children has taught me how easy children are. All they need is love and guidance.

May you please pass my warmest regards to all the team you were with and your families. Wishing you a merry Christmas and a happy prosperous New Year. May the Good Lord Bless and Keep You All. I pray God that this is the start of an everlasting relationship.

Yours sincerely

Ivy Nkutha

PS. Sorry I nearly forgot; the children have asked me for two more soccer kits since we have four teams in the School, please!!!

The punctuation marks are **Ivy**'s not mine. Next year the Army Soccer Team is to visit Soweto during a tour that they are undertaking and it is hoped that they may be able to meet some of the pleas that **Ivy** makes. Meanwhile it is nice to know that our visit was well received and that the soccer kit which we gave, which you will remember was funded mainly from the efforts of tour party members holding a charity soccer competition at Blandford, is not only being used but is greatly appreciated.

FORECAST OF CORPS EVENTS 1999

11 May	-	Corps Dinner	-	Café Royal
3 June	-	Morrison Cup	-	Blandford
26 June	-	Corps Luncheon	-	Blandford
26 June	-	Princess Royal Day Parade	-	Blandford
26/27 June	-	RSA Reunion	-	Blandford
5 September	-	Corps Luncheon	-	Catterick
29 October	-	Scottish Dinner	-	Glasgow
10 November	-	RSI Lecture	-	London
11 November	-	Opening of Field of Remembrance	-	London
16 December	-	Corps Carol Service	-	London

THREE GENERATIONS OF ROYAL SIGNALS OFFICERS



On 11 December 1998, **2Lt Jon Mayne** was commissioned into the Corps from RMA Sandhurst, via Wells Cathedral School CCF and University of London OTC. **Jon** is the third generation of his family to be a Royal Signals officer: he is the son of **Maj (Retd) Nick Mayne** (served 1966-1984), and the grandson of the late **Capt F. P.** 'Pat' **Rickard**, who served during the Second World War.



If responding to any advertisements in *The Wire* please mention that you saw it in your Corps magazine



LSC GROUP

LSC Group is a dynamic IT/Logistics company based in the Midlands. The company has contracts with a number of Blue Chip Organisations throughout the UK and abroad. Due to ongoing business success LSC is expanding and looking to recruit a number of consultants with varying skills to work at various locations throughout the UK. The positions will suit people seeking a long term career with opportunities for involvement in leading edge projects.

Currently we are looking for experienced professionals in the following areas:

ARM Engineers

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Senior Developer

IT Trainers

Senior Consultant - Electronic Documentation Business Unit

Senior Software Engineer

Technical Consultant

The company offers competitive salary packages including pension, private medical insurance and performance related pay,

Please contact Debbie Stone at the address below, alternatively visit our recruitment pages on our website:
http://www/lsc.co.uk/recruitment/

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PARACHUTE SIGNALS

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NOW IS THE TIME TO VOLUNTEER FOR SERVICE WITH AIRBORNE FORCES IN 16 AIR ASSAULT BRIGADE.

ROYAL SIGNALS VOLUNTEERS HAVE BEEN ALLOWED AN INCREASE IN PLACES ON P COMPANY IN RECOGNITION OF THE INCREASED REQUIREMENT FOR PARACHUTE TRAINED SOLDIERS.

SUCCESSFUL INDIVIDUALS WILL BE CAREER MANAGED TO ALLOW THE BEST CHANCE OF SUBSEQUENT SERVICE WITH THE AIRBORNE SIGNAL SQUADRON.

For more information contact the 2IC at
216 Parachute Signal Squadron
on Aldershot mil 4501 or the training wing on Aldershot mil 4549.

1984-1999
ROYAL CORPS OF SIGNALS & SWANAGE RAILWAY
FIFTEEN YEARS IN ASSOCIATION

The Royal Corps of Signals has assisted in the rebuilding of the Swanage Steam Railway in Dorset since 1984. Soldiers installed the first telecom cables in 1984, installed the Corfe Castle telephone exchange in 1990 and built the home for the third telephone exchange at Herston in 1997. Around 1,000 tradesmen from the Royal Signals have been involved. Telecom assistance continued in January 1999 commencing with a replacement programme for 12 telephone poles. (222 Signal Squadron). Exercise Topham Hatt has been approved until 1 April 2003 by HQ 3 (UK) Division.

EXERCISE TOPHAM HATT

All aspects of planning, administration, health and safety and finance have recently been revised; the work has resulted in the Topham Hatt Planning Document. There is a fitted carriage for use during Ex Topham Hatt; it provides accommodation, messing, tool and stores facilities for up to eight personnel. The Royal Signals have adopted an area of the railway including Herston Halt, and have commenced a general refurbishment programme of basic DIY tasks throughout the whole area; many major telecom tasks remain. All Royal Signals units are invited to consider involvement in the project, specifically by small parties managed by Sergeants or Corporals.

THE MERCURY GROUP

Over 130 members of the Royal Signals have joined the Swanage Railway as Premier Life Members, each paying £350. There is a military support group within the Railway known as 'The Mercury Group'. The Group meets at least once a year.

THE 15th ANNIVERSARY REUNION

will be held on
SATURDAY 12 JUNE 1999
in Swanage

All members of the Royal Signals, past and present, who have supported Exercise Topham Hatt, or the Mercury Group, are invited to attend.

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

11 Sig Regt is the official link between the Royal Signals and the Swanage Railway; the Regiment has been a Corporate Member of the Railway since 1993. Soldiers and staff with a Blandford Camp postal address may apply for travel concessions on the Railway offering 50% reductions off fares. As part of the 15th Anniversary Celebrations a 50% reduction on all tickets is offered to serving soldiers, their families and supporting staff. Please show your military ID card/Civil Service card when visiting the Railway during the periods:

Saturday 5 June - Sunday 13 June 1999
Saturday 24 July - Sunday 1 August 1999

Further information on all matters from **WO2 (SSM) Frank Roberts**, 222 Sig Sqn, 3 (UK) Div Sig Regt, Picton Bks, Bulford, Salisbury, WILTSHIRE SP4 9NY

THE SWANAGE RAILWAY CO LTD

The company operates a steam railway 18 miles south of Blandford. This year is the fifteenth anniversary of the Association between the Royal Corps of Signals and the Swanage Railway. In recognition of the substantial amount of work undertaken by the Royal Corps of Signals since 1984, the railway is pleased to offer

CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL

for all members of the Corps, their dependants and government staff with a Blandford Camp postal address.

By obtaining a

SWANAGE RAILWAY COMMUNITY CARD
(previously only available to permanent local residents within the Isle of Purbeck)

Holders will be entitled to half price discount off normal Swanage Railway train fares. The card costs £5.00 and is valid for one year. This concession is offered to all personnel associated with 11 Signal Regiment (and associated Blandford units). The Regiment is a Corporate Member of the Southern Steam Trust. The Trust is the registered charity which manages the Swanage Railway. Further information on the Community Card, and the many special events held at Swanage can be obtained by contacting:

Mr Dave Green
The Passenger Services Manager
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222 Sig Sqn
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MOVEMENTS

OFFICERS
FEBRUARY 1999

Name and Rank	*Unit to which posted*
Lt Col J. Dryburgh	Combined Joint Plng Staff
Lt Col M. V. Ledwards	Royal School of Signals
Lt Col A. P. R. Roberts MBE	40 Signal Regiment (V)
Maj N. J. H. Naylor MBE	AD DCISIA
Capt W. J. Drain	7 Sig Regt (Corps Main HQ)
Capt J. Howell-Walmsley	HQNI & 15 Signal Regiment
Capt M. Keech BEM	14 Signal Regiment (EW)
Capt P. Kendrick	COMSEC Monitoring (UK)
Capt G. N. F. Knight	1 Mech Bde & Sig Sqn (215)
Capt D. MacTaggart	Army Appts STC (SHF HQ)
Capt S. J. Morgan	Royal School of Signals
Capt F. Nelson	IARRCIS RSS
Capt I. L. Parry	Army EMC Division
Capt J. Williams	30 Cdt TrgTeam
Lt N. J. Morris	259 Signal Squadron

MARCH

Name and Rank	*Unit to which posted*
Col G. N. Donaldson OBE	OCE HQ LAND
Col S. S. Paul	DMO
Lt Col B. J. Barton-Ancliffe	MISC APPTS (R. SIGNALS)
Lt Col A. H. Johnstone	PMSP
Maj R. A. Licence MBE	ATR Bassingbourn
Maj W. N. White MBE	SHAPE NACOSA
Capt A. R. Aitken LLB (Hons)	30 Signal Regiment
Capt D. Chrystal	JCU (Northern Ireland)
Capt T. C. Crosby	HQ MND (C) (BAE)
Capt P. J. McElwee	1 (UK) Armd Div & Sig Regt
Capt P. D. Merry Beng	24 Airmob Bde/Sig Sqn (210)
Lt G. K. Bowdler BSc (Hons)	Royal School of Signals
Lt P. A. Buck LLB (Hons)	4 Armd Bde & Sig Sqn (204)
Lt C. E. Caie BA	259 Signal Squadron
Lt A. G. L. Fennell BA (Hons)	30 Signal Regiment
Lt O. S. Finnie BSc (Hons)	30 Signal Regiment
Lt A. N. Hopcraft	30 Signal Regiment
Lt G. B. Ingram BSc (Hons)	14 Signal Regiment (EW)
Lt R. J. Odling Meng (Hons)	3 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt
Lt R. J. Smith BSc (Hons)	9 Signal Regiment (Radio)
Lt R. J. Todd	Royal School of Signals

WOs and SNCOs
FEBRUARY 1999

Name and Rank	*Unit to which Posted*
WO2 YofS J. R. Love	SHAPE
A/WO2 J. R. Stillie	Wales UOTC
A/WO2 A. G. Aimer	16 Signal Regiment
SSgt P. W. Fowkes	2 Signal Regiment
SSgt B. P. Croxford	71 (Y) Signal Regiment (V)
SSgt S. K. Legg	19 Mech Bde & Sig Sqn (209)
SSgt J. H. Laffey	ACIO Norwich
SSgt J. C. Heaton	Royal School of Signals
A/SSgt K. M. Johnson	4 Armd Bde & Sig Sqn (204)
Sgt J. Webber	7 Signal Regiment
Sgt J. Reid	Army Presentation Team
Sgt P. D. Lagden	TWACN (TWT)
Sgt L. S. Crossing	16 Signal Regiment
Sgt D. Clash	251 Signal Squadron
Sgt B. V. Turner	17 Cadet Training Team
Sgt S. W. Peters	20 Armd Bde & Sig Sqn (200)
Sgt C. S. Morgan	Royal School of Signals
Sgt M. D. Buffery	Royal School of Signals
Sgt C. P. Ashworth	JSSU Digby
Sgt I. M. Grubb	3 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt
Sgt J. A. S. Castle	7 Signal Regiment
A/Sgt S. J. Crooks	35 Signal Regiment (V)
A/Sgt J. G. McCorry	243 Signal Squadron
A/Sgt I. B. Pearson	Armagh Bn

MARCH 1999

Name and Rank	*Unit to which Posted*
WO1 A. Scott	1 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt
A/WO1 RD RSM A. Higgins	30 Signal Regiment
A/WO1 RD RSM A. Balsdon	HQNI & 15 Signal Regiment
A/WO1 RD RSM J. Gibson	31 Signal Regiment (V)
A/WO1 M. D. Elliott	Royal School of Signals
A/WO1 S. A. Knight	DI(SI)
WO2 YofS S. J. Bertram	CIS Eng Gp
A/WO2 E. Hall	238 Signal Squadron
A/WO2 K. J. Simmons	1 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt
A/WO2 K. R. J. Smith	2 Signal Regiment
SSgt A. E. Taylor	8 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (218)
Sgt D. W. Hughes	HQ AFCENT
Sgt S. J. Evans	14 Signal Regiment (EW)
Sgt C. R. Hawkins	94 (BY) Signal Squadron (V)
Sgt M. A. Chivers	7 Signal Regiment
Sgt K. J. Wood	HQNI & 15 Signal Regiment
Sgt R. M. Godfrey	34 Signal Regiment (V)
Sgt R. I. Hawkins	37 Signal Regiment (V)
A/Sgt K. V. Castledine	21 Signal Regiment
A/Sgt A. M. Eardley	HQ NORTH
A/Sgt A. D. Moczulski	30 Signal Regiment

In the December 1998 issue of The WIRE, there was an entry made for ***Sgt L. V. Bath*** *... posted to 16 Sig Regt. The soldier's rank should have been SSgt.*

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NEWS FROM HEADQUARTERS

HEADQUARTERS' MESS ROYAL SIGNALS

FAREWELL TO JUDITH IRONSIDE

On 10 December a representative group of mess members led by the Signal Officer in Chief (Army) bade farewell to **Judith Ironside** after 30 years service to the HQ Mess.

During a lunch in the Corps Room held in **Judith**'s honour, **Brig Griffin** presented a silver salver on behalf of the Officers of the Corps, past and present. He also paid tribute to **Judith**'s extensive and loyal service to the Mess. A summary of her service appears below.



Judith was first employed in the Mess in 1968 as a temporary comi and kitchen porter. Fortunately, she was persuaded to take up a permanent position by **Brig John Cubberley**. Her potential was soon recognised and she was promoted into the Reception and later she became a steward in the Bar. During the period 1973 -1975, **Judith** did in fact work in the West Moors Mess as Chief Steward but found it too quiet and sought to rectify this by further employment in Blandford!

On her return she became Chief Steward 2 in charge of the Bar/Dinning Room/Reception and later became Chief Steward 1 in overall charge of Front of House. As Chief Steward 1 she assumed the rewarding duty of being responsible for the Corps and Mess Wine Cellar. From 1984 for five years she was the Mess Accountant having achieved an A+ on the Service Fund Accounting Course. In 1989, at the time of contractorisation in the Mess, **Judith**'s commitment and dedication as a civil servant was formally recognised by the award of the GOC's Commendation. The contractor soon realised that they needed **Judith** to advise on the general running of the Mess particularly for function etiquette. Consequently, she was appointed Mess Manager, an appointment she held for nine years prior to her departure in May.

Additional tributes have been received from many officers a selection of which follows:

I remember **Judith** arriving as temporary bar staff. I was on a course at the time. She was very good at looking after the young officers and keeping us out of trouble in those lazy days of the late 60s.

A wayward young officer.

I have many reasons to be grateful to her particularly during the period I was running the Headquarters Mess (or was **Judith** running the HQ Mess!?)

A grateful Mess President (one of many).

In my opinion **Judith** has done a fantastic job in the Headquarters Mess. She has always been helpful often under pressure. Her long service has done much to give the Mess the family feeling so important to us all, especially the young officers.

Another old young officer.

Judith was always particularly helpful to me in getting the TA courses accommodation, messing, and general well being sorted out. I am most grateful to her for all the extra time she always willingly gave to this most frustrating of tasks

A TA Officer.

There can be no more than a handful of very wrinkly officers, in the Corps who remember the Blandford Mess pre **Judith**!

Another admirer.

Thank You **Judith** from all past and present members of the HQ Mess, those that are wrinkly and those that are not so wrinkly!

THE BAND

A NEW BANDMASTER FOR THE CORPS BAND

After three years, it was time to say 'goodbye' **to WO1 (BM) Kevin Davies**, who is now Bandmaster to the Irish Guards, and welcome **WO1 (BM) Andrew** 'Bill' **Booth**.

After joining the Royal Green Jackets in 1981 and touring the world, **Mr Booth** undertook a three-year bandmaster's course, which started in 1994. Upon graduation with a BA degree, he was posted to the Gibraltar Regiment as their Bandmaster. We welcome 'Bill' and his wife **Christine** and daughter **Lindsey** to the Corps, and hope his tour with us is a happy and enjoyable experience.



(Before) – WO1 Kevin Davies
The thought of leaving Blandford all got too much for him



(After) - Over to you Bill.
(L) the Outgoing Bandmaster WO1 Kevin Davies hands over the baton to the new Bandmaster WO1 Andrew 'Bill' Booth

THE ROYAL SIGNALS BAND VISITS BOSNIA

It was on a damp Sunday, two weeks before Christmas, when a small ensemble from the Corps Band set off for Op Paletine. With four members fresh from the Sgts' Mess Christmas Ball the ten musicians, led by the Assistant Bandmaster, **WO2 Matthew Brown**, loaded the MFO boxes at 3am and set off for RAF Lyneham. It was at Lyneham that we were told that the temperature had been 25 degrees below only the week before and we wondered if we would be able to play! Our arrival at Split was very pleasant as we stepped off the Hercules to Mediterranean temperatures of 17 degrees and after clearing the airport, it was on to HQ MND (SW) for documentation and the do's and don'ts of "Theatre". Here we met our escorts for the week, **Capt Jason Nichols** and **Sig Philip Smith**, (later to be known as 'Bodie' and 'Doyle'!), who led us to our accommodation and the QM's, for the issue of Flack Jackets, Morphine and ration packs - just in case! No tour goes without a first night out, so it was time to hit downtown Trogir and a chance to get to know 'Bodie' and 'Doyle' a little better, try the local pizza and negotiate a dodgy bus inspector. Monday morning arrived and it was time to hit the road and start the week-long journey around Theatre.

Our first engagement was for MND (SW) HQ & Sig Regt at Banja Luka. This was a very relaxed evening in 'Tommy Tuckers', their amenities centre. Our aim for this, and all other engagements, was to get the audience involved with our performance, and after a few carols it was time to go into the solo routine. The Post Horn Gallop is always good for this and the Band Sergeant Major, **WO2 Russell Duckworth**, and Sgt **Martin Hancock** provided the necessary entertainment. This was followed by the hose-pipes, our version of the Waltzing Bugle Boy - audiences always marvel at what can be obtained from a length of plastic tube and a tin can. The Post Horn soloists were joined by **SSgt Kelvin Bryant**, **Drum Major Tony Wilson** and **Musician Clive Membury** for this rendition. The merry group of musicians went on to entertain B Battery, 1 RHA in Glamoc for their regimental dinner night. This was also the last night that the Kiwi Gunners would be with the Regiment before returning to New Zealand. Here we involved the guests in a rendition of "The Twelve Days of Christmas". Our only problem was that we found that volunteers were not forthcoming, so it was up to our whip-cracking flautist, **LCpl Martin Hutchinson**, and solo clarinettist **Musn Lee Singleton** to round up the prey. The 1st Battalion REME at Sipovo was next on our list. On arrival we joined them in the garages for a curry lunch. Quite an unusual venue we thought! That evening it was time to sing for your supper. Each Squadron had to compete to decide who would eat first. The easiest way was of course, a singing competition. Afterwards the four SNCO's entertained the Officers Mess members with a few more carols. 1 WFR in Gornji Vakuf was next on our hit list. Firstly a carol service in the gymnasium. This didn't seem to be high up the list of the most popular things to do, and we were feeling very apprehensive towards the evening concert. Somehow we managed to turn the tables and get them going. This was helped along by our own **LCpl Paul Hill**, who gave an excellent verbal ND in a piece entitled 'The Snowman With a Terrible Temper', and **Capt Nichols** helping eleven members of the Regiment to sing 'The Twelve Days of Christmas'. There are some jobs that give you a real sense of achievement, and this was definitely one. Our last day away from Split took us eastward to UK NSE detachment in Sarajevo, passing the monument of 'Tito's Fist' en route. It was here that our task of playing for the lighting of the Christmas tree was upstaged by local children performing carols and dances. Of course, a visit from St Nicholas with many helpers was perfect for this occasion, and the delight on the children's faces was not to be missed.

Following this was one of the biggest dinner nights that we have ever been involved in. Held in a marquee, the British contingent hosted the Canadians, who made their own special mark on the occasion, and whose donations to the band were welcomed, especially by **Cpl Simon Stember** on tuba.

The Christmas spirit was terrific, and in the presence of the Commander British Forces, we could not have wished for a better last day out of base. The time to return to Split had suddenly arrived and after many an ice-covered road, a thoroughly rewarding week, and seeing more of Bosnia than many see in a six-month tour. We left the snow-clad mountains and headed for the warmth of the Mediterranean and Croatia. The final carol service in HQ MND (SW) gave us the opportunity to publicly thank **Capt Nichols** and **Sig Smith** for their great comradeship, help and friendship during a week that we will always remember. It was then time for our farewell visit to Trogir before the flight home.

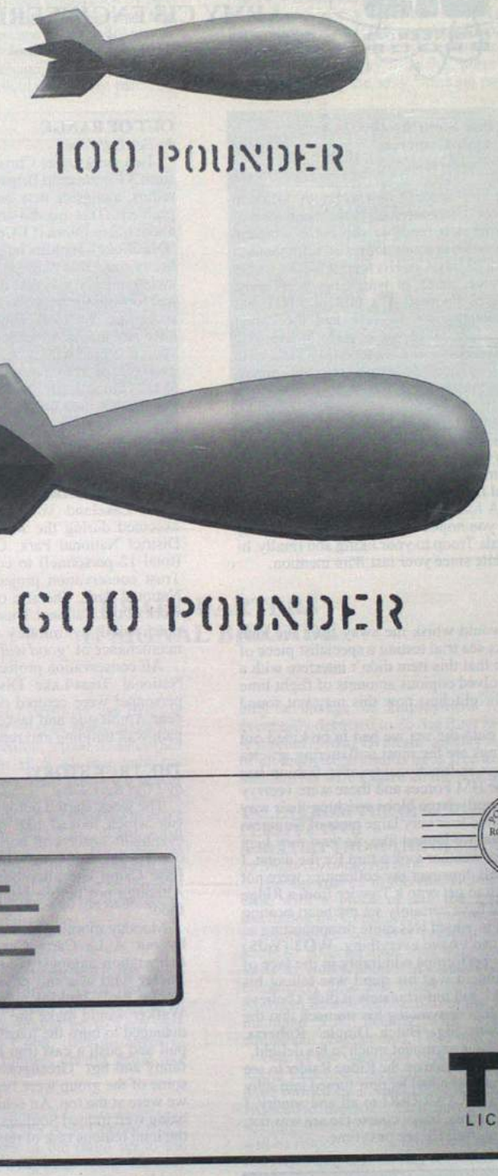
ROYAL CORPS OF SIGNALS PIPES AND DRUMS

Band President **Capt M. J. Chambers**, Adjt 32 Sig Regt (V)
Band WO **WO2 D. Y. Smith**, 32 Sig Regt (V)

The Pipes and Drums are coming along in leaps and bounds. We now have **CSgt (Pipe Major) J Stout**, HIGHLANDERS established in Blandford who is, in addition to his main task of SQMS, Whitespear Troop, running piping classes for anyone interested in learning or improving current standard. We welcome to the band **Jimmy** and his wife **Anne**. For those of you who don't know who he is, he is the only man in a kilt and funny green jumper at Blandford.

With the kind of assistance of 2 Sig Regt, the Band has started to train on weekends in York. This provides a central location that all band members, regular and TA can attend and train to improve the standard of the band. As the Band develops, so does the demand to hear it. In the past three months we have given piping support to units in Bosnia, Sweden, Cyprus and Germany. The tropical paradise of Benbecula awaits us as do confirmed requests to play in Germany. We say a sad farewell to **WO1 (RSM) Showell**, who was the first regular to join the band and has now finished his time with the Army. We wish him all the very best for the future.

The Band is unfunded and relies completely on the goodwill of the Corps for assistance in achieving any credibility. Many thanks for your support so far, but we are currently short of bagpipes and if any one has a set they no longer require, we would be most pleased to deal with them. If you are able to help, please contact **WO2 D. Y. Smith** at 32 Sig Regt (V), 21 Jardine St. GLASGOW, G41 3AN or fax 756 5041.



SIGNALS TRIALS & DEVELOPMENT UNIT (STDU) ARMY CIS ENGINEERING GROUP

OC STDU **Maj Pete Smurthwaite**
OC Trials Tp/SO3(W) Trials **Maj Andy Cameron**

CHANGE AT THE TOP

Having managed to squeeze in a final football tour to South Africa in October of last year, the time has come to say farewell to the Main Man of STDU, **Maj Pete Smurthwaite**, as he gets ready to slip out of uniform and into Hush Puppies and Slacks in order to move across on retirement to a Retired Officers post in HQ Army CIS Eng Gp. His tour at STDU marks the end of 38 years of Colour Service, much of which has been spent playing, coaching and managing Corps Football. His time at STDU has been marked by his persistent dedication to the task and the career management of all those within the Unit; all of whom have at least one instance to be grateful for the Boss's guidance and leadership. STDU wish you and **Trish** all the best and thank you for all of your efforts and support throughout your time in Command of the Unit.

NEWS ON THE GROUND - TRIALS TROOP

by Sgt 'Taff' Jones

Before I open the book on another chapter in the life of Trials Troop, let me first congratulate **Maj Andy Cameron** and **LCpl Kerr Laye** on their recent promotions. Good luck to **Paul Barrett** in his business venture after a rewarding 22 years in the Signals. A fond farewell to **Johnny Atkinson**, hope you find civvy street as easy as you hoped. Welcome to **WO2 (YofS) John Evans** hope you find life in Trials Troop to your liking and finally, hi **Pete** 'The Civvy', I bet it's been a while since your last *Wire* mention.

ALL AT SEA!

by Cpl Mark Beasley

An opportunity had arrived that would whisk me away from the hum drum life in Blandford Camp, a weeks sea trial testing a specialist piece of equipment. My job was to make sure that this item didn't interfere with a Lynx's operational systems. This involved copious amounts of flight time observing instrumentation looking for glitches; now this may not sound exciting but it sure beat first lines!

In order for us to venture over or onto the sea we had to be kitted out with immersion suits. Now, these things are the most unflattering articles of clothing you could think of, however functionality over fashion has always been the precedence for all the HM Forces and these were *veerryy* functional. Imagine if you will four overly large blobs swishing their way down the jetty, looking something akin to four very large pints of Guinness and that might give you an idea of what we looked like. At least they kept you dry, which was a good thing as the weather took a turn for the worst. I was flying high, well clear of the squall, however my colleagues were not so fortunate; battling 10ft swells trying to get onto a Trawler from a Ridge Raider with no ladders or ropes would have certainly set my heart beating faster. I'm sad to say that nobody fell in which was quite disappointing as there was beer riding on it, but you can't have everything. **WO2 (YofS) Paul Barrett** as the trial co-ordinator performed admirably in the face of such adverse conditions the only problem was his mind was telling his stomach 'Flat sea, Flat sea FLAT SEA!' but unfortunately it didn't believe him. **Sgt** 'Taff' **Jones** also had a problem convincing his stomach that the sea does not have swells, along with **Sig** 'Butch Dingle' **Roberts**. Whereas **Sig** 'Swamp-Rat' **Porter** won his argument much to his delight.

At the end of the trial I managed to catch a ride on the Ridge Raider to see if I could face the sea, like the rest of them who had by now turned into salty old sea dogs wondering around saying AAAARRRR! to all and sundry. I felt that I did fine, I experienced no arguments, but of course the sea was flat, so they told me that it proved nothing, oh well I'll see next time.

OUT OF RANGE

by Sgt Taff Jones

Two weeks after Christmas leave we received our first fastball of 1999 from 3 Commando Brigade asking Trials Troop to range test their old field radios, alongside new ones of the same make as there appeared to be a problem. This we did and rather than use Land Rovers we had to walk about 60km (more if **LCpl** 'Rah' **Guthrie** was map reading even with **Cpl** 'Old Bloke' **Jenkins** helping). Unfortunately this trial coincided with the heavy rains that plagued the south which meant lots of detours and some swimming (or was that the other way around?) One of the routes that we had to walk happened to finish at a pub and the two that were walking this route **Sgt** 'Northern Bloke' **Lord** and **Sgt** 'Welsh Bloke' **Jones** didn't have any money with them, but they still fancied a pint. Undeterred 'Taff' went in armed with water bottles and came out with two pints an excellent example of resourcefulness. Knowing this, **SSgt** 'Olly' **McGrail** and **WO2 (YofS) John Evans** volunteered for that route the next day using the excuse that they had to settle the tab for **Sgt Jones**'s and **Sgt Lord**'s two pints. Hmmmmmm!. The trial ended successfully with all teams finding their way back, much to their disgust as it now meant that Lakeland Volunteer was definitely going to happen.

EXERCISE LAKELAND VOLUNTEER - COVER STORY !

Ex Lakeland Volunteer was a Public Relations Training Exercise executed during the week 31 January - 5 February 1999, in the Lake District National Park, Cumbria. The Exercise provided a work party (total 12 personnel) to conduct strenuous labour in support of National Trust conservation projects within the boundaries of the Lake District National Park. The aim of the Exercise was to support the conservation work of the National Trust within the Lake District National Park, an area much used by military units for training, in order to assist in the maintenance of '*good will*' between the Park Authorities and the Military.

All conservation project activities were under the direct supervision of National Trust/Lake District National Park representatives. Exercise personnel were centred on the National Trust Basecamp at High Wray, near Ambleside and tasked daily by National Park staff. Tasks included path/wall building and repair and other conservation activities!

THE TRUE STORY!

by LCpl Kerr Laye

The week started out with the always reliable MT giving us a shed of a van which looked like it had just returned from the scrap heap. We eventually headed off north with lots of abuse and heckling being fired at our Tp Sgt, **Sgt** 'Taff' **Jones**. We arrived at High Wray National Trust Base Camp late afternoon ready and eager to start work the next day. Although not before sampling the surrounding public houses, for good food!

Monday morning was here, breakfast was not on the table as promised by our A La Carte Chef, **Cpl Mark** 'Wibble' **Beasley**. After some deliberation amongst the troops, not including **Sig Duggie** 'Swamp-Rat' **Porter** who was still practising water sports, we decided that **Cpl John** 'Jenky Boy' **Jenkins** aided by non other than **Cpl Craig** 'Burger Boy' **Walker** would make the scoff from then on in, especially after the Boss managed to burn the toast! Our first task set by the National Trust was to pull and push a cast iron barrow up 2000 feet of mountain, this was not funny and **Sgt** 'Greengrass' **Jones** (OC Ex) started to fear for his life as some of the group were becoming very irate. Eventually many hours later we were at the top. An achievement I think we were all very proud of, and being well trained Soldiers we made it off the hill in record time and began the long tedious task of replacing bodily fluids.

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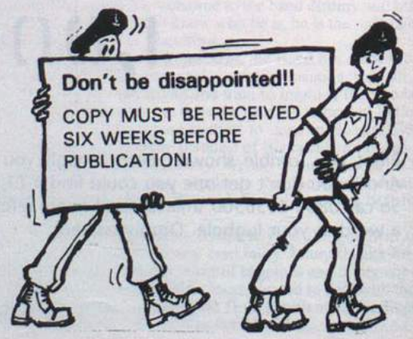

Days two and three consisted of building various types of walls, drainage ditches and generally making the lakes a nice place to visit, unless you were part of the Boss's team, **Maj Andy Cameron**, which consisted of **Cpl Mark** 'Wibble' **Beasley, LCpl Kerr Laye** and **Sig Duggie** 'Watersports Fanatic' **Porter**, who decided to dig a drainage ditch the width of the M4! Meanwhile on the other side of the mountain an elite team of trench diggers led by **Sgt** 'Northern Bloke' **Lord** ably assisted by **LCpl** 'Rah' **Guthrie** and **Sig** 'Maximum Bob' **Roberts** were making good their escape from the hill just in time for tea. The remainder of the Troop, **Sgt** 'Taff' **Jones** and **Cpls Jenkins** and **Walker** could be seen beavering away on drainage ditches and (lucky Blokes) positioning stepping stones through a particularly smelly patch of boggy ground. 'Old Burger Boy' **Walker** had assumed the mantle of Chief Construction Engineer for this group and is so proud of his achievements, his wife is going to receive a guided tour over the Easter Break (Lucky Lady!).

The fourth day was more digging, which we were becoming very accustomed to by now and some of us were getting quite good at it until our two Technicians decided it would be fun to throw wheelbarrows at each other. The day ended and we said our good-byes to the kind people of the National Trust and we then found ourselves returning to our more natural environment, namely being the local hostelries. The Exercise was a brilliant week away from the 'norm', although we can now appreciate what is meant by the song 'working on the Chain Gang'!



Cpl 'Bez' Beasley catches a lift to the Liverpool versus Preston Testimonial



DANGER - Eco-Terrorists at Work

HEADQUARTERS 11 SIGNAL BRIGADE

After the build up to and the excitement of Christmas the Brigade Headquarters has lapsed into a period of relative calm as many make use of a maximum leave period. Calm though it appeared, a near disaster (not quite of San Andreas Fault proportions) made all think that half day working was to be the norm, when at 1530hrs on the 6 January a power black out switched off Donnington and Telford. There was disappointment all round when the backup lighting (candles) could not be diverted to drive the IT. There is no truth in the rumour that the SO3 CEC, **Capt John Hiorns** was seen trying this. While the activity has not been as newsworthy as in previous periods it would be a brave man who says it has been a quiet period; especially in this Headquarters! It would be fairer to say the routine continues at pace and great magnitude, and the expression, 'You want what, by when?' has taken on a new dimension.

FITNESS

As the new boy I have joined with enthusiasm (honest), the twice weekly physical training sessions. While the infirm, old or just plain grumpy (with apologies to **Cpl Jackie Simpson**) head for the delights of mechanical torture in the multi-gym, the racing snakes try to keep pace with the Brigade Commander, **Brig Jonathan Cook**, over distances of varying pain. Is it just my imagination or do runners always smile like that?

BUILD UP TO ANNUAL CAMP

Planning has already started for this years FTX, Ex Able Condor (UK). The round of planning weekends and Exercises in the build up to the Exercise started in January. The Chief of Staff, **Maj Paul** 'This will only take a few hours' **Hudson**, led the way with a short meeting that led to a late lunch followed by an even later tea. One of the results of the weekend was the production of the first edition of **Maj Steve** 'I'm a Loggie' **Bellerby's** time/action chart which is already large enough to paper the lounge and hallway of a modest size 'semi'; it's also more colourful than most wallpaper and of course less useful! Forward planning as always we have been directed to Scotland next month by the Commander who wants us to recce the Brigade FTX for training year 2001. Even though inexperienced in the ways of this Headquarters I detect that there is some reluctance amongst the Headquarters Staff to follow this directive, reluctance which I put down to the arduous winter conditions they all seem to be expecting. Well why else would they have already packed the skis, boots and ice axes!

HAIL AND FAREWELL

Maj Andy Cornish has arrived from RARO to take over as SO2 G1 MS (V), the post vacated by **Maj Angus Maude** last year. Also joining us on Full Time Reserve Service is **Sgt Nigel Jones** in the new post of Staff Assistant Projects. The more astute will be aware that for **Sgt Jones** this is only a change of employment not location. **Maj David Sullivan** eventually departed to 30 Sig Regt in mid-January and his replacement (or is it relief?) **Maj Graham Addley** is now firmly in place. The new fount of all knowledge claims he is free to take questions at any time! We wish him and his wife **Claire** all the best during their new tour.

TALES FROM THE OPS CR (ECHE) YPT - OR THE NEW BOYS PERSPECTIVE
A REPORT FROM THE OPS STAFF

by Major Graham Addley

Having arrived in the Bde HQ in the second week of January 1999, I took with a pinch of salt the constant comments from all the staff (including the Commander) on how busy the HQ was and what long hours everybody worked. This couldn't be more hectic than Northern Ireland, could it? After all there were only a couple of Regular and a half dozen TA units to worry about! My hand-over week proved my preconceptions completely false and I now realise how very sheltered my existence in Northern Ireland had been from the incredible amount of work going on in mainland UK, dealing with ongoing operations world-wide, new equipment programmes, TRIT and SDR.

One of the outcomes of the SDR was the formation of the new Joint Rapid Reaction Force (JRRF). This Force, the first elements of which are to be formed by 1 April 1999, is to be commanded from a new, deployable HQ called the Joint Task Force Headquarters (JTFHQ). At the risk of stealing someone else's thunder, one of the Brigade's units (30 Sig Regt) will be responsible for the provision of all the CIS and Life Support for the JTFHQ. Although 30 Sig Regt has for a long time been responsible for world-wide strategic communications supporting various scales of deployment this will be the first time that the unit has been tasked to provide such a comprehensive infrastructure support as well as strategic links.

As part of the build-up to the readiness date of 1 April 1999 the CO 30 Sig Regt, **Lt Col Mike Lithgow MBE**, hosted a demonstration of a 'worst-case' Headquarters. JFHQ staff from Northwood, Commander 11 Sig Bde and other Brigade staff attended on Friday 15 January 1999, in weather which matched the worst case scenario. In a large hangar in Bramcote, the JTFHQ Squadron, commanded by **Maj George Odling**, had built a massive tented complex and laid out example communications and IS, according to initial JFHQ requirements. The demonstration showed clearly how far the Squadron had come in only a few months in meeting the headquarters' needs. However, they were also able to explain some of the real problems likely to face the unit should the JTFHQ be deployed.

At the end of the demonstration an outstanding curry lunch was served by the field kitchen which left the visitors in no doubt as to the abilities of the unit to provide real 'life support'!

HEADQUARTERS
2ND (NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS)
SIGNAL BRIGADE & COTSWOLD GARRISON

Comd **Brig S. G. Hughes CBE**
RQMS **WO2 A. Simpson**

GENERAL

The Brigade Headquarters is standing tall(er) and proud as the recent arrivals have pushed the average height to just over six feet. This is believed to be a sign of the good nurturing that occurs around here. It's a Corsham thing. The COS, **Maj Paul Kelly,** has been seen in another car (for regular readers) although this one has a fixed roof. Tels, **Capt Dave Drinkall**, the HQ action man is currently off skiing in Norway, honing those skills he mastered on his Christmas skiing trip. A great deal of work looms with the millennium issue drawing ever near. Heading the project from our end is **Lt Col Malcolm Sinton**, Controller, ACISG. The Brigade as a whole has a variety of equipment and resources that may be used in a grand master-plan for the millennium period. Time will tell. What hasn't been told is that he is posted as of 31 December 1999. Does he know something we don't?

BRIGADE STUDY PERIOD

The major event of the current period was the Brigade Study Period, the theme of which was 'Moving Forward - From Vision to Reality'. The aim was to ensure that all Officers of the Brigade would focus their minds on the year ahead and the more tangible business of translating high level Defence and Brigade plans into action on the ground. All of the Brigade's Officers are given a variety of lectures, presentations and time together to learn about their wider and closer environments. Well over 150 people attended the weekend, which was directly after the Christmas break. Once again, Longmoor was the setting where the adequate, and in some ways salubrious surroundings provided their own element of making the weekend a success. The bulk of the work party came from 39 Sig Regt (V) who helped the HQ staff with the setup, (many thanks should you read this), before the multitudes turned up on the Friday night to be swiftly processed before making their own way to luxury style accommodation. Saturday morning kicked off with a hearty breakfast before the first presentation; an update on British Army Doctrine.

Senior guest speakers included **Brig John Griffin, Brig Bev Smalley, Brig Tony Verey, Col Paul Acda, Col John Ewbank** and **Col David McDowell.** Once again the far reaching tendrils of the Brigade managed to attract another special guest speaker. The Deputy Commander, **Col Steven Foakes**, had invited none other than **Jilly Cooper** to speak. As part of wider education and general interest, she spoke on how she goes about researching and collecting information to write a novel. Most of us have told a few stories in our time with limited time to develop one properly, so this could have proven very useful in being able to concoct a really convincing tale. There were other presentations given by regimental representatives on issues directly affecting the Brigade and also on emergency planning, led by **Lt Cdr Damian Belgonne**.

There was considerable face time to be had during the evenings activities. The Master of Ceremonies and creator of all things devious for the evening was **Maj Peter Williams**. It would appear that the evening was rather successful and enjoyed by all. A few interesting photos have since been developed. The HQ staff really showed their sporting prowess in the boat race with a team largely made up from WOs. Not only was this shown in winning the event but also in their sporting behaviour by letting 39 Sig Regt win on a 'technicality'. Perhaps their embroidered version of events is recorded elsewhere within this issue. Anyway, anything for good morale. Next mornings BFT was welcomed by all. Few really pushed the boat out as there was a BFT to run the next day. Transport was not available as nobody had had the foresight to submit their AF756 on time. The pass rate was quite shocking with only minimal failure.

Longmoor is a rather old camp and being winter with bad weather there was likely to be a little bit of a problem. Although it can be argued that it happened at the best time (to provide a finale that nobody would forget) or at the worst time (as the SOinC began to deliver his encapsulating speech) the slight problem of electricity supply reared its unmistakable but invisible head. The whole camp was supplied by a dying and desperately surging power supply, which it would seem, was affecting the whole area. Without nature's own light source (no windows) **Brig Griffin** gave his words of wisdom with the aid of a maglight torch. At least there were no distractions to look at. Thus ended another extravaganza from the Brigade, done once again with panache, style, and a lot of smiles!



Happy Shiny People

TRAINING

The White Helmets

OC White Helmets **Lt Col Jack Amberton**
Team Capt **Capt Gordon Newell**
Team Sgt **Sgt Don Brebner**

The Team continues to train and will be involved in the opening shows of the season by the time this is published. The SOinC's Opening Show takes place on the 23 April, with the season then taking us all over the UK, Germany and Belgium. At the end of last year the selection course brought forth a number of new riders to the team. **LCpl V-Mal Hildreth** drag-raced himself into the limelight during training and his thoughts on the Team are carried below.

JOIN THE WHITE HELMETS

by LCpl Hildreth

After ten years in my trade I felt that I had pretty much seen and done most of the things that my trade had to offer. I needed a new challenge. Having known a couple of people who had been in the White Helmets I knew basically what they were about and had thought of trying for the Team earlier in my career. I still had things I wanted to do in my trade back then but now the time was right. The White Helmets provided the perfect opportunity to combine a favourite past-time (motorbike) with work and there was no doubt in my mind it would be challenging and rewarding. Also the opportunity to perform as part of such a highly regarded team in front of large crowds and on television had its appeal. I knew I would be living and working along side like minded people with similar interests and this I knew would help to make a great job even better. I had heard the selection course for the team was hard work and challenging but I was fit, could already ride a motorbike, and had a positive attitude going into the course.

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If so, are you due to renew it?

THE SELECTION COURSE



Cpl John Strachen shows some Corps pride by performing the 'Double Jimmy' with the aid of an established Team member

The selection course itself was pretty much what I had expected but I don't think anything could have prepared me for the sense of achievement I felt at the end of each day. The first week was very physical with PT before breakfast each day, followed by a room and kit inspection after. The day then consisted of the Selection Course personnel loading the cross-country bikes onto the transport and a short journey to Bovington. Once at Bovington it was a long day of very challenging riding that progressively got even more challenging as the week went on. Even if I had not passed the course I would of come away from the first week with increased confidence on a motorbike and a sense of pride in my achievements.

The second week was very different from the first but no less challenging as we started to learn the tricks that have made the Team famous. I felt privileged to be allowed to ride the actual bikes that are used in the shows. If someone had told me at the beginning of the week that I would soon be riding around the arena stood on my head I may not have believed them, but sure enough there I was doing exactly that within a day or so of the second week starting. The instructors were excellent and very patient and within a short time we were all performing some pretty impressive looking tricks. The highlight of the week I think for most of the Course had to be the fire jump, it was so exciting that I hardly noticed the loss of facial hair. At the end of the Course we were all shattered, as everyone had put a lot of effort into a physically demanding course. Unfortunately not everyone passed the Course but most of those that failed vowed to return next year to give it another shot. Having had a small insight into the work the team does and seen what life on the team is like, I can't say I blame them.



A Selection Course member performs the famous 'Fruit Bat' trick

Now I am looking forward to my first season with the team. I have been made to feel very welcome and the accommodation is excellent. Serious training begins at RAF Sealand soon and it is then that those new to the Team will be integrated into the show and longer serving members try something new. Looking at the schedule we will be performing at a big variety of shows this season at home and abroad, from Small County shows to the Royal Tournament. I love to travel and there certainly won't be any shortage of that this year. To finish with I'd just like to say that if you are finding life a little dull, enjoy a challenge, and prefer working with a close knit and friendly crowd then look no further than The White Helmets.

SHILLINGSTONE SCHOOL

The Team also gets involved in other local projects. On Wednesday 10 February four members of the Team went to the Forum School in Shillingstone. The school, which deals with children with special needs, is doing a project on transport and wanted the team to let them see some of the bikes and a few tricks to encourage the children to draw some pictures for the project. It was a very frosty morning and a very slippery surface but turned out to be a very enjoyable day for the school and the four riders involved.

11 SIGNAL REGIMENT

3 (HARROGATE) SQUADRON CHRISTMAS PARTY

On the 3 December 1998, 3 (Harrogate) Sqn enjoyed their annual Christmas Party in the Semaphore Arms. The usual merriment was enjoyed by Cadre and trainees alike producing some memorable moments as captured on camera.

11 SIGNAL REGIMENT DRILL COMPETITION 1998

by Sig Harrocks of 3 (Harrogate) Sqn, Ulster Tp

Exactly Two weeks before the event date (7 November 1998), 20 others and I volunteered to participate in the glory hunting event that is the annual Drill Competition. Two days before the dreaded event we were ready, almost. At knockoff on the Thursday someone in their infinite wisdom decided that we, the TEAM, needed extra personnel to compete. **WO1** 'You are getting better, but it still needs some work' **Banner**, threw a slight wobbly and started volunteering people out of the good of his heart, awful nice the way he does that.

With three new members on the team we started from scratch. The day finally arrived for the Competition. With broken hearts we watched the amazing performances of 1 Sqn and 2 Sqn then it was our turn. Off we went to our destiny, marching on with our heads held high and our arms swinging like two ton pendulums. I could have sworn that my collar was going to leave a permanent scar in my neck. 1 Sqn, the archenemies of the Technician world, looked like favourites to take the pole position. As it happened the positions were called out, 3rd 2 Sqn, 'Thank god we didn't



Who says upgraders are normal?

come last,' was heard from one 3 Sqn team member. Second, 1 Sqn (slight pause while it sank in that we had actually won) then the cheers erupted. Grinning from ear to ear like Cheshire cats we left the square at the end of a nerve-wrecking day. After a short (yeah-right) speech from **SSgt Richie Plummer**, we left to celebrate in true 3 Sqn style! Happy days.



3 Squadron – 11 Signal Regiment Drill Competition

FAREWELL TO MAJ DAVE LUMB

October 1998 saw a turn around of the Squadron Commander with the loss of **Maj David Lumb** and the arrival of **Maj Andy Duncan**. After two years of dedicated leadership to 3 (Harrogate) Sqn, **Maj Lumb** leaves us to seek pastures new (revisited) on the sunny shores of Cyprus. **Maj Lumb** was overcome by emotion as he said farewell to 3 (Harrogate) Sqn, while **WO2 (SSM) Eric Udell** could hardly contain himself but managed a rare smile. The Squadron wishes you and **Brenda** all the best for the future and offers a warm welcome to **Maj Andy** and **Claire Duncan**.



Maj Dave Lumb bids farewell to WO2 (SSM) 'Ginge' Udell

OPERATION PALATINE – THE LAST LEG

On 20 January 1999, the Royal School of Signals (RSS) undertook the demobilisation of 54 TA/Reservists returning from Bosnia having served there for six months on Op Palatine. It was the fourth occasion that the RSS had conducted the processing of troops to and from Bosnia. As on all previous occasions, the work was done by the staff of 11 Sig Regt. Under the co-ordination of the Regimental 2IC, **Maj P. A. Brown, WO2 (SQMS) Goudge** for the initial processing met the returning soldiers at RAF Brize Norton. Once they had moved back to Blandford **WO2 (RQMS) Fradley** put them all through a dekitting and weapon cleaning programme and reunited them with whatever MFO was awaiting them. The Medical Centre Practice Manager, **Sgt Birtwell**, then picked up the baton and directed them past both Regimental doctors for the necessary final examinations. Once all fingers and toes were accounted for it was time to sign off and drive away in brand new hire cars arranged for their collection by the MT SNCO, **SSgt Baxter**.

Many of those returning from Bosnia had actually been mobilised in Blandford last July. As beautiful as the Camp is on a brisk January morning, it was of little surprise to see the soldiers' enthusiasm to depart. It is to the credit of 11 Sig Regt that all were smiling when they commenced the final leg of their journey home just six hours after arriving in Blandford. Bon Voyage.

MT NEWS

Looking through old copies of *The Wire*, it's fair to say that it has been a little while since the MT of 11 Sig Regt has put anything into *The Wire* so here goes. I would like to start by saying hello to **Sig Griffiths**, who has been posted in from 3 (UK) Div Bulford. The MT will also be welcoming three new lads that will be posted into the MT in the next couple of months which will hopefully make the work load a little lighter for the rest of us. The MT has been its usual busy hive of activity with **LCpl Orr** on the details-desk.

Juggling between his computer and the telephone which never seems to stop ringing, while **Cpl Mick Stewart** is running around trying to get all his green vehicles back in on time ready for inspections. The MT would like to wish **Mick** good luck on his forthcoming NCOs Course at Mil Trg Sqn. I am sure there won't be too many late nights. We would also like to congratulate **LCpl** 'Togs' **Teague** and his wife on their new baby girl **Nina**, who was born just before Christmas. We will shortly be losing **SSgt Kev Baxter** who will be leaving the Army, we would like to wish him and his family all the best in his new job and life in Civvy Street.

CROSS COUNTRY

It was just not her day. **Sig McStravork** had every intention of going to the Spar to buy a chocolate bar when she was diverted by the offer of a free packed lunch and an afternoon of fresh air. Minutes later the bus left Blandford, bound for Longmoor Camp and the venue of the 1999 Army Cross Country Championships. She was just one of six willing runners from Kohima Tp that ran for the Women's Team that day. The others, for the record, were **SSgt Lindsey Manktelow, Sig Emma Flynn, Sig Helen Caplin** and **Sig Rachel Jacklin**. The Team, complemented by **Capt Sophie Davies** of SORLS, ran their hearts out over the 3-mile Race. In a race where participation was more important than position, everyone was brilliant. Commiserations to **Cpl Kendra Hughes** and **Sgt Sarah Strawn**, stalwarts of the women's team, as neither were able to start the race.

Like the women, the men's team had won the 3 (UK) Division Championships to qualify for the Army finals. Unfortunately two key runners were missing, **Sgt Stu Maughan** who was ill, and **WO1 (RSM) Laycock** who was away shooting sheep at Sennybridge. Fortunately the entire team survived the traditional and very precarious cavalry charge, where 360 runners push and shove each other around the first field, that had been thoughtfully churned up for the occasion. The old dependables **WO1 (YofS) Stu Little** and **Sgt Bho Pradham**were up there with the first 60 leaders, along with **Sgt Dave Clark** who was taking a break from his Foreman of Signals Course. Well down the field, in what he describes as an essential sweeping role was the not so old Regimental 2IC, **Maj Phil Brown** (now a junior veteran). It was his task to encourage the four junior runners from the newly elected Kohima Tp men's running team. The six - mile course, comprising 5% firm flat paths, 5% impossible mud and 90% undulating sandy tracks, is enough to intimidate the most seasoned athlete. However, **Sig Peter Tucker, Sig Glenn Gibbs, Sig Paul Romback** and **Sig Dan Snelling** stuck to their tasks with determination and finished in style. It was certainly an afternoon to remember, or was it to forget, certainly Kohima Tp runs will never seem as bad again.



Women's Cross Country Team at Longmoor Camp
Back Row (L-R): SSgt Manktelow, Capt Davies,
Sig Jacklin, Sig McStravock
Front Row Sig Flynn, Sig Caplin

Make 1999 the year you take out a subscription to your magazine!

1 TRAINING SQUADRON
ROYAL SIGNALS ARMY TRAINING REGIMENT
BASSINGBOURN

OC **Maj J. M. Norris**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) S. Slaney**

ATR Bassingbourn is a mythical place. Those who have not served, or trained, here have many pre-conceptions. They are mostly inaccurate! More of the realities later, but suffice to say this is a challenging, rewarding environment and, yes, it is a good career move. Here at ATR Bassingbourn our six training teams of highly skilled instructors battle it out against the odds to deliver able bodied and willing recruits to Phase II at Blandford. However, we DO NOT deliver Field Standard. Phase 2 moves them from this intermediate level to that which you receive in the field Army.

For these last few months the theme has definitely been charity fund raising, more so than ever, with each Troop raising over £1000 for various charities. The Troops continue to organise charity events for each intake of recruits. Despite this, we find ourselves caught up in a whirlwind of sporting events that we manage to fit in to the hectic training schedule. All six Troops have been down to Tregantle Fort, Devon for Adventure Training. Activities include caving, climbing, canoeing, dry slope skiing and hill-walking. Alpha Tp even managed to fit in Go Karting! The Squadron also bids farewell to **Maj Charlie Cooper** as he briefly commands Wray Coy before heading to Australia! (Is this a precedent – I hope so – New OC). **Maj John Norris** has assumed command arriving hotfoot from HQ 3 (UK) Div.



Charlie Troop training team
relaxing after a recruit training exercise

A FEW FACTS ABOUT CMS(R)

Capt Fiona Hay

There are a number of misconceptions surrounding the Common Military Syllabus (Recruit), or CMS(R) in the field army. In an effort to allay fears over the standard of recruits being trained at ATR Bassingbourn, and to highlight a few facts about the training, here is a quick guide to CMS(R). ATR Bassingbourn trains all recruits for the Royal Corps of Signals. On arrival each recruit undergoes 'Week 0', when kit is issued and initial physical tests are undertaken. On successful completion of 'Week 0' the recruit will start CMS(R) - more of that later. Should a recruit be unable to pass the initial physical tests, they will be sent to the Army Foundation Scheme Company – known as AFS, where they will receive remedial PT. The tests include a jerry-can lift, lifting an ammo box, completing a 31 sit up beep test and a 1.5 mile run in under 12 min 15secs, which is squadded for the first 500 metres – making faster times harder. Recruits who lack confidence, maturity or the correct attitude to begin CMS(R) will also be sent to AFS at this stage to undergo training in 'Whiskey Troop', which involves a number of field exercises and packages designed to address character weaknesses. Recruits in AFS are reassessed every two weeks and sent to CMS(R) when they are ready to begin training.

Recruits meeting all the required standards begin CMS(R), which lasts for 11 weeks. Each Troop is trained by a training team consisting of a Tp Comd, Tp Sgt and four Tp Cpls, who are section commanders. Each Troop normally begins training with 48 recruits. At the end of CMS(R), recruits are able to do the following:

Pass an APWT (TS)
Complete TOETS
Pass an NBC attainment test
Pass a First Aid attainment test
Run 1.5 miles in 11min 45secs
Carry 2 full jerry cans for 90m
Lift an ammo box weighing 25kg
Carry out basic map reading
Pass MST
Complete a 6 mile Recruit CFT in 90 mins

In addition they will have spent a total of six nights in the field, living under normal field conditions. There is not a 'pink and fluffy' approach to training. It is demanding and testing while also being totally fair to each recruit, regardless of age, sex, race and religion. There is NOT a red stress card system and recruits are not in the NAAFI every night – most are lucky to spend more than one or two nights there during their time at Bassingbourn. In conclusion, there are a number of areas where recruits can be expected to be fully competent trained soldiers. However, on arrival at a field unit, they will not be fully trained and this has to be borne in mind by receiving units.

Finally . . . working in a training regiment is demanding but it is also rewarding and enjoyable. The syllabus offers physically active instructors ample opportunity to make their mark on tomorrow's soldiers. We encourage everybody interested in trying their hand at instructing or something challenging to get themselves here. The hours may be irregular but the job satisfaction is real!

ATR BASSINGBOURN GOES TO THE DIV CHAMPIONSHIPS

ATR Bassingbourn fielded a team of hardy skiers to compete in the 2 Div ski championships in Serre Chevalier. Ten members of the Regiment were finally chosen to make the long journey; six sweaties and four alpine racers. Unfortunately, due to the lack of snow (which was, in fact, non-existent) a two hour journey every day had to be undertaken to reach the nearest resort with snow. Alpe D'Huez became our new training ground for the week before the championships commenced. The races were hit and miss for the whole competition. Lack of snow caused the alpiners to have alpine starts every morning; 0530 reveille in order to complete the race before any holiday makers wanted to use the piste. So, no drinking for them …!

The Regiment managed to field excellent teams, winning the combined Alpine and Nordic award for 2 Div. **Lt Kate Simmonds** then went on to compete in the Army and inter-service championships in Valliore, France. She won the downhill race and came third overall in the combined event. Thanks must go to Echo Tp training team, who were working the recruits while she was away, and certainly let her know about it when she got back. (**Cpl** 'Mac' **McIntyre** thought it would be a good idea to fill the boss's bergan up with some extra weight before exercise!).



Lt Kate Simmonds receiving yet another
medal for her skiing efforts

NEWS FROM ALPHA TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt Jamie Balfour**
Tp Sgt **Sgt Roy Turner**

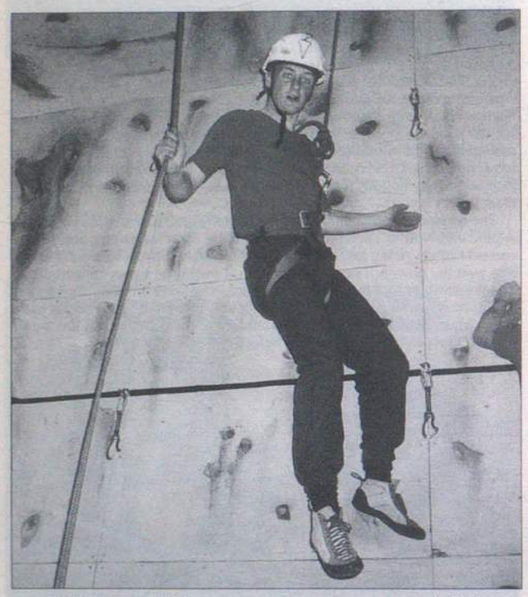
Alpha Tp have just moved a staggering 45 recruits on to Phase II training. In between fitting in numerous courses, they managed to raise over £1600 for the Elgin and Lossiemouth Arthritis Care charity. Many thanks go to the past recruits and their families for their money raising efforts. The Training Team have managed to get themselves away on numerous courses, much to the envy of the rest of the Squadron. An example is **Sgt Roy Turner** – having completed his Battlefield First Aid Trainer (BFAT) course, Mountain Leader Training since the last intake of recruits, and now trying to get on his Drill Course and Sergeant's Course! **Cpls Mitchell, Revell, McBean** and **Smith** have performing miracles with both the recruits and the troop lines, achieving a 90% pass rate with the recruits and a complete professional redecoration with the latter.

BRAVO TROOP SPONSORED CLIMB

Tp Comd — **Lt Charlie Roberts**
Tp Sgt — **Sgt Paula Matheson**

On the 24 November 1998 members of Bravo Tp, undertook a sponsored climb on behalf of the BBC Children in Need appeal. The event was organised and run by **Cpl** 'Richie' **Richardson** and aimed to climb the total height of Ben Nevis (4406 feet) on the indoor climbing wall at ATR Bassingbourn. The event was a great success and the total height was reached. Parents and relatives raised the money on behalf of the recruits and we were able present the BBC Children In Need Appeal with a cheque for the total sum of £544.00.

Since December and some very welcome Christmas leave the Troop has once again started training, this time with Royal Signals recruits rather than the RLC! The Troop Corporals have been keeping themselves busy and we are pleased to welcome **Cpl McKenzie** back from his short tour with the Regimental Discharge Section (running it, not leaving the Army). **Cpl Percival** R Anglian is fully integrated into the Corps now and is taking the opportunity to gain every qualification the Army has. The Troop hopes to see him soon so that he can train some recruits before he goes on his diving expedition to Belize. **Cpl Richardson** is also catching up on the qualifications and has got his head well and truly stuck in the PAMS on his SAA course. That leaves **Cpl Young** who is about to start on his own courses quest with MLT and Battlefield First Aid Trainer Course. In amongst all this **Sgt Paula Matheson** is keeping the ship running smoothly with occasional assistance from **Lt Charlie Roberts** when he isn't arranging his next sailing trip.



Pte Mooney RLC hangs around on the sponsored climb

NEWS FROM DELTA TROOP

Tp Comd — **Lt Ivan Bates**
Tp Sgt — **Sgt Jason Smithurst**

Since the previous Delta Tp contribution to *The Wire*, a good deal of change has taken place amongst the permanent staff. Firstly, the Cavalry representative, **Lt Christopher Stanley-Smith** has moved over to the School Leavers Scheme to help transform the youth of today into viable trainees for the field army. In his place arrived **Lt Ivan Bates** from 3 Bde HQ and Sig Sqn in Northern Ireland. Here he has found that the streets of ATR Bassingbourn are far more dangerous than the streets of South Armagh! Having completed recently their adventure training package near Plymouth in Devon, Delta Tp are now refreshed and are ready to develop their recruits with boundless enthusiasm.

FOXTROT TROOP FUNDRAISING AND ADVENTURE TRAINING

Tp Comd — **Lt Simon Coeshott**
Tp Sgt — **Sgt Phil Graham**

Foxtrot Tp managed to raise over £1100 for The National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) with their marathon abseil at Royston Fire Station. The recruits managed to abseil from the fire brigade training tower continuously for eight hours in bitterly cold conditions. Foxtrot Tp deployed on adventure training to Dartmoor training area and though the weather was disappointingly mild, the recruits all had a challenging time getting through the bogs that they seemed drawn to. The recruits particularly enjoyed the canoeing phase, where they braved icy Devon water through sheer enjoyment and prompting from the Training Team. Special mention must be made of **Cpl Paul** 'Diesel Power' **Smith** who attempted to run the (diesel) adventure training minibus on four-star petrol. A warm welcome must go to **Sgt Phil Graham** and **Cpl Gavin Wilson**, just posted in from the sunny field army, and a fond farewell to his predecessor **Sgt Mick Aver** who moves on to another training job with 6 Cadet Training Team. Enjoy those lie-ins!

If responding to any advertisements in The Wire please mention that you saw it in your Corps magazine

263 (HARROGATE) SIGNAL SQUADRON ARMY APPRENTICES COLLEGE, ARBORFIELD

Sqn Comd — **Maj Steven France**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) Mick Senior**

The Spring Term kicked off on 4 January with the new intake (99A), 86 in number, being received into Bradley and Penney Troops and inducted into the Army way of life. We said goodbye to **Capt Carmel Winskill** AGC(ETS) who handed over Bradley Tp to **Lt** (now Capt) **Kelly Holloway** AGC(ETS). **Kelly** is revisiting all her skills of Troop Commanding, having spent all her time after Sandhurst teaching in an Army Education Centre, whilst **Carmel** has decided to embark upon a law career in the near future, for which we wish her well. We also welcome **Cpl Craig Woolass** who joined us from 264 (SAS) Sig Sqn to work in the Gym as a PTI. We wish him a very successful tour at Arborfield. By the time this article gets published, our Apprentice Tradesmen (AT) of Intake 98C from Rawson and Scott Troops will be passing out of the College and eagerly waiting to get on their trade courses at the Royal School of Signals. Our slot in this edition of *The Wire* features news of their main activities.

RAWSON TROOP

Tp Comd — **Capt Darren Cooper**
Tp Sgt — **Sgt** 'Tosh' **Hodgskins**

EXERCISE SARAH SANDS 28 - 30 JANUARY 1999

by AT Hayes

Before the Exercise began we were nervous as having PT just before dinner and deployment was not what we would class as an ideal scenario. After dinner we formed up, cammed up and ready for war, wishing we had a B-Chit. When we arrived at our destination we had to 'tab' 2.5km to our location. It was at this time that tiredness sank in and we all wanted to go to bed. Arriving at our harbour location we started digging our shell scrapes and soon got tired of hearing 'Dig deeper' by our Troop staff. We were sure we were digging to reach Australia! We then split off into our section activities and for the next 18 hours we went on patrols, conducted OP's and practised harbour defence. This took us up to Friday tea-time. All Friday night we did stag and slept, dreaming of the 'final attack'. Saturday morning was worse than a hangover, in fact it was a disaster as we got attacked and everything went wrong. If things had been for real we would have been dead without a doubt! Even though **Sgt Hodgskins** shouted at as all, it took us about one hour to vacate our location, but by this time we were all in 'mong mode'.

We tabbed to our hasty harbour where we got our orders from **Capt Cooper**. At this stage we ate what we could from our 'tasty' ration packs. At approximately 1400hrs we headed for the final attack and the adrenalin was high, our hearts were pumping - in fact, we were lean mean fighting machines. In the attack we demolished the enemy and achieved our mission, the only problem being clearing out the casualties. We then tabbed back to our collection point which was a relief because the Exercise was more or less over.

We got our warm kit on, packed our bergens and headed back to Arborfield. In bed that night we snuggled up to our quilts, glad to be back, although we all enjoyed the exercise and had a real sense of achievement. Roll on the next Exercise, Ex Janner's Joy.

SCOTT TROOP

Tp Comd — **Capt Tom Jeffries**
Tp Sgt — **Sgt Bruce** 'Waggy' **Wagstaff**

During this senior term, when much of the curriculum is Education, **Cpls Millington** and **Brotherston** have admirably kept the troops licked into shape and road tested the Troop computer to its limits, whilst **Sgt Wagstaff** has been doing his square bashing (on the All Arms Advanced Drill Instructor Course) and Field Exercises (on his RSSC)! In the meantime news of activities to date are covered by the ATs below.

THE MARCH AND SHOOT COMPETITION – 15 DECEMBER 1998

by AT Harris

In the weeks prior to the big event, the staff of Scott Tp had shown great emphasis on their compelling need to win the competition, **Cpl Millington** treating it as a life and death situation and making out that the honour of the Troop was at stake. This gave our Troop the rapid rise in morale it needed and we began our preparations. Eventually the day arrived and seeing this as an opportunity to get in the good books of the Troop staff, we decided we would go all out to win the competition and show the RE, RLC and REME how it's supposed to be done. Before the event started there was an inspection by the OC of the Military Training Wing (MTW), **Maj Don Jellard MBE** D and D, of all our kit, down to the minute detail of having two ten-pence pieces taped to our note books. As usual we were on the ball.

The event itself started off with what the staff called 'a gentle stroll in the countryside'. This stroll, as far as I was concerned, was anything but gentle. **Cpl Yates** A and SH, our PTI, made sure of that, setting the pace. **Capt Jeffries** brought up the rear with **Sgt Wagstaff** and **Cpls Brotherston, Millington, Lowe** and **Askin** running up and down the Troop making sure we were all giving 110%. The tab took us over a couple of hills called the 'Sisters', whose name still gives us cause to miss a heart beat whenever they're mentioned. I'm not sure how many there were, but each time we got to the top of one, the staff kept saying there's just one more to go. As we ran the route several things then began to happen, such as **Sgt Wagstaff** went for a trip which sent him flying face first into the mud. **Cpl Millington** used his fitness to get us to the top of each hill using the 'grab onto my webbing and hold on tight' method. **Cpl Brotherston**, however, gave gentle encouragement as usual - YEAH RIGHT!

Then it was time for the shoot - lined up at the 200 metre point with our weapons loaded, waiting for the off. The signal was given and we sprinted down to the 100 metre point. Once there, we all made ready, took quick steady aim, controlled our breathing and the rounds then began to fly down the range to the plates. Remembering our detailed briefing from the staff, the outer people took the outer plates and worked in and the inner people took the inner plates and worked out. Of course we won, coming out of the competition with the glory and the honour we set out to gain. Now whenever the College doubt Scott Troop, 263 (H) Sig Sqn, we simply say 'March and Shoot'!

BASIC LEADERSHIP (BL) 16 - 17 DECEMBER 1998

by AT Lord

Picture the scene, you are stuck behind enemy lines having to learn new ways to survive with only what you are wearing and what resources you can find locally. Under the direction of Scott Tp permanent staff we were taught the basics of surviving in adverse weather conditions in the field without our bergens. This included how to humanely kill, pluck and gut a chicken under the careful supervision of **Sgt Hodgskins**. While cooking the chicken, we were wishing the RLC (chefs) were there.



AT Baines being put to the test on the Confidence Course

Other tasks included the High Wire confidence course where we all did our 'Elvis' impressions, shelter building and a 'stretcher' run that seemed to last forever with a very odd and particularly heavy stretcher. On our first night we completed a navigation exercise before retiring to our bashas. The woods looked as if they had been taken over by an anti-road demonstration group and we shivered the night away huddled around our small fires trying to keep warm. On the second day we were introduced to command tasks which everyone enjoyed. Although not all were completed successfully, the staff remained happy as we entertained them with our solutions.



AT Vickers on the cantilever during a Section Command Task

All of us learned a great deal from the Exercise, but were thankful when endex was called and at last it was time to depart on Christmas leave.

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NEWS FROM NORTHERN IRELAND

XV HEADQUARTERS NORTHERN IRELAND & 15 SIGNAL REGIMENT

ECHO TROOP - 225 SIGNAL SQUADRON

In the deep dark recesses of HQNI & 15 Sig Regt, Echo Tp were nudged by the real world and told that it was Christmas. Amid cries of 'Humbug' were the occasional cheers of merriment from those fortunate enough to own a calendar. With no windows to the outside world, the only thing to give the fact that it was actually Christmas was the increased frequency of functions, promotions and postings.

First and foremost congratulations go to **WO1 Dave Ruddock** for his promotion and posting, a whole 20 metres, back to 321 EOD. Our congratulations also go to **WO2 Paul** 'PFG' **Gardiner** who has been promoted from the shop floor to the dizzy heights, and day shirking, of the Sqn OPSWO. Other promotions include **Sgt Dave** 'JR Heartley' **Marrs** and **Sgt Sarah** 'Dodgy Pegs' **Matthews**. It is heavily rumoured that the Troop has a 'new' OC masquerading under the name of **Lt Nat Baker**. He can be identified by his dodgy handshake and a fondness for George Michael. However, with the skiing season in full swim, there is more chance of meeting Lord Lucan riding Shergar around the quarter-deck of the Titanic.

The festive season has taken its usual toll on the Troop with many planned, and even more impromptu, functions arranged under the guise of celebrating the season of goodwill. The mandatory Phoenix Bar New Years Eve bash was once again a hit thanks to the meticulous planning of **Cpl** 'Pepsi' **Mattacola** and his wife **Vicky**. At the stroke of midnight 'Pepsi' cracked the traditional bottle of Champagne seeing how many people he could ricochet the cork off.

With the conclusion to the season of merriment our continued goodwill goes with **Sgt Chris Ashworth** who is off to the black hole known affectionately as JSSU Digby, and **Cpl Aidy Russell** who landed a plumb posting to HQ ARRC. Out with the old (in **Aidy's** case very old) and in with the new. Those being **LCpls Helen Waites** and **Lisa Shaw** from Digby, plus 'Baps', **Woodhouse** and **Steve Price** from 14 Sig Regt (EW). The manning situation continues to change as posting season hits hard and new faces arriving every week. The Troop spirit continues unabated and we still ask **Q Gardiner's** immortal question 'Where is my Aston Villa Pennant?'

233 SIGNAL SQUADRON - SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS

Sqn Comd	**Maj Giles**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Day**

VISIT OF LT GEN PIKE, GOC NORTHERN IRELAND

The new General Officer Command Northern Ireland, **Lt Gen Sir Hew Pike KCB DSO MBE** paid a visit to the Squadron on 16 December 1998 to see in detail the mission of the Squadron and how we supported his Troops on the ground. He visited both TM Tp and Romeo Tp and received in-depth briefs on their Troops specific roles within Northern Ireland, before presenting LS & GC Medals in the Officers' Mess Annex to various members of the Regiment including our very own **WO2 (YofS)** 'Russ' **Darlington**.



(L-R): WO1 (SSM) Day, Sgt Davidson, WO2 (YofS) Darlington
Mrs Day, GOC (NI), Mrs Darlington

OFFICERS v SERGEANTS MESS ANNUAL RUGBY MATCH

Every year in the run up to Christmas and the beginning of the party season there has to appear somewhere on the calendar the date for the Annual Rugby match, between the Officers' Mess and the Sergeants' Mess, to sort the men from the boys. In previous years the Officers have taken a keen interest in leave passes being pushed around the Regiment before deciding the date, to ensure the maximum number of players available to play the Sergeants' Mess are on leave or unavailable. This year was different, the boot was on the other foot, the Adjt, **Capt Guy Bennett** had run off scared (although his impending marriage to Harry may have had something to do with it) and **Capt Dave Worden** arranged an early posting to Command Group to avoid the game, a little drastic me thinks. So on a cold and wet (we are in Northern Ireland, what do you expect) December day we prepared to do battle, the beer tent was up and once the Officers had warmed up their weary old bones, we drew a line in the sand and kicked off. Obviously the Sergeants' Mess had not warmed up sufficiently in the beer tent as the Officers scored and converted a try within seven minutes and shocked everyone, watching as well as the SNCO's team and the band of merry supporters (not influenced by the beer tent). The game continued at a furious pace, set by **Capt** 'Gig' **Plumb** the TOT and the Sergeants' Mess soon levelled the score, with a try created by the forward effort of **WO2 (SSM) Dave Rook** and **Sgt Steve Legg**. This was the turning point with the experience of **WO2 (SSM)** 'Doz' **Day, WO2 (RQMS) Paul Downie** leading the back line and the Old and Bold pack, the SNCO's began to come out on top. The 95 metre try scored by **WO2 (SSM) Day** and set up by **Sgt Paul Cleghorn** was the final nail in the coffin and the Sergeants' Mess ran out fairly confortable winners, revenge for the defeats in the two previous years games. **WO2 (SSM) Day** would like to thank **Capt Jules Walster** and **WO1 Fiona Nelson** for dressing up as cheerleaders and warming everyone up on this cold winters day.

ROMEO TROOP
NEWS FROM THE WORKSHOPS

Farewell's go out to **Cpl Jayne Simmons** and **Cpl Si Butler**, both of whom are off to do their upgrading. A welcome goes out to **LCpl John Connolly**. Congratulations to newly promoted **Sgt Jones**, and to **Cpl Andy Dobson** on his 'recent' engagement.

During December, we managed to fit in our fair share of Christmas parties, and a very merry time was had by all. At the Troop 'Christmas Do' there were some rather suspicious going's on. **Cpl Bri McLean** (Who was not present) winning seven of the prizes in the raffle 'MMMMMM'! He did happen to be the one selling the raffle tickets! A democratic conclusion was reached in his absence and being the generous guys that we are, decided that he could have ONE prize, and no more. **Cpl** 'Swanny' **Swannick** won the £160 cash prize, complete with IOU from the boss. He's still waiting!!

As we get into January **Sgt** 'Del' **Trotter** and **Cpl** 'Ickle' **Davies**, had to send for help in the form of a 4WD vehicle during a recent task, apparently they wouldn't be able to make their return through a heavy snow fall. Upon arrival of the said 4WD vehicle it was discovered that the two cowards had in fact been afraid of nothing more than a slight snow flurry, also due to the fact that they had been working inside hadn't noticed that there was NO SNOW. A posting is being organised for them both to 249 Sig Sqn to enable them to get some snow under their boots. We also had two very lucky vehicle owners in the section, **Cpl** 'Birdy' **Bird** and **Cpl Pete Mulcahy** who are not in the market for 'In Car' entertainment systems. Anyone selling a car stereo contact the Troop, any reasonable offer considered.

FROM THE OPERATIONS SECTION

After soldiering on with the minimum of manpower the cavalry has now arrived to the section in the form of **Sgt Craig Brookshank** and **Cpl Dean Rudd**. The baby boom has continued to flourish with **Cpl Steve Simpson** and his wife **Tanya** who are to be congratulated on the arrival of **Emily**. A good time was had by all at the Troop Christmas Function which was organised by **Sgt Treff Davies** assisted by two kitbags. Let it not be said that they couldn't organise a 'booze up in a brewery'. **Sgt Brookshank** would like to say a special seasonal thank you to the Sqn SSM, **WO2 Day**, for allowing him to do a Christmas Day Guard Commander duty after only 17 days in the unit. Needless to say the SSM is off **Craig**'s Christmas card list for 1999.

SURV SURF

The Section said goodbye to **Cpl Dave Thomas**, who had one of the shortest leaving speeches in the history of the Troop. He either had a squeaky clean past or none of his friends were willing to dish the dirt. He now has ventured out into the big bad world and has become a human being, the Section wish him all the best in civvy street. The Section Christmas 'do' went off in fine spirits. **Sgt Pete Reeve** wiped the floor during the Ten Pin bowling, **Cpl Andy Webb** went into hiding after an impressive score of 34 showing the rest of us how not to do it. At the Troop function **Sgt Ralph Johnson** re-lived Saturday Night Fever and we have the photos to prove it. **LCpl** 'Wrighty' **Wright** has suddenly come into an unexpected windfall however the Troop OC recently paid out a ransom demand for his sports jacket taken during the evening, apparently the two incidents are not related.

COMMCEN TROOP

Tp Comd	**Capt Walster**
Troop SSgt	**SSgt Jackson**

There is a COMMCEN Troop at 15 Signal Regiment!!! Will be the cry I hear when *The Wire* is opened. Truth is we have been far too busy to even look at *The Wire* never mind get an entry into it, that is my story and I will be sticking to it. Well it has been a funny period for the Troop what with finding out that the Corps no longer requires the specialist trade of HANDBAG and juggling the person power (bit of Political Correctness for you there) about to man some shifts. So who has made a mistake over the last few months which is worthy of Corps wide humiliation, there have been too many to mention but one which is due a mention is the mouse in the COMMCEN incident.

Let met set the scene, a busy COMMCEN in NI (operational theatre) a number of night shift operators working very hard on the SKY TV cct. When a mouse on a covert recce mission blew its cover by moving from the fridge to the cupboard. Breaking the most basic of fieldcraft rules, movement. Like the coiled springs that they are, the operators dash for cover and send a Contact Report to the Troop Staffy who as you would expect was sleeping with one eye open. The slick call went something like this 'S S S S S Staffy, Th th th th there is a mouse in the COMMCEN'. As you can imagine a situation like this needs to be handled in a professional manner. 'Leave it to the morning, bye.' So when the Staffy arrives in the morning he finds the shift had drawn weapons and had been stagging through the night. I would like to finish this story but it would take a page on its own. No names have been mentioned to date as a court case is pending, the gripping conclusion will be found in next month's issue so do not miss it.

Now to the hello and goodbyes, recently we have said goodbye to **Sammi Lee-Davis** and **Sarah Staff** who have been posted on promotion to full Corporal and remained in Province. Sorry to all those goodbyes we have missed over the last few months but hope you are enjoying your new postings. The hellos are to **Sigs Hannam, Pennock** and **Simpson** who arrive straight from the School and have not spent enough time here to even get nicknames but no doubt they will appear in future *Wires*. One more thing, Happy New Year for 1999 from all members of COMMCEN Troop.

EXERCISE GLACIER FINN - CORPS SKI CAMP 1998

Within two days of leaving the decadence of Lisburn life the intrepid team from 15 Sig Regt endured more adversity than most Expeditions encounter throughout their whole period. There was a brush with an irate traffic policeman, an eight hour breakdown in the sub zero wasteland of Carlisle, unfriendly natives in a service station in Germany, erratic driving conditions and even more erratic drivers on the Austrian border . . . The list goes on and on. Despite almost every adversity possible hindering our progress, the weary team found its way to Zell-Am-See in a mere 52 hours, ready to join the Corps Ski Camp for three weeks and compete in the Corps Championship in the fourth week.

Led by the intrepid **Lt Nat Baker** it was the first time the Regiment had been represented at the Corps Camp and we began far from the top of the seeding list. After the first day of assessment we were split into rough ability groups which we stayed in for the duration of the training. As each day brought the competition closer the mood become more festive as the team gelled, with the Sunday morning McDonalds in bed becoming the highlight of some team members week. **Cpl Tim Rigby** threatened not to eat anymore McDonalds but after they foresaw bankruptcy they folded and gave him a bulk discount.

Our time in Austria coincided with a festival called Krampus which involves local farmers dressing as Demons from the mountains who come down to beat naughty children with wicker sticks. If you happen to be a tourist you are a prime target as **SSgt Rob Allen** found out. If confronted by one of the creatures the immediate action is not to shout,'Come on then,' because you will find yourself surrounded by another four of them and you will be black and blue after thirty seconds. Another option was taken by **Cpl Marie McChesney** who chose to dive through the nearest open door, lock it behind her and take photos of the marauding creatures. **Cpl Sharon Lothian** found that being blonde was hazardous to your health as it was a monster magnet but managed to hide behind everyone else so they got hit instead. **Cpl Mat Quirke's** personal mission to destroy his liver and bank account was thoroughly successful and he even managed to find time to be the most improved skier in the team and develop an allergic reaction to sweetcorn. **Cpl Louise Phillips** constantly astounded all the members of the team, not by her skiing but by the amount a girl of only four foot ten can eat.

As the first day of the competition was postponed due to three foot visibility the competition got underway on the second day when visibility had increased to six foot! **Sgt Watkins** began her own personal tradition as a permanent fixture as a start gate keeper, (a job given to those who finished in the last ten of the previous race). Her efforts were rewarded with the prize for the most utilised gatekeeper. **Sgt Al Newman** broke this trend with constant high placing throughout the competition narrowly missing out on the individual Slalom on the final leg and finishing fifth in the overall combined competition. Not bad for a man who hasn't raced for four years.

The Regiment did not leave empty handed as **SSgt Allen** romped away with the Combined Discipline Veterans prize amid tense and heavy competition. **Cpl McChesney** ran, or rather walked away, with the prize for the longest time to complete a course with a time of three days four hours and twenty three minutes. Although not the most successful team (with a few notable exceptions) all the team members gained a great deal from the Camp and had an excellent time. The Regiment will be attending again next year, only this time we will be a little better prepared and (we hope) better equipped. The Corps Ski Camp is an excellent opportunity for some productive training and is, above all, great fun!



The team and our saviours of Carlisle
after an eight hour breakdown

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40 (ULSTER) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO — **Lt Col N. C. Beacom TD**
RSM — **WO1 (RSM) C. G. McGinley**

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

– Welcome to **WO1 (RSM) McGinley** just arrived from 2 Sig Regt. Also welcome to **Cpl Searles** and his wife and family, as he arrives to take over as our VM. Farewell to **WO1 (RSM) John Black** as he hands over the mantle and prepares to resettle. Also to **SSgt Mo Howarth** and **Cpl Johnson** from the LAD as they both leave the Army. We hope to see Cpl Johnson again as a TA soldier in the near future.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations go to **WO2 (YofS) Paul Rose** and **SSgt Dave Watson** who were both selected for promotion in January.

SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE

LCpl Lightfoot

On Thursday 14 January 1999, **Lt Col (Retd) Terry Lightfoot**, laid a stone in the Remembrance Garden at Palace Barracks, Holywood, in memory of his son **LCpl Lightfoot**, a member of 264 (SAS) Signal Squadron, killed in a helicopter crash in the Falklands in 1982. **Lt Col Lightfoot** and members of his family were joined by members of the Regiment at a Service to remember his son.



Lt Col Lightfoot and family by the memorial stone

SUPPORT SQUADRON

Sqn Comd — **Maj V. Beggs** REME (V)
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) Cook**

The Squadron has had a very busy time since returning from Annual Camp in September. We dined out **Maj Joe Haldane** as OC and also welcomed our new OC, **Maj Victor Beggs**, formally the OC LAD, who has not wasted much time in outlining the future for the Squadron.

All the plans are laid for the Sqn Winter skiing training in the Scottish mountains. The exercise is once again the brain child of the SSM, **WO2 George Cook**, ably assisted by **SSgt** 'Ginge' **Coburn** and the SQMS, **SSgt Ed Hedley**. There are some 30 members of the Squadron who will be braving the winds of the Cairngorms and Lecht ski resorts near Aviemore. Many were first time skiers last year and hope to improve on what they achieved on Scottie Finn 1. The rest are listening to the war stories.

It has also been a hectic time for the caterers and mess management, firstly with all the festive functions and then the change over of RSM's. **WO1 (RSM) John Black** has handed the reins to **WO1 (RSM) Chris McGinley**, who is looking forward to serving in the land of his youth. There has been a Dinner night on every Friday since the turn of the year. **SSgt Jim Hagan** ensuring that every little detail has been covered, whilst **SSgt Duncan Short** and **Sgt** 'Spud' **Murphy** have produced some excellent meals with the help of **Cpl** 'Monty' **Montgomery** and **Pte** 'Salty' **Jamieson**.

We are also saying farewell to the CO, **Lt Col Beacom**, who is leaving the Regiment and returning to the Mainland. The Squadron formed up on HMS *Caroline*, permanently moored in Belfast Harbour on Sunday 31 January to have a farewell photograph.

We all wish **Col Nigel** and his wife **Isobel** and son **Jack**, all the best in the future and we will no doubt see them from time to time.

Not to be out done, the LAD has seen some changes over the last couple of months with several comings and goings. Having lost their OC to SHQ, sadly, they said farewell to **Cpl** 'Jono' **Johnson**, who is retiring from the Regular Army, but the good news is that he intends to enlist into the Regiment as a TA VM. We have also seen some promotions for **Sgt's** 'Daz' **Dalzell**, **Davey McCardle** and **Pete Youll**, who incidentally will be defending his 'Best Student' title on Ex Scottie Finn in February. Well done fella's. Congratulations go to **SSgt Duncan Short** and his wife **Jeannie** on the birth of their son **Michael**, who weighed in at 6lb 12ozs.

66 (CITY OF BELFAST) SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd — **Maj R. G. Butler R SIGNALS (V)**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) Irvine**

UPDATE

Castlemartin (Annual Camp) was a distant memory as the Squadron propelled itself towards the Christmas festivities and into the final New Year of this millennium.



Support Squadron's farewell to the CO

CONGRATULATIONS

The Squadron would like to pass on its best wishes to **Sgt** 'Izzy' **Hill** on her recent marriage – Good Luck for the future. Also congratulations on promotion to **Capt Andy Woods**, **Sgt Tommy McCardle**, **Cpl's Davie Burgess**, **Anne Scates** and **Suzanne Small**, **LCpl's Glen Adams** and 'Sandy' **Reid**.

ARRIVALS/DEPARTURES

All members of the Squadron would like to wish **Capt Carl** 'Gods on my side' **Kinghan** all the best of luck for his new appointment as PSAO, 85 Sig Sqn (and he'll need it). Welcome to **Maj Ray** 'It's only just begun' **Kinkead** on his arrival at Clonaver TA Centre from 85 Sqn, as joint PSAO for Sp Sqn and 66.

EXERCISE YORKIE BAR

This Exercise held over the weekend of 9-11 October 1998 saw nine members of the Squadron deploy to Castle Kennedy in Scotland. The aim of the Exercise was driver conversion for newly qualified drivers to green vehicles. Training was intense but varied and included trailer reversing, convoy drills, first parades, vehicle manoeuvring, camouflage, night driving and vehicle documentation. It proved to be a very worthwhile Exercise and was enjoyed by all who took part.

EXERCISE WINTER EAGLE 1998

This was the annual end of year deployment, designed to remind the Regiment of its comms role (and how to spell EUROMUX) before the Winter break. It changed format to become a local comms testing exercise. This involved the deployment of EAN 561 to Carrickfergus, with 562 remaining in Clonaver, with the OSC attached controlling the phases. With the preparation complete **Sgt Darren** 'The recce' **Anthony** deployed to Carrickfergus with EAN 561. The Troop OC, **Lt Janette Ferry** managed to escape the Exercise for a short period to partake in a photographic session with the Officers' Mess. It wasn't discovered until the Sunday that **LCpl Andy** 'the Tan' **Colwell** had got the sleeps confused with the camps sauna/solarium – Well done that man.

CHRISTMAS CHEER

The Christmas period came and went with much frivolity and merry making with the Squadron Annual Christmas meal again held in a restaurant nearby. This started some years ago as a few Radio Relay Ops and now some 30 people attend, and a special mention goes to **SSgt Ian** 'Where's your ticket' **Wolfe** for the organising. Again the Squadron got the vote for best Christmas disco for our effort on 18 December when we rocked the TA Centre before the stand down. A small mention must go to Crazy Sunday which passed by without any drama's and with all its normal craziness including the normal Seniors and Officers all chipping in to get drinks for the Junior ranks – the 50cl bottle of diet water nearly went round twice!!!

THE ARRIVAL OF 1999

The final New Year of this millennium passed without incident although the Squadron members of the Sgts Mess trod wearily through the month of January with a mess function on every Friday. The Burns Supper was again superbly organised by **SSgt Stew** 'Hoots Mon' **Mullen** the NRPS staffie, with guest appearances from Squadron members, the SPSI – **SSgt Mark** 'The Tartan' **Barrass** with the 'Immortal Memory' and SSM – **WO2 Derek** 'No tash' **Irvine** with 'The Sassenachs'.

LOOK FORWARD

The Squadron is currently working very hard, to prepare for its annual RSIT inspection, the first weekend in February. (Subsequently we received a good report). This is immediately followed by our annual long weekend skiing in Aviemore. The following months provide the build-up to annual camp in June.

69 (NORTH IRISH HORSE) SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd — **Maj W. B. Houston R Signals (V)**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) McKnight**



69 Sqn farewell to the CO - 'The Giant's Causeway'

Welcome back to **LCpl Anna Marie Cleminson** who has spent the last year in Bosnia as an Information Ops Cell clerk in the Banja Luka Metal Factory.

On Armistice Sunday the Squadron provided the Cenotaph Guard in Limavady which consisted of **WO2 (SSM) McKnight**, **Sgt's Colhoun**, **Gamble** and **Cpl's Palmer** and **Ritchie**. **Maj Brian Houston** and **WO2 Lyle** laid a wreath in Limavady. **Capt Lynch** and **Sgt Williamson** also laid a wreath in Londonderry. In the afternoon 30 members of the Squadron along with members of 5 R IRISH, 1RWF and local youth organisations went to the church service. The Squadron also provided the escort for the Royal British Legion Colour Party, one Officer and eight other ranks. Two pipers from the Squadron also took part in Armistice Services, **Pipe Maj Taylor** in Limavady and **Cfn Wilson** in Newtownards.

The Squadron said farewell to **SSgt Mo Howarth** after over two years with the Squadron and over 15 in the Army as he heads off to civilian life. We all wish him well. We welcome **Capt Neil Turnbull** to the Squadron as Second in Command, and **SSgt Harry Harrison** from 1 Mech Bde.

EXERCISE WINTER EAGLE

The Squadron provided two RATT links and one voice link for 11 Sig Bde's Exercise. The remainder of the Squadron provided four RATT dets for the Regimental PACEX.

VISIT BY COMMANDER 107 (ULSTER) BRIGADE

Early December **Brig O'Lone** came to visit for the first time. Newly arrived in Province he was having a look around the real estate. He was given a brief on the Squadron's role in the Regiment and 11 Sig Bde by **Maj Brian Houston** after which he toured the Centre and saw trade training and recruit training in progress. The Brigadier had lunch with the Officers and SNCOs before leaving.

SQUADRON COMMS EXERCISE

In January the Squadron conducted its own Commex which mainly focused on antennas, antenna theory and propagation. The Exercise was a success and much was learnt by all involved. We also saw the last of our Series III Landrovers go and the issue of 10 FFR Defenders.

SQUADRON FOOTBALL

The Squadron Football Team finally played its second round tie of the Northern Ireland Football Cup with last year's winner C Coy 4/5 Rangers at the third attempt. Unfortunately the Squadron was defeated 6-0, better luck next time.

85 (ULSTER) SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd — **Maj C. R. Sutherland R Signals (V)**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) Brotherston**

The Squadron has had a busy period leading up to and going past Christmas. There is still much to be decided under SDR but one thing is certain the Squadron will move from Newtownards to its own TA Centre, the third in the Regiment, by Mid 1999.

The Remembrance Sunday Parade took place at the Cenotaph in Newtownards. We were given the opportunity to produce a Cenotaph Honour Guard, and the Royal British Legion Newtownards Branch were heard to say that it was the best Newtownards has seen. However, sadly this will be the last year we will be able to participate in Newtownards. The opportunity posed by the relocation of the Squadron is second to none and gives us access to a huge recruiting catchment. On the recruiting front we hope to recruit 30-40 from the disbanding unit whose centre we are taking over. As we prepare to move congratulations must go to **Cpl Wilson** with a baby daughter and **LCpls McMillan/Robertson** with a baby son.

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ARMY ANGLING ASSOCIATION
BRITISH SHORE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Saturday 14 November 1998 saw the team assemble at Clonaver Park. They were **LCpl Jim McFerran** (organiser) and **SSgt Gary Shaw**, travelling via Liverpool followed by a 300 mile drive to Shorncliffe, to participate in the Championships. Some other members could not attend. Joining up with members from Antrim, 9 R IRISH (The Crazy Gang), Ballykelly RLC (The Quiet Man) and Lisburn RLC (Slop Jockeys), Area 6 Northern Ireland made up a formidable combination.



L-R: LCpl Jim McFerran and Mr Geordie Thompson at the Championships

Day 1 and 2 - Fishing started early on Monday morning with a boat trip out to the Dover breakwater. Arriving on the breakwater after a climb up seaweed covered steps, all anglers took up their peg numbers and upon the signal horn fishing commenced in earnest. Species caught consisted of Cod, Pollack, Flounder, Plaice, Dover Sole, Poor Cod, Dab and Pouting, with a great many fish captured and released back to the sea. The day ended and all fish cards handed in to **WO1 Jimmy King**, Secretary of the AAA, all points recorded and results posted. On Day 2 the same species were captured and returned, Cod up to 9lbs weight and Pouting up to 1.5 lbs were taken. During both days the weather was very kind and remained sunny and warm throughout.

Day 3 - This consisted of presentations of prizes, unfortunately none for the Area 6 Team (except raffle prizes). However, during 1998 **LCpl McFerran** did capture a Haddock of 370gms from the shore to take the Army Shore Record. On the Wednesday morning the return trip was made to the Province. Preparations are now underway for 1999 when, once again, the Championships are being held at the Dover Breakwater. Hopefully more members will be able to attend. For the millennium year, the Area 6 group have offered to organise the Shore Championships here in Northern Ireland, under the direction of the Secretary, **WO1 D. Moore**, 9 R IRISH, **LCpl McFerran** and other members of the AAA.

DON'T BE DISAPPOINTED
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3 INFANTRY BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (203)

Sqn Comd — **Maj S. K. MacRosfie MBE**
RSM — **WO1 (RSM) S. Cheslett**

COMMUNICATIONS TROOP
Tp Comd — **2Lt F. D. Guthrie**
Tp Sgt — **SSgt R. Wallace**

Communications Section: 'The Senders' - Comms Section say farewell to **Cpl Ted** 'Fat Hands' **Heath**, who leaves us to take up the vacant position of ship's cat in Radex, Blandford. A warm welcome extends to **Cpl Sarah Staff** from Lisburn and **LCpl Kerry** 'Illusive' **Davis** who has joined us from 3 Div. **2Lt Forbes Guthrie** straight from the Troop Commander's Course, and **SSgt** 'Call me Bob in the bar' **Wallace** from 14 Sig Regt (EW) are now firmly in the chair. For Comms Section, Christmas was a jolly affair with plenty of parties being attended and beer quaffed. We now are all looking forward to the coming year; perhaps **SSgt Bob Wallace** and **Sgt Sam Parke** will make guest appearances as Troop Seniors, and help lower **2Lt Guthrie**'s blood pressure. The Troop is looking forward to lots of recreational trips, adventure training and sport, all the while ensuring that the Brigade's TAOR is suitably supplied with communications support.

Congratulations go out to **LCpl Krissy Strain, LCpl Nelly Nelson**, and of course **LCpl** 'Moggsy,' **Morris** from TM Section, on their recent promotions.

Technical Maintenance Section: 'The Menders' - Over the Festive period, congratulations and thanks must surely go out to **Mrs Elaine Baker** and the local industrial cleaning company for what must have been the clean up operation of the century. Next time she will know better than to invite all remaining members of TM Section for Christmas Dinner. A special mention must go out to **LCpl** 'Dogsy,' **Barker**, who was allegedly seen wearing ladies underwear and holding a badger on several occasions during Yuletide season; typical 216 warrior.

Before returning from a deployment, **Cpl Dean** 'Colin McCrae' **Morgan** and **Sig** 'Iz' **Stainer** decided to simulate the Camel trophy in their Landrover Discovery. However, they were to find that Landrovers are not as good 'off the road' as they had thought, especially on Saturdays. One phone call and an hour later, **Sig Carl** 'Schumacher' **Stewart** and **Cpl** 'Billy' **Bremner** turned up to demonstrate the towing capabilities of the Isuzu Trooper. Final score Landrover 0 - Isuzu 1.

LCpl 'Shippy' **Ship** has gone to start his Class 1 course, before being posted to 39 Bde (we think) and picking up his second on the way. **Cpl** 'Brummie' **Baker** and **LCpl** 'Dogsy' **Barker** are soon to leave for the sunny skies of Blandford for their retrade to EDs. **Cpl Tony** 'Mad Dog' **Raby** is going back home to 19 Mech Bde and **Sig Carl** 'Schumacher' **Stewart** is leaving for a life at AFCENT and getting his first 'banana' into the bargain. Finally, congratulations go out to **Cpl** 'Tosh' **Pope** on his timely EFP threshold pass and EFP 1.

3 INFANTRY BRIGADE MARCH AND SHOOT COMPETITION

The Brigade held a March and Shoot competition in January for all units, major and minor, within its TAOR. 3 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (203) entered a twelve man team to compete against teams from the likes of 2 Para and 42 Commando. The competition started with an eight mile tab, followed by a spot of assault course antics, and finished off with a falling plates shoot. All in a day's work for a lowly Syscon worker, I thought. Once the competition was under way, **SSgt** 'Light speed' **Lothain** was determined to do well. However, some of the other members of the team had a different idea. After a short spell walking, things got back to a normal pace and before we knew it we were at the assault course. The assault course was a blur, the fatigue (not to mention all those bacon butties we had eaten in Sands' Restaurant) ensured that we were extremely glad to see the finish line.

The shoot demonstrated what we had previously feared, Iron Sights are definitely not as good as SUSATs when it comes to falling plate competitions (at least that is our story and we are sticking to it). Needless to say we did not leave with a trophy, but we did have a moral victory over one of the 42 Commando teams, who came in behind us. The Team comprised:

SSgt Lothain	**LCpl Ashton**
Sgt Parke	**LCpl Barker**
Cpl Baker	**LCpl Humphries**
Cpl Carlton	**LCpl Pearce**
Cpl Gaddas	**Sig Frost**
Cpl Webster	**Pte Ridgeway**

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8 INFANTRY BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNALS SQUADRON (218)

Sqn Comd — **Maj C. J. Thackray**
RSM — **WO1 (RSM) A. Higgins**

TECHNICAL MAINTENANCE TROOP
Tp Comd — **Lt Stewart**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt Evans**

MERCURY CUP
by Sgt Mills

The order came through; it was the last event in the Mercury Cup. Even though we didn't have a chance of winning the overall cup, we thought we should try and do well in the last event. The event was advertised and the volunteers come flooding in (not). We eventually got a team together, and looked into training. 'How many weeks have we got before the event?' was the question, the answer was a bit of a surprise, 'Three days.' Oh well! 'What does the event consist of?' was the next question, again the answer back was almost as good as the first 'No idea!'

The day of the event arrived and the team set off at 0400hrs (what no sleep) to arrive at the competition location for 0630hrs, at least we were the first there! The first event organised, by **SSgt Laffey**, was a first aid stand and very realistic it was too, with legs, blood and guts all over the place. The team mucked in and we ended up doing well in this event. The next stand was a pistol shoot with a difference, firing from cars. This brought home to us the difficulty of this type of shooting as we didn't hit the target too often, but it was a good shoot and well run. After two events, we were third. The next event was the clay pigeon shoot, another well-organised range. All the team scored apart from **Sgt** 'Pete' **Mills** who was thought to be a member of the clay pigeon liberation front. After lunch came the kit check, and with points lost for empty oil bottles (which had leaked out on the transport down, honest), we headed to the assault course. After a quick stretch-off by **PTI Andy Richards** we were ready. 'GO' was the order to start the first obstacle, a wall, (not a problem) second was the water jump (huh). We were in turbo mode. Next came a few monkey bars, a six foot wall flattened, then the problem of THE DREADED ROPE CLIMB. We actually finished the course in the fastest time but picked up 20mins penalty points on the rope (honest RSM Sir it wasn't just **Sgt Mills** that couldn't get up it).

The final event was a baton gun shoot. Unfortunately none of us had ever fired it before. We were given shields, baton guns and helmets and off we went. 'Advance' was the order, and we advanced. Unfortunately so did the civilian population, straight into us. At this stage all that could be heard was **Cpl** 'Rambo' **Ruscoe**, who had hurt his hand sliding down the dreaded rope, saying, 'If that *+I/*- jumps onto my shield once more he's going to get it.' At this **LCpl Andy Richards** and **Sig Karl Stephenson** received a hit from a twenty stone monster and fell over. The end of the day arrived and the prizes were given out, unfortunately no prizes to 8 Inf Bde & Sig Sqn, but now we've lured you all into a false sense of security. You had better watch out for next year! (We are already training to climb ropes!).

Finally, this month was particularly sad as two members of the Troop left us. **Sgt** 'Have you heard the joke about the strawberry?' **Bentley** on his posting to 604 Signal Troop, Aldershot and **LCpl** 'Spotter' **Stanford** on his return to civvy street. We all wish them well for the future.

SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS
Tp Comd — **SSgt J. Hughes**

Over recent months there have been many comings and goings within SHQ. We say farewell to **Maj Perry** and family and wish them the best of luck on their return to civvy street. Best wishes also to **WO1 (RSM) Fisher** and family who go off to sunny climes in Blandford and also farewell to **WO2 (FofS) Court** off to 'I'm not really going to watch the baggies' 30 Sig Regt. **Cpl Lewis** travels just down the road to Hollywood and **LCpl Kennford** goes on promotion back home to mum's cooking in sunny Kent. Congratulations to **Pte Smith,** selected for promotion to LCpl and posted to 7 RHA.

Now the hellos, firstly welcome to **Maj Thackray** and family who join the Squadron from Hohne. Congratulations to **WO1 (RSM) Higgins** who joins us on promotion from his previous appointment as RQMS within the unit. Welcome also to **WO2 (FofS) Brown** and **SSgt Redman** who join the merry band in the Ops/Plans world. Welcome to **Cpl Goldsmith, LCpl Banyard** and their families and to **Pte Cumming** who joins us straight from AGC Depot. Finally we say a sad farewell to **Maj** 'Percy' **Broad** and his wife **Ivy**, who retire after 35 years of service, the last five of which he has served with us. We wish you both well and best of luck on your move to SSO post at Ballykelly. You will certainly be missed.

Change of Address?
Write and let us know!

MOTOR TRANSPORT TROOP
Tp Comd — **WO2 Hair**

RLC MILITARY SKILLS COMPETITION
by Pte Street

We drove down to the port playing cards and had a few sociables before embarking. Once on the ferry we ditched the bus and headed straight for the bar and we didn't see our cabins until closing time. We arrived on the mainland tired but ready to go. We headed for the first MacDonalds for 'breccy' as they say around those parts. After the long drive to Aldershot we kicked out the mice and took over the accommodation. We gathered some bedding, ironed our civvy wear and decided to find out what the night (and afternoon) life, in Aldershot was like. We had a good night in Aldershot and set off early on Saturday morning for Deepcut, where we booked in our team.

We started the 10 miler and found the first four miles the hardest, the first checkpoint didn't come quickly enough. After two more checkpoints and another six miles we eventually completed the march. We were all really pleased to have finished but then we realised that we had an assault course and shoot to do. The assault course would have been tough but was made even worse after the ten mile march. The first obstacle, the wall, burst everyone's blisters when they landed. We finished the course in good time and made our way to the range for the shoot, which consisted of shooting six falling plates. We had ten rounds each and thought that would be enough, but we only managed to hit four. We finished 36 out of 72 but all in all it was a pretty good result and we all had a good day.

ROYAL SIGNALS CORPS 6'S FOOTBALL COMPETITION BLANDFORD
by Pte Collins

Our journey to the mainland turned out to be probably the worst flight any of us had ever been on and it was not helped by **Cpl** 'Kev' **Cooney** playing hide and seek with everybody's baggage receipts. Further problems arose when **Sig** 'Geordie' **Harrison** decided to take 40mins to sign for his super pad-mobile hire car, we all thought was a nice slow family people carrier, but obviously 'Geordie' knew differently. We set off on our journey to Weymouth at the pace of a thousand gazelles on Speed. On arrival in Weymouth we booked into our 'bomb shelter' accommodation and departed on a sight seeing tour of the local watering holes. We returned to the accommodation that in polar bear terms was a little bit chilly. The few of us who had brought quilts and sleeping bags had the chance to have a laugh at the RSM who was determined to wear everything he had brought with him including one of the designer curtains fresh off the rail.



Squadron Football Team

The next morning was the start of the football and to our dismay we were drawn for the main competition against the favourites, 3 UK Div. It was a hard fought game in which we missed a couple of chances to take the lead. The misses of the day have to go to **Pte** 'Moff' **Moffat** and another by **Pte** 'Steve' **Collins**. We eventually lost the game by a single goal, but were told by most people at the end of the day that as a squadron we did ourselves no harm at all and gave them their hardest game. Unfortunately we failed to qualify for the next round of the main competition so we went into the Plate. We thrashed the pants off the opposition in the early rounds and qualified for the final. Our opposition was ATR Bassingbourn, who had cruised quietly into the final so we knew very little about them. The match was fairly even, we took an early 2-0 lead; **LCpl** 'Andy' **Richards** scoring the first and **LCpl** 'Jase' **Catchpole** scoring the second. By half time ATR had pulled a goal back. The second half started with us holding the ball well despite the horrible wind. ATR

then equalized due to a goal keeping error by **Cpl** 'Dave' **Rabbage. LCpl** 'Jase' **Catchpole** scored a second, (a half way line effort that was luck to say the least) to put us in a comfortable, if not a winning, position. However, due to a couple of refereeing decisions and another disastrous goal-keeping we lost the game 4-3 in the last seconds.

Despite the disappointment of losing we left Blandford in high spirits looking forward to a night drowning our sorrows and listening to our very own Elvis and our even better Marty Pellow alias **Sig** 'Geordie' **Harrison** and **LCpl** 'Andy' **Richards.** We returned to Londonderry with empty wallets, but had a brilliant couple of days in which our standard of football had impressed a few people, including ourselves.

EXERCISE HIGHLAND DRIVE V1

by Cpl 'Vodka Long' Rabbage

The advance party departed which consisted of **Cpl** 'Dave' **Rabbage, Cpl** 'Dan' **Benson, Pte** 'Steve' **Collins** and **Sig** 'Ian' **Billings** and headed to HMS *Gannet* in Ayrshire. The next day we drove off to Irvine to collect the six Motorbikes on loan to us from 251 Tp RLC. The main body that consisted of **Cpl** 'Steve' **Birch, LCpl** 'Rob' **Cruickshank, LCpl** 'Dave' **Wardle, LCpl** 'Jase' **Harris** and **Sig** 'Kelly' **McCulloch** arrived at HMS *Gannet* in the early evening. On arrival we recced the driver training routes and other attractions including the watering holes. On Sunday the Driving Instructors carried out the driver familiarisation on the vehicles. **Cpl** 'Vodka Long' **Rabbage** instructed **LCpl** 'Slow Coach' **Harris, LCpl Rob** 'Golden Eye' **Cruickshank** instructed **Cpl** 'Gwar' **Birch** and **Sig** 'Where are the brakes?' **McCulloch.** All three students were learning Cat B. **Cpl** 'I'm on the phone' **Benson** instructed on Cat A and his students were **LCpl** 'Dangerous' **Wardle, Pte** 'Sip of Tizer' **Collins** and **Sig** 'Bareback' **Billings.**



Sgt Pattendon on bike – Cpl Benson Instructing

The week of training went well with everyone getting a pass except for **Sig Kelly McCulloch** who stayed on for extra training. Friday saw the departure of Week 1 students and the arrival of Week 2 students who were **Sgt Steve** 'Wheelie' **Pattenden, LCpl Maria** 'Scary Spice' **McDonagh, LCpl** 'Your Getting' **Stojanovic, LCpl** 'Claude' **Green** and **Sig** 'Where's my teddy?' **Palmer.** The second week on Cat B, **LCpl** ''Rob' **Cruickshank** instructed **Sig** 'Kelly' McCulloch, **LCpl** 'Maria' **McDonagh** and **Leslie Morris** a Wren from HMS *Garnet*. Cat A students for the second week were **Sgt** 'Steve' **Pattenden, LCpl** 'Claude' **Green, Cpl** 'Eddie' **Stojanovic** and **Sig** 'Roy' Palmer. All students passed the Cat A test. Unfortunately there were a couple of failures on Cat B, **LCpl** 'Maria' **McDonagh** and **Sig** 'Kelly' **McCulloch.** The week nearly ended in disaster when **LCpl** 'Maria' **McDonagh** put the car in to the camp sick bay. Our thanks go to the 3 DDE's, **WO2 Tom Hair, WO2 Tom Scollen** and **SSgt Danny Ferguson** for carrying out the testing.

COMMUNICATIONS TROOP

Tp Comd — **SSgt Laffey**

WELL HELLO AGAIN

by Sig Dawson

So here I am, six months of service with 8 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn and what is there to say? It has been an interesting change from normal Brigade HQ as there is not one 436 in sight, (but I am not complaining about that at all). When I first arrived, the Cougar Net was a little bit of a nightmare but after a few very long nightshifts, a lot of instruction from my shift supervisor, **Cpl** 'SUSAT' **Benson, Sig** 'Did you know I was in EOD?' **Herd,** and not forgetting **Cpl Marrit,** it soon became as clear as mud!

THE BRIGADE COMMANDER'S VISIT TO THE SQUADRON

by LCpl Healy and Sig Prigmore

On Tuesday 19 January **Brig P. E. O'R. B. Davidson-Houston OBE** came to visit 218 Sig Sqn. **LCpl Dave Healy** and **Sig Gav Prigmore** were tasked with giving him a practical demonstration on the joys of antenna rigging. The Brigadier and the OC Sqn were given a brief about what was involved in rigging, and in particular the safety aspects. While the Brigadier was being suited up **Maj Thackray** zipped (sort of) to the top of the mast, soon followed at a more sedate pace by the Brigadier. When they reached the top of the mast the OC pointed out the sites of beautiful Derry to the Brigadier. On returning to solid ground the Brigadier mentioned how cold his hands were, at which point **LCpl Healy** realised that he had forgotten to give him his gloves. The Brigadier then continued on his visit, blowing on his hands to warm them up, and **LCpl Healy** was persuaded to get a crate in.



About to start their epic climb
LCpl Dave Healy and Brig P. E. O'R B. Davidson Houston OBE

FOOTBALL CLUB - THE SEASON SO FAR

by LCpl Andy Richards

The first game versus SNONI had a few highs and lows. Firstly the lows. We had six first team players missing and managed to lose 5 - 1, despite being 1 - 0 up (courtesy of **Cpl Jasper Marritt**) and the opposition having a man sent off! The high points were that we actually managed to score with both our strikers missing and the OC Sqn being booked within two minutes of coming on as a sub!

The next game versus 8 BPU was a bit better, despite the team being without its inspirational leader **WO1 (RSM) Higgins**. With our flashy strip on (see attached photo) we won 4 - 1, with goals from **LCpl Andy** 'Skips' **Richards** (2), **Pte Stevie** 'I'll pay for the end of the season party myself' **Collins** and **Sig** Geordie 'Oh no you won't' **Harrison**. The only bad note was **Cpl Kev** 'Give us your tickets' **Cooney** having a nose bleed when he forgot which sport he was playing and rugby tackled the opposition by mistake. This resulted in a scored penalty for them and the 'Donkey of the match award' for **Cpl Cooney!** We lost the next two matches, 1 League and 1 Cup. However, we decided to stay in the one cup that we are least likely to win, the NI Challenge Cup. We do like challenges.

To finish off, I don't think that any of us will be gracing Hampden or Wembley in the near future. However, one thing is certain, with **Pte Collins** and **Sig Harrison** around, no one else need contribute any money for the end of season function. Life is never dull around 8 Bde HQ & Sig Sqn FC and so as they say 'bring on Man Utd.'

EXERCISE KESWICK RUNNER II 17-22 JANUARY 1999

by Sig Oliver and Sig Stevenson

Ex Keswick Runner was a week of cross country running held in the Lake District. It is the second time that the exercise has been run and was organised by **Maj Wood** and **Capt Turnbull** (who may I say has a lovely collection of pink running kit).

We arrived on the Sunday ready for a week of hard work, we had no idea of what hard work was until now!! Both **Maj Wood** and **Capt Turnbull** briefed us on the week ahead and everyone was happy and raring to go. Our first session was a time trial that was just over two kilometres and was described as 'It is not a race! It is simply to decide which ability group you are suited for'. Everyone then kitted up and did a lap of the course as a quick warm up. It was emphasised again that it was not a race, but as soon as we heard the command 'GO' the race began. What seemed like hours later we finished and were allocated to our groups.

As for the rest of the week there was a light training session in the morning and a hill or a fartlec session in the afternoon. Although the morning session was light you certainly worked up a sweat, and as for the afternoon session you soon found out why the morning sessions were only described as light. Midweek we entered a cross country race at Catterick, the course was not so much cross country but more like motor cross in my opinion. By the end of the week legs were aching, feet were sore, and people were generally tired. The thought of coming back to NI did not seem so bad. Above all, the week was a great success and thoroughly enjoyable. I would recommend it to anyone who is a keen runner or interested in starting the wonderful sport.

EXERCISE RICHMOND CHALLENGE

The Squadron departed on the first phase of Ex Richmond Challenge. This is now to be the Squadron's annual ATD camp, which involves all of the ATDs with a few little cheeky bits added to make it all the more enjoyable! **Cpl** 'Its my train set' **Marrit** and myself, armed with a GPS, 349, map and compass not forgetting a damn good sense of humour set out on the Night Navigation. We eventually arrived at our first checkpoint, and this is where the fun really started. We tried to radio in our position and to receive our next grid, but to our surprise we were out of range so we decided to start walking back towards the camp. We eventually got Comms to the safety wagon, but only after about a one and a half kilometre walk. Eventually we received our next grid that was in the same direction we had come from. So instead of heading back down the same road, we had earlier seen **LCpl** 'Holly' **Glen** and **Pte** 'Richie' **Street** heading to the checkpoint we had just been given so we decided to wait for them then we could get the relevant information from them.



First Aid Stand

By this time we had met up with another three teams with similar Comms problems. Shortly after this 'End Ex' was called so we all went back to camp to get ready for the next day's fun filled agenda.

The next morning kicked off with a PT session on the logs, taken by **LCpl** 'Lets waste'em' **Baxter** and **Sig** 'Lets play football' **Palmer.** It lasted for an hour and it was very painful, especially after doing a CFT the day before. We continued with some solid military training in the classroom and ended the day with Padre's hour. We returned to the Waterside Bar, where at 1930hrs the proper training began.

COMMUNICATIONS TROOP

Tp Comd — **Lt Stewart**

ENGINEERING SECTION

by Sig Prigmore

OC — **SSgt Evans**

A sad farewell to our now civvy comrades **LCpl** 'stomach' **Stamford** and **Sig** 'bouffant' **Setchfield.** We all wish them the best in their new found careers. The new arrivals to the section are **Cpl Paul Hounsell** and **LCpl Gaz Welch** from 7 Sig Regt. Also from 7 Sig Regt, flying in via sunny Colchester, **Sig** 'my God he's short' **Dacey**. I'm sure they will be a big asset to the section. We also have new meat from Blandford, lets give a big hug to **Sig Dave King. Sig** 'Ollie' **Oliver** and **Sig Rob Passey.**

OPERATOR SECTION

by LCpl Carr

OC — **SSgt Laffey**

The last couple of months have been fairly busy for the section. Over the Christmas and New Year period the number of people around fell by about half to allow everyone to get away for some much needed leave. December began with the Squadron Christmas function at the usual venue as well as the Squadron Wives' Club Christmas Party. The Section also had a particularly busy period on 12 December for the Lundy Parade in the city, with **LCpl Andy Carr** and **LCpl** 'Bertie' **Baxter** deployed out to work with the RUC. With the return of all the Squadron personnel after the New Year we had promotion drinks for **Sig** 'Fun Bobby' **Dowson, Sig** 'Eyebrow' **Wood** and **Sig Andy Herd**. The section is also saying goodbye to **SSgt John Laffey** off to ACIO Norwich, **Cpl Andrea Mills** off to CENTAC, **Cpl** 'Tellytubbie' **Marritt** returning to 21 Sig Regt and his family and **Cpl** 'Scary Spice' **McDonagh** off to 15 Sig Regt.

The section also welcomes **LCpl Matt Thomas** from 14 Sig Regt, **Sig** 'Sid' **Sidorowicz** straight from the factory and **Cpl Gaz Moore** from 19 Bde. The Squadron is now in the preparation phase for the 'Bloody Sunday' parade in Londonderry which is at the end of January.

QM'S DEPARTMENT

by WO2 (RQMS) Kev Tunstall

RQMS — **WO2 (RQMS) Kev Tunstall**

Farewell to **Sgt Mark Chivers** on his posting to 7 Sigs, good luck 7 Sigs, his replacement is due on the 12th of never. Congratulations to **Cpl Jase Steen** RLC on his recent promotion, we still have not seen the drinks! Congratulations also go to **Cpl Mike Harvey** who has just passed his selection course for a change of trade to photographer. There was meant to be a photograph to accompany this entry to *The Wire* but when Mike went to have it processed it did not come out, enough said!

The new RQMS, **Kev Tunstall**, is now in the chair. He was originally on his way to sunny Belgium from Cyprus, however on his last day in Cyprus he was asked if he wouldn't mind making his way to Londonderry instead. Of course he was only too delighted, who wouldn't be with the money he is on. It can't be true that he is trying to get out of Londonderry already, unless it is for more money.

Now down to the nitty gritty. **Sgt Mark Chivers** is on the lookout for a couple of pairs of binoculars, he says that he needs them for bird watching but we think that he needs them to cover his exercise losses! He must think that everyone here is like himself, 10 coupons short of a pop up toaster!

MT TROOP

by LCpl Howarth

Tp Comd — **WO2 (MTWO) Hair** RLC

Tp Sgt — **Sgt Stanley** RLC

The Troop would like to mention **LCpl Stu Palmer** who made the colossal journey over the Sperrins from Lisburn to Londonderry, **LCpl** 'Mac' **McCall** from 24 Airmobile in Chester, **Pte Kev Foster** from Support Battalion HQ ARRC and **Sig Phillip Bloxham** from Blandford. Farewell to **Cpl Dan Benson, LCpl Rob Cruickshank** and **Pte** 'Muff' **Moffat** who are all off to join 1 UK CIV DIV. Also good luck to **Sig Palmer** who is leaving sunny Londonderry to go to sunny JSSU Falklands Islands on promotion.

Christmas, as expected, was a very busy time for MT with the Brigade personnel shooting off left right and centre. Escaping on leave, usually at the most unsociable of hours, these trips sometimes involved the treacherous journey over the Glenshane pass. Sheets of ice and squaddies do not normally mix well, but with exceptional driving skills (or just sheer luck) everyone managed to reach their freedom bids on time with the unfortunate exception of **Pte** 'Mo' **Morris.**

There was the obligatory JNCO's Versus Officers and SNCO's football match that the juniors narrowly won 8 - 3. This was despite the six goals the juniors had disallowed. The grown-ups' goals were all of a dubious nature. The first was a penalty awarded for the OC's monstrous dive from outside the box and onto the penalty spot. Then a second dubious penalty that the OC took. **Cpl Dave Rabbage** saved the shot but unfortunately for him the ref said that he had moved before the kick and so it had to be retaken. This time the OC managed to find the back of the net. It seems that the ref's CR must be due. The other goal was awarded to the Yeoman after the RQMS nearly broke the cross bar with his thunderous shot from the half way line leaving the Yeoman with a simple tap in for the goal.

The rest of the Christmas period went quietly until Boxing Day evening when the MTWO and Tp Sgt were rudely interrupted from their evening refreshments (a sociable gathering we were told) by the news that the biggest tree in the world had fallen onto their precious fleet of cars. Result, two cars and a minibus written off, OOPS!! It took the pioneers 15 days to chop the tree up. The Brigade Officers now no longer need to buy firewood to keep warm during the winter. Therefore, all you officers who received the logs can we have the moneys due, paid in by 1 February 2000!

39 INFANTRY BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (213)

Sqn Comd **Maj N. J. Borrill**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) G. B. Hawkins BEM**

QUARTERMASTER'S DEPARTMENT
by LCpl McGuinness

The Department would firstly like to congratulate our illustrious leader **WO2 (RQMS)** 'Brummie' **Lawes** on his promotion to WO1, also to **Pte Steve Binney** on his promotion to LCpl. The Department finally received its well earned sports afternoon and even though it was Christmas Day it was well appreciated. We also got a pre-Christmas treat with **Cpl** 'Just over the hill' **Selby** who treated the Department to a small trek around the Mourne Mountains, in which **Sgt** 'Get off me!!' **Hyland** and **Sig** 'Come here sarge while I push you off a cliff' **Edwards** enjoyed the day immensely. The Department now looks forward to a hectic next few months with the unit PRE Battle Camp and Province Cadre Courses all on the agenda.

ROVER GROUP

The Rover Group has changed in many ways in the last few weeks with the deployment of various assets to other departments within the Squadron, but only if we have the available manning. The RLC contingent now also work in the MT and Training Wing when not on Group taskings. The Group Rad Ops meanwhile had to cut the cards to see who was lucky enough to go and give upstairs a bit more strength in SYSCON. **LCpl Kev Brown** can now be seen most days giving an outstanding impression of Father Jack on the front desk. The Group now get together in its entirety for a three day training package every month to keep on top of the 'skills and drills' needed. These days are also to give the Ops Team a chance to get the essential maintenance done by MT Section on comms sites around the TAOR. This month has seen much needed crews into the West and North of the city ably led by **LCpl** 'Route Galute' **Owens**. Hellos go out to **Cpl** 'Lurch' **Howe** who has arrived from 23 Pioneer Regt in Bicester. Farewell goes to **Cpl** 'JC' **Moses** to 518 Pioneer Squadron. Good luck to them both.

DOING THE NORTHERN IRELAND THING
COMMUNICATIONS SECTION
by Sig Jamie Buyers

I arrived at the Squadron on 7 December 1998 not entirely knowing what to expect. Already I had been told that I would be running for the Cross Country team (don't tell your Troop SSgt that you enjoy running when you first get to a unit!!!) and I was already going to both of the Christmas functions that had been organised. So basically I turned up at my first unit already lemoned to run, not knowing what I was doing and told to get the first round in. Then to cap it all off I was told I had no leave left for Christmas, so all in all I had a good start in my new unit. Getting to know all the personalities in the Troop did not prove to be a problem as the first time I met most of them was at the Troop Do, where everybody was let's just say a tad chemically imbalanced along with myself. I would like to say a special thanks to our Yeoman, **Dave** 'I'll charge you if you transmit a PDS' **Brudenall** for selling me to the close protection group as their female dog, but I still contest I was worth more than a pint!!!

The job itself was not hard to get to grips with, but getting up to actually go to work proved increasingly difficult over the first week, I can't think why? After settling in at work I embarked on my NIRTT Course which was quite interesting. I never realised the Provo's had so many ways in which to blow us up. On arriving back at Lisburn I left within hours on a Corps Cross Country Running Course in the Lake District in a little backwater town called Keswick (another week out of province), this running lark is all right you know). **Cpl Nige** 'Two Six Back Door' **Rogan** and myself were the only ones from the Squadron to attend the course, which lasted for five days of enjoyable hard graft.

As for here and now its business as usual. I have the Lanyard Trophy coming up soon, so that's another excuse for me to skive off. It can't be that hard ambling up and down the mountains. Also before I forget I want to say a special thanks to **Sig Stevie** 'Apples and Pears' **Ireson** for showing me the ropes and to anybody else who gave the new bloke a point in the right direction.

Hello to **Cpl Sam Lee-Davies**, who came to us from across the road to join those hard working dedicated people in Crypto. Hello also to myself **Sig Jamie** 'Can't think of an amusing anecdote to call myself' **Buyers** as I have arrived straight from the factory to join those happy shift workers in the COMMCEN. Farewell to **Cpl Roy** 'Lardy Boy' **Davies** who has moved downstairs to make the brews for the ADPLO. Good luck to **Cpl Ken** 'I hope to complete my class one' **Johnston** who has escaped sitting in SYSCON to go and sit in the classrooms at Blandford for four months.

TECHNICAL MAINTENANCE TROOP
(ALIAS THE BLUE HELMETS)
by LCpl Suzie Watt

First of all let me wish you a Happy New Year for 1999; may it be full of excitement and laughter. The changes in personnel have been many. The good-byes go to **Sgt** 'Lord Lucan' **Barber** who is off to civ div, Sgt 'Basher' **Bates** who is off to Tempest Team, Blandford, **Cpl** 'Cas' **Cassee** who is now on his T1 at Blandford. **Cpl Steve** 'Not so happy' **Reeves** to TM Troop, Blandford and **LCpl Jim** 'Beast Master' **Dryden** to 220 Sig Sqn RAF Bruggen. Welcomes go to **Sgt Dave** 'The heart and soul of the party' **Catlett, Cpl Gail Harper** who has arrived from the sunny part of the south, Bulford. Four more Tech's who have arrived from the factory, **LCpl Kev Gallacher, LCpl Bedden, LCpl Dignall** and not forgetting **Sig Paul Wade**. Congratulations go to **SSgt Hartley** on his selection for promotion to WO2. Good luck to all in the Breckons as **Tech Cpl Wedge** is allowed on the loose with his gun. **Sig Neil** 'Toothless' **Leatham** is set to become a Beast Master. Our busy schedule has seen us do many displays which has now labelled us as 'The Blue Helmet Display Team' and may the excitement in TM Troop continue.

EXERCISE KESWICK RUNNER 1999
by Sig Jamie Buyers

Ex Keswick Runner took place from 16-22 January 1999. The purpose of the Exercise was to introduce potential Corps and middle distance track runners into the sport of cross country. The Exercise was spread over five days and consisted of two training sessions per day.

The morning session being a five to six mile run with an extensive warm up and warm down. The afternoon session was different types of hard training, ranging from short hill repetitions to fartlek training. On the Wednesday the course took part in a league race at ITC Catterick. The race itself was a very difficult course and was agreed by all an enjoyable run but arduous at the same time. On the whole the Exercise was a great success and **Cpl Nige Rogan** and myself, found the training hard, but extremely beneficial to our own personal fitness, physically and mentally. The Exercise itself was run by **Maj Wood** and **Capt Turnbull** who are always looking for potential runners throughout the Corps. There will be another Keswick Runner later on in the year and I certainly hope to attend the course and I would recommend that anybody who is interested in improving their running skill and training, attend the course in the

NEWS FROM BOSNIA

MULTI NATIONAL DIVISION (SOUTH WEST) HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO **Lt Col E. M. Flint**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) M. A. Schofield**

The Multinational Division (South West) Headquarters and Signal Regiment is in good spirits as we approach the end of our winter tour in Bosnia. It is now nearly five months since our tour began and many of us are keenly looking forward to our return to Herford after what has been a successful tour. The Regiment's role is to provide command support and communications to Multinational Division (South West). This breaks down into a wide range of tasks. In Banja Luka we support and maintain the Divisional Headquarters and the headquarters of the British National Support Element. We also stand ready to deploy an airmobile headquarters, an armoured headquarters and special communications detachments into the field. Across the Divisional area we run the Division's telephone systems, radio nets and computer networks, and to make this possible we have men and women based in more than twenty different locations. Our most remote detachments are on the top of some of Bosnia's highest mountains, where the temperature sometimes drops below – 40 degrees.

Most of our people live and work in Banja Luka Metal Factory, or Dragocaj Barracks as it is now known. One of the Regiment's biggest jobs is to run the site and administer the 1000 soldiers who live there. This keeps the Camp Commandant and his men very busy, but they have earned widespread admiration and respect for the high standards of accommodation, administration and catering that they have achieved. While 21 of the Regiment's officers and 295 of our soldiers come from 1st (UK) Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt, we must not forget the large contingent from 30 Sig Regt who provide us with satellite communications, nor 14 Sig Tp from 14 Sig Regt (EW), the Support Helicopter Force Signal Troop from 21Sig Regt, or the many individual augmentees from other regiments throughout the Corps. All have played an important part in restoring peace and freedom from fear to the people of Bosnia, and can be proud of what they have achieved.

MND (SW) CIS SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj A. A. S. Harwell**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Palmer**

The Squadron has continued to provide a suite of communications throughout the Divisional AO despite the plethora of new challenges thrown at us by the current climate. The comms expert, **Pete** 'Yeoman Plod' **Van Den Broek**, and the snowchains manager, **FofS Andy** 'The Route Lesley 1' **Amies** continue to whinge, moan, snap and wind each other up, oh and occasionally do some work in between Echos (to the uninitiated that's Naafi) trips. The Sqn Ops Officer and resident IT expert (not) **Capt Kev** 'I know I've just done an IS Degree but we never covered page formatting or…' **Mosby** has finally arrived from Split after the longest stay at the Theatre Reception Centre ever. The latest addition to the office is **WO2 (SSM)** 'The ablutionarily over publicised' **Palmer** who became lonely in his own office and so moved in with us. (Actually - we use him as telephone monitor, it's amazing how many people put the phone down when faced with the answer 'Ops – Sergeant Major')! Oh, and apparently we have got a clerk somewhere, siting reports will be much appreciated. Congratulations to both the Sqn Ops Officer and Foreman for successfully managing to glean an extra week of R&R on the Croatian Riviera…cheers to 'Plod' for stagging on during our absence!

HEADQUARTERS TROOP
Tp Comd **2Lt Gunson**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Hook**

As a frantic tour based in Banja Luka Metal Factory draws to a close we take a look back over the achievements of the last five months. The COMMCEN under the watchful eye of DSO **Sgt Mick Poyning** has handled more messages each week than they would in a month in Herford and have perfected the delicate art of dealing with the Staff. Congratulations to **LCpl Nicky Roberts** and **LCpl Dean Thompson** on their recent promotions. **Cpl Holman**'s RADCON has managed the, at best, temperamental nets, and provided remarkably reliable conference calls, weather and EUROMUX excepted. A team under constant pressure from the staff. Good work **LCpl** '2Lt Gunson' **Barker** for his sterling efforts in such a high-pressured working environment. Well done to **Sig Claire** 'Rocky' **Bentham** for keeping her head down long enough to be allowed to go on leave. SYSCON has battered EUROMUX and Satcom into submission and now have the largest repertoire of 'no comms' excuses in the Corps. Congratulations to the IC, **Sgt Paul Haigh** on the birth of his son **Callum**.

The tech workshop is only now starting to slow down with the weather and the amount of PT instigated by **SSgt Jim** 'Phys first, Phys second, Teching third' **Hook**, but the second line repairs continue at full speed. Run by **Sgt Dave Crowther** and lost without **Cpl Jase** 'Jock' **McBain**. Not to be out done the Tech FRTs have taken any opportunity to improve their already encyclopaedic geographical knowledge of Bosnia - and Split and Zagreb. The Line Kennel has never stopped running, arguably the busiest detachment in theatre, and work more as 'Mechs' than 'Lineys'. **LCpl Paul Allen** has had his detachment augmented by TA **Sig Paul Glennon** and Reservist **Sig Dave McCarthy**. Farewell to **LCpl Angie Twist** departing for 21 Sig Regt and **LCpl** 'Chaz' **Charnock** off to 15 Sig Regt. We wish you all the best for the future.

COMMUNICATIONS TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt Morton**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Wharton**

Since deploying last October the Troop have maintained both the VHF Div Comd net and the Euromux telephone systems. This has been done in some very harsh winter conditions with the hill top sites of Gola Pljesevica, Sjenokosic and Viterog experiencing the most extreme. The Viterog has been inaccessible by road since early November. Also the Troop has been responsible for the manning and running of six static COMMCENS, five of which are attached to other nations. On a lighter note, the Troop Commander **Lt** 'Mickey' **Morton** has continued to spread his personal equipment throughout all thirteen locations without fully realising this much to the pleasure of his detachment commanders!

MOBILE TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt Shakespeare**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Leach**

Since our deployment on Operation Palatine, Mobile Troop has deployed the Armour in its forward guise to Manjaca Ranges for Ex Joint Resolve XIII and in its TAC guise to Banja Luka airfield with true Mobile Tp success on both occasions.

We have also needed to learn the alien idea of under slinging our headquarters (though I must add in the form of Land Rovers) under the



Another bleak days' work in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia the Exercise location at Manjaca Ranges

Chinooks of the RAF. We deployed our fly forward HQ to the Shoe Factory in Mrkonji-Grad showing our skill at providing communication assets for the General in the field. The busiest area of the Troop by far is our 'Special to task' fleet supplying fast efficient communications anywhere within the DAOR, including supplying communications for the Czech helicopter crash and communications for the Canadian BG during their operations in the area of Titov Dravar.



'Wish we were not here!'
Sig Scheidecker (don't let the name badge/rank slide fool you) and Sig Johnson experience less than favourable weather conditions during Ex Joint Resolve

The tour is finally drawing to a close, thankfully, as we need to defrost ourselves thoroughly! Things have calmed down since our last notes to *The Wire* but the locals have kept us on our toes over their Christmas and New Year with their celebratory fire. **Lt** 'Shakey' **Shakespeare** arriving back from R&R, was bundled into the back of a vehicle and sent straight on Ex Joint Resolve XIII. Looking after him as ever were **SSgt** 'John' **Leach**, **Cpls Allen** and Murray 'Alias the chuckle Brothers' **LCpl** 'Taff' **Williams**, **LCpl** 'Ky' **Wilcockson**, **Sig Helen Johnson** and **Sig Scheidecker**. If it were not for the excellent food provided by **LCpl Cairns**, I believe we would have to wait for the spring thaw to retrieve them! The Troop has continued to provide the General with Special to task communications and will continue to do so until the 1 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn come to rescue us! Congratulations must go to **LCpl Black** on his recent promotion and to **Sgt Innes** on his promotion to SSgt on his return to Herford.

EXERCISE JOINT RESOLVE XIII
by Lt Adam Shakespeare

Ex Joint Resolve XIII was to be a live firing exercise for the BG and the GOCs' Armoured Forward Headquarters was to deploy to the barren wastes of Manjaca Ranges in conditions that would normally require soldiers trained in arctic warfare! We built the complex in heavy snow and temperatures well below zero although everyone was kept warm through the frenetic activity that was put in by all to complete the complex by last light. Throughout the exercise we had severe snowfall and temperatures plummeting to –25 C but the soldiers still managed to provide the full suite of communications for the whole exercise. Everyone came back dreaming of the hot showers and the Playstation Championships awaiting them at Banja Luka.

SPLIT TROOP
Tp Comd **Capt J. Nichols**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Dewar**

Having had an eventful tour, Split AO Sig Troop is preparing to handover next month. Faces have come and gone, or just gone elsewhere, but the majority of the clan reached the end of the tour unscathed. Apart

from running the COMMCEN, FRT, ISM and SYSCON the Troop has been involved in running and repairing the local SKY and BFBS system, a job which has had its pitfalls for **Sgt** 'Richie Matress' **Matless,** who spent three days trying to find the BFBS satellite! The LAD was kept busy by the FRT who insisted on wrecking the FFR at all available opportunities! However the prize must go to a young Signaller from 16 Sig Regt, who drove 18km with the handbrake on…we know who you are **Sig** 'Griffy G' **Griffiths**! By the way **Sig Griffiths** have you noticed that the R&R flights are quite regular! A few people in the Troop had birthdays over here and one in particular raised a question that was to become the subject of an investigation …who exactly was it that sat on the cake? The cake conspiracy went on for a week or so until photographic evidence was obtained **Cpl** 'Gazza' **Dine**…you were rumbled! Cross training between trades made for an interesting insight into the lives of some of our colleagues, never again will the Techs say that operators have an easy life. Everybody is looking forward to being reunited with loved ones and friends and we wish 1 Mech Bde a successful tour.

QM DEPARTMENT

QM	**Maj Maycock**
RQMS	**WO2 (RQMS) Smith**

The department continues to press on at full pelt cramming in one years worth of inspections and stocktakes into half a year but there has been time for other things too. QM, **Maj** 'Butch' **Maycock,** now fluent in Serbo-Croat swearwords, has been seen gracing the five-a-side pitch while **Cpl Alfie Garnett** searches for a pair of shorts big enough to fit in. He should take a leaf out of **SSgt Trev Henry**'s book and tuck his shirt into his underpants to cover his modesty! **LCpl Jules Cope** and **Sgt** 'Duck Van' **Dack** are now the worlds experts in finding Motorola radios and welfare videos. (If anyone in Bulford or Catterick have their own supply they would be delighted to hear from you!). **Cpl** 'Taff' **Phillips** and **Sig** 'Rodders' **Rodriguez** have been helping out on the G5 project at Kulijana School.

The department made a very special Christmas Day for the pupils with a year's supply of stationary, toys, presents and even put on a free jumble sale of clothes for the whole village on Boxing Day. **Cpl** 'Brad the Impaler' **Swinton** AGC keeps vampires and other customers away from the stationary store and **Sig** 'Chad' **Chadwick** is now so good in the clothing store he only issues to full Colonels and above. **LCpl Eddie Law** has escaped from the expense store and departed to Blandford on his Class one course. **Sig** 'McPlop' **McLean** also escaped for a two-day turn around in Split, which lasted almost a full week, with our only satisfaction being that it snowed there too!



With the kids at Kulijana School
(L-R): Sandra, Cpl 'Taff' Philips, LCpl Eddie Law, LCpl Jules Cope, Sig 'Rodders' Rodriguez, Maj Jane Emms (RADC and Bar) and Gordana (Teacher)

Readers will be pleased to hear that our loyal Serb workers **Ivan the Huge, Snowdrop** and the beautiful **Sandra** are still with us and doing sterling work. All efforts are now directed towards a good LSI, producing the 100% complete Board of Officers that every other unit has done in the past and giving 1 Mech Bde a great hand-over. Some continuity posts may be available soon here at the BLMF Man at Q & Ms. Quartermasters and stores Accountants should get their bids in early, care of MCM Div.

30 SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO	**Lt Col Lithgow MBE**
RSM	**WO1 (RSM) Gary Johnson**

SATCOM TROOP-OPERATION PALATINE

The elite fighting force known locally as the Mighty Ducks, from 30 Signal Regiment and 249 Signal Squadron, clock up Christmas no. 6 in the Balkans. We say, 'Bloody hell, I'm off!' to **Capt Jules** 'assimilated' **Hill** and **WO2 (FofS) Bill** 'Pilkington man' **McCreath** and a ,'Hows about ye.' to **Capt Graham** 'wireless' **Ingram** and **WO2 (FofS) Paul** 'look at all my presents' **Hubble**.

The biggest hellos and goodbyes must go to the changing HQ & Signal Regiments. The 'Borg' have gone, after valiant efforts to assimilate into their collective, all those who came into contact with them. Resistance was futile, but after sacrificing the Capt of the ship we escaped. Standing on the steps we watched the first 'happy bus' of 'Judean Peoples Front' arrive at the grim surrounds of Banja Luka Metal Factory. Before long they were in their stride (or at least in step). Having passed an immediate resolution at the inaugural conference of their tour, after a vote of course, they agreed to conduct urgent talks, once a seconder had been found, to make plenty of changes. (But only if these proposals were accepted by the forum of democratically elected officials.)

The next challenge facing SATCOM Troop has been laid down by MOST Cat in Sarajevo. As they actually have a pet cat the challenge is open to the other MOST Dets to produce their name sake animal as a det pet. The responses from MOST Bear and MOST Aardvark have been muted.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE DETS
MOST CAT SARAJEVO:

The jewel in the SATCOM Tp crown temporarily became the morale void of the Troop after the bar was closed by the Camp Commandant. The bar area has now become a 'Bistro' where you can join us for coffee, tea and board games. **Sgt Flynn, Cpl Wilkie** and **Cpl Kidd** came down from Banja Luka for a re-supply and overnight stay. **Sgt Flynn** flaked out early and hence the two judges covered his face in boot polish. The two judges also tried and convicted **LCpl** 'Snake' **Chapman** with four offences; namely stacking, spillage, being a snake and sexy correspondence with a female Signaller who will remain nameless. The latter being more serious than joining a religious cult in the Pagan environment of Sarajevo. His punishments were four inches either side of the jaw followed with being banished outside in his boxer shorts. It was -12 degrees Centigrade. He'll never spill again.

Sig Rickman's replacement turned up **Sig** 'Bas' **Basanta** and for the first couple of days fitted the true mantle of a DE, he even bathed in diesel. It turned out that being vertically disadvantaged he was holding the Jerry can over his head to reach the filler cap on the generator. He was subsequently done for spillage too.

WIRE PHOTOGRAPHS

Please do not ask for photographs sent for publication in The Wire, to be returned, unless they are irreplaceable. Contributors should be aware of the fact that although every care is taken with contributions, they should not risk losing a photograph that cannot be replaced.

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NEWS FROM THE REGIMENTS

1 (UNITED KINGDOM) ARMOURED DIVISION HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL REGIMENT

HAREWOOD GROUP

Sqn Comd **Capt Jo Evans**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Steve Hughes**

Harewood Group is now a well established and rapidly expanding Squadron albeit rather young – 30 new recruits from Blandford making up more than a third of the manpower and soon to be on the roads driving AFV 432's in Herford! Having finally recovered from the Christmas silly season where somehow a Panzer got painted pink - the less said about that the better - the workload has continued with maintenance of vehicles being a priority along with endless duties. 211 and 212 Sigs Sqns' personnel will not recognise the Camp when they get back from the Falklands and Bosnia with the amount of work that is currently under way, however the number of workmen on camp involved with the 'face lift' have reduced rapidly; something to do with the firm going bust no doubt or it being too cold.

212 LCP TROOP

Tp Comd **2Lt Louise Burlinson**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Bob Breheney**

212 LCP Tp (the crazy gang) have seen some changes in the last few weeks. The arrival of **Sgt** 'RV Socially Confused' **Balmforth** the work enforcer, has ensured that the whole Troop leaves work with dirty hands, including the Troop Commander. Other arrivals welcomed are **Sig** 'Smiler' **Athey, Sig** 'Carpenter' **Cannon, Sig Hobbs, Sig** 'Ginger Spice' or is it Pink Spice' **Stables** and **Sig** 'Train Spotter' **Todd.** They all arrived straight from Blandford and so are still trying to work out one end of a panzer from the other. **SSgt** 'Grandad Fireman Sam' **Breheney** has just returned from his Fire Course but is now waiting for his Green Goddess to arrive. Congratulations go to **Sig** 'Swims like a fish' **Wilson**, who has passed his PTI Course Class 3. No doubt he will enjoy beasting us all round the Gym before too long! We saw **Sigs Caulfield** and **McKenzie** deploy to Bosnia for the remainder of the tour and **Sig Robinson** will shortly be following in March.

EXERCISE RICKSHAW RAMBLE

Ex Rickshaw Ramble, in January, took **Sigs Wilson, Thomas, Brydon, McKenzie** and **Caulfield** back to the UK for four days rallying, The Exercise was thoroughly enjoyed and it is hoped that we can participate in any future Exercises. Other than that the month has been quiet and morale is high.

211 LCP TROOP

by Sig Kenny Smith

Troop SSgt **SSgt Harvey**

The last few months have been very hectic for 211 LCP Tp with everyone going to Bosnia. But even with that, the lads and lasses have stuck together showing real teamwork. Most of the Troop knew it was possible to deploy to Bosnia at any time, the first to leave us being **Sig Yuille** and **Sig Record** with **LCpl Hutson, Sigs Grimes** and **Heap** completing the UNTAT training and deploying early March. **SSgt Bob Harvey** controls the good ship HMS 211 whilst **Sgt Si Boase** acts as his Midshipman. He is about to leave us for the fairer waters of Blandford on the Yeoman of Signals Course (good luck goes to the future brew boy to the staff). Congratulations to **LCpl** 'Tips' **Tiplady** on completing his DMI Course at sunny Bovington. He has already taken the 'Rhino' firmly by the horn and is fully booked with running Commanders and Driver courses until the Regiment is back in March. The Troop was tasked with maintaining the remaining Squadron vehicles, so at great length we have checked, tested and painted every single Panzer, Bedford, Daf and Wolf that's left behind. However, with the increase of personnel posted into the Troop this should lighten our tasking load. New personalities include **Sgt Tony** 'Nice Duran Duran hair cut' **Rosen** and **Sgt Ade** 'I have to walk over drains with my arms out wide' **Sims.** Blandford are pumping out new soldiers faster than we can put names to detachments and so we welcome **Sigs Brown, Chaisty, Holdworth, Howard, McSharry, Moore** and **Wilson** along with **Sig Dean** who has joined us from 30 Sig Regt.

TRUNK GROUP - 201 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj Colin Lawrence**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Harry Kemp**

Since our last report a fairly hectic timetable of Christmas Parties, presented the requirement for some quality 'Gut Busting' Squadron PT sessions, which the extremely capable PTI staff duly provided. The Squadron has been occupied with mainly routine activities, made particularly more so by the Regiment's current operational demands. What the Squadron needed was a quality day of Cunning Stealth, Good Drills, Rapid Reaction and All-out Aggression. **SSM Kemp** duly responded with a CQB range day held at Sennelager ranges. The event was a welcome break from Barrack routine and a new and exciting experience for many of our younger soldiers. There have been a number of new faces arriving and old ones departing recently, for details of this and Troop news, READ ON!

PANTHER TROOP

Tp Comd **2Lt C. N. Biddulph**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Robertson**

It has been another period of change for the 'Mighty Panther'. No sooner had **2Lt Morton** arrived then he was off to Bosnia without his Troop, to be replaced by **2Lt Biddulph,** fresh from Blandford! Also welcomed to the troop are **Cpl** 'Geordie' **Jones** and **LCpl** 'no nickname yet' **Hendry.** Good luck to **LCpl** 'Wilf' **Warnes** on his forthcoming tour in Bosnia. Congratulations of the highest order go out to **SSgt** ' did you know I was LSGC' **Robertson** on being awarded his LSGC for 15 years of exemplary conduct and service (17 years as a stormtrooper). A sad farewell to **Sig Bartlett,** who is posted to Blandford on promotion to LCpl. His expertise as a PTI in the Gym will be missed. Finally, best wishes go out to those temporarily separated from the Troop whilst serving in glamorous sun-drenched corners of the globe, Namely **Cpl** 'Gyros' **Garret** in the Falklands, **Cpl** 'Jasper' **Scarrott** in Bosnia and **Sigs** 'Markey Mark' **Hayden** and 'Nickey' **Park** at the hub in Corsham.

201 SIGNAL SQUADRON CHARITY MARCH

On November 6 1998, 15 members of 201 Sqn successfully completed a formidable 26 Mile March, whilst carrying 401bs, in a time of 5hrs 30mins. The event raised DM2700 for the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal. In preparation for the event, both **Cpl Crooks** (Team IC and **Sgt McIntyre** (Team 2IC) took the remaining team members through three gruelling weeks of build-up, consisting mainly of tabbing up and down the Steinmeyer, and yet again up and down the Steinmeyer. Whilst the Team coped well with the daily rigours of arduous training, other members of the Squadron couldn't quite understand what had got into these boys, they were mean, mean and wild! A last minute volunteer, **SSM Kemp**, provided a virtual guarantee that all 15 members were going to finish the entire 26 miles.

The event proved to be a success, and despite a few sore feet everybody finished in high spirits. After a quick photo it was shower and change and over to the British Legion for some extremely cheap beer, and as you can imagine, the first pint went down very well indeed! The team was:

SSM Kemp	**Sgt McIntyre**	**Cpl Crooks**
Cpl Doe	**LCpl Gough**	**Sig Bartlett**
Sig Vickers	**Sig Keers**	**Sig Owens**
Sig Smith	**Sig Gallagher**	**Sig Goody**
Sig Entwistle	**Sig Brown**	

CLOSE QUARTER BATTLE RANGE

With the Regimental Battlecamp fast approaching and the cobwebs of Christmas leave still in the air Trunk Group made the short trip from Herford to Sennelager for some much needed revision. The training was split into three areas - a fire and manoeuvre revision stand, a first aid stand and finally the CQBR itself. The F & M stand dealt with the basics that would be needed on the CQBR although one fire-team did their own thing when two Signallers (who shall remain nameless) ran through the objective, across a small stream and disappeared into a forest. The action began to hot up on the first aid stand when **2Lt Biddulph** and **Cpl Crooks** had to deal with a small fire in an abandoned car. The CQBR was run in pairs or in threes under the close guidance of **WO2 (SSM) Kemp** and **Sgt Wood**. This gave the troops the chance to put into practise the lessons that they had learnt earlier in the day and needless to say they got stuck in. No one more so than **Sig Mills** who found himself waist deep in a bog and had to be dragged out by his safety supervisor. The day on the CQBR proved to be as popular as it was useful and gave some of Trunk Group a welcome change to routine in barracks.

SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS TROOP

Tp SSgt **SSgt Chapman**

After an eventful period of Christmas leave, the MT boys were straight back into a hard working routine. **LCpl** 'Geordie' **Gough** went away on his driving instructors course in Leaconfield, he should have a few new war stories for the lads. **LCpl Mick** 'Schneckworth' **Hepworth** was placed at the helm as **Sgt** 'Slick' **Whitworth** took two weeks of 'Maternity Leave'. Congratulations Sergeant on the birth of your baby daughter, **Millie**. Finally, **Sig Lee** 'Buba Gump' **Brown** claims that he knows everything about the Shrimping business, and **Sig Terry** 'Deals on wheels' **Frank** has recently purchased the Lime Green Love Machine, only to find he is no longer keen on it, any offers considered. Everybody in Power section wish **Sig Neil** 'Who ate all the pies' **Pearson** the best of luck and happiness in his marriage to **Miriam** in early February. Thanks for getting us all the day off to attend! Congratulations are also extended to **LCpl Gaz** 'Oily Tash' **Roberts** on his recent promotion and to **Sgt** 'Designer label' **Whitworth** and his wife on the birth of their daughter **Millie**. Best of luck to **Sgt Andy** 'Get the brews in' **Young** for his skill at Arms course.

The Technicians, who are all extremely busy at the moment, send their best wishes to all members of the Troop on tour in Bosnia and the Falklands, we look forward to your return, and a reduction in workload! We welcome **LCpls Savage, Topping** and **Lynn** to the Troop, and say a fond farewell to **Cpls Joe Smith** and **Steve** 'Whippy' **Whipp,** who are bound for 15 Sig Regt.

SQUADRON QUARTERMASTER'S DEPARTMENT

SQMS **SSgt North**

Well, it's been a busy time for the SQMS Dept with the departure of **Sgt Don Cunningham** and **LCpl Andy Humble,** the ('B' team) to sunny 21 Sig Regt. A warm welcome goes out to the 'X' team **SSgt (SQMS)** 'the Yorkshire Diplomat ?' **North** and his family from 16 Sig Regt also **LCpl Andy** 'that's a slab you owe me? **MacPhee** and his family from 4 Bde Osnabruck.

I don't know if the Squadron is going to see much of the 'Q' this year as he let it slip out in the Sgt's Mess at a Christmas function that he is a JSMEL (that's Joint Services Mountain Expedition Leader to us people that never get to go on adventure training, hint hint). It's now rumoured that he's leading an expedition to Peru (God help them) and to top that off he also gets to swan off to the Ham mountains to do some hill walking 'just in case there's no snow' we believe you 'Q' many wouldn't, have a cracking time and we'll see you next year if you can find your way back. Also a quick mention must go out to **SSgt Chapman** (SHQ SSgt) who just came in as I was writing this and said he had to go in *The WIRE* because it's a cool thing to do, nuff said.

208 SIGNAL SQUADRON (REAR TROOP)

Tp Comd **Lt Michele Hanlon**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Willie Scoots**

Squadron Rear Troop has been working hard during the Regiment's deployment to the Falkland Islands and Bosnia. We have seen quite a few departures from the Squadron over the last few months. We wish the best of luck to **Sgt Jones** and **Cpl** 'Bos' **Boscowan** on their departure into the unknown (Civvy Street!) Congratulations and farewell go to **Cpl Hardy** not only on her promotion but also on her recent success on her PTI's course, best of luck with her new posting to the Province. Goodbye also to **Cpl Bri Hurcombe** who is off to new greener' pastures with the Intelligence Corps and **Sig Hodge** on his posting to 3 Div.

Congratulations to **LCpl Nessling** and **LCpl Doe** (at last) on their promotion and now for the hellos to the Squadron. A large welcome to **Cpl** 'Geordie' **Ferry** and **Sgt** 'Taff' **Doughty** who have teamed up to revolutionise the Squadron's generators and also to **LCpl** 'Natie' **Dorrian** and **LCpl** 'Chippy' **Hayward.** Hello also to **Cpl** ' Fisherman's Friend' **Walmsley** fresh from 7 Armd Bde and to new Signallers on the block, **Sig Young** and **Sig** 'Russ' **Abbott.** Final congratulations go to **LCpl** 'Des' **Hill** and his wife **Karen** on the birth of their new baby girl **Ashleigh**.

1 (UK) ADSR ALPINE SKIING TEAM – 1998-1999 SEASON

by LCpl Topping

Selection for this seasons Regimental Alpine Skiing Team proved difficult as many of the Regiment's skiers were committed on operational tours, consequently a novice team was gathered from all around the Regiment. Training began in earnest in November in Kaprun, Austria in preparation for the Divisional Championships. The team was captained by **Lt Michele Hanlon** under the expert guidance of **SSgt Cal** 'Firestarter' **Bruce,** the ringer on the team. other members included **LCpl** 'Sunglasses on' **Topping, Sig** 'Sillivan' **Sullivan, Sig** 'Admin' **Bird and Sig** 'Red hot magma' **Raw.** During the training everyone improved dramatically (some by 100%) which was fortunate as we were soon to be hurtling down black runs at the Divisional Championships. All went well but be advised never to get on a ski lift with **Lt Hanlon.**

After a well earned break over Christmas we departed for the Divisional Championships held at Les Contamines in France. Considering it was the first time the majority of us had raced we all did quite well, especially **Lt Michele Hanlon** who won best ladies alpine skier out of a cast of thousands .... well done!! The award of Maniac of the Exercise must go to **Sig Danny Raw** who dived, soared and fell over (anything to get his picture taken) at every opportunity on the snow. He also did a marvellous job keeping the piste clear for everyone else as terrified skiers dived for cover or faced certain death.

HERFORD STATION CHRISTMAS FAYRE

by Capt Jo Evans

Herford Station Christmas Fayre was a great success and raised over DM 4000 for the Station Charity Fund which donates money to worthy causes throughout the year, a lot of preparation went into the event. **SSgt Mick Shirley** insisted on getting a 'jingle' on BFBS Radio which irritated everyone for two weeks leading up to the event. **SSgt** 'Geordie' **Hancock** made sure the grub was good and even invited the Pasty Lady! Father Christmas or rather **Sgt Barny Balmforth** wanted to arrive by helicopter but his plans were scuppered and so he improvised with one of his tanks!



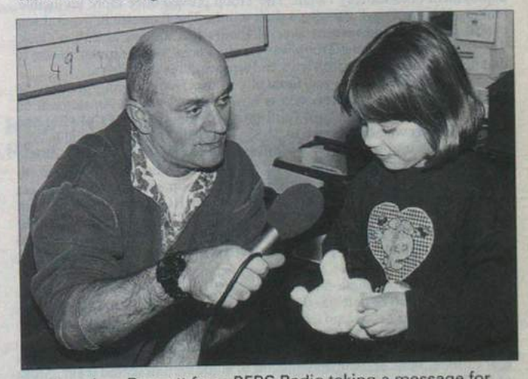
212 LCP Troop's finest example of light care and preservation. Santa's Panzer is now stored away with Santa's Christmas uniform

Finally, **SSgt** 'Robbo' **Robinson** surpassed himself by leaving everything to the last minute and then raising over DM1500 by dressing up as Rasta Clause and hassling everyone in the Regiment and Divisional Headquarters for donations.



Helpers and Staff from Herford Rainbows and Créches raising money for charity

The day was obviously for the families with so many members of the Station in either Bosnia or the Falklands and despite the snow we had a good turnout. Highlights of the day were dance routines by Lister School children and 'Calling the Balklands' by **Jonathan Bennett**.



Jonathon Bennett from BFBS Radio taking a message for calling the Balkans

For those hung over from all of the Christmas functions there were ample Hot Chocolate, Gluhwein and Irish Coffee stalls to get everyone in the festive mood.

2 SIGNAL REGIMENT
YORK

CO **Lt Col C. Wakerley MBE**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) D. A. Whitaker**

The Regiment has had a dramatic start to the New Year. Not only are most of 219 Sig Sqn deploying to the Falklands as we speak; by the time you read this, most of the rest of the men and women of 2 Sig Regt will be scattered around the Balkans. The shock news that the CO and his Command team would be deploying to Bosnia in early March was followed by a warning order to make ready for a swift move to Kosovo. Having a sense of humour has had much to do with the way in which assets have been turned around ready for the challenge. As ever, the personalities and professionals that make up this Regiment have certainly ensured that we are up to the job. Well done everyone and good luck.

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj J. Walker**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) A. Terry**

There's little to report from HQ at present. Everyone has found themselves supporting the triple whammy of post Christmas deployments. However, we would like to congratulate **Sgt Bev Lumb** AGC (SPS) on her selection to promotion to SSgt (perhaps we'll get a little more sense out of her now that the board results are out!). Also, farewell to the AGC Det Comd, **Capt Linda** 'Kinky Boots' **Johnston. Capt Johnston** came on an attachment from 39 Regt RA, but the drop shots want her and her boots back in Newcastle! We also congratulate **LCpl Harvey** on the birth of her new baby

214 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj Dave Somerville**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Forshaw**

On returning from a well-earned Christmas break the Squadron were in the depths of preparing for a very busy year. There have been no changes in the Squadron hierarchy which suggested some stability in a hectic year. Exercises in Cyprus, America and all over the UK were already in the advanced planning stage. These Exercises promised a very busy but exciting period and an opportunity to fulfil the Army's eternal promise 'Join the Army, see the world'. All these plans were then of course shattered by the breaking international news and now the Squadron is planning to return to the Balkans for more medals.

Everyone in 214 Sig Sqn congratulates **YofS Wright, FofS Oliver** and **SSgt Keen** on their well deserved selection for promotion to WO2.

ROMAN TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt Adam Honor**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Morrisson**

The close of 1998 was the usual liquid end to an incredibly busy year for Roman Tp. With the obligatory 'slabbing' of individuals, the end of year bash was LARGE, with the Troop 'ripping it up' down at York's premier night club (NOT!!), TOFFS. **Lt** 'I love the Army' **Honor** did his usual of redecorating York centre, earning a gold medal for style and prowess! The Troop Christmas function at York Breweries was typically predictable for Roman Tp, with gorgeous women, large amounts of cheap ale and **Cpl** 'Travolta' **Leek** shaking his thing on the dance floor, and getting his knee down at least twice! The Troop continues to sweep aside all in its way, winning Inter Troop Football and Hockey.

The start of 1999 saw the Troop have an excellent Regimental deployment onto Ex Key Flight. The Troop proved once more invincible, making Viking 'Quad' Troop eat their words. The Exercise in general was challenging, with movement every 24hours and always at daft o'clock. The final location for the Troop was perched on a 'peak' similar in size to that of Mount Everest, with views and temperatures to match.

There have been some sad farewells in the Troop, saying goodbye to **LCpl** 'Slugger' **Warrender** who is now working within Amsterdam on some communications project (pull the other one Dave!), **Cpl** 'Big and scary' **Francis** who has moved to 21 Sig Regt, **Sig** 'I need a special helmet to fit my enormous Noggin' **Fiddes** who has sped off to the White Helmets and finally **LCpl** 'Badger' **Culver** who has mutinied to Viking Tp (Why?). New arrivals into the Troop include **Cpl** 'lets get naked' **White** who arrived from 24 AirMob Bde HQ & Sig Sqn, **Cpl** 'twin of the Adjutant' **Mcloughlin** from AFCENT, **Sig Stroughair**, **Sig Welburn** and **Sig Jones**. The Troop now looks forward to an operational tour to the Balkans and playing an active role in the forthcoming six months.

VIKING TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt Peter Hale**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Terry Shiels**

December seems such a long time ago. The party season passed in a blur of food, wine and the anticipation of some well deserved leave. Most of the Troop appeared to have had a good Christmas and returning to work came as a welcome relief from the continuous partying. The Troop would like to extend a warm welcome to **Sig Sexton, Sig Elliot** and **Sig Munnings** who have all been posted in from Blandford. A welcome also to **LCpls McNally** and **Culver** who have come to the Troop from within the Squadron

January started with a low level Troop Exercise, which was designed to shake out the cob-webs after a Christmas leave. This was followed the week after with an inter Troop competition that involved trade, driving and physical tests. The pressure was really on as the results of this competition would go forward to decide which Troop would go to America on Ex Roving Sands. As the results of the competition were announced it became clear that the Troop had done exceedingly well. We had beaten the others in all the disciplines and a feeling of impending warm sun and cool American beer spread through the Troop. The other deciding factor of who would go to America was the performance of the Troop on Ex Key Flight. Ex Key Flight was a Squadron level, week long, Exercise conducted around Catterick and Otterburn. Over 30% of the Squadron were new arrivals from Blandford and had never been on Exercise before. Everyone performed admirably ensuring that the whole Exercise was a great success. The day of the announcement of which Troop would go to the States was eagerly awaited. For about two hours the Troop regaled in the prospect of buying suntan lotion and deciding where to send the postcards. Unfortunately, on the same morning the Regiment also received a signal, stating it was on 72 NTM to go to Kosovo. It seems the suntan lotion might not be needed after all.

TORNADO TROOP

Tp Comd **2Lt Graham Wills**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Neil Cooper**

The Troop has been very busy – in line with Regimental policy – over the last few months. Ex Chimera Challenge being the first Inter Troop Competition of the year. Designed to test every level at every skill; newcomers **2Lt** 'Willsie' **Wills, Sig Loach, Sgt** 'Snoz' **Nairns** and **Sig** 'Donna' **Holmes** were all confused to say the least. Things didn't go completely to plan, although we did come second overall (out of three that is!).

Ex Key Flight was our next challenge. This week-long Exercise took place in the picturesque countryside surrounding Otterburn. The wet weather kept everyone's spirits up and frequent moves were a bonus. The Exercise was a steep learning curve but thoroughly rewarding.

FAREWELLS

We said goodbye to **Lt Bryany Brian, Cpl Strachan** and **Cpl Hanlon** who are all off to new units. Also to **Sig Carlyon** who decided to be a civvy. Good luck to **Sig Hunt** and **LCpl McNally** who have left to join an 'enemy Troop'. Finally, congratulations to **Cpl Lees** who has recently had a new edition to the family – a little boy called **Jack**.

219 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj D. C. Gaul**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) M. Neighbour**

This still remains a busy time for the Squadron as we anticipate the departure (finally!!) of the JCUFI manpower for penguin patrol in the Falklands. 219 Rear Squadron have an intense and task filled programme ahead of them supporting 214 Sig Sqn for the Exercises. **SSgt Carl Tucker**, fresh from his MAPRIC course, is intent on utilising his new found skill with many planned jaunts to the hills to practice the soldiers map reading. **SSgt (YofS) Billy Barnes** has finally cleaned up his desk area, the map store and the remainder of the ops room prior to his deployment much to the relief of **SSgt (FofS) Richie Paterson**. Congratulations also go out to the both of them and the **SSgt (SQMS) Terry Hague** for their promotion off the last SSgt to WO2 board – well done! Congratulations also go out to **Maj Dave Gaul** and his wife **Helen** with the birth of their first daughter – also well done!!

EAGLE TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt Alex Clixby**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Andy Allen** (currently in South Georgia as part of JCUFI)

It has been a reasonably quiet few months for the Troop, as preparation for our deployment to the Falkland Islands takes place. Lots of people are away on courses and the remainder are trying to cram in as much leave as possible, before we depart for less sunny shores in February. See you soon, Penguins!

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219 SIGNAL SQUADRON ATTACHMENT ON HMS *YORK*

by Sig Stu Whale

Due to the deployment to JCUFI in February, the lucky few that have been left behind on rear details got the chance to experience the Navy way of life aboard HMS *York* (see pictures for HQ/214 also swapping air waves for ocean waves). The lucky few were **2Lt Kerry Cochran, 2Lt** 'John Boy' **Lyons, Cpl Craig Purdon, LCpl Kelly Thompson, Sig Willy Wilson, Sig Chris Brown, Sig Stu Whale, Sig Ian Bailey, Sig Ross Dourley** and **Sig Al Allardyce**.

The visit began at Garelochhead on the West coast of Scotland where we boarded the ship. During our visit we were shown all aspects of the ship from the engine room through to the impressive weaponry systems on board. The biggest surprise of our visit was the size of the accommodation - very small and compact. The sailors onboard the ship made us feel welcome throughout our stay. The crew were always hospitable and during the evening most of us participated in a few sociable beers. However, as our journey progressed further up the west coast of Scotland and into the expanse of the North Sea, the beers remained in the fridge. This was due to the fact that the majority were feeling a little sea sick. Credit should be given at this point to **Sig Al Allardyce** who managed to drink (in moderation!!!) to the early hours most nights - luckily he regretted it the next day. The final leg of our journey took us down the east coast and into Hull where we departed. HMS *York* had the freedom of York parade on the Saturday followed by a meal at the Regimental cook house. The visit aboard HMS *York* had been a fantastic experience to all of us but it can be said that we were all glad to be back on dry land.



'All the nice girls .....'
Sig Elliott getting to grips with Air Defence Exercises



(L-R): Sigs Elliott, McEwan, Thornton and Smith, LCpl Middleton, Sig O'Connor, LCpl Thompson, Sig McLiesh, Sgt Lloyd and two unknown Navy types who got in on the act

3 (UNITED KINGDOM) DIVISION HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL REGIMENT

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS

CO **Lt Col N. D. Couch**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) G. J. Stoker MBE**

Life in a Divisional Signal Regiment is never meant to be quiet and it certainly isn't. The Regiment is expected to have to juggle the reinforcement of 1 (Mech) Bde's Bosnia tour with the current manning state and a full programme of Exercises on Salisbury Plain: Op Agricola, which was not expected and has put a large number of the Regiment on standby. Fortunately the trunk elements who were largely untouched by Palatine have borne the brunt this time but even so 35% of the personnel have only returned from a six month unaccompanied tour within the last twelve months. All of this is taxing even the 2IC whose mission it is to keep as much sport and adventurous training in the programme as possible. Look out for future reports from New Zealand and Canada as well as Kosovo.

REGIMENTAL POTENTIAL JNCO CADRE COURSE 22 JANUARY – 5 FEBRUARY 1999

It all started at 8am on Sunday morning, yes Sunday! The 3 (UK) DSR Cadre course was off to a flying start, as the students completed their initial BFT. Although some had a not so flying finish, most managed to overcome their 'Sticky Carpets' hangovers! This was to become the first of many tests for the budding leaders. **Sig** 'Curly' **Watts** was the first across the finishing line, what a champ! The following days CFT managed to kick the students into action. It warmed them up nicely for the following mornings PT session at 0600hrs.

The first week was mostly classroom work culminating in a range package and confidence course at Copehill Down Fibua village. This is where **Sig** 'Cat' **Catney** fought her fear of claustrophobia and finished admirably earning herself best endeavour of the course. Friday night was spent running around the Kiwi, no, not the pub, the hill! Section 2

managed to expertly run past the last checkpoint on the night navigation exercise. They turned up an hour later with **Sig** 'Pathfinder' **Locke** adamant that he knew where he was all the time. The weekend brought about the written exams and a lecture presentation that every student had to prepare. This is the part of the course where **LCpl** 'Peda' **Fildes** presented the SSM with an outstanding presentation on the maintenance of the combat boot. Well done soldier!

The next phase of the course was the Exercise, which started on the Monday night with deployment orders. By this time the students were raring to go, or in some cases not. The final day of the Exercise came and the students found themselves on their belt buckles in a twelve inch deep puddle courtesy of the SSM who in the end even ordered combat clerk **LCpl** 'Albino Pasty' **Hine** to take the plunge! The SSM couldn't even hold back **DS Sgt's Mick** 'Screaming Airborne Warrior' **Brown, Phil** 'Universal soldier' **Cooper** and **Jase** 'Northern Git' **Cook** from showing off their leopard crawling skills. All this madness was in preparation for the course photo that was taken at the end. And didn't they look like real war dogs! **LCpl Kenny** 'Shiny Arse' **Irwin** even made the effort to get out of the training wing office and hang out with the real men. Well done to **Sig** 'Shady Man' **Robb** who came top student and **Sigs** 'Westy' **Westerman** and 'combat spice' **Mates** for their second and third places respectfully.

202 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj R J Quinlan**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) S. G. Jackson**

The last couple of months have seen the Squadron conducting a major spring clean in order to prepare both Divisional Main HQ (Overloon) and Step up HQ (Waterloo) for the training season. All the armoured and wheeled vehicles were 'dug out' in time for a good CO's inspection and the Squadron training plan looks set to pay dividends on the upcoming Regimental and Divisional Exercises. The last couple of weeks have seen a change in emphasis away from these Exercises as the Regiment works up its commitment to operations in Kosovo. 202 Squadron will be providing one third of its soldiers, who will soon be detached to form a new Troop in readiness to deploy when the order is given. With this in mind, and under the firm control of **SSM Jackson**, the Squadron has launched into a furious training schedule in order to prepare everyone to be ready to deploy if required.

WATERLOO TROOP

Tp Comd	**Capt C. E. Caie**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Wringe**

Nothing stays the same for long in Waterloo Tp as the new Troop **SSgt Tony Wringe** is finding out. Having arrived at the beginning of February from 206 Sig Sqn, during his first week he was warned for operations in Kosovo. Waterloo Tp had already been reduced to a step up headquarters through losing manpower to Bosnia, but with the Kosovo operation looming large Waterloo Tp's armour looks set to be out of action for the rest of the year. That's good news for the new Troop storeman **Cpl** 'Barney' **Rumble** who has returned from RSCC in time to sign for the whole Troop! Goodbyes to **LCpl** 'Jay' **Hunter** who is posted to CIS Blandford, **LCpl** 'Angie' **Wright** who is off to 24 Airmob Bde and **Sig Chris Pimlott** who is leaving the Army. Congratulations and goodbye to **Katy Caie** who is posted to Cyprus on promotion to Captain. Also Congratulations to **LCpl Marsh** on his promotion (Not before time Sid!) Finally, farewell and good luck to all those people who are off to Kosovo – maybe!

OVERLOON TROOP

Tp Comd	**Capt L. Hendricks**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt A. J. Crawford**

Under the misdirection of the Troop Commander and part time Weapon Handling Instructor **Capt Hendricks**, the Troop has been slaving hard to prepare for the Exercise Season. On Ex 'Tricorn Bull'. **Cpl Towers** was working so hard that he managed to get forty winks at the wheel of his panzer during a move into one of the sites. Thankfully those Troop members who were awake had a good Exercise and are looking forward to going on Exercise with whoever is left after the deployment to Kosovo.

Congratulations to our newly promoted NCOs, **LCpl** 'Peder' **Fildes, LCpl Scadden** and **LCpl** 'Bomber' **Lancaster. LCpl Lancaster** almost had his promotion revoked after he was tasked with painting a new, corps-coloured sign for the front of Div Main. Minutes prior to the GOC's visit, eagle eyed **SSM Jackson** thought to check his spelling of 'Headquarters' (he had a dictionary!) and **LCpl Lancaster** was duly put to shame. Well done to **Cpl Hoffman** and **Cpl Adams** on successful completion of their RSCC. We welcome **LCpl Bysouth** who has arrived from Germany, and **Sig Hocking** and family. Hello and Goodbye to **Sig Murray** who is another footballer and part time soldier. Finally, goodbye to **Cpl Sorbie** and **Sig Grant** who have both gone to pursue a second career outside the Army.

BUSSACO TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt D. A. Jackson**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt A. Dick**

Bussaco Tp has also been out on Exercise in support of the two headquarters. The experience passed off without incident and most of the Troop were glad to be out of barracks. Bussaco contributed well to the Squadron's wooden spoon in the Regimental Sports week but with two sprained ankles, one broken wrist and a few cracked ribs, no one can accuse them of not getting stuck in!

Congratulations to **LCpls Hogan, Slade** and **Long** who found their first tapes in a cornflakes box. Several members of the Troop attended a Regimental Cadre course for two weeks and despite being cold and wet for most of it, all seemed to have taken something from it, even if it was only blisters.

Hellos to **Sig** 'Sprogg' **Silcock** and **Sig** 'Hopalong' **Jones** who have both recently joined the Troop. Goodbye to **LCpl Long** who leaves us to be with all the good looking girls he supposedly knows, and **LCpl Hogan** who too is off to pastures new.



LCpl Carter about to repeat Cpl Towers' trick of falling asleep at the wheel



Sig Marchant looking industrious prior to the CO's Inspection

206 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj Paul Glibbery**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Stu Archer**

Once again it is all hands on deck as the Squadron prepares for a potential operational deployment. A large number of Squadron personnel are currently on stand by for Op Acrigola in Kosovo and await final confirmation of deployment (this is in addition to the 16 Sqn personnel who are deploying to Bosnia with 1 (Mech) Bde). Just as well the Squadron has been exercising like mad in the weeks following Christmas leave!

INKERMAN TROOP

Tp Comd	**Capt Alex Fennell**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Steve Bartleet**

Shortly into the new year the Troop took part in a week long exercise which was designed to shake off those Christmas cobwebs. Two of our detachments were attached to 202 Sqn, to the delight of the Det Commanders **Cpl Sean** 'Don't call me a greengrocer!' **Richardson** and **LCpl Lorna** 'Static comms are for winners' **Moses**. Their escape was not for long as we grabbed them back when 202 tried to send them home a day early. After a short nights sleep in the crew room (or in the back of a Bedford in the case of **Sig Mark** 'I'm joining the Met' **Jenkins**) it was time to get up, finish the wagons and go home.

The first day of the next Exercise started with a snowstorm, much to the distaste of the guys who were really looking forward to five days spent in the snow. Someone was obviously looking down on us because at the last minute the Exercise was cancelled. Relief quickly turned into apprehension as we trooped off to Tidworth for a briefing on the Kosovo situation. The bottom line was that if we were going to deploy then Inkerman Tp would be one of those going, to provide Rebro coverage. The last few days have seen us ready our vehicles for deployment and triple-check everything that we might need. The exact detachment manning has yet to be decided, but everyone now knows who is down to go. As would be expected from a Rebro Tp this means just about everyone, including such worthies as **LCpl Lorna** 'Can I take my Bikini?' **Moses, Sig Iain** 'Can I take my snowboard' **Johnson** and **Sig Stuart** 'Can I take my pies?' **Stephen**. By the time this comes to print we will either be there or still here on notice to move.

Inkerman Tp welcomes **Sig Sarah Hill** from 19 Mech and says farewell to **LCpl Simon Worsley** who joins the slacksters in 222 Sqn. Good luck also to all of the Troop attached to 1 Mech for their Bosnia deployment; **LCpl Scott** 'I was on TV' **Lewis, Sig Ben Andrews, Sig Laura** 'I want to come back' **Best, Sig Clint** 'I thought I'd got away with it' **Brady, Sig Edward** 'Can I go back to Ireland' **Brown, Sig Tim** 'Short' **Cooper, Sig Julie** 'I was on TV too' **Cornfield** and **Sig Mick** 'Whizz' **Gee**.

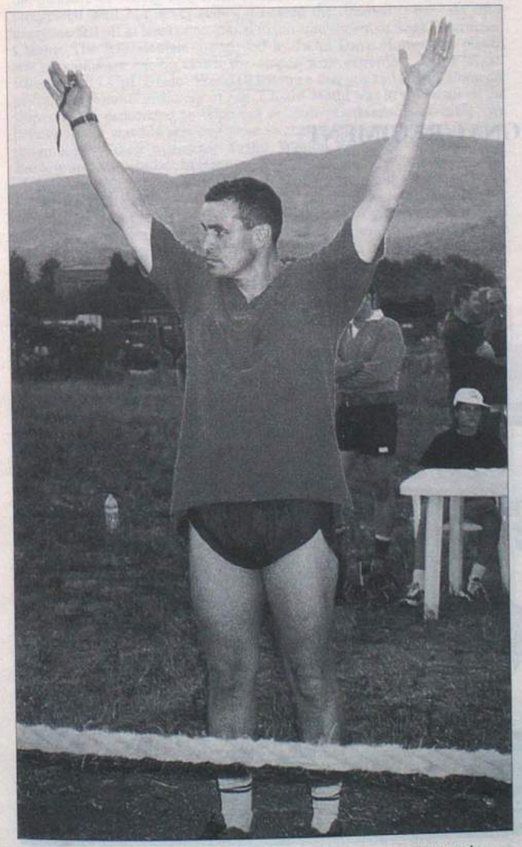
Finally congratulations go to the OC, **Alex Fennell**, who was promoted to Captain by no less than **General Sir Michael Walker** (CinC LAND) during a recent visit to the Regiment.

CAMBRAI TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt Liz Allan**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Carlos Sinclair**

Life has been fairly hectic since returning from Christmas leave. Some lucky members of the Squadron found themselves returning to work during leave for a mad day of prepping the Cambrai Spec Task vehicles for deployment to Cyprus! The lads worst nightmare came true as Troop OC, **Lt Liz Allan** and **WO2 (FofS) Joe Docherty** found themselves delving deep into the detachment cages and finding out what exactly the boys hide in their cages. However, many thanks to **LCpl Kev** 'Join the Army and see Bulford' **Meek** for returning to work even though he'd already been posted (What is that all about then?) Good luck in 249 (AMF(L)) Sig Sqn **Kev.** The vehicles themselves have had a pleasant months cruise to Cyprus and back and we didn't even get to deploy with them.

Cambrai Tp seems to be returning to its 1997 form as Cambrai Section, with numbers dwindling rapidly from 44 soldiers in October to 17 in February. **LCpl Martin Kennie, Sig Dave** 'the hockey goalie' **Harris** both volunteered for Op Palatine and have gone to raise the standards at 1 Mech Bde. **Cpl Baz Cadman, LCpl Charles Whenman, Sig Michelle Amis, Sig Alexander** 'Hammer' **Mace, Sig Colin** 'Naughtiboy' **Mortiboys** and **Sig Grant** 'Robbo' **Robertson** (we will miss those bagpipes Robbo) have all been cross Squadroned to 222 Sig Sqn, and no they are not all on a three month bender. Farewell and good luck to you all with 222 Sig Sqn. A sad farewell to **LCpl Guy Davies** who by now is probably throwing himself out of a plane with 216 Sig Sqn. Welcome **Sig Charlotte** '962' **Driscoll** who recently arrived from 202 Sig Squadron. Currently having been put on standby for Kosovo, the Troop finds itself packing and re-packing the Dets as well as fitting in a bit of pre deployment training and hopefully some leave.



WO2 (SSM) Hymas 'Hands up everyone who likes me'

BOSNIA BRIEFING TOUR

January 1999 found **Lt Liz Allan, Cpl Bob Dryden, LCpl Andy Bennett** and **Sig Dave Marshall** all on a ten-day Bosnia Briefing Tour in schools around Edinburgh.. We spoke to a variety of age groups ranging from 4th to 6th years, unfortunately, to the great disappointment of the boys, we had to cancel our presentation to the one and only all female school which was in our programme. Better luck next time lads. The presentation was about 40mins long. Starting with **Lt Liz Allan** giving an extremely exciting history brief followed by **Sig Dave Marshall**'s top brief on pre Bosnia Training and mine awareness. Last but not least **LCpl Andy** 'motor mouth' **Bennett** rendered the audience speechless with his war stories. **Cpl Bob Dryden** excelled himself with his outstanding slide projector abilities.

222 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj M. Billingham**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) F. Roberts**

SHQ Tp has had a busy period since Christmas leave and with the OC away a number of the troops disappeared for a touch of train-spotting with SSM, **WO2** 'Mine's a Xmas Tree' **Roberts** on Ex Topham Hatt. Now we face the next challenge, to Kosovo we must go!

Congratulations to **SSgt (FoS)** 'I must get my deposit back' **Gorman** for coming off the board and tying the eternal knot. A sad farewell to **SSgt (YoS)** 'footballs coming home' **Best** and **Cpl** 'The Brigadier' **Austin-Williamson**. Welcome to **Sgt** 'where do I start' **Howlett** to the Ops team and acting Yeoman for ten 'long' minutes. A strange welcome back to **Cpl** 'Give those chocolates back' **Austin-Williamson** (It must be operational requirements ?!) and to **SSgt (YoS)** 'Regt Ops part-timer' **Yates** back in the chair once again.

SHARJAH TROOP

Tp Comd	**2Lt Adrian Johnson**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Lang**

December was not the usual pre-Christmas wind down that the troops were hoping for. CO's day took place on 8 December and a tremendous amount of work was put in by all. This paid off as the CO was suitably pleased. It served as a good exercise in which to get everything in order before the Christmas break. After the thousands of functions over the final few months of the year Sharjah Tp staggered out into the New Year. It was goodbye to **Sgt McNeil, Cpl Knapman, LCpl Mcdougall** and **Sig Leach** who are all off to Bosnia in support of 1 Mech Bde. Congratulations and a sad farewell to the 'Prince of Darkness' Lance Corporal to be **Harkness**. A warm welcome to **Sgt Pickering** and **Paula** fresh from three years with the Weekend Warriors. Hello to **LCpl Fearns, LCpl Worsley, Sig Mortiboys** and **Sig Mace** who have all had inter Squadron postings to bolster the man power in the Squadron. January was taken up with preparation for the busy Exercise period in the coming months. A small surprise was in store though. We are now in the middle of fast moving preparations for a possible deployment on Op Agricola to Kosovo. Busy is the key word.

MASIRAH TROOP

Tp Comd	**2Lt E. J. Fawcett**
Tp SSgt	**Sgt M. W. Emmerson**

Many changes have occurred in the Troop during the recovery period from the Christmas festivities. Farewells have been said to **Sig** 'Chubbsie' **Claridge** and **Sig Crewes** on their posting to Blandford on their promotions to LCpl. **Sig** 'the beret' **Cornfield** moves to HQ Sqn as the CO's driver. **Sgt** 'which is my best side' **Howlett** moves to the hectic Ops room and **Sgt** 'Lenny' **Lyons** takes over his post. A well done goes out to **Sig Watt** for a good result on the Regimental cadre course. Things have definitely livened up in the Troop as the Squadron is put on notice for Op Agricola and the Troop seemed to double in size over night. A warm hearty welcome to all new arrivals specially to **Sgt** 'I'm mad as a hatter' **Howes** and **Sig** 'I didn't get lost, honest' **Newbold**. In the busy run up to deployment we say a temporary goodbye to **Cpl** 'W.D.' **Catney, LCpl Pozo** and **Sig Dent**. With a busy, yet exciting time ahead the Troop is ready for anything, even the jokes from **Sgt** 'Small but perfectly formed' **Emmerson**!

OMAN TROOP

Tp Comd	**2Lt I. Hemy**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Baker**

The Troop kicked off the New Year in style with a deployment up to the Beacon on Exercise Two-Names-Depencs-How-you-Feel, involving comms and mud gathering as well as a change of Tp Commander, **2Lt** 'send me' **Hemy**, straight from the Blandford Chocolate factory. A chance to prove that Troop morale had not died at the hands of OSC, although it still remains somewhat dependant on the arrival of **Sig** 'I make them myself' **Dawson's** mail and its dubious photographic contents. New arrivals **Sgt Phil** 'Shaggy' **Howes, Sig** 'Hyacinth' **Onslow** and **Sig** 'Steam' **Ions** are welcomed into the Troop, as are **Sig Georgina** 'Doris One' **Walters** and **Sig Lindsey** 'Doris Two' **Melia** (to be known as one, two!). Oman Tp continues to survive despite **SSgt** 'Bru' **Baker's** legendary commitment to Hockey ('A team with women, what else can I say') and the timely disappearance of the new OC on Ex Nebel Iron ('Skiing is training'). A temporary farewell to newly promoted **Capt Sellwood** (one crate!), **Cpl Christison, LCpl Appleby** and **Sig Brady** down the road to 1 Mech for a stint – good luck over there. And not forgetting **Capt Sellwood**'s rapidly approaching nuptials (two crates!) – all the best to you both from the Troop.

EXERCISE TOPHAM HATT 99/1

The Exercise was led by **WO2 (SSM) F. Roberts**. Promising top grade accommodation and plenty of social fluid it was with some caution, after hearing tales of old that 25 fearless warriors from the Squadron departed for the very popular tourist resort of Swanage on Ex Topham Hatt 99/1 at the end of January 1999. On arrival Mr Topham Hatt or **SSM Frank** 'Footplate' **Roberts** allocated tasks to Gangs before retiring to the luxurious comfort of the Scenery Carriage. The weather was very kind to all except **Cpl Mick** 'Gonzo' **Eades** who attracted severe wind burn to the nasal area while repairing Herston Halt with **Cpl Jack** 'Stig of the dump' **Hawkins** and **Sig Jamie** 'Braveheart' **Miller. Sig David** 'Slippery' **McArthur** has to be commended on the standard of woodwork and maintenance that he performed while working with the SSM,' it will take more than sharpening a few chisels to get your promotion soldier!' **Sig Chris Andy McNabb Newbold** took this opportunity to hone his military skills by slipping off into the night to carry out a perimeter check of the town, or did he just get severely lost? **LCpl Taff** The Inspector **Francis** and **Sig Andy** The Butcher **Carvin,** when not planting telegraph poles, entertained the expeditionary force with an excellent rendition of Swan Lake, 'but please, guys not at 3.30 in the morning!' **Sig Lee** First **Scrafton, Cpl Karl** Second **Stenning** and **Sig John** 'Third' **Hemming** pursued a common goal whilst socialising, 'gentlemen our compliments'. On the whole a fantastic but very tiring 5 days work and socialising was had by all.



Quick lads another steam train


LCpl Taff Francis What's next Taff, 'Who cares the bars open'

7 SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO **Lt Col D. A. H. Jones**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) S. Smoothey**

Amid much Kosovo preparation comes the latest news from Krefeld.

THE ADJUTANT IS ON HIS WAY

The Adjt, **Capt Andy Knott** is soon to leave the Regiment to begin JCSC - good luck. He is pictured here with the other children in his Karate Club on their final grading.


The Adjutant, Capt A. Knott, says farewell to his Karate Kids

229 (BERLIN) SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj Chris Robinson**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Stevie Bovan**

CHARLIE TROOP

Tp Comd **2Lt Caroline Evans**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Gary Davies**

Exercise, people coming and going and a planned Adventure Training period in Kosovo has provided many challenges for the Troop. A warm 'Get yourself on Exercise tomorrow,' welcome to **Sigs Claire Roberts**, 'Luca' **Giann, Alex** 'Lemming' **Leeming, Kev** '4 Ace' **Smilie, George Walters** and goodbye to **LCpl Mark** 'I'm after my second stripe' **Cozens,** who will be missed by his MacDonalds partner **Sgt Dave** 'Elvis' **Whitfield**.

Snow arrived with the Exercise period, providing laughter and mayhem. **Sig** 'Taff' **Phillips** and co-driver **LCpl Lee Shipley** played chicken with a German civilian vehicle, resulting in an easy victory for the Radio Relay Tag Team Duo and **Sig** 'Jay' **Preston's** large ears appeared cunningly disguised as an American Tropo Det. Casualties of the Exercise were **Cpl George McMinn** who was hit by a low flying snowball, and **Sgt Dave** 'Elvis' **Whitfield** who dropped a Jerry can on his own head. **Sig Steph Evans** and **Sig** '4 Ace' **Smilie** were taught how to be good Central Operators by **LCpl John McDonnell** and then spent most of the Exercise asleep. Well done to **2Lt Evans** for keeping her sanity and **SSgt Gaz Davies** for not losing all his hair. Finally congratulations to **LCpl Paul Brown** and his wife **Claire** on the birth of their baby girl.

231 SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj Paul Boscher**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Ward**

ROMEO TROOP

Tp Comd **2Lt Nicky James**
Tp SSgt **SSgt George Farrar**

0500hrs Monday 4 January we assembled, bleary eyed on the parade square to embark on an 8hr journey to Bavaria. We arrived safely after the routine MacDonalds stop ready to start Ex Badger Backstop. There were different levels of experience in the Troop so we split into three groups - Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced. The performer of the beginner group was **Sig Porter** who was aptly christened 'Ditch' by those who had the pleasure of seeing him crash on more than one occasion. The group progressed well but never really mastered the dreaded 't-bar' ski lift - everyone fell off at least once, much to the amusement of **SSgt** 'Instructor' **Clarke**. The Intermediate group, led by **LCpl Dave Honeywill**, played wacky kamikaze racing down the slopes with extremists **LCpl** 'Axle' **Rhodes** and **LCpl** 'Blade' **Woodall** having a few ups and downs along the pistes. The famous girlie cry of **Sig** 'Chaos' **Dodd** was heard by all on the slopes as he proceeded to wipe-out as many Germans as possible. We believe that it was his skis that were in charge. Meanwhile the Advanced group led by their instructor **Tasha Weston** consisted of **LCpl** 'Air' **Barlow** and **Sig** 'Bullet' **Matthews**, who classed themselves as the 'kings' of the piste. Fancy turns here and there leading the group of nutters down the hill, stopping every so often for the OC, **Lt James** to catch up after her speedy downhill parallel turns. The highlight of this group was to try and wipe everyone else in the group out, because it was funny. During the Exercise various merits were awarded ranging from two star to four stars. A very big congratulations go to **Cpl** 'Tone' **Caprio** and **Sgt Tony Downing** for being the only four stars on the piste.


Radio Troop on Exercise Badger Backstop

232 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj Alan G. Stringer**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Hughes**

DELTA TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt** 'Pierre' **Farrimond**
Tp SSgt **SSgt** 'Stef' **Newton**

Congratulations on promotion from Signalman to Lance Corporal 'swing the lampshade' **Buckle, Gareth** 'I'm not allowed to drive, honest' **MacFarland** and **Lt** 'Pierre' **Farrimond** on getting his 'second'. We are also looking forward to welcoming a new member to the Troop - **Sig Kirkbright** is pregnant and **Sig Knowles** has defected to Papa Tp due to the Regimental reshuffle. Elsewhere much has happened in Delta Troop since Christmas thanks to **Mr Malosovich** - we have changed role from the normal two Secondary Access Nodes to ARRC TAC Peace Support Operations (PSO) and ARRC FORWARD PSO.

On the first deployment of the two new Headquarters nobody really knew whether it was shrove Tuesday or Sheffield Wednesday but after four weeks of Exercise it finally came together, (ish). Moving locations proved challenging - especially if your packet had **Sig Dobbing** in it. Instead of following the rest of the packet towards Dortmund he decided to go for a tour around Germany taking everyone behind him with him and adding two hours to the journey. The OC, 231 Sqn, also stopped our air portable vehicles, mistaking them for one of his convoys going the wrong way. All this added pressure on **Lt Farrimond** (packet commander) to keep the packet together. He did this by driving along with his arm out of the window with a rear view mirror in his hand before losing his beret on the autobahn. He has to wear his skid lid for the rest of the Exercise which provided us with much amusement.

Finally a special good bye and good luck for **Sgt Clark** who is off to beast recruits in sunny Bassingbourn, maybe the recruits need the luck more than he does. **Sgt Clark** has done five years sterling service to the Troop.

HOTEL TROOP

Tp Comd **2Lt Howarth**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Ironside**

From the ashes of CIS Tp, with a generous helping of 'Men of Line' and some Technical wizardry was born Hotel Tp and despite early teething problems, no furniture, no buildings, no vehicles, to name a few, this motley crew has gelled superbly. What you learn quickly with a new Troop is who you can trust, and who you can trust to really botch it up. Early into the charts comes **Sig** 'Warn them I'm coming' **Evans** and **Sig** 'Is this the way to Hannover' **Dobbing** who learnt the cheeky lesson it's not merely enough just to tie the line together, you actually have to join it. Congratulations to **Cpl** 'Smoothy' **Wilson** and **LCpl** 'Running Man' **Duddles** on their recent promotions, and **SSgt Ironside** on the recent birth of his daughter **Hannah**. Best wishes go to **Cpls Graham** and **McNally** on their forthcoming postings. Finally the Troop would like to thank **Sig** 'SSMs special friend' **Murray** for his outstanding hospitality. I think next time we'll try to be out of the house before his wife gets back.

PAPA TROOP

Tp Comd **2Lt Noakes**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Gemmell**

The Troop wishes a fond farewell to **Sgt Steve Easter** and his wife, **Chris**, as he swaps webbing and helmet for the pipe and slippers he will need in CIS Tp. Welcome to our new boss, **2Lt Noakes** as well as **Sigs Chris Haddrell, Louise Allen, Si Cartmel** and 'I am a Switch guru' **Knowles**. All fresh from the factory along with our two new baby Techs **LCpls Mundy** and **Ross**. Also a big hello to **Sgt Andy Mapstone** and his wife, as our new boots and haircut man! Last but not least, hello to **Cpl** 'Dave-get your coat' **Burke**, fresh from N Ireland.

Exercise season began with a squelch as the Troop broke all records on Ex Frosty Cobweb! After taking a staggering three and a half hours to set up, **Sig** 'my foot slipped' **Grant** managed to park her Bedford on our new Wolf. A few hours later **Sig** 'Pugsley' **McLaughlin** parked the same Wolf on a trailer! Three Exercises later and at last we are back up to scratch ready for our imminent departure to Kosovo in our new role as ARRC FWD PSO.

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TAC TROOP

Tp Comd **2Lt Lowther**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Angove**

TAC Troop has had a hectic start to the New Years with coming and goings - so long to **Lt Young** who has left for Cyprus, **SSgt Phil** 'sons of ferrets' **MacKenzie** has gone to sunny TM Tp, **LCpl** 'autobahn' **McKenna** to 4 Bde and **Sig** 'Dicko' **Dickenson** as he patrols to 3 Inf Bde. Welcome to **2Lt Lowther** who has interrupted a busy skiing schedule to find his office, **SSgt Mick Angove** who joins us from the Officers' Mess bringing the three immortal words, 'make it so!' **Cpl Rob Murray** has been promoted from Radio Tp and **LCpl Ferguson** has come across from Quebec Tp. Another crowd have arrived from the factory - **LCpl Neil Cansfield, Sig Trish** 'Jimmy Cranky' **Drummond**, and **Sig** 'Matron' **Hawkins.**

Exercise has dominated the first couple of months providing the chance to perfect the art of tent construction. In order to make sure the REME weren't left twiddling their thumbs, **Sig Ross Sutherland** experimented with his wolf by filling it with petrol. Not to be outdone, **LCpl** 'NAILS' **Fitzpatrick-Swallow** took the spotlight by ignoring the road. TAC Tp also took time on Exercise to compose a poem . . .

Chicken 'Tac' Masala

Here lies Anchovie snoring softly, wishing that he had a softie
To the chicken farm Tac did go, away from all the mist and snow
As HQ go quote, 'This is it,' apart from all the chicken s**t
It wasn't us that wrecked Kohima, we just bugged out, well sort of, see ya!
Benz and diesel can cause a hitch, so can a RATT det in the ditch
We watched the trunk go down the sink, amid the calls of where's the link
Of casualties little to be said, apart from Sarge who split his head
So Staffs still dreaming of the day, the Troop will let him have his way
To perfection we all know, the one command . . . make it so!!!!

THE ARMY CROSS-COUNTRY FINALS

by Sig Aaron Garside

Following the superb win in the BA (G) Cross-Country finals in December last year, the units team headed for the Army finals in the UK on 3 February 1999. On arriving at the course, in Longmoor, the team was in two minds whether to wear spikes or wellies, on a muddy and demanding course. A superb 7th place to **2Lt Noakes** helped the ladies' team to 3rd place overall. In the men's race over four hundred of the best lined up focused on the narrow passage. Only 20m in front of them and after lots of shoving the runners settled into their places for three hard laps. Excellent positions for **WO1 (YofS) Lee** 23rd and **WO2 (RQMS) Ged** 'GLEAMING' **Keane** 49th, who helped the men's team to a very respectable 4th overall position. On a final note the team wishes to say farewell to **SSgt Stu Taylor**, who has gone on to run even more at SHAPE, thanks for all your help and commitment.

ALPINE SKI TEAM

The Regiment deployed its finest skiers to Kuprun, Austria to the Corps Training Camp to endure freezing conditions – however, the après-ski did make the situation bearable. The hardships paid dividends the team finished first in the slalom, third in the giant slalom and second overall. A special congratulations to **Sig Matty Hartigan** who was named the overall Corps Champion. New Year demanded the Team's presence at the Divisional Championships – Les Contamines France. The higher standard provided tough competition and the Team did not win any prizes but congratulations to the Team led by **Lt Crowther** who made their mark by qualifying for the Princess Marinas Cup - an achievement not completed by a Royal Signals team for a number of years. The alpine team consisted of **Sgt Carpenter, Cpl Evans, Cpl Findlay, LCpl Dransfield, LCpl Macmillan, Sig Hartigan, Sig Lane** and **Sig Sosinski**.



Lt Crowther struggles to lift her rifle

14 SIGNAL REGIMENT (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)

LS & GC MEDAL PRESENTATION



LS and GC Medal Presentation 22 January 1999
(L-R): Lt Col Mackenzie, WO2 Osborne, Cpl Dimmack, SSgt Wallace, Sgt Walker, WO1 (RSM) Hardwidge

Friday 22 January 1999 was to be ACOS CIS second visit to the Regiment but unfortunately due to 'No Fly Weather it was cancelled, however The CO agreed to present the Long Service and Good Conduct Medals to the eagerly awaiting recipients.



(L-R): WO I (RSM) Hardwidge, SSgt Davies, SSgt Watters, SSgt Kitchen, Sgt Thompson, Cpl Anderton, Lt Col Mackenzie
Front Row – Brig Shaw

Friday the 27 November saw ACOS CIS **Brig Shaw** visit the Regiment where he visited various displays and disciplines culminating in a presentation of Long Service and Good Conduct Medals, followed by Lunch in the Sgts' Mess.

NOTES - PORTFIELD SCHOOL VISIT

On 14 December 1998 The Regiment hosted the disabled children from Portfield School in Haverfordwest for an activities day and some festive entertainment. The kids were met off the transport by **WO1 (RSM) Hardwidge** who organised them into four groups for a mornings' frenzy of activity. 3, 2, 1, GO!

245 Sig Sqn provided a 'panzer' ride around the adjacent airfield. **WO2 (SSM) Fisher** and his gang of willing sinners loaded the troops into the 43's and sent them off on a magical mystery tour with the kids all having the chance to be mini Field Marshal Rommel's for forty minutes.



The Gymnasium set up an indoor hockey arena under the supervision of **Cpl Dawson** and the rest of the gym staff. Although the kids have varying disabilities all were able to participate. Although the hockey team may have nothing to fear, the Japanese Samurai had better watch out as there were fierce stick wielding skills on show.



Next up was the Small Arms Trainer under the eagle eye of **SSgt Strefford** and the training wing staff. The kids and their carers were invited on a 'dawn patrol' and several other scenarios of high intensity Needless to say the kids loved it though some of our 'virtual' American compatriots would have been less than enthusiastic as they were 'blown away' in a very gung-ho spirit. All left the SAT with a smile on their face and a certificate of merit, top guns!



Finally it was down to the bowling alley for a good old game of skittles. On hand to entertain the kids waiting to go on the activities were the Regimental clowns (steady) **WO1 (FofS) Ball** and **Sgt Inglesant** who laid on games, conjuring, balloon bending, songs and all manner of top quality entertainment once **FofS Ball** had convinced half the kids he wasn't the devil in disguise - (scary make-up).

A top level nosh up was provided by **Sgt Speake** who served up burgers and chips for the hungry masses who were waiting for the arrival of the main man. Santa (**SSgt Campbell**) arrived by Wolf (isn't that supposed to be reindeer) to a chorus of hurrahs from the crowd and handed out festive cheer and presents to all. Unfortunately it was time to call it a day having had a thoroughly enjoyable day as had all those involved in making the day work.

226 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj Rob Meinertzhagen**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Jenkins**

COMMUNICATIONS TROOP

Tp Comd **2Lt Stewart**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Murray**

A busy period straight from our extended Crimbo leave, starting with a Squadron Exercise, called 'Whale Herd'. Perhaps 'Nothing Heard' would have been more appropriate. There were various stands throughout the first two days. However, the most important stand that was missed by some Squadron members was the excellent Harbour/Packet drills by our very own **Sgt Titus** 'Watch The Fence' **Reene.** The main effort of the week, with elements of Hotel Tp and Romeo Tp blistering onto Comms Tp side (How privileged they must have felt!) to act as OPFOR against the one and only 640 Tp with strict instructions to ensure capture. For three days all traffic was serialised to ensure that utmost traffic gets transmitted and to provide a target for receiving dets. A successful Ex and one in the cap for Comms Tp. A big warm welcome and morale boosting mention to **Cpl Callurn Black** and family from Paderborn, and farewell and good luck to **Cpl** 'Secret Squirrel' **Quinlan** leaving for the dizzy heights of Civvi Street. Although she's only made an appearance for 5 days in the last two months, welcome also to **2Lt Fiona** 'Away skiing' **Stewart.** We look forward to her more regular attendance with the Troop.

237 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj John Dakin**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Richardson**

KILO TROOP

Tp Comd **2Lt Reid**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Speirs**

It was a busy couple of months for the few members of the Troop left in the Squadron bays while the rest worked hard in Cyprus. The Troop would like to say hello to **2Lt** 'Porridge' **MacReid** who returns to the Regiment after completing his Troop Commanders Course at Blandford and to **Sig Parker** straight out of trade training. The Troop sends its congratulations to **SSgt Jim Speirs** who successfully came off the WO2 promotion board. We will wait until he returns from his course for the drinks. The Troop is looking forward to a number of Troop and Squadron level Exercises testing both military and trade training over the next couple of months. We all have to hope that the equipment can handle the test.

Welcome back to **LCpl Phil McDiarmid** and **Sig Phil Lee** from there 'arduous' two and a half month skiing competition. Amazingly they both promptly asked for leave claiming that they have had no time off. A special mention has to go out to **Sig Bradford** who managed to hit a figure 11 target 13 out of a possible 15 times with a respirator on. He is currently being questioned about what he wears when sitting in his room at night.

LEWT

SNCO IC **SSgt Campbell**

Another busy couple of months for LEWT under the leadership of **SSgt** 'Sane as ever' **Campbell** with demos for the RAC at Bovington and the Snipers course in Warminster. They enjoyed the Squadron range week at Castlemartin, with excellent shooting from **Cpl** 'Sniper' **South.** The other members of the Squadron particularly 'enjoyed' the two mile battle run with LEWT members. On a sad note, we say goodbye to two Troop stalwarts, **Cpl** 'Tez' **Blakely,** who is off to mould our young soldiers at Bassingbourn, and **Cpl Martin South** off to brush his SCROAT skills up at university. We look forward to the start of our Ex Season and jumping into France with 5 Airborne Brigade and also the LEWT cadre in the summer - all DISI trades welcome.

VICTOR TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt Smith**
Tp WO **WO Matthews**

After a welcome Christmas break Victor Tp returned to work on Monday 4 January. The Troop was almost back to full strength with the majority of personnel back from Cyprus. A busy couple of weeks followed in loading all the returned equipment, then back into the normal routine of services, first line inspections etc. The Troop deployed with the rest of the Squadron for a range week from 25 to 29 January at the Castlemartin Ranges where most people got the opportunity to fire a variety of weapons, on several different ranges. It was a good week enjoyed by most, which made a welcome change from the normal hum-drum routine of bay life. The Troop would like to bid farewell and good luck to **LCpl Eltringham** on his posting to JCUNI. A warm welcome is also extended to **Sig Pete Nex, LCpl Dave Orme** and **Sgt Jez Ward** on joining the Troop.

245 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj G. Owen**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Fisher**

With the usual Christmas festivities a distant memory, the Squadron is settling in for what will be a busy and interesting year. We take receipt of eagerly awaited new equipment in a matter of weeks and the Squadron is shifting up a gear. We have also taken delivery of a new OC, **Maj Guy**

Owen, and we offer a warm welcome to him and **Charlotte**. Many congratulations to **SSM** 'Mo' **Fisher**, on his selection to WO1. Stand-by any unit awaiting an RSM in the next few months!

WHISKEY TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt Crapper**
Tp INTWO	**WO2 P Kennedy**

November and December saw Whiskey Tp, the Squadron's intercept force involved in a Squadron Level Crashout Exercise. Amongst other things, this involved causing maximum chaos on the Pembrokeshire lanes, by convoy after convoy of FV432 variants inching their way to various exotic locations. The Troop welcomed back it's long standing boss, **Lt Alun** 'Grumpy' **Crapper** from an arduous summer spent undergoing hard training with the Royal Australian Signals. We look forward to witnessing his new found BBQ skills. Welcome back also to the numerous personnel returning from six months in Bosnia and Bon Voyage to their replacements. A more permanent welcome to **LCpl Nicky Davies**, joining husband 'Taff' who lives in HQ Sqn.

JULIET/YANKEE TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt R. Bailey**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt (Supvr R) M. Wallace**

J/Y Tp settled back into the swing of things following Ex Ulan Eagle, and was immediately thrust back into the routine of servicing and inspections. December proved relatively quiet with the usual round of Xmas merriment, accommodation inspections and ever present equipment maintenance. On our return, the Troop deployed straight onto Ex Moufflons Blitz. The highlight of this was a first class day of Bromure instruction from **Sig Tom O'Hanlon.**

HELLO'S AND GOODBYES

Greetings to **LCpl Chris Dowd** from 216 (Para) Sig Sqn, **Cpl** 'Buck' **Rogers and LCpl** 'Taff' **Rees** both from 3 Div and to **Sig Ian Campbell** from 4 Armd Bde. Welcome back to the Troop's Bosnia contingent and a sad farewell to **Cpl Cam Logan** (RP Cpl), **Cpl** 'Scan' **Kelly** (Germany) and **LCpl** 'Smudge' **Smith,** who get early parole for good behaviour. Congratulations to **LCpl Chris Sweeney,** who gets even more time off for earning a place in the Army Ski Championships.

ZULU TROOP

Tp Comd	**SSgt Donnelly**
Tp SSgt	**Sgt Turner**

The Troop sent three of it's rank and file on the units potential JNCO Cadre course, they were **Sig** 'Hot Shot' **Hanks, Sig** 'Admin' **James** and **Sig** 'Sturdy Girl' **Musson.** Whilst these were hard at work the rest of the Troop were hard at play getting in some hard training for all the normal Christmas functions. Speaking of which the Troop Christmas thrash will go down in the history book, the town's amount of gorgeous girls actually doubled on the night to a total of eight.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

We say a sad fairwell to **LCpl** 'Flying V' **Thomas** who leaves us to go to 8 Bde. We welcome into the Troop **Sig** 'Good Start' **Clarke** and **Sig** 'The Cat' **Heathcote** and **Cpl** 'Sammy' **Samuelson** and his family.

QUARTERMASTER'S (TECHNICAL) DEPARTMENT
'A GRAND DAY OUT'

QM	**Maj Dean**
RQMS	**WO2 (RQMS) Newton**

Friday 14 January saw the QM(T) department escape Cawdor Barracks and head off for a day of adventurous training. After a few minor hitches, such as no fuel, we bundled into the Regiment's best minibus and drove off into the unknown. Arriving at a secret location somewhere in the Pembrokeshire countryside we tumbled out the bus and awaited our brief.



Our first task involved making an A Frame from three logs and a selection of ropes. Once this had been accomplished we had to walk the frame from one end of the field to the other. We were about to get to work when we discovered the catch or catches in this case. A member of the team must be transported on the frame, no member of the team could touch the wood and to top it off nobody must speak. Well we soon had the frame built but moving it was another thing all together. We were eventually put out of our misery when **Dave Thom,** our task master for the day, gave us a possible solution. Even with this solution we had a few problems one being **Sig** 'Scouse' **Caine** attempting to pull over the frame with **SSgt** 'Fablon' **Abson** clinging to it. Two more arduous tasks later we paused for a bite to eat much to the relief of **Sgt** 'Jacko' **Jackson** and **Cpl** 'Cowy' **Coward.**

Next on the agenda was a course of various rope obstacles, which caused a few laughs. Several rope burns later we had reached the final challenge, a large gap spanned by six rope swings. **Sgt** ' Denise Van' **Haughton** proved to be the Tarzan of the Troop managing three ropes, the rest of us being more like Jane managing one or two. Moving on we made our way to our most challenging task yet, a succession of bridges, ropes and scramble nets strung high in the trees. This proved to be too much for a few of us but most plodded bravely, or stupidly depending on your point of view, over the course. Once all feet were firmly planted on the ground again we set of for our final command task.

Stuck behind enemy lines with only one boat and several pieces of important equipment, we had to escape. Our only way out was the river and unfortunately the equipment was not waterproof, several minutes later the equipment was strapped into the boat and our worried faces were looking towards a very cold and fast flowing river. The first half of our team plunged into the icy depths whilst the rest searched down river for enemy traps. Moving down the river as carefully as possible we were soon knocked off our feet and shot down the rapids like crazed Pooh sticks. We would have surely drowned if **LCpl John Blowes** hadn't wedged his leg in a tree just below the surface plugging the river and saving our lives. During the second stage of the river **Sig** 'Cockney' **Mackay** managed to get stuck under the boat but was retrieved looking slightly blue. A few problems later we had reached the end of the river stage, very cold and slightly bruised, and hauled our cargo to the safety of a convenient bridge. The day was rounded off with a Ten pin bowling contest and lottery syndicate scratchcard bonanza. Congratulations to **Cpl Mick Rees** and **Dave Thom,** our local Army Welfare Officer, for organising such a successful day.

The Troop would also like to wish **Sig Becky Connor**, luck with her pregnancy and we hope she will keep in touch in the future.

POTENTIAL JNCO CADRE COURSE
22 NOVEMBER TO 4 DECEMBER 1998
A SOLDIER'S VIEW

NOTES FROM SIG SLATER- STUDENT

It all began when I got the joining instructions from the MTWO. I thought to myself, 'What has the Boss done to me now? He is sending me to Sennybridge in the middle of winter for a Potential JNCO Course, which will mean long days and early starts along with the usual wet and cold mornings.' So my first thoughts were ones of anxiety and doubt over the course content. It all started with detailed briefing from **SSgt Eric** 'Green Machine' **Strefford** and **SSgt Andy** 'Gadget Man' **Evans.** They painted a wonderful picture for us stating that there would be lots of food, gentle training and generally a really good time to be had by all 'NOT'. Gentle words of encouragement were given by **SSgt Strefford** and **SSgt Evans** after the briefing.

The course had started, I think, on the Sunday morning when the students gathered for an admin briefing from the DS. They carried out an in-depth brief and stressed the importance of motivation. Morale among the students seemed to be high, but there were still 12 days to go. The first few days seemed a bit hectic with a high emphasis on both classroom and practical training. There was plenty of physical activities as well. We also began to form up in our sections to strengthen our teamwork. Teamwork was obviously the watchword of **Sgt** 'Scouse' **Peters,** as he was continually stressing this throughout all activities. During this initial phase all sections began to gel together and to prepare for the forthcoming Shakedown Exercise and the FTX. The Shakedown Exercise came upon us very quickly and the days became very long and testing. The Shakedown phase allowed us all to put into practice all that had been taught during the first few days. We all had to prepare a ten minute lesson and also to practise the Orders process. At times there did not seem to be enough hours in the day to accomplish everything but we struggled through. Prior to the Shakedown Phase we had, all been eating centrally but had now moved onto 24hr Rat-packs. These were filling but we missed the gourmet meals that had been prepared by the Chef, **LCpl Morley.** Food was also very important to the DS, and as **Sgt** 'Taff' **Williams** stressed, 'Food is Fuel'. We were fortunate for the weather during the Shakedown as it was the usual Sennybridge cold, but at least it stayed dry. We practised all the skills we had been taught during the initial phase, with varying degrees of success, and as **SSgt Evans** pointed out, 'Now is the time to make mistakes, not during the FTX'. At last the FTX phase began, with a great deal of panic and confusion, as we were bugged out at 0400 from our camp location to our initial hide locations. My section were soon settled into their field routine and working on all cylinders, with **Sig Tom Hanks** providing the morale boosts we needed, especially when Orders needed to be given early or late. The FTX was arduous and everyone found it hard going both mentally and physically, so this was when we all pulled together and helped each other as much as we could. The FTX finished with a Battle Shooting Exercise. We had to occupy a Defensive Position and provide fire support, if required, for our Comms Site. This was enjoyed by all. Finally it was Endex and we were finished on Sennybridge but not with the course, as we still had all the stores to clean and then prepare for our end of course drill parade. It was great to be back in barracks and to appreciate sleeping in a nice warm bed again after Sennybridge. However, this was balanced against kit preparation and ensuring that our boots were 'Highly Polished' ready for the parade. We practised Drill all day in order to get it right. At the end of that day 'It had all been worth it'.

The day of the parade began early with last minute checks of uniform prior to the inspection, but finally we were ready to march onto the square. The parade itself went well, and I was shocked and delighted to be named as Top Student for the course. I felt that I should share it with the others from my Section, as we had become a good working team. After the parade the course and the DS sat down to an end of course Lunch and the bar was opened for us all to have a couple of well deserved drinks. We also said goodbye to **Sgt Peters** and wished him well on his next posting. We also wished good luck to all those lucky (?) enough to be selected for next years course, they will need it.

EXERCISE SPARTAN HIKE 1999 - ALPINE SKIING
by LCpl Sweeney

In the early hours of the 2 January, when the New Year had barely had time to wear off, four members of the newly crowned Corps Champions headed off under the command of **2Lt Fi** 'why won't you let me drive?' **Stewart,** bound for Serre Chevalier, Southern France to compete in the UK Land Command Skiing Championships. With the recent shock victory at the Corps Championships (well done to 7 and 16 Sigs anyway!) held in Kaprun, Austria the team were still buzzing on 'race adrenalin' and high hopes were already pinned on securing some more swag for the Alpine trophy stash. Twenty-four hours of motorway, the usual ferry dramas and an overdose on imperial mints, a slightly less buzzing (in that sense anyway!) ski team arrived in the World Downhill Champions territory, hail **Luc Alphand**! His picture on every billboard, in every shop window and even in the bar, if you didn't know of him already, you would by the end of the Championships.

The first week consisted of precious training days at Les Deux Alpes, due to the fact that there was no snow in Serre Chevalier. The journey of 1 hour each way was made worth while by the awesome glacier conditions, and the much needed instruction from **Cpl Andy** 'BASI' **Dawson.** During the training week we forged close relations with another team headed by an unmistakable character and former member of the Regiment, identifying himself as **Capt** 'Robbie' **King**, now the Adjutant of Cambridge UOTC. In his unique style he produced much of the entertainment in the days to come. With only two days before the start of the competition the team had already incurred two injuries - one ski related and the other Apres-ski related. **LCpl Chris** 'Who's got my ump training managed to lock onto shades ?' **Sweeney**, whilst practising the necessary speed (and destroy) a snowboarder whilst rendering himself unconscious, making full use of the E 111. Whilst the previous evening returning from a night socialising in Le Frog, **2Lt Fi** 'Zebedee' **Stewart** had a close encounter with a magic roundabout in the nearby park, and no more than 5metres away from the door of the apartment, **Cpl Andy** 'Ahh me ribs are killing me' **Dawson** managed to slip and bruise a rib or two.



Cpl Dawson

Finally the first race day arrived and the seeding Giant Slalom run was eagerly participated by all 137 competitors, showing determination and drive commendable of any Ski Sunday athlete. Day two was a team event, and the CO, **Lt Col Mackenzie** and the Adjt, **Capt Julius Caesar** could be heard from the side of the piste rallying their support despite the early morning start time of 0700hrs. The third race saw the team slalom take shape amongst a sea of blue and red poles with all team members successfully negotiating their way down, the best skiers, including **Cpl Andy** 'Banana' **Dawson** setting off in the dark. The individual slalom seemed to bring out something not yet seen in **LCpl** 'Do you know why they call me River?' **Johnston**'s character, as an obsession with the reverse block technique saw him hitting every pole even if it wasn't within striking distance. The penultimate race was the Super G, a tense stage of the competition for those hoping to qualify for the Army Championships. Helmets were worn by all competitors on the last day of racing which was an extended Super G in lieu of the Downhill, due to the lack of snow. A race which takes superior courage to attempt and was bravely attacked by all, and saw the predictable number of crashes, only one from our team. **LCpl Chris** 'Have you seen my -shades?' **Sweeney** managed to take out a double gate (and his shoulder) in the process.

Come presentation night the team did themselves and the Regiment proud, winning the 5 Div combinations Alpine/Nordic trophy, and the Alpine combination second. Later that night the team departed Le Frog bar having achieved what they had come to do, despite three out of four of the team members never having raced at Divisional level before. Congratulations to **Cpl Andy Dawson** and **LCpl Chris Sweeney** for qualifying to go on to compete in the Army Championships.



Our victorious skiers - Cpl Dawson and Cpl Sweeney

EXERCISE NORDIC DRAGON
20 NOVEMBER - 20 DECEMBER 1998
by Sig Lee

Team members:

Lt Ben White	**WO2 (QMSI) Smith**
LCpl Dave Orme	**LCpl Phil McDiarmid**
Sig Tony Chapman	**Sig Phil Lee**

This newly formed team departed for Sweden on 20 November in high spirits for their four weeks of Nordic ski training. The team led by **Lt Ben** 'Chocaholic' **White** arrived at Idre Hall with much hard work ahead of them. The training was undertaken by **WO2 (QMSI)** 'Earl Blitzer' **Smith** and was definitely harder than most of the team had anticipated, but with Smudge's PT Corps background we shouldn't have been surprised. So with many references to our training and that of the Jamaican Bobsleigh team, 'Coach' set about trying to turn five uncoordinated Non-Skiers into a half decent cross country team. We soon set into a hard routine of morning technique lessons followed by endurance sessions in the afternoon. Just to make things harder we had to contend with temperatures dropping to -12, before wind-chill.

To relax we were allowed Saturday night off in the local Swedish disco. Our dreams of dancing the night away with leggy Swedish blondes evaporated, when 'the reality of night life in a country where Phil Collins is still in the Top 10' hit home. **LCpl Phil** 'Social hand grenade' **McDiarmid** really cheered us all up with stories of his first Norway, his second Norway, and so on ('No really **Phil**, tell us again how you drove your BV whilst chipping ice off your mast in the down draught of a Puma, while going through the ice in an avalanche.'). **LCpl** 'Dangerous Dave' **Orme** tried livening things up with a series of death defying, equipment destroying stunts, while **Sigs Phil Lee** and 'Leon' **Chapman** set about studying foreign literature.

Other Units training in Sweden were amazed at our unconventional technique, state of the art equipment and impeccable dress. The Exercise was a great success with all ranks becoming (quite!) competent skiers, and thanks must go to our ever patient 'Coach'.

16 SIGNAL REGIMENT

EXERCISE PIPEDOWN

Alpine ski racing, how easy is that? All you have to do is point your skis downhill, get through the course quicker than everyone else, and you've won! Or that is what a lot of people think. However, it is a bit different when you are faced with a sixty degree slope, and you know that if you loose control at the wrong time, you are getting the ambulance sledge down with two broken legs.

Ex Pipedown is the Divisional Alpine Ski Championships. Ten days of racing in Les Contamines in the French Alps. To prepare for the competition you first have to learn how to race - getting out of the skis close together (everybody look at me) 'punter' siding. For training purposes, we were first put through the Corps race training camp at Zell am See in Austria, concluding in the Corps Championships. This is where you first find out that everyone involved in racing is actually a complete lunatic once they have skis on. After the third day I was wondering whether the instructors actually knew what traversing was! **Sig John Cox,** however, doesn't have a problem with the fear factor, but this probably comes down to him being the blindest man in NATO. We trained at short swings (slalom), and we trained at long swings (giant slalom). On the edge, off the edge, on the other edge, on the outside ski and then with only one ski. We thought we were quite good. Then we tried racing. The gates were positioned and the course was set, all we had to do was get down it. So there you are, you have your seed number, you are at the start gate about to break the clocking barrier, you remember the training, you are ready - bag's of aggression .... five, four, three, two, one, GO.

You have good races and you have races where you take time out to have a bit of a sit down and look around. We did quite well as a team, leaving for the Christmas break with medals and high spirits. Then onto the 'Divs' for a real eye-opener. Longer, harder courses, and competitors from the top teams who ski all year round. The races start, Slalom and GS -you know what you are doing. Then there was Super G. Time to put the helmet on. Longer skis and a much quicker course, with speeds at thirty to forty mph and a bit of 'air time' thrown in for good measure. The ten days flew past. With the top sixty-three racers going onto the Army Championships (unlucky number sixty-four), the rest of us idiots will just have to try harder next season.

INDOOR HOCKEY LEAGUE

The Rhine Armed Forces hockey club was starting at the beginning of November under the driving influence of the CO, **Lt Col James,** to play in the local civilian area indoor league. The team is open to all members of the British Armed Forces and civilian attached personnel, although at present the bulk of the squad is made up of 16 Sig Regt personnel. The first half of the season has seen the team trying to come to terms with the different skills required for the indoor game, as most members had not played this fast and furious version of the game for many a year. The team has steadily improved over the course of the season, with **Mr Dave Dart** and **Maj Andy Williams** now providing the backbone of the side in midfield. This gradual improvement is surprising our civilian counterparts during our return matches, and should mean that we are able to turn some of our close defeats from the first half of the season into wins.



The Indoor Hockey League Team

MOUNTAIN TRAINING WITH GEBIRGSJÄGERBATALLION 233

16 Sig Regt have a long standing friendship with 233 GebirgsJager, a German Mountain Infantry Battalion based in Mittenwald, Bavaria. During the period 9 January-5 February 1999, I **(SSgt Mark Bullivant)** was invited to join 4 Kompanie for their annual Winter Mountain Training. On arrival at Mittenwald I was met by **Oberleutnant v.Witzendorf** of 2 Platoon, and introduced to **Stabsunteroffizier's** 'Blacky' **Schwarz** and **Mathias Goetzke**, who were to be my mentors for the next four weeks. The first phase of training consisted of a week Ski Marching around the local peaks of Mittenwald. This was carried out under the watchful eye of the resident **Burgsfuhrer Oberfeldwebel, Florde Hagn**. A typical ski march entailed a four hour, 1000m ascent followed by a two hour descent of the same route. The average distance covered was around 15km, carrying bergens. Mastering the art of the German Army ski touring proved to be a nightmare for me, but endless entertainment for my comrades. By the end of the week I had earned the nickname 'Eddie the Eagle'.

The following week saw the Kompanie deploy to the Michelfeld training area for Ex Winter Biwak, a winter battle camp/mountain survival exercise. The Exercise began with a gruelling 10km ski march into the training area carrying full CEFO, bergens and weapons. On arrival Kompanie positions were dug in, along with snow holes, which were to act as our patrol base throughout the Exercise. The whole of the Exercise was on skis and consisted of fighting patrols, ambush drills, heliborne insertions by Bell Huey and night navigation. Instruction was given on various types of snow holes, igloos, fire trench and defence positions. The Exercise concluded with section attacks and a long ski out of the training area.

The weekend gave us a chance to recover before deploying to the Bundeswehr mountain hut at Bad Reichenhall. Located at 1600m in the Reitealpe training area, the hut provided an ideal base for our eight day Wintkampf. Over 2 metres of snow fall in the first three days did not deter our training, and daily ski marches were conducted to the various peaks in the area. Training was given in avalanche rescue, first aid, emergency stretchers and rope work, culminating in an Avalanche Rescue and Casevac Exercise. The final day consisted of a Kompanie Ski Competition with 2 Platoon taking the first prize, followed by a social function in true Gebirsjäger style.

On return to Mittenwald I was given an introduction to the German Infantry Fighting Vehicles and a chance to travel in the Fuchs Armoured Personnel Carrier and the Weisel Armoured Weapons Carrier. It was now time to hand in my equipment, exchange presentations and take part in the final Kompanie deployment to the local night-club. Overall the attachment gave a good insight into how a German Mountain Infantry Kompanie operates in a winter mountain environment. 4/GebJgrBtl proved to be the perfect hosts and many new friendships were made. Many thanks go to **Maj Louise Tomkins** for making the attachment possible and to **Hauptmann Carstens,** OC 4 Kornpanie, and all members of 2 Platoon for putting up with me.

DAIMLER-BENZ VOICE TESTING

16 Sig Regt has been drafted in to help a German Company build the ultimate in car accessories. An in-car computer allows drivers to operate the windscreen wipers, lights and choose CD tracks, with a simple spoken command. The voice-activated system is designed to improve safety by allowing drivers to keep their hands on the steering wheel whilst operating various functions. The system has already been adopted by Mercedes and BMW in Germany and the USA, but there are also plans for versions in Italy, Spain, France, Japan and in the UK. During research, however, it was discovered that the computer could not understand some of the broad local dialects found within Britain. As a result, Daimler Benz sought the help of 16 Sig Regt to 'teach' the computer how to cope with the vagaries of the English accent. The soldiers were required to read out loud lists of words, including place names, numbers and simple commands like 'turn CD off'. It is hoped that the engineers will now be able to assimilate the recordings and design a programme to cope with every accent from 'Scouser' to 'Scotsman'!



Cpl Windsor, Sgt Goldsworthy and Sig Barron taking part in the Daimler-Benz voice testing

230 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj I. L. Smart**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) A. F. Churchward**

2LT COVEY-CRUMP'S ATTACHMENT

After leaving Sandhurst, I spent six weeks on attachment to 16 Sig Regt before going on the Troop Commanders Course. I spent the vast majority of my attachment with 230 Sig Sqn. Initially being attached to TNO 14 led by **Lt Lucy Thirsk** and then later to TNO 16 whose Troop OC, **Lt Phil Connor**, was away skiing. The Squadron had a lively atmosphere and I was made to feel very welcome. Two out of the six weeks was spent on Exercise. It was nice to know that in the real world we had warm tents to sleep in and a chef who cooked doughnuts, as well as a vehicle to work from. After being threatened with Court Martial for damaging some Crypto and a DM4000 fine for environmental damage all in the name of a wind up, I learned a valuable lesson - don't trust anyone! During my six week attachment, the Regiment had an Opeval. When the team came round and asked where the Troop OC was, **Sig Daz Kirby** dropped me in it by pointing at me. I was whisked away to be interrogated, protesting all the while! Towards the end of the attachment, all eyes turned towards the future deployment to Kosovo (or Greece for some). I wish them all well and hope they have a quiet tour -watch out for the sunburn!

TRUNK NODE 015
KOSOVO PRE-DEPLOYMENT PREPARATION

Tp Comd	**2Lt S. Gladwin**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt R. Marshall**

Phone Sky Television because we, and a large group of friends, are going on holiday to Greece. The time has come for the Regiment to go an Operational Tour, and it has fallen to 230 Squadron to provide the Trunk



The Nordic Ski Team

Communications for the Rear Support Command. Location: Thesalonika, a port on the Greek coast, a thriving metropolis in the centre of a tourist haven. The Regiment has been thrown into a maelstrom of activity in preparation for the upcoming Operation Coca Cola, sorry Agricola. The boys, in-between briefings and int sums, have been busy on the vehicle park ensuring that all of the deploying vehicles are up to scratch, and at the time of writing, have just completed a Board of Officers. We are able to report that as a Squadron we are 'green and ready to go! We now await the UNTAT briefing, and then it is possible that the next article from this Squadron will be from Kosovo.

255 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj A. Ross**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) A. Aimer**

MAN TROOP
EXERCISE SJUSJOEN BACKSTOP

Tp Comd	**Lt M. Crinnion**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt S. Crawford**

The first training session I **(LCpl Tracy Milligan)** attended nearly put me off going on Ex Sjusjoen Backstop. It was fartleg training led by **Lt Crinnion** and for 5-6 miles I thought I was going to die. Similar training sessions followed but they proved to be very beneficial for the skiing that was in store for us. The journey to Norway was long with a few hic-ups along the way. On the way to collect one of our instructors, I opened a bottle of coke which exploded and I soaked for the rest of the journey. When we got to the port in Denmark, **Cpl** 'Bananaman' **Blears, Sig Pete Beardsley, Sig Crayton, Sig Kathy Williams** and I, went successfully looking for a bar to have a social drink. On arrival at Larvik we lost **Pete** who had been collared by security guards and strip searched, which he proceeded to tell us all about for the four hour drive to Sjusjoen, where we were staying. The Skiing was amazing. I'd never even had skis on before, and by the end of the week we were going on 20km loops around a gorgeous lake. The day that made it all worthwhile for me, was when we went on a 25km trek across some of the best scenery Norway had to offer I was tired, hungry and my legs were sore but when I finally got to the top of the hill and looked down on everything below, I felt a sense of achievement that I had never felt before. We got ski-lifts down to the bottom where the mini-bus was waiting for us. **Kathy, SSgt** 'Dad' **Crawford** and I, got on one lift together. At the bottom, when we were getting off, 'Dad' got trapped and fell which meant the ski-lift had to stop.

I couldn't believe how much I had learnt in four weeks. It was such hard work and most mornings I didn't want to get out of bed. One of **Kathy's** favourite sayings was 'You're living up a tree', which we heard every time we were challenged to do something different. We had a trip to an Alpine Ski Slope where we were told to egg it down to the bottom and we'd get the ski lift back to the top. **Kathy** and I were a bit wary about this, and it took us a while to pluck up the courage to proceed down the hill. On the way down I hit a bump and dobbed. **Kathy** kept falling and got so worked up that she took her skis off and started walking to the top. I thought this was a very sensible idea, because if I had carried on I'd have broken my neck, so I followed behind her. Our instructor, **Mick,** persuaded us to try again and after about an hour we got to the bottom safely and extremely happy that we'd achieved another challenge that had been presented to us. There were a few races to determine which lads would be in the team which would then go to France after Christmas leave. **Kathy** and I were there as guinea pigs to see if there would be a girls team this year. Personally, I think we proved that girls can be just as good as lads at this sport. There were things I enjoyed and things I didn't enjoy, but it was an experience that I'm glad I had the opportunity to have. It brought out a lot of things in us, as people. We learnt to live very closely with each other, to be a team and it gave us confidence to do things that some of us would never have dreamed of doing before. I'm planning on going back this year and I hope other girls and lads will follow.

FORWARD SUPPORT TROOP
EXERCISE INSTANT WHIP

Tp Comd	**Lt E. J. Bruce**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt G. S. Roberts**

The Exercise started well, with constant rain and drizzle for the first three days turning our Squadron harbour area into a bog. For these three days we participated in interesting lessons of First Aid, NBC and Driver Training. In the evenings, 255 Sig Sqn and 230 Sig Sqn tried outwitting each other with tactical recces, observation posts and various night patrols. Then the fun really began, as all the FFR dets deployed with their respective SANs, MANs and Trunk Nodes but not for long. After 48hrs we was recalled back to A Ech to complete some unknown command task. Rumours and good advice was rife, but it was not until I was in the Ops vehicle with the Ops officer and RSM did I believe what I was being told. My mission was; 'You are to utilise the four FFRs with crews, and deploy to trig point 715 in Sauerlands and set up a rebroadcast station. Oh, and by the way you probably won't get the vehicles to that point! When you've finished with the vehicles they are to be left with the nearest Trunk Node. Thanks!' This wasn't a problem in theory. After preparing the dets and warning the crews, we were off. Things couldn't be better, until we got lost and a trailer ended in a garden! At 2000hrs, five hours after we had initially deployed, we finally arrived at the correct location. Having already bogged in several dets over the Exercise **Cpl Dan Hitchmough** and I **(Cpl Biddle)** decided to leave three dets at the bottom of the hill and ferry the kit as far as possible with one rover. This left us with 500 metres to climb to the trig point - with a lot of kit to carry (3 x VRC353, 2 x EVHF, a 1500watt generator, 2 x 12V radio batteries, a 9 x 9 tent complete, 2 x jerrycans of water, 1 x jerrycan benz, 2 x 10 man ration packs plus, last but not least, everyone's personal kit with weapons!) Even with eight of us carrying the equipment, it took three trips each to get it all to the top of the hill. Once all the equipment was at the top, it didn't take long for us to get in and have it working. At 0200hrs we had a visit from the CO, **Col Jarnes**, who'd tabbed 10kms with his drivers, **Sigs Nikki Kenyon** and **Rob Brown** to reach our location. Unfortunately, the 9 x 9 tent was already jam packed. In the morning when the sun finally rose, we realised that the admin area was very open and could be seen from every angle, so we moved it 20 metres backwards and cammed it up with freshly cut spruces. Now that everything was tactically cammed up, it was time for a few lessons in basic re-broadcasting and home-made antennas, as everyone apart from **Cpl Dan Hitchmough** and I had never touched that side of comms before - especially as we had two Data Ops on their first 'real' Exercise since training and a Liney with us. On tear-down, although it had been a good Exercise, we were all pleased to see that the 4 tonner had got 200mtrs further up the track to the HLS than we had. Funnily enough the kit went down faster than it went up! We can all communicate and survive with our vehicles, but every now and then it pays to communicate in different environments, which we proved we can do on this Exercise.

EXERCISE INSTANT WHIP - THE DRIVING PHASE

After a very busy 1998, 255 Sig Sqn returned from Christmas and New Year leave to another hectic start. After an intensive week of ATD training run by **Sgt** 'Kit' **Knight,** the Squadron prepared itself for Ex Instant Whip '99. Once again, with bergens packed and vehicles checked we braced ourselves for the CO's taskings! With Trunk Node 099 and two Squadron SAN groups, we deployed into the frozen backyard of Germany, and the Exercise began in earnest. As usual the 'man power' consisted of a lot more power than man and it was necessary for the Sergeants to pull a few stags. I found it quite amusing when **Sgt Knight** complained about the amount of stags he'd had, asking if he had extras or something, until he was reminded that he had actually written the guard list himself.

With the Exercise progressing into mid week TN 099 led by **Lt Bruce**, was tasked to do a spot of Bridge Building at the nearby German Armoured Barracks. With a few mutterings of, 'I thought we joined the Signals, not the Engineers.' all non essential personnel and vehicles made their way to our set grid reference where we were met by a German soldier carrying a radio. 'Follow me,' said the soldier in German. Unfortunately, as I **(Cpl Paul)** was the only idiot wearing the colloquial badge everyone looked in my direction for a translation! We drove into the German Training Area and waited with baited breath at the top a steep incline, we were all expecting the worst (probably a couple of hours manual labour and back breaking bridge building). Our guide mumbled a few words into his radio, in the wood line to our rear a thundering engine sprang to life. With the ground trembling beneath our feet, to our delight, a Bundeswehr

Tank Bridge Layer rounded the corner (Hooray, no manual bridge building for us)! Our German counterparts proceeded in giving us an excellent display of modern bridge building explaining every detail at the same time, I must at this stage apologise to one and all for my shaky, if not colourful, translating! Once the demonstration was completed we were given a chance to use the Training Area Cross-Country Driving Course. With engines revving and gritted teeth, our vehicles began to make their way to start point. It was rumoured that the CO had said he wanted to see at least five vehicles bogged in before we left! True or False we don't know, however if true, the Colonel soon got his wish with **Sig** 'Coops' **Cooper** being first to sink his GS Bedford into a rather deep puddle. Luckily our German counterparts were at hand with their Leopard I tank to tow the Bedford out. I do feel however that **Sigs Cooper** and **Stewart** should be mentioned for the fact that they must have passed their military swimming tests just trying to attach the tow rope! With vehicles racing up and down the training area, a special mention should go to **Sig Nikki Kenyon** who under direction from **Capt Percival** managed to turn the CO's new Landrover into a submarine, thus giving the troops a much needed morale boost!

During the cross country phase, the Germans mentioned that they could give a few soldiers a drive in the Leopard Tank. Being duty translator, I felt well within my rights to keep this under my hat until I'd had my go! After a few pointers from the Tank Commander, I released the brakes and hit the accelerator. I thought I would try and mimic the Challenger II sales video, however, I was unaware that the front splash plate was not working and proceeded to race across the training area with half of it landing in my face! Both the OC and **Sgt Knight** tried to flag me down to retrieve the CO's Landrover from its watery grave, but I was in a little world of my own, one where the 'Fun Police' couldn't take me alive! Once I ran out of training area, I reluctantly handed back the tank controls to their rightful owner and proceeded to survey the destruction surrounding me, with vehicles in various states of disarray. Half an hour later, with our vehicles recovered, the fun was over and it was back to the Exercise. A big mention has to go to **Sig Sam Gontier** as he managed to shatter the clutch plate on his vehicle (CP 16) after driving over one mound! A big thank you should also go to **Sgt Mick Eccles** and the rest of the REME crew who worked well into the early hours sorting out our mess (what's the saying lads, 'we bend 'em you mend 'em!').



Another one bites the dust



Sig Kenyon with the CO's new amphibious Wolf



Members of Trunk Node 099 on a German Armoured Bridge Layer

21 SIGNAL REGIMENT (AIR SUPPORT)



220 SIGNAL SQUADRON
ARMY BOBSLEIGH

On Saturday the 16 January, **LCpl Dave** 'Twinkle Toes' **Heath**, a Technician serving with 220 Sig Sqn at RAF Bruggen competed in his first ever Army Novice Bobsleigh Championships at Innsbruck, Austria. Ably assisted by his trusty brakeman from 33 Eng Regt, and calling on experience limited to a few practice runs, **LCpl Heath** pushed off the 200kg of fibre glass and jumped in. So started his first competitive 2-man lauf. It took just 56 Seconds and they achieved speeds of over 75mph down the icy run. Thanks to some excellent driving and brake work the pair ended the competition in a very respectable third place and earned an invitation to the Army and Inter Services Championships to be held in February at Lillehammer, Norway.

Many thanks go to the Ped Flight at RAF Bruggen who gave their financial backing, to the Troop for all their support, and to the Corps Games Club who have offered financial support to help **LCpl Heath** get to Lillehammer. Watch this space for more news of 220s Tobogganing Tech in the next edition of *The Wire*, and in the meantime get the beers in **Dave**! Any members of the Corps wishing to glean more information on this dangerous but exhilarating sport can contact **LCpl Dave Heath** on Bruggen Mil 2569.



LCpl Dave Heath (left) and his brakeman LCpl Adam Grant (from 33 Engineer Regt) in Innsbruck

LIFE IN H TROOP

Tp Comd — **Lt Toby Heath**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt** 'Taff' **Bryant**

H Tp has once again seen a busy period before Christmas come and go and now are experiencing times of great change within the Troop. With the imminent closure of RAF Laarbruch and the disbandment of our sister Troop based there, many changes are afoot to enable the remaining elements of 220 Sig Sqn to support RAF Bruggen to the highest standard.

H Tp consists of some 35 Telemechs and a small technical support staff, who together are responsible for the installation, maintenance and upkeep of the cable infrastructure and airfield communications equipment deployed around RAF Bruggen. The Troop works hard and plays hard, and benefits from the many sporting and social activities on the Station. Despite being small in numbers in comparison to our RAF counterparts we still manage to give a battling account of ourselves. (Some of us doing more than our fair share of the battling!)

Looking forward, the Troop will continue to carry out its numerous roulement tours to theatres near and far, and many more deployments are around the corner. Therefore anyone who thinks telemechs get it easy stuck on a big RAF Station should come and check out our year planner.

HELLO'S to:

SSgt 'Taff' **Bryant** and Family (congratulations on the birth of **Erin**). **SSgt Gaz Tinsley** and Family from AFCENT, **Sgt Harry Harris** from Laarbruch, **Sgt** 'Scouse' **Deegan** from up north, **Cpl Paul Walker** from 216 (Para) Sig Sqn, **LCpl Gwennap, Sigs Sharratt, Brooker, Tweddell, Dugan, Brampton, McGloughlin.**

GOODBYES to:

SSgt Lloyd Bath to 16 Sig Regt, **Sgt Dave Scragg** Civ Div.

CONGRATULATIONS to: LCpl Jim Figel on his promotion.

30 SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO — **Lt Col Mike Lithgow MBE**
RSM — **WO1 (RSM) Gary Johnson**

250 GURKHA SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd — **Maj Richard Wilson**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) Chandra**

SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS

The past couple of months have seen a major turn around of personnel in the SHQ, specifically with the Sqn Ops. **WO2 (YofS) Pete Goodliff** was the first to arrive from 40 Sig Regt to replace **WO2 (YofS) Kev Robinson** who is off to the Regt Trg Wing. Then within the week **SSgt (FofS) Sue King** from 15 Sig Regt replaced **SSgt (FofS) Tess Brown** who is posted to 8 Inf Bde Sig Sqn on promotion to WO2. Finally **Lt Jason** 'Short Bloke' **Nichols** (Acting Ops Offr/2IC) was posted to 1 ADSR, so **Capt Jules Hill** was short toured from Bosnia to assume the appointment of OC/21C/Ops Offr until **Maj Richard Wilson, Ruth** and family arrived to take control of the helm.

The Squadron programme is full with personnel deployed with a VSC501 det to Slovenia with the AMF (L) and others on short NTM's to deploy on Operations. The Squadron will be picking up additional tasks in the New Year, which will provide opportunities to deploy in support of the AMF (L), ARRC and NATO to Germany, Italy, Florida and Cyprus. There is also the mandatory PT, Sport and social activities that ensure that the weeks are full and the pace of life fast.

OPERATION JURAL

Op Jural is a deployment of the British Army and the Royal Air Force in Saudi Arabia with responsibilities to protect Kuwait including the Saudi region with the help of USA, France and Saudi Elms. Gurkha Soldiers from 250 Sig Sqn are based in the capital of Riyadh and are attached to the RAF's Tactical Communication Wing (TCW). Our main task is to provide world-wide communication including internal secure communications using Euromux. Total tour of Op Jural is normally four months.

The RAF have some recreational facilities in the base where we pass our time with friends, either British or American and also the Americans run some sports competitions ie: Volley Ball, Football, Horse shoe, 5km run etc. However, the only down side is that alcohol cannot be consumed, unless at special functions held in the British embassy. A perk of the tour is R&R in Bahrain, which is a relaxed Islamic state, where you can get everything that is not normally available in more traditional countries. On R&R we were accommodated in a five star hotel.

EXERCISE SWAN CONNECTION

by Cpl. Shantiram, W Troop

The 30 Sig Regt took part in Ex Swan Connection that was held at the Llydd and Hythe Ranges in Southern England from 12-16 October 1998. There were 74 people involved in the Exercise, including the safety staff. All the range staff left Bramcote Camp three days prior to the main body for recce and familiarisation of ranges. It was the very first time 30 Sig Regt had used this range. There were more than six stands such as CQBR, AMM shooting moving targets from the moving vehicle, long range shoot for guns, zeroing points and falling plates shoot. The weather on the first two days was rainy and windy but later luckily it was bright and sunny throughout. As a safety supervisor, I really enjoyed operating the remote controlled targets on the fire and movement. It is very important to have knowledge of shooting moving targets and especially CQBR and dealing with own force casualties. The event was video taped and shown later during the debrief. We were not allowed to take any photographs due to security reasons. Lastly, I would personally encourage people to go and enjoy themselves, who haven't been there this year. It is good fun and at the same time gives you a lot of knowledge about who you are on the ranges. 30 Sig Regt will look forward this kind of opportunity in the future. So why not you to be a one of the volunteer to take part and enjoy.

256 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd — **Maj Jules Swindells**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) Steve Lockwood**

ALPHA TROOP

Tp Comd — **Capt** 'Who?' **Ingram**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt** 'Ikky' **Gratrick**

A Troop have continued to be busy with the usual workload: Operations Upminster, Palatine and Bolton and current preparations for Ex Cobb Ring in Florida. As the Regiment restructures, we have handed over two of our TRC 522 detachments to 258 Sig Sqn to fill their role as JTFHQI. We now sit and hope for some more kit so that we can fill the JTFHQ2 role. Ex Apocalypse Ram was a week long Military Training Exercise at Swynnerton. The traditional competition was run on the combat trail, practising fire and manoeuvre over obstacles. **Sig** 'Gung Ho' **Ashley** completed the course four times, beating **LCpl** 'Gunny' **Guntrip's** long standing record of three.



Cpl Grist breaks in a new pair of feet

The Troop says welcome back to **Capt** 'Lord Lucan' **Ingram** from Op Palatine who on his return set a personal best of 30mins in the Troop office before disappearing to who knows where! Also welcome to **John McCone, Nickie Ranon, Bishnu** and anyone else.

BRAVO TROOP

Tp Comd — **Capt Ben Fitch**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt Hurren**

Bravo Tp would like to welcome **SSgt Hurren, Sgt Paz, Cpl Nelson, Cpl Allen, Sig Dodgson** and **Sig Smart** to the Troop. We would also like to congratulate **Sig** 'Taff' **Roberts** and his wife on having a baby boy and wish them all the best on his posting to 4 Armed Bde. Congratulations to Sig **Steve** 'Longshanks' **Air** who recently got married and comes into work every morning with a permanent smile on his face.

At this time the Troop has personnel in Germany and Antarctica on different Exercises. Also five members of the Troop are in Kenya on Ex Grand Prix including **Sig Jonny** 'Fat Boy' **Devine** and **LCpl Neil** 'Geordie' **Coils** enjoying the sun and sending postcards just to wind the Troop up. Everybody else in the Troop is having a quiet time under the supervision of **Dave Bennett.**



Members of 256 Sig Sqn presenting a cheque for £350 to the local hospital for a Community Resuscitation Unit

EXERCISE CYGNET VINE

Ex Cygnet Vine was yet another arduous Squadron deployment to Ayilos Nikolaos, Cyprus in September. With a bit of SATCOM and a slack handful of strategic HF we went for some rear link action in the sun.



Cpl Anscombe trys to get the better of Laura Croft again

The team was led by **Lt** 'Danny Boy' **Ingram, SSgt** 'Iky' **Gratrick** Karaoke night down the 'Orange Grove' will never be the same again. We were so busy that the station swimming pool, air condition gymnasium and clay pigeon range weren't on our agenda at all . . . Much! Some days it was so hot that we were climbing the walls, or the fence in the case of **Sig** 'John Denver' **Nicolson.** Before long his bags were packed, he was taken home by country roads, over rocky mountains high, so he could be leaving on a jet plane the very next day.

We balanced all the hard work with a bit of R&R. The Dehkalia water sports centre broke up a long day soaking up the sun with, water volleyball, canoeing, water skiing, swimming and racing around on some very fast racing jet skis.



Sgt Wesseldine and LCpl Fielding discuss the pros' and cons' of Strategic HF Communications

The new OC, **Maj Jules Swindells** managed to make it out for a fact finding visit, just in time for the R&R phase.

258 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj G. H. A. Odling**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) M. A. Webb**

NEW SQUADRON ROLE

Amidst a fanfare of Warning Orders and Mission Statements, 258 Sig Sqn has been announced as the new Joint Task Force Headquarters (JTFHQ) and Signal Squadron. The new role will take effect from 1 April 1999, but, needless to say, the midnight oil has already been burning in SHQ to ensure that all goes to plan on the big day. The Squadron has already begun the process of restructuring and procuring all the CIS, tentage and other stores needed to build a brand new Tri-Service Headquarters entirely from scratch. With other commitments still to be met, the Squadron faces a challenging, but potentially very rewarding time in the months ahead.

CHILDREN IN NEED - SPONSORED TRUCK PULL
20 NOVEMBER 1998

In response to a challenge from a local truck firm, fifteen of 258 Sig Sqn's finest (or should that be heaviest) turned out in force on 20 November 1998 to raise monies for Children in Need. Led by **WO2 (SSM)** 'Mr Motivator' **Webb**, the team of challengers had to race against teams from Warwickshire Fire Brigade and the Dennis Eagle Vehicle Company over a distance of 100 metres... pulling a 14 tonne refuse truck and then a fire engine. Amazing the lengths that some will go to in order to miss CO's PT.



LCpl Repworth giving it some!

Needless to say, the Squadron team won the day and returned as heroes, having raised just under £100 (at very short notice) and gained a mention on BBC 1's 'Live Children in Need'. The Squadron has been invited back next year for what is hoped will become an annual event in support of this extremely worthwhile cause.



The victorious 258 Signal Squadron Team led by WO2 Miles Webb pictured left

NOTICE

For: ROYAL SIGNALS CORPS FUND
Read: ROYAL SIGNALS
BENEVOLENT FUND

31ST (CITY OF LONDON) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS - SOUTHFIELDS

CO	**Lt Col L. F. Harrison TD**
RSM	**WO1 (RSM) Hall**

Having ended 1998 on a high note with the normal round of Squadron Christmas Parties, the Regiment returned from the Christmas Stand-down with renewed vigour to face the challenges of a New Year. With the last hangover and mince pie of Christmas still lingering, the Regiment swiftly launched itself back into training. The Regimental Officers all deployed to Longmoor on the 8 - 10 January for a Brigade Study Weekend, whilst the soldiers got stuck into trade training, recruit courses and bounty training days.

2(NC) SIGNAL BRIGADE STUDY WEEKEND
8-10 JANUARY 1999 LONGMOOR CAMP

It was with no small amount of enthusiasm that the Regimental Officers arrived in Longmoor on the first Friday after the New Year (honest). The weekend promised to be interesting due to the massive turn out from the Brigade and the calibre of the presenters. For the representatives from HQ R Signals the warning 'to duck' was issued as various post SDR questions flew around during the open forum session. Well done to **Capt Sarah Streete** of 56 Sig Sqn for being commended by the Brigade Commander for her presentation. Prior to the weekend, each Regiment had been tasked to supply a recruiting display board for the main theatre. RSM 31 Sig Regt (V), not known for doing things by halves, grabbed the task between his teeth and wouldn't let go until the Regiment had the biggest, all singing, all dancing display board that Longmoor had ever seen. Well done **WO1 (RSM) Hall** for your outstanding effort.

With the daytime presentations complete it was time to move on to the lighter aspects of the weekend. The evening activities started well with a talk from guest speaker **Jilly Cooper**. Having spoken about the research that she conducts for all of her books, we began to wonder if her next best-seller was going to be based on the comings and goings of an Officers' Mess - what an intriguing thought! We then moved onto supper and a games night. The CO, **Lt Col Linda Harrison,** led from the front as usual and did her bit by trying to bump up the team score in the golf game. All seemed to be well and quite respectable until the Brigade Boat Race Challenge took place. Although the Regimental Team did not win, they are convinced that they acquitted themselves well and did not have to resort to cheating - unlike some teams we could mention. Well done to **Capt Steve Goodburn, Capt Tony Potter, Capt Tim Winterson, Capt Mel Rayner, Lt Scott MacSween** and **2Lt Kieron Francis** for an honourable, if not successful attempt. To ensure that his Brigade Officers were in fine fettle the next morning, the Brigade Commander decreed that an early morning BFT was to take place. What an excellent start to a Sunday! It did the trick though and at least most people were in good order by the time the SOinC (A) gave his address. All together a very successful and worthwhile weekend.

MEDAL PRESENTATION

The other important part of the GOC's visit was a medal presentation to both TA and Regular soldiers. The recipients were as follows:

SSgt Dez Eldridge	- GSM and a GOC Northern Ireland's Commendation
WO2 (FofS) Bob Wymer	- LS & GC
WO2 (RQMS) Meg Garven	- TA Efficiency Medal
Cpl Pat Gould	- TA Efficiency Medal
LCpl Dave Misell	- TA Efficiency Medal



Back Row (L-R): SSgt Dez Eldridge, Cpl Pat Gould, WO2(FofS) Bob Wymer, WO2 (RQMS) Meg Garven, LCpl Dave Misell
Front Row (L-R): Mrs Maureen Gould, Miss Birgitte Vik, Maj Gen E J Webb-Carter OBE, Mrs Garven, Mrs Misell

The presentation went off without a hitch under the watchful eye of Acting RSM **WO2 (RQMS) George Coffin**. All the medal recipients had invited a number of friends and family to attend the proud occasion. Special mention goes to **Cpl Gould** who must have invited his whole clan. It was tremendous to see so much support from friends and family and it certainly made for an excellent evening of celebration. A big thank you goes to the GOC for presenting the medals and to the Master Chef **WO2 Fred Bramble** and his able assistant **Cpl Steve Howell** who yet again laid on a superb spread.



LCpl Dave Misell with his proud Mum

VISIT BY GOC LONDIST - MAJ GEN WEBB-CARTER

Having rounded off 1998 with a visit by DCinC Land, **Maj Gen Stokoe**, the Regiment started 1999 on a similar theme with a visit by the GOC LONDIST on 9 February 1999. The visit was a great success. Special congratulations go to **SSgt (YofS) McAuliffe** for an excellent presentation about the PLK Colours. Well done to the technicians **Sgt Oliver, Sgt Threadgold** and **SSgt Fisher** for managing to make 2nd line inspections sound interesting. Well done also to the LAD - **Capt Steve Goodburn, WO2 (AQMS) Andre Schrivener, Sgt Gunter** and **Sgt Jones** for an informative brief.

FAREWELL

The Regiment has two farewells, firstly to **Maj Joe Owen**, AGC(SPS)(V) who retires after more glorious years of service than he probably cares to remember. He performed a sterling job as RAO(V) for the Regiment and is now enjoying a well deserved rest, well at least from his second career anyway. We would like to extend our great thanks for the work that **Maj Owen** has done over the years and the commitment that he has shown to the Regiment. We would also like to wish him all the best in the future. Farewell also to the RSM, **WO1 (RSM) Duncan Hall,** who retires from Regular service after 22 years. We thank him for his dedication to the Regiment during his tour and wish him well in his new life in Civ Div with **Brigitte**.

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON - SOUTHFIELDS TAC

Sqn Comd	**Maj Chris Mahony**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Lovett**

WELCOME TO 1999

The Squadron is well underway with the activities of the New Year. The emphasis at the moment is trade training, as laid down by the current Yeoman, **WO2 Si** ' I may be short but I know my stuff' **Tyler**. The Regiment is raising its operator and technical standards with every weekend that takes place.

ARRIVALS

The Squadron is pleased to announce the arrival of **LCpl Cowlard** RAMC transferring from Special Forces. **LCpl Cowlard** has served with the Regiment in the past and will play a major part in the recruiting process currently in force here at Southfields. Welcome and we hope you enjoy your time back in the Squadron.

REGIMENTAL BURNS SUPPER - 30 JANUARY 1999

To commemorate the great Scottish Poet, Robert Burns, the Officers' and Warrant Officers' & Sergeants' Mess held a Burns Night Supper at Southfields TAC. The evening was greatly supported by both Messes. Those Scottish members of the Regiment are congratulated for the pride that they showed in their heritage by putting on such a wonderful display of tartans (a few Southern type people also made the effort, so well done for that). There also seemed to be a hidden agenda with a 'who can wear the biggest sporran competition'!

The entertainment for the evening began with the Commanding Officers' husband, **Alasdair**, executing a word perfect 'Address to the Haggis'. Following an excellent meal it was time for **SSgt** 'I am the best RTG in my quarter' **Loch** to deliver Burn's 'Address to the Toothache' and a fine job he did, well done 'Wullie'. To ensure that the evening ran smoothly and was executed in true highland fashion the event coordinator, **SSgt** 'If you're not a jock I don't want to know' **Bruce BEM**, imported a number of guests from North of the Border. These were in the form of an ex Scots Guards piper, **Mr Calum Bruce**, and a guest speaker, **Mr Mitch Bruce**, (is it coincidence that they all have the same surname????) who were both flown in from Fife in Scotland. **Mitch** carried out a perfect 'Immortal Memory to Robert Burns' and **Calum's** piping was excellent. They were both appreciated whole heartedly and the Commanding Officer and the Regiment would once again like to thank them both.

Further entertainment came from the Quartermaster, **Maj Ken Clark** and **SSgt Mick Johnson** with a joint effort of 'To a Mouse'. **SSgt Johnson** recited the poem in Burns' original words and the Quartermaster read his very clever translation into 'Queens English'. A very unusual way of reciting the poem, but very enjoyable to all that witnessed it. At least the non-Jocks could understand the translation! The remainder of the speakers were **Maj Brian How** and **Mr Colin Wilson** who proposed the 'Toast to the Lassies' and would still be speaking now if the PMC had not intervened. The 'Reply from The Lassies' was delivered by the Adjt, **Capt Mel Rayner,** who managed to get some revenge for the ladies.

The evening then concluded with a burst of inspiration in the form of a Ceili Band who played into the small wee hours of the morning. Such was the hour of departure, that most people stopped for breakfast on the way home! The Burns Supper was enjoyed by all those who attended. A very special thank you goes to **SSgt Craig Bruce** for his tremendous hard work and dedication and to the RSM for steering the 'ship'. All the other workers who played a part in the success of the night are thanked whole heartedly. We now look forward to next year to see if there are any more 'potential Jocks' within our Regiment who will come forward to organise the event.

41 (PLK) SIGNAL SQUADRON - COULSDON

Sqn Comd	**Maj Baker**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Watson**

CHRISTMAS BALL

To ensure that the year was rounded off on a high note, the Squadron held their annual Christmas Ball and Raffle on 19 December. The event was ably organised by the dynamic team of **LCpl Julia May** and **LCpl Maria Traynor**. New Recruit **Sig** 'not quite the OC' **Aoife Baker** won the first prize of a weekend away for two. **Sgt Brian Traynor** won two tickets to see Saturday Night Fever, and many others won equally exciting prizes. The Squadron were once again called upon to use their imagination and ingenuity to provide the evening's entertainment. The Ball was a tremendous success and proved yet again that 41 (PLK) Sig Sqn not only know how to party, but know how to do it in style!

EXERCISE WILLSWORTHY CHALLENGE
SQUADRON WEEKEND 15-17 JANUARY 1999

Our first Squadron Weekend of the year saw the OC Sqn, **Maj Steve Baker,** leading the Squadron quad biking amidst the muddy hills of Dartmoor.



OC Sqn, Maj Steve Baker, looking in serious need of a bath!

The Squadron left Coulsdon on a cold and rainy Friday night to drive what seemed to be the longest journey of our lives to Willsworthy Camp near Okehampton in deepest, darkest Devon. Thankfully, we awoke the next morning to sunny blue skies. We set off in high spirits to Ashcombe Activity Centre, where we undertook activities such as quad biking safaris, and slalom races (both forwards and backwards) around the track. **LCpl** 'Mudman' **Andy Wallace** deserves a particular mention for his enthusiastic efforts. No need to lean quite that far forward, but about time you had a bath anyway! **Sgt** 'Lean Mean Driving Machine' **Travis** demonstrated why he is NOT a panzer driver. Nice 360 spin - pity you didn't mean to !

The Commanding Officer, **Lt Col Linda Harrison**, Training Major, **Maj Alfie Brand** and RSM, **WO1 Duncan Hall** visited us on location. The CO proved that she is not afraid of getting her hands dirty. She donned waterproofs and set off on safari with the rest of the group - nice yellow overalls Ma'am!

ATTENTION ALL GOLFERS

Your problems are solved Golfballs that are truly
"SWIFT AND SURE"
The Museum are now selling the following Golfballs
inscribed with the Corp Logo

ROYAL SIGNALS

TITLEIST PTS WOUND – COST £6.50 PER PACK OF 3*
PINACLE GOLD – COST £4.00 PER PACK OF 3*
Also Golf Gloves – Excellent quality all weather gloves at £5.00 each*
*All costs are subject to change

ROYAL SIGNALS WHITE HELMETS POTENTIAL VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION

Royal Signals White Helmets, Blandford Camp
Blandford, Dorset
DT11 8RH

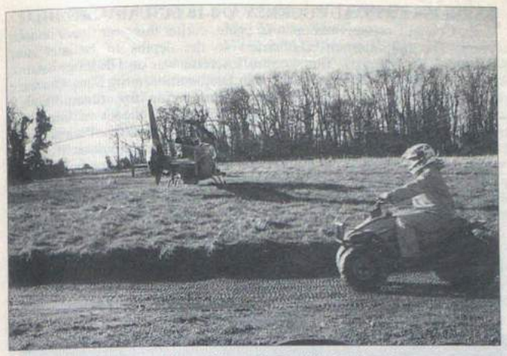
Number ..... Rank .....

Name ..... Initials .....

Trade ..... Class .....

Unit .....

Please register me to receive further information on selection for the Royal Signals White Helmets when details are available.



Commanding Officer, Lt Col Linda Harrison
sporting a particularly fetching set of yellow waterproofs

The afternoon saw teams racing skid-carts around the track. Pit-stop techniques left a lot to be desired - in the haste of competition many found themselves forcefully evicted from their carts. At least the best team won!



Sig Sethna looking quite at home in her 'Moon Buggy'

After a hard day on the track everyone enjoyed a relaxing 'social' on the Saturday night. This was excellent preparation for Sunday morning's BFT! What could be better than a run around Okehampton Camp on a cold, crisp winter morning with a snow covered Yes Tor in the background?

56 SIGNAL SQUADRON (V) - EASTBOURNE

Sqn Comd	**Maj Brian Howe**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Kevin Godden**

BACK TO WORK!

After a hectic but very successful year's training, the Squadron's main effort in December was to see out the old year in suitably festive style. We were glad of a relatively quiet month with a bit of time to relax and recuperate before the New Year's busy schedule kicked in. Which of course it did all too soon! And so, well rested, fortified with copious quantities of roast turkey and mince pies, washed down with (hopefully!) a generous helping of our loved ones' goodwill to all (TA) men (and women) for another year of Tuesday nights and weekends away, we embarked with renewed enthusiasm on the 1999 training programme.

CHRISTMAS PARTY 1998

The drill hall was positively heaving with humanity (mostly!) for the Squadron Christmas party on 19 December, not that you could really recognise it as a drill hall. Many thanks go to **Sgts Chris Maginnis** and **Martin Cooper** and their team for all their hard work in putting up the decorations and setting up table and chairs. (The crisp white table cloths would have done one of our Squadron VIP lunches in the field proud!) Thanks also to **Cpl Kyle Manns** and **Cpl Avril Tough** for organising the raffle. The display of prizes was a veritable Aladdin's cave! (Amazing what you can pick up in the 'Everything Under a Fiver' shop these days!) That, plus a (very loud!) disco and the usual sumptuous fare provided by chef, **Cpl Steve Howell**, ensured that a brilliant time was had by all. It was also a great way of saying thanks to our other halves for all their support over the year.

EXERCISE RED RAG II - 15-17 JANUARY 1999

Alas, all good things have to come to an end, even the Christmas and New Year break. And what better way of chasing away the temptation of another helping of left-over Christmas pudding than a weekend away at the Squadron's home from home, Pippingford Park Training Area? Our first Comms Exercise of the year was, predictably enough, accompanied by miserable weather. Fortunately, the howling gales and driving rain of the preceding week abated long enough to make conditions boggy, but bearable! In tandem with the main Exercise we also ran a Comms Exercise with units across the Atlantic. We were also visited by our CO, **Lt Col Linda Harrison**, who arrived in style, care of a helicopter. This was immediately commandeered by OC 859 Tp, **Capt Sarah Streete, LCpl Jo Butler** and **Sig Michael Scott** for a bit of a joy ride. Naturally the real reason to take to the air was to get a bird's eye view of 858 Tp and to see how well OC Tp, **Capt Tony Potter,** had cammed up his vehicles. It was **2Lt Kieron Francis'** first Field Exercise with us and, as he and his detachment were despatched from Pippingford in the direction of Beachy Head late on Saturday night, we thought this was probably going to give a good indication of what he thought of it so far ..... We needn't have worried. Sunday morning came and with it a beaming Tp Comd and his merry men returned back from the brink!

ARMY PRESENTATION TEAM EVENING - 19 JANUARY 1999

Eastbourne Town Hall was the distinguished venue chosen by the Army Presentation Team for its latest briefing to local communities. The Squadron Officers, along with those from other local units, were asked to help out with hosting the 150 or so guests to the event. They came from various local companies, local government and other institutions deemed of strategic importance to the Army. They had been invited to listen to the Team's briefing on the Army of Today (Regular and TA). This was followed by drinks and a rather tasty buffet supper (yes, there was even enough for us hosts to grab a morsel or two!) The CO and RSM very kindly made the journey from London to help us out (the RSM doing a grand job as chief forager and glass filler!) Not to be forgotten are the other members of the Squadron who helped out behind the scenes. The presentation itself was extremely impressive, interesting and informative, very professionally put together and delivered. Judging from the guests' reactions afterwards, it did a great job in transmitting a very positive message.

RSM'S FAREWELL - 26 JANUARY 1999

Alas and alack, woe and great misery . . . Could it really be true? The RSM's tour over so soon? Surely not. Why, it seemed like only yesterday that the Squadron had first encountered the figure of **WO1 Duncan Hall**, when his soothing, dulcet tones wafted gently across the breeze through the trees somewhere in deepest Surrey at the end of his first Comms Ex with the Regiment. NOT! We rapidly came to the conclusion back then in Spring 1996 that here was a force to be reckoned with, and he certainly didn't disappoint us! But seriously, we reckoned the RSM was, as RSMs go, a pretty good chap and deserved a suitable send-off, which duly took place in Eastbourne at the end of January. It was a chance for us to say thanks for all the support and enthusiasm **WO1 Hall** has shown the Squadron and for allowing us to be privy to his own unique brand of humour on so many occasions . . . It was also a chance for him to say a few words (did I say a FEW?) and to accept a small token of our appreciation, a framed print showing a view of Eastbourne. So goodbye and good luck, RSM, for a successful transition to civvy street.

IMPORTANT!!

Would ALL Units please note the following: **ALL** PHOTOS accompanying Articles for *The Wire*, **MUST** have CAPTIONS and an indication where they are to be placed in the text, otherwise they **MAY NOT BE USED**

83 (LONDON) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V) - CHELSEA

Sqn Comd — **Maj Mike Jackson**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) Jim McMahon**

SQUADRON CHRISTMAS PARTY

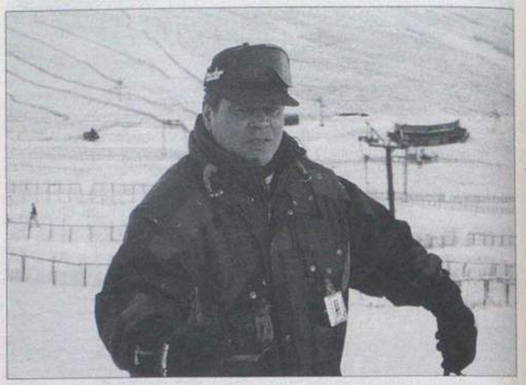
The 83 (London) Signal Squadron (V) Grand Christmas Party was held yet again in the Drill Hall at Mercury House The Duke of York's Barracks. This annual black tie event was as usual very well supported. Notable quests returning to visit were **Maj John Irvine** (previously OC) and **Karen, Capt Brian Alderson** (previously Adjutant), and his darling wife **Mel, Mr John Dadley** and **Denise** members of TAVRA (GL). The function apart from a couple of minor incidents went extremely well, with the babes(!) of 83 Dancing til! dawn. A thoroughly intoxicating time was had by all. The OC, **Maj Mike Jackson** graciously assisted by **Glynis** saw that diplomacy and tact prevailed during the evening. The OC thanked all the permanent staff, especially **Capt Dave Thomas** and **SSgt Roy Smith** who he presented with gifts of thanks.



The BABES! of 83 Signal Squadron
(L-R): Sig Rafferty, Sig Eastwood, Sig Stephens, Sig Hendley, Sig Snell, Sig Morris, Sig Cresswell

EXERCISE CRYSTAL COCKNEY V 8-10 JANUARY 1999

Ex Crystal Cockney was upon us again, earlier this year than previous years. The migration of southerners to the depths of Ballater near Balmoral was upon us. This Comms Exercise was an HF long distance link. This year to our sister Squadron in Eastbourne, 56 Sig Sqn, who were ably led by their PSI **SSgt Willie Loch**. During free time, off shift personnel had the chance to ski on the local ski slopes at Glenshee. Communications were BOOMING! In the words of the In - Patient of the Royal Hospital **WO2 (SSM) Jim McMahon** who in a previous life was a regular PSI and RTG. A number of soldiers did try Snow Boarding without too much success. **SSgt Roy Smith** having just returned from his Christmas Skiing Holiday in Andorra was a hard man to catch on the slopes.



ROMMEL! - SSgt Roy Smith where's my 'Little Tank'

32 (SCOTTISH) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO — **Lt Col A. G. C. Lapsley (TD)**
RSM — **WO1 (RSM) A. B. Hilborn**

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS ARRIVALS/DEPARTURES

The Regiment says farewell to **WO1 (RSM) J. McLachlan, Mel** and the boys. **Jim** we wish you well on your return to 'civ div' and we welcome the new TARA a fellow Scot, **WO1 (RSM) Angie Hilborn**.

THE SCOTTISH PATIENT

The location is Kenya, Ex Grand Prix, and 1 KOSB Battle Group has been reinforced by a crack team of Signallers from 32 Sig Regt (V). **WO2** ' Mad Dog' **Anderson** was sent out into the African plains (Impala Farm Ranges), with 2 x Bergen, Webbing, Suitcase/Large, Holdall, a Suit Carrier and then we didn't see him again until the flight home! **Cpl** 'Sweeny Todd' **Harvey** became the boy from Company A. He looked like the infantry, spoke like them and after ten days in the jungle he smelled just like them too. (That smell had no connection with him spending six days Adv Trg on a Portaloo). **Sig** 'O/Cdt Space' **Sheridan** and **Sig** 'Thrasher' **Lambie** along with **Lt** '40 winks' **McBride** were the first to sample Jungle Training in conjunction with the Jungle weight loss plan (fortunately there isn't a video.) Newly promoted **LCpl** 'Lucky' **Gray** heard that she may have to do some Jungle Training. On learning that the jungle houses snakes, scorpions, tigers and rats (ROUS), **LCpl Gray** decided that it was better to do three weeks in hospital than a week on point in the jungle. To give herself a convincing injury, drastic measures had to be taken. While she was travelling as a passenger in a land-rover, the vehicle hit one of the many pot-holes in the road thus allowing her to take a dive and feign an injury. Unfortunately her fall was a little too convincing and resulted in her ankle being fractured in three places and indeed, required major surgery! The upshot of this was that **LCpl** 'Lucky' **Gray** got her vacation in hospital and **Lt** '40 Winks' **McBride** got to drive six hours per day for three weeks to see her. Back at base camp, **LCpl** 'Dancing Queen' **Nursimaloo** held the fort. 1 KOSB did try to recruit her with two years in Cyprus but we saw her first boys. The story would not be complete without our own commandos, AGC **Pte** 'Happy' **Mondie** who was based at HQ when she wasn't kick boxing with the Go Go dancers and AGC **Sgt** 'La La' **Peebles** who began the Exercise as a driver but after the MTO ran out of trucks, moved over to provide admin support for the Adventure Training.



Lt '40 Winks' McBride working on Sgt 'La La ' Peebles truck, evidence of an officer getting his hands dirty



Sgt 'La La' Peebles pictured with a Rhino and a large African beast

51 (HIGHLAND) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V) - ABERDEEN

Sqn Comd — **Maj Morna Strachan**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) Donald Webster**

As we lead up to Christmas the Squadron is gearing itself up for a recruiting drive in the new year. We welcome **SSM Jim Waddell** (Ex 3 Hldrs) into the fold as our RRTT supremo - welcome to 51 Sqn **Jim**. Also back in the fold is **Sgt Nige Allen** recently returned from Bosnia as a mil/civ liaison officer. **Nigel** did sterling work helping the local population with various projects including a much needed fresh water project (undiluted water is a first for **Sgt Allen**). On the departures scene we have to say farewell to **Cpl Jim Douglas** who has just joined the Regulars as a Technician - our photograph shows **Cpl Douglas** being force fed to build him up for regular service under the supervision of our PSI, **SSgt Tim Abbot**.

The photo was taken during a recent medieval night at Gordon Barracks where the Sqn 2IC, **Capt Mackie** turned up in his normal clothes (claiming they were fashionable at that period in time)! Also present at the fun filled event was **LCpl** 'Baldrick' **Hunter** and **LCpl Allison** 'Chastity belt' **McKay** .



LCpl McKay' and Cpl Hunter

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to **SSgt Karen Paterson** and husband **Roy** on their recent new arrival to the family our best wishes to you all.

61 (CITY OF EDINBURGH) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)

Sqn Comd — **Maj B. Shankland**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) G. Garland**

The Squadron received an early Christmas present in the shape of escaping any form of cutback under the SDR, in fact the Squadron establishment has increased slightly so the Recruiting Team will have plenty to keep them busy in 1999. An added bonus was the news that we are to move to a newly refurbished TA Centre a mile down the road from our current home. Formerly occupied by our 'grandfather' Corps, the Royal Engineers we are hopeful of persuading a few of their number to remain with us.

CONGRATULATIONS

In the interests of making sure we all continue to get paid we have to mention that at last MOD have been persuaded that **LCpl Lynn Drummond** is indeed the 'best pay clerk in the world' (as she has claimed for the last two years) and awarded her with promotion to Corporal following another excellent course report. **Cpl Drummond** decided to set up a web site to spread the word rather than fly posting the entire TAC so we still have a photocopying budget this time. Congratulations also to **LCpl** 'Too Easy' **Davidson**, the world's biggest (only) NCRS fan who successfully passed his HGV driving test. On the last training night of last year we received a visit from the Commander 2 (NC) Sig Bde, **Brig Hughes** who presented Yeoman of Signals 'Jeff" **Jephcote** with his Efficiency Medal after umpteen years undetected crime. 'Jeff' liked the glint of the medal so much that he's now off to work with SFOR for six months - the things some people will do to keep up with their wife's medal count!

NEW RECRUITS

A particular well done to **Sig Lowe** who at long last completed his recruits course at Blandford. Undeterred by the problems in booking a course at RSS, **Sig Lowe** actually completed his B3 Radio and Data trade training months before he ever went near a Recruits Course. He's currently studying for his Staff Officer's course.

NEW YEAR - NEW EXERCISE

To celebrate the New Year, the Sqn Ops Officer, **Capt** 'Mad Dog' **Middleton** and Tech PSI, **Sgt Ian** 'Rambo' **Stallard** planned the ultimate in 'warry' exercises, Ex Frosty Ferret 99. The weather certainly lived up to the name but we still wonder where **Capt Middleton** hides his Ferret! The Exercise was radical since it involved leaving the NCRS wagons in the garage and going for a gentle stroll in the moonlit hills above Edinburgh. They even insisted that we take weapons and wear cam cream!! **Sgt Stallard** had a great weekend with his 'Perfect Model' though most of the boys were expecting something a little more like Cindy Crawford. His quest for realism may have gone a little too far though as it involved re-landscaping the caretaker's garden. In between patrols he also taught the Squadron how to play 'Killer Pool' and finished the weekend with more money than he started. The climax of the weekend was a final assault uphill during which **LCpl** 'Run, Forest Run' **Crampton** distinguished himself with a solo death or glory charge which would have made Rambo proud. The dynamic **Stallard - Middleton** duo are planning a sequel in March - Ex Slightly Thawed Rabbit run'.

33 SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

Times are-a-changing in the Regiment, with the on-going implementation of the Strategic Defence Review. We have recently had an influx of troops from 55 Sig Sqn (V), who are being disbanded, with the majority of soldiers going to 59 Sig Sqn (V). The Regiment has never seen **Capt Geoff Downey**, the PSAO of 59 so excited. The Officer plot has also had some slight alterations with the addition of **Capt Wendy** 'Mess Bill' **Kirby**, ex-regular, and now TA (she just could not keep away), who has become OIC of the OSC. She practised this position to great effect on the last comms exercise, and now the Adjt won't go near the vehicle! **Capt Nick Range** is now firmly back in the Tech Adjt's slot, and is contemplating returning to his studies. Congratulations from all the Regiment to **WO2 Henley** on his recent promotion to WO1. Good luck on your move to 14 Sig Regt (but not yet).

MERCURY DRAGON - 3 JANUARY 1999

33 Sig Regt's winter sports adventure training exercise to the Italian Dolomites got off to a fine start at 4am, at Manchester Airport when our glorious leader **Capt Bill Dixon** discovered that he had left his passport at home. Luckily for him, most officials were understanding and didn't give him too much of a hard time, unlike his travelling companions. Our accommodation in the resort of Canazei was in a delightful chalet strangely named 'The Horse From Hell'. The Horse clearly bored with eating hay found members of the Regiment far more interesting as **Cpl Mike Prendigast** in his glitzy new fleece found to his peril whilst rolling home each night from the Deodate, our local hostelry. Showering at the chalet proved difficult which tended to suit **Sig** 'Sooty' **Vincent** due to shared bathroom arrangements and **2Lt Karen Reddy**'s love of the bath which always smelt of lavender and joss sticks for hours after she had been in it.

The area was chosen for both its abundance of snow canons and excellent skiing which included the 11,810kms of piste of the Dolomite super ski area. One of the aims of the trip was to conquer the Sella Rhonda. This involved a clockwise or anticlockwise 60km circuit. In practice this proved a problem for most because of a 5km gap due to the poor snow conditions around the resort of Gardinia. Only **Sgt** 'Ebineeza' **Wylie** actually completed the circuit with the help of a 50,000 Lira bribe to a local Minibus driver called **Alberto**. Anyway, the trip was soon over and with many new skills learnt, kilometres skied and bodies we returned to the UK to post Christmas blues a week later than everyone else. As the Italians would say, 'Ciao Baby'. As **Cpl Clint Kerry** would say, 'Chow'.



Capt Bill Dixon, Sgt Wylie, and Cpl Kerry in the three-legged ski competition, or are they waiting for the lift?

42 SIGNAL SQUADRON

December in Manchester has brought the usual hectic social programme with departmental Squadron and Regimental functions taking place, culminating in the Squadron all ranks Christmas party on the day of the Regimental stand-down. Of particular note, was the Manchester Branch of the Royal Signals Association Christmas dinner, held in the Trafford Hall Hotel in Old Trafford - adjacent to the famous cricket ground. The guest of honour, was the Master of Signals, **Maj Gen I. O. J. Sprackling OBE**, accompanied by his charming wife **Annie**. The Squadron was well represented by the Sqn Comd, **Maj Ian Kelly**, and the PSAO, **Capt Gerry Whelan,** together with two very smart pennant bearers, **Cpl Mark Ranna** and **LCpl Andy Brady**. The dinner was a huge success, to the obvious delight of the Secretary **Mr Harry Ferguson** and The Master gave a memorable speech which fully updated the association members on Corps matters and painted an exhilarating and exciting future for members of Royal Signals, post SDR.



Master of Signals and his wife with the Chairman of the Royal Signals Association (Manchester Branch), Maj Chris Reynolds Jones, flanked by Cpl Mick Hanna and LCpl Andy Brady

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please advise the Assistant Accountant, at RHG, IN WRITING, of any change of address

This information should NOT be telephoned

FRANCIS HOUSE

Francis House is a children's Hospice in South Manchester which offers the families of terminally ill children a respite from their role as carers and gives the children a loving home from home. It was opened in 1991 by Princess Diana and cares for children from Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Staffordshire, Isle of Man, Derbyshire and Cheshire. 42 Sig Sqn has a long association with Francis House and one of the more pleasurable duties prior to the Christmas stand-down was to present the Hospice with a fully decorated Christmas tree. Our picture shows members of the Squadron with **Sister Aloyisious** who runs the centre.



Sister Aloyisious with (from left to right) Sig Kev Heverin, Cpl Sharon Blythe and Sgt Bob Duffield

GLOSSOP RECRUITING WEEKEND - 9 JANUARY 1999

The OC, **Maj Ian Kelly,** decided to get the New Year off to a flying start by holding a recruiting weekend based in the town of Glossop. Glossop is situated in the extreme west of Derbyshire surrounded by some of the most magnificent scenery of the Peak District and only 14 miles from Manchester. The recruiting weekend was built into a communications scenario with the command post set up on the cobbled forecourt in front of the Norfolk Arms in the centre of Glossop. A video and computer demonstration together with children's events communication vehicles and tents completed an eye catching display to attract the interest of the local population.



Cpl Fitzgerald manning the Squadron recruiting stand in Glossop Town Centre with two potential ACF recruits

Glossop had its own Royal Signals unit from 1939 to 1967 and a great many local part time 'Terriers' served in the Second World War. Unfortunately, under the TA cut backs of 1967, the Glossop detachment closed and the TA Centre was sold. It is hoped to rekindle the strong historical links which exist with 42 Sig Sqn (V) and at the same time attract new recruits from the area.

WELCOME AND CONGRATULATIONS

We would like to welcome to the Squadron our brace of new Troop Commanders and to congratulate them on their recent commissions. **Lt Paul Edwards**, taking over as OC Trunk Node - last year he was serving as RSM 37 Sig Regt (V) - and **2Lt Karen Reddy**, taking over as OC Access Troop. We also welcome back to the Squadron our two prodigal sons, **WO2 (SSM) Graham Ward** and **Sgt Paul Duffin. Graham Ward** has just spent two years as SSM at HQ Sqn in Liverpool and **Paul Duffin** was the MT Sergeant for a year at 80 Sqn in Runcorn. Finally we congratulate **Sgt Dave Coussons** on his promotion to Sub Sergeant.

59 SIGNAL SQUADRON
EXERCISE WINTER EAGLE

The Squadron went into the festive season immediately after Ex Winter Eagle which was a very successful 11 Signal Brigade Comms Exercise in the North West of England. **LCpl Paula Scully** as det commander Switch 032 was responsible for ensuring the Kilostream snatch at Altcar Training Area was successful and did so without the help of her backup **SSgt Paul Weston.**

SOCIAL

The all ranks Christmas party was a tremendous success and much of the thanks must go to **Cpl Frank Goodwin** and his depleted committee. The next day carrying sore heads the children's party organised by **Sgt Ted Littler** was again well supported and the children had a most enjoyable time. Father Christmas (**Sgt Chris Simpson** again) provided the highlight of the day for most of the young ones and has promised to do it again next year.

80 SIGNAL SQUADRON
AN EDUCATION FOR ALL TA OFFICERS WHO ATTEND JSCSC (TA)

by Capt Dan Tanzey

I have recently attended the above course, having first been warned off by the Adjt that he wanted me to give a synopsis to the other eligible officers in the Regiment when I returned. As the first Officer for some time to attend a Staff Officers' course, and certainly the first to attend the new-format course. I was, he cheerfully informed me, being used as a guinea-pig. Isn't it nice to be appreciated? There was also the fact that, 80 Sqn having supplied the only candidates (and therefore the Regiment supply) for Range Qualifications Stage 4-5, it seemed only natural that we should lead the way intellectually as well as militarily!

IMMEDIATE IMPRESSIONS

There are reams of preparatory reading and not enough time to do it. There is very little outside work, but many written exercises. The normal day-to-day dress was loosely interpreted as any combination of a variety of green trousers, lightweights, SD trousers, the odd kilt here and there, or (for the ladies), an equally varied range of skirts, all with a multiplicity of pullovers in all the colours of the rainbow. There also appears to be some tradition, I am not privy to, as the mess sells masses of Smarties. One frequently heard rumour was that the dye in the blue ones contained a drug closely related to Prozac. No, I don't understand it either. Finally, there was a dinner night at the end.

SOBER REFLECTION

Like 'The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy', the alternative motto to 'Serve to Lead' should be DON'T PANIC. More than half the students on the course had read less than half the preparatory work. What is more, the course DS, from the Colonel down were neither surprised nor annoyed at this. They seemed to think it was amazing that anyone had read anything at all, given that most had full-time civilian jobs and families. In fact, turning up for the course was a major brownie point in itself. Lastly, it was not just the TA; the regular course were Smartie junkies as well!

THE COURSE

***Tip one**: aim to arrive the afternoon before the course starts, or at least in the early evening. Those who arrived on the day had a nightmare trying to catch up with everything that was going on, and no one to sell them Smarties.*

On arrival, you will receive a crate of pamphlets, Aide Memoirs, handouts, exercises and précis. The first two you have to hand back, the latter three are yours to keep and constitute the destruction of a small rain forest. The précis include exercises that have to be done in your own time - and you can check your results because the answers are in the back! All five will form the basis of what you will be studying over the coming days and cover every aspect of staff officer work.

***Tip two**: get hold of an up-to-date copy of the Staff Officers Handbook (SOBB), and the Tactical Aide Memoires 1 and 2.*

The first day or so is fairly relaxed, in a frenetic sort of way. They cover introductory addresses, meeting your syndicate DS and the rest of your syndicate, with a creeping death of explaining who you are and your career to date, etc. This gets quite competitive, as the first candidates give a condensed and modest version of their career, while succeeding speakers expand and extol the variety and gloriousness of their passage through the ranks to the heady height of Captain, or even Major. Eventually you could be forgiven for imagining that you were in the presence of the Chiefs of the Defence staff - past, present and to come. Then comes a series of presentations and syndicate room discussions. These will lull you into a false sense of security that, other than a few details about organisation, roles, employment, equipment, capabilities, weapon ranges, classifications, strengths, and so on, there is really nothing to learn (see tip two). Then they hit you when you're not looking. MISSION COMMAND. In letters that big. We are now talking serious brain work. Let me put it this way; when you make a note to yourself to 'do the shopping' it implies a multitude of items. So does a simple order like 'take that hill'. I'll say no more about this here, as it's one of those subjects that requires a book or nothing.

***Tip three:** get up to speed on Mission Command, IPB and orders. Everyone will think you're a girlie swot, but it does give you more time at the bar later.*

Then there is Combat Service Support, or CSS. What to you or I is a fairly minor and uninteresting section of orders, is life and death to some people (in the case of RAMC, QUARANC and casualties, quite literally). I had a REME officer on my syndicate who lived, breathed, drank (coffee), slept and dreamt about the wonders of CSS. Typical conversation:

'Where did you go for camp this year?' Well, we were back loading this 4-tonner .....'. Or, 'Have you come far?' 'Not as far as we had to go to get a 6-pin, 24 volt, bipodal spring knobbler for a Drops last weekend'. CSS is a subject with a message and the message is, leave well enough alone; if you are not already involved in it, don't go poking your nose in.

***Tip four**: read about it anyway; it'll look strange if you have a total blind-spot where it's concerned. Just don't get carried away.*

Another delight that awaits you is Service Writing. We all know that the Adjt considers himself a world-expert on this topic, and his comments on one's writing style and presentation do have to be borne. A couple of points. One, the handbook has changed and nothing is how it was. Two, you will have a golden opportunity to discover the wonderful world of service writing as you write Official Letters, Demi-Official Letters, memos, and briefs. To say that this is tedious is like calling the Sahara desert hot and dry, a major understatement. Having had words with the Adjt for the standard of some document you've produced, nothing is more pleasant than pointing out that it is he, in fact, who is out of date and you have the new format. On the other the Adjt is not someone to get on the wrong side of. Diplomacy is called for here. Volunteer the information that you have a copy of the latest standards to hand and offer to let him have a copy.

***Tip five**: all the work for this part is classroom based, apart from a couple of exercises in the précis. But if you don't do them before hand - and some didn't in my syndicate, no one will really mind. Just say you were revising the ES-leg of CSS; the DS won't believe you, but it will get you off the hook. If they ask any ES-leg CS questions and you get them wrong, explain that that's why you are revising. Devious or what?*

The TEWT has to be approached with a proper sense of reverence and determination. There are a number of sessions in the syndicate room where you and your sub-syndicate prepare your appreciation, plan of attack and presentation. It is absolutely vital at this stage to memorise and use those phrases that Training Majors and CO's relish, like 'The Commanders Intent is . . . with his Main Effort as . . . therefore my mission is . . . IN ORDER TO . . . etc'. Your plan could be totally useless but if you've got the phraseology off-pat, you're half-way home. To explain; in 'My Fair Lady', Rex Harrison/Professor Higgins remarks of the French that they 'don't care what they say as long as they pronounce it correctly'. This preparatory stage is much the same. As you present your solution, the critique will concentrate on the format of your plan, not the content. 'Two up, left flanking with bags of smoke, follow me lads, it's VCs all the way,' is right out. So you complete your plan for the assault and then go out on the ground. This is when you discover that 'Two up, left flanking with bags of smoke, follow me lads, it's VCs all the way', would be just the job.

***Final tip:** don't get too carried away with it all.*

In summary, the course is immensely enjoyable, challenging in terms of what you can remember and packed with information. Above all, remember that this is a Staff Officers' course - and a Junior Staff Officers' course at that. You are not expected to be the next Alexander the Great or Field Marshall. Nor are you expected to be bang-up-to-speed on all the latest military doctrine and tactics. You are expected to know the basics of soldiering, roles and organisations, capabilities (but not exhaustively) and how the Armed Forces work, with particular emphasis on the Army. Go there, stay calm, listen in and make notes. And make sure to make time for the mess every evening to keep your supply of Smarties up to stock.

DON'T BE DISAPPOINTED

Copy for June edition must be received by 15 April – latest!

34 (NORTHERN) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO — **Lt Col D. A. Hargreaves**
RSM — **WO1 (RSM) N. Yarwood**

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS

A 'quiet period' in RHQ has seen no changes other than more smog from ICI, an acre of Rain Forest destroyed for us and no advance on establishments. Now the Tech Adjt wears his new found smile! For those of you who do not know the CO and RSM, the RSM is grinning as he controls the pace-stick!



Lt Col D. A. Hargreaves with WO1 (RSM) N. Yarwood

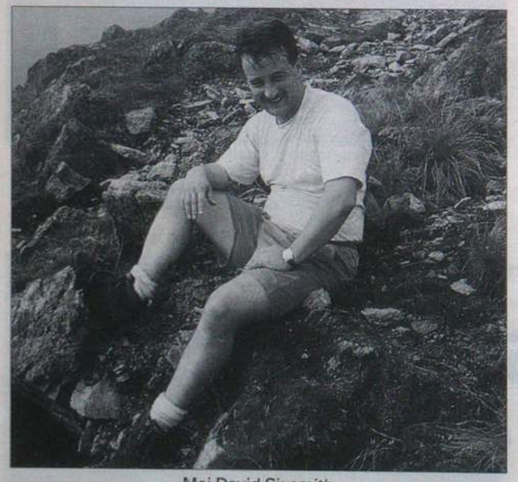
49 (WR) SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd — **Maj D. E. Sixsmith**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) James**

EXERCISE POLAR EXPLORER - 25-27 SEPTEMBER 1998

49 Sig Sqn conducted a leadership exercise over the weekend 25-27 September 1998 in the Keswick area of the Lake District. The aim was to identify future NCO's within the Squadron and to teach and practice squadron personnel in rock-climbing, map reading and leadership.

The rock-climbing was all going to plan until a rather attractive female appeared on the rock-face, or was it the world famous climbing transvestite from Ambleside. Only **Cpl Haynes** knows the answer. The mist did not prevent **Lt Drennan**'s walking group from reaching the cafe for a well earned hot drink. In fact some would say that the only reason that they found the cafe was because it appeared from nowhere. The more strenuous group decided to tackle Striding Edge assisted (or should that be hindered) by the OC, who was heard to mutter the following words of inspiration to his troops - 'How much more of this is there?' whilst halfway up in the mist and clouds. He was ably assisted by **FofS Steve Moore**, who was caught short while on top of Striding Edge and used the mist as cover.



Maj David Sixsmith
Not a surprise to find David out of the office

TRADE TRAINING

Trade training began without **WO1 (YofS) Jim** 'I'm off to Oz' **Thompson**, not that this was the only reason for it's success. 49 Sig Sqn attended both daytime and night time activities with relish and enthusiasm.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations go to **Lt Ruth Middleton**, upon her marriage to **2Lt Andrew Powell,** of 38 Sig Regt. In the finest traditions of equality they have decided to amalgamate their surnames to become the **Middleton-Powells**, although this tends to be abbreviated to **Middleton** when on exercise.



CARLTON GATE TIGERS

The Squadron has entered the local six a side astro league. Things can only get better, after finishing in an embarrassingly low position last season. So far this season we have got off to a good start with a 4-1 victory in our first game, with **2Lt Keith** 'twinkle toes' **Williams** getting two and **Sig Ben** 'I don't dye my hair' **Martindale** getting the others. Following on from the last edition of *The Wire*, it is regretted to inform of the demise of the Squadron in the TA Cup against Sheffield UOTC. Despite a spirited first half performance which saw the scores level at 1-1, age plus a dodgy penalty missing performance from **WO2 (FofS) Kev** 'I'm not normally this bad' **Sturman** we ran out 4-1 losers.

742 SIGNAL TROOP

The Troop has been busy over the past few months, with RSIT and Adventure Training along with a lot of other activities to keep us busy. RSIT proved again to be a great success for the Troop with all of the vehicles achieving excellent results. **LCpl Neil Watkin** managed within the space of a week to improve his Det from five pages on first line to 15 lines on RSIT and **Sig Paul Broadbent**, also achieved an excellent report. Well done to all who took part and lets try even harder next year.

The Troop had a good turn out for the Regimental Training Weekend that took place at Ripon Barracks and although the weather was a bit off the spirits were kept high throughout. Once again an evening out proved to be too much for some and after the disappearing act made by **SSgt Tom** 'I think I have the flu' **Lappin** who failed to mention what time it was (Cheers staff!) a good night was had by the remainder of the Regiment.

The Troop would like to extend a welcome to our most recent members. **Sig Louise** 'Snowy' **Snowdon** who has transferred in from our Squadron, **Sig Steve Armstrong** and **Sig Paul Albone** who both join us from the Regulars, **Cpl Richard Gibson** and **Sig Graham Black** who have moved up here from Blackburn. We hope that you all enjoy your time within the Troop. The Troop social functions have been going well and the latest was a great hit. The Squadron Foreman, **Hank Potts**, managed to drag himself away from his hectic workload to buy the long awaited, and much talked about, beers. Thanks again Foreman.

Congratulations to **Sig Helen Watt** on passing her recruit's course and also to **Sig Alan** 'Urban' **Hession** on being promoted to Corporal.

50 (NORTHUMBRIAN) SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

Sqn Comd — **Maj J. Lambton**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) S. Tinkler**

ARRIVALS/FAREWELLS

Welcome to **Cpl Paul Robinson** and family who have joined us from 3 (UK) Armoured Division and Signal Regiment on a three year posting. Farewell to **Sig Emma Martin-Law**, who has left us to join the regular army and become a 'Muppet', best of luck.

PROMOTIONS

Congratulations to the Squadron's Recruit Troop Guru, **Sgt Al Gregory** on his recent promotion (again), the steady queue of people waiting to join the ranks of the TA, a testament to the excellent work he continues to do. Also to **LCpl** 'Dutch' **Holland**, who on his promotion impressed the Colonel when he refused to ring the bell in the JRC! The rumour is that he didn't want to buy the drinks, because the rare Abyssinian Lesser-Spotted Moth was hibernating in his wallet

SQUADRON DINING OUT NIGHT

The Squadron held a joint-mess triple dining out night, where we said, 'So long and thanks for all the fish,' to the Regimental TA Foreman of Signals, **SSgt Simon Land**, who gave the longest speech ever heard in the Squadron's history. Also it was goodbye to **WO2 (RQMS) Kev Appleby**, who didn't give the longest speech that the Messes had ever heard. Finally, goodbye to **Capt** 'Taff' **Watts** who delighted the gathered masses with his rendition of The Corps March on his harmonica for which he has become a legend in his own lunch time. Gentlemen, thank you for your contributions to 50 (N) Signal Squadron (V), you will all be missed. A special thank you to **WO2 (SSM) Steve Tinkler** who did a sterling job hosting his first Mess dinner night and even managed to keep his old comrades in tow!

EXERCISE WINTER EAGLE

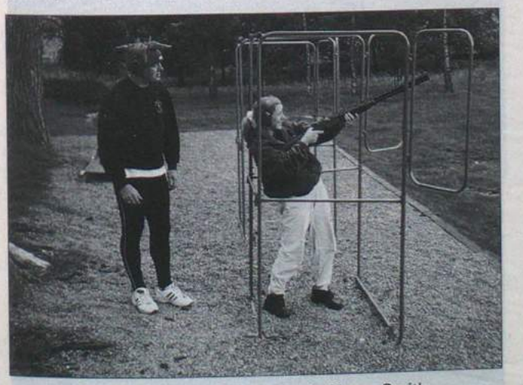
The second Brigade Communications Exercise of the year saw the Squadron deployed to the darkest depths of North Yorkshire. Well assisted by the SPSI's and PSIs both Troops conducted themselves very well and the weekend was a great success all-round. Regulars from 19 Mech Bde, who were using the Exercise as trade familiarisation, joined us for the weekend. The girls from the switch gratefully accepted their contribution and hopefully this will be the first of many Exercises together.

90 (NORTH RIDING) SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)
ADVENTURE TRAINING/LEADERSHIP EXERCISE
EXERCISE CAT'S EBOR

by Capt 'Taff' Watts

Ex Cat's Ebor was my first weekend after taking over as Squadron 2IC. 'We're off to Warcop for some adventure training,' they told me. 'Warcop? Warcop? I haven't been there since 1976 - and I didn't like it then either!' was my reply - but they made me go anyway. We took over a little compound - which saved us having to move in and out of the camp itself every time we wanted to change activities - and set up our admin area. This was run by our regular FofS, **SSgt Ian Walling**, assisted by **SSgts Alex Durnall** and **Ian Ward**. They set to with a will and soon had the whole thing running like clockwork.

The weekend's activities included hill walking, map reading, clay pigeon shooting, climbing, and abseiling. **Cpl Si Haynes'** climbing and abseiling stand proved once again that a sixty foot climb looks a lot further from the top than from the bottom - the look of sheer terror on some faces confirmed that. **SSM Kev Turrington** and **Lt Simon Smith** showed everyone why it's often safer to stand in front of a gun than behind it - although they did help the Padre to achieve a lifelong ambition to shoot at and hit a target! **SSgt Gary Jowers** managed to get everyone back safely from the hill walking - although one group did get back late (where could they have been?) We had a barbecue on the Saturday evening followed by the night's activities which included Charades and Draughts - but not like I've ever played them before. The novel way of disposing of your opponent's draughtsmen left me quite intoxicated with excitement - thanks Foreman, good game! On Sunday morning, just to clear our heads, we had some potted sports. After a quick clear up we brought everyone back safely - if just a little tired. One thing that sticks in the mind - and stuck to the ribs - was **SSgt Alex Durnall**'s salmon and ham pasta dish covered by a sauce made from compo cheese, chicken soup and ham left over from the sandwiches. Thanks **Alex**, next time I want to re-lay my drive I'll give you a shout! It was a good weekend, made so by the enthusiasm of all who attended, and it left everyone asking for a similar Exercise next year - but please, please not Warcop!



Sig Michaela Savin showing Lt Simon Smith
how she used to do it when she worked for the Krays
(Yes, the one in the hat is an officer!)



Cpl Si Haynes demonstrating to the group that if the Viagra doesn't work a climbing rope can be used to good effect



Sig Lorraine Hague showing that it's dead easy to hang from a rope

THE ROYAL CORPS OF SIGNALS TA BAND (34 NORTHERN)

The Band programme of events for 1998 proved to be as equally busy as in previous years, despite a drastic reduction in the allocation of Man Training Days (MTDS). This regrettably, meant that events scheduled for Corps Units, 35 Sig Regt in Birmingham and 81 Sig Sqn in Colerne had to be cancelled.

One of the major events in the Band calendar for the early part of the year was the dinner for 39 (Skinners) Sig Regt held in Skinners Hall London. This was a magnificent setting for the Band to perform, albeit after making several attempts to locate the venue. However, the Tour of London' was free! Our next main event took us to RAF Digby in Lincolnshire where we performed for their 80th Anniversary and met new acquaintances in the Signal Squadron attached to RAF Digby. The only civilian engagement we had in our 1998 calendar took place in April at the Belfry Golf Club near Birmingham. This was to play at a charity dinner for the BACTA organisation, a subsidiary of Rank Leisure. Again the setting for the Band to perform in was magnificent.

The end of May saw the Band perform their first Marching Display of 1998 at the Catterick Garrison Open Day and Yorkshire Services Football Cup Final, The presence of the Band obviously inspired 2 Div Sig Regt who eventually overcame the RAF to win the Trophy! It is hoped that the one of the three parachutists bringing in the match ball and whose canopy failed to open until the last minute landed safely some distance from the football pitch. Had he been the one with the match ball we may well have still been waiting to kick off! The major Corps event for the Band this year was at the RSA weekend in Blandford where we linked up with the Corps Band and 32 Sig Regt Pipers to perform the Beating of Retreat Ceremony.

The Band Annual Camp for 1998 was held in Jersey, Channel Islands where the Band performed at Concerts Displays and Town Marches. It was also arranged for the Band members to brush up on their Medical Training. All in all a very busy work schedule, but one which presented excellent PR for the Corps, the Regiment and the Band. The Band continues to go from strength to strength and is currently fully established at 35 musicians, eight of which are female and twenty-two who are ex-regular musicians. The Band also played for the 39 Sig Regt Freedom Parade celebrations in Banbury in July and at 11 Sig Bde dinner in Donnington in October. It is hoped that even more Corps events can be added to the Band Calendar for 1999 MTDs permitting. Advance bookings for the Band can be made by contacting the Band PSI, **SSgt Jim Robinson,** on 01749 872313 or Catterick Military (773) 2313.

35 (SOUTH MIDLANDS) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

XXXV

HATCHES AND DESPATCHES

A number of staffing changes have taken place since the beginning of the year and we have welcomed many new faces and said farewell to their predecessors. HQ Sqn have said farewell to **Cpl Gordon Tumington** and welcomed his replacement **Cpl Simon Marsden.** 48 Sqn meanwhile have bade a sad farewell to **Cpl Mark Lynch** on his discharge and wish him well in his future career as a civilian. 58 Sqn on the other hand have extended a welcome to **Sgt Steve Colledge** who arrived in January from 4 Armd Bde and has now settled into the TA environment. 89 Sqn, however, have endured almost a complete changeover of staff. They have said farewell to **Sgt's Kevin Parkinson** and **Jock Reid** and welcomed their replacements **Sgt Andy Egan** and **Steve Crooks**. The Squadron has also welcomed **Cpl** 'Wink' **Watson** to the fold who replaces **Cpl Steve Saunders** who has now left the Army to pursue a civilian career. 'Wink' is an FTRS volunteer and joins the Squadron from 58 Sqn who are naturally sad to lose him. Also welcomed to the Squadron in February was **Cpl Martin Walton** from his TI Course - we hope he is as competent a technician as he is a Map reader! Finally 95 Sqn have said farewell to **Sgt Steve Pickering** and his family on posting to Culford. The Squadron has also bade a particularly sad farewell to **WO2 (SSM) Clive Winstanley** who leaves the Squadron after 18 years service (eight of which were as SSM) on posting to HQ Sqn as RQMS TA.

A LIFE ON THE OCEAN WAVES

Fresh from her mobilised service in Bosnia **Capt Helen Molyneux** decided to continue her globe trotting when she volunteered to go on holiday; sorry, participate in Ex Transglobe over the Christmas Period. Ex Transglobe was the second leg of the Joint Services Round the World Yacht Race. What follows is her account of this tremendous voyage, which hopefully will bring some sunshine into all of our lives: Sun, blue sky, warm clear sea, white sandy beaches, fresh melon and pineapple washed down with champagne, early morning swims and snorkelling - definitely the way to spend Christmas Day. Antigua is a small island located in the West Indies, it has 365 beaches and here is where I spent two weeks, whilst preparing for the second leg of Ex Transglobe. I had been lucky to gain a last minute berth on *HMSTC Racer*, the RAF boat and joined the boat at English Harbour. Following a week of preparations repairing the generator, engine, sails and just about everything else we set sail on 29 December across the Caribbean Sea to Panama where the race would end. The start was really thrilling, with the three yachts in our group tacking back and forth to keep in the area of the buoy until the starter signal had been heard - then we were off.



Helen at the Wheel

The Army entry *Broadsword* took the initial lead but we kept fairly level with the Navy entry *Adventurer*, but there was very little between the boats for the first few hours. As we neared Montserrat the competition raced off in a Southerly direction and that was the last we saw of them until we finished the race. The race itself took six days and we reached speeds of up to 13.9 knots. When I took control of the helm I was extremely pleased at reaching a speed of 12 knots. During the race there was the usual rivalry between the boats with false positions being given to the various skippers (they were correct - just a couple of hours old). There were scenes of jubilation when we heard that *Broadsword* had lost a spinnaker and most of its halyards and celebrations when news came through that *Adventurer* had broken her boom. Within a few miles from the end we caught sight of *Broadsword,* but despite a last ditch effort to catch up they went on to finish and win the race. Needless to say I was delighted that the Army had won and even more delighted that *Adventurer* came in several hours later missing the victory party. After a couple of days in Colon (the second most dangerous city in the world according to US troops), we were woken by the pilot at the crack of dawn to prepare to transit the Panama Canal. The canal was not what we had expected; it is actually a lake with lock-gates at either end. There are three locks to enter the canal and two to leave, one of which is a double lock, known as Miraflores. Our progress through the canal was smooth, with only a few hairy moments when massive container ships got a little too close for comfort. After a day we were finally through to the Pacific. We spent our final six days cleaning the boat, visiting Panama, repairing new faults and enjoying some last minute sun-bathing. We also held a cocktail party, during which the crew of the *Adventurer* was presented with a new dinghy to replace the one they lost somewhere in the British Virgin Islands. It was a memorable and exciting fours weeks and, I am proud to say, I have finally conquered sea sickness!

PASS OFF PARADE

Our recruiting fortunes during the past year can only be described as mixed, but happily we continue to attract high quality recruits and the number of potential recruits walking through the doors of TA Centres has already begun to show a major improvement. This is not only due to the ongoing efforts of our excellent recruiting teams but also due to individual members of the Regiment introducing friends or work colleagues, which is proving to be a most effective way of attracting new blood. Happily another recruit course, the last of the year, passed off at Cateswell House on Sunday 13 December. Once again the parade was attended by family and friends to whom the CO, **Lt Col Miles Stockdale**, paid his traditional tribute. Following the parade recruits, their family and friends joined his instructors and Squadron representatives at a small reception held in the Sergeants Mess.



The best recruit and brother.



The Recruit Course Photograph

REFLECTIONS OF A GOLF DRIVER

A telephone from the Regimental Yeoman of Signals, **WO2 Terry Burbidge** requesting me to give some coverage to the Regimental Golf Team aroused my curiosity. Being a driver of the famous car marque I was almost convinced that he was forming a VW owners 'Golf Club'. Sadly I was mistaken, as he was anxious only to enlist my dubious photographic skills to cover the Regimental Golf Competition, which took place at the Belfry on Thursday 17 December. Following my introduction to the colourful golf terminology and rules of the game (yes they do exist) my confusion reigned supreme. Consequently I didn't know whether to Tee-Off or Pee-Off, but did discover that a sand-wedge left in the bar (which for some reason was called the 19th hole) was something you couldn't have with a cup of tee, even if a caddy was available! Obviously I was handicapped because these golfing terms were beginning to drive me mad. On my wander round the course, by now feeling a little under par, I fared no better when **SSgt Stu Waring** (the oldest swinger in town) sensing my bewilderment started talking about birdies in particular eagles and albatross's - that did it for me I took my final photograph, hitched a lift on a golf trolley and made my way to the 19th hole, went off my trolley, and had a cup of coffee!! I am, however, still left with many unanswered questions such as why every team member seemed determined to place their golf balls in the centre of a lake, rather than on the green? Why (I hasten to add with the exception of the CO, **Lt Col Miles Stockdale,** and his brother **Chris** who both had a remarkably good round and of course the Honorary Colonel **Brig Ian Sim)** do they all dress like **Alan Partridge** (is he their TV hero) rather than **Nick Faldo, Tiger Woods, Ian Whatshisname** or **Bobby Clampett!**



The CO and his brother on the green

Now that my interest has been aroused, however, I'm putting in for a golf course - all I need now are some irons, a pringle sweater and a funny hat! Joking apart I was left with a sense of admiration for this hardy group of sportsmen who relentlessly pursue their game no matter what the weather conditions and do not believe for one minute that it is just an excuse to get out of the office. Finally some results and acknowledgements. Firstly a special thank you to The Belfry Manager, **Scott Jarvis** and his staff for supporting the event and allowing our use of The Belfry and its facilities. Congratulations are also extended to **Scott** on winning the event and to **Terry Burbidge** for winning the longest drive and finally to **FofS Pete Stowell** and his family for winning just about everything else.



A jubilant Pete Stowell minus his family!

There are a few good challenges left in this life ... This is one

Territorial Army SAS (Volunteers)

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Trained Corps Attached Personnel also required

REGIMENTAL SPORTS

To maintain the sports theme now is a good opportunity to provide an update on the sporting activities that have taken place during the past couple of months starting with our intrepid Rugby Team captained by that immensely talented but equally 'modest, tactful and reserved' **Capt Martin Pulwer** who led his team to an impressive victory against the Sutton Coldfield Perthelians on Sunday 13 December. Unfortunately the Regimental team, despite a valiant effort, could only manage a draw on the return match on Sunday 7 February. The Rugby team at the moment



The Regimental Rugby Team

appears to be streets ahead of the Regimental soccer team who desperately need strikers to reduce their goal deficit or a new manager (sorry chief) having lost eleven out of twelve games. It is rumour-mongered that our two goalies are in competition with each other, with **Cpl** 'Wink' **Watson** (who is to goal-keeping what Glen Hoddle is to Scope or what Joan of Arc was to fire-fighting) who let in twelve during the last game beating **Capt** 'Chopper' **Kennedy's** record of eight (the term chocolate ashtray on a motorcycle springs to mind). Team Captain, **Sgt Rod Thomas** is reportedly seeking counselling or the advice of the Manager of Nottingham Forest (Not)!

On a much lighter note the Regimental Sports competition started in a positive but relaxed manner with Netball that not surprisingly was won by HQ Sqn with 58 Sqn coming a close second. The Orienteering competition, expertly organised by **SSgt Dave Arnot,** took place at Lichfield on Sunday 24 January and produced no surprises either, with 89 Sqn as expected taking the team prize. Congratulations are extended however to **SSgt Alf Holyoak** whose timing of 39.02 on Course 13 qualified him as Regimental Champion and to **Lt Anna Cliff** who succeeded as Female Champion with a record breaking 23.37 on Course 15. Team members were also delighted to be joined by the Comd 11 Sig Bde, **Brig Jonathan Cook** who participated as a guest runner and very nearly won the runner up prize! The following Tuesday, teams gathered again at 58 Sqn for the indoor football competition. As expected this was a highly competitive, tough and fierce competition, points were at stake and the principal players were anxious to secure their ranking in the championship league. After some tough games during the evening and despite losing one of their key players 89 Sqn triumphantly overcome the opposition and won the day. They now trail HQ Sqn who are maintaining their position at the top of championship league. Next is Hockey, followed by Volleyball and Basketball so the competition is still wide open!

36 (EASTERN) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO **Lt Col J. A. Allan TD**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) R. J. Stanton**

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS

Needless to say, being in a TA unit at the moment is full of rumour and counter rumour, depending on whom you talk to or what you want to believe. I for one just get on and do my job until someone tells me to stop! Maybe by the time you are read this, the situation will have been resolved one way or another and we'll know what's happening to who and why. All I know is that I bet a '*Wire* Notes Writer' won't be posted in! So here goes for this edition . . .

I would like to start by thanking all those contributors who have made my life so easy . . . NOT! I'm up to about my fourth contributor in the last twelve months and that's only because they are mostly at RHQ and I keep pestering them. So the party line is, 'If you want your name/Tp/TAC/Sqn mentioned in 1999, you are going to have to put pen to paper and send it by by the first day of April/June/August/October/December to: *The Wire* Editor, c/o RHQ.

SNCO & JNCO CADRE COURSE JANUARY 1999

The Course is a promotion qualifying course for Signallers to LCpl and Corporals to Sergeant held over two concurrent weekends. The first weekend is an intake test and teaching weekend followed by a test weekend in the field. This year we had 21 Signallers and 10 Corporals all trying to qualify for promotion, a good turn out over recent years. The course was planned and organised by **WO1 (RSM) Bob Stanton** on Stanford training area. The PSIs were given their subjects to teach and **SSgt Martin Wright** took up the challenge to run the admin side of things. The course started with a good old BFT at 0630hrs when it was still dark and misty led gently by **Sgt** 'Pegasus' **Back**. A quick shower and breakfast and onto the square to listen to the dulcet tones of **Sgt** 'Tasmanian' **Tuff** and the RSM's inspection. Before they knew it they were in the classroom for intake tests followed immediately by weapon handling tests, or was it a test of the instructor's patience? The rest of the day found the students learning all about squad control and Internal Security, then the JNCOs on navigation and the SNCO course on admin in the field and formal orders. After a long day scratching their heads it was off to the bar for a beer and study their test results. **Sig Wilson** and **Cfn Izzard** were looking strong on the JNCO course , but this was the teaching phase after all.

Sunday morning came all too quickly and there we were treading up the BFT route again trying to pass or improve their times. Some did, some didn't and some tried to help others who hadn't. More drill, vehicle navigation with **Sgt Pete Stidwell** or admin in the field with **SSgt** 'Satan' **Sullivan** followed by an IS practical with **Sgt Laurence Jarvis** and before we knew it we were all heading home for some well earned rest. A quick week in the office and 'Aaagh', it was the weekend again! This was the weekend to find out who could put into practice what had been previously taught. With stores issued and bergans on, we set off for our respective training areas, the JNCO course going through the slow time practicals, the SNCO course going a little faster! **Sig Garfoot** led the way as Patrol Comd showing grit and determination, but what he didn't know was that the SNCO course had been given orders to recce their harbour location, which they did quite successfully. With light fading and the temperature dropping, the JNCO course started to send out OPs and the SNCO course prepared to locate and attack them. This happened at 2100hrs and if I was an umpire I have to say that the JNCO OP would have taken out the SNCO patrol. After the fire-fight each course returned to its own location to carry out night time routine, until 0300hrs of course, when **Cpl Romans** was selected to receive the Platoon Commander's orders for the dawn attack, not much sleep there then!

At 0600hrs the Commanding Officer, **Lt Col Jackie Allan TD,** arrived at the RV point to be given a brief and pyro demo. By 0620hrs the CO and RSM were in position and 10mins later the JNCO course were given the traditional early morning wake-up call! The SNCO course advanced to the target and tactically stopped two feet short of the trip flares which lay in wait for them, much to the annoyance of **SSgt** 'Peacemaker' **Pollitt.** The banter will go on for weeks about who killed who etc etc, but all in all it was a good learning curve for all of the students. A quick breakfast and cleaning of weapons and before you knew it we were into an IS phase in the form of Op Wideawake followed immediately by a TEWT. The courses were mixed and divided into teams of three. 90 minutes later the teams handed in their solutions to the problem. After watching the teams on the ground and looking at their answers, it showed that they had put in a lot of thought and wanted to get it right and all were not far from the mark. An excellent way of carrying out IS training and certainly recommended to anyone looking for ideas.

After the course photo, it was onto the square for the final results. 'Top bananas' were **Cpl King** for the SNCO course and **Cfn Izzard** of the JNCO course, who was immediately promoted to LCpl and received the Top Student shield. I wonder who will be turning up for the next course?

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj D. Watson**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) M. Grimshaw**

Recently it was decided to practice the Squadron at map reading and HF comms on a Sqn Comds weekend. The weekend started off with an orienteering competition at Waltham Abbey Country Park. The map reading skills were varied and this was denoted by the size of day sack or bergan that they were carrying! Some had obviously planned for an hour or two, some for a week or two.

Everyone was set off at three minutes intervals with **Capt Alan Newbery** leading at a brisk pace. Others set off more sedately, however due to heavy ground tremors; it seemed that the rumours of **Sgt** 'Babs' **Babester** breaking into a trot were well founded. As more people set off the competition hotted up, with **Sig Rodwell** and **LCpl Hughie Rowlands** in particular, warming up with more than the usual enthusiasm. **LCpl Karen Nicholls** would like to extend her gratitude to PG Tips for providing her

tea urn that she carried around in her daysack because, as she says, 'I can't go for more than an hour without a cup of tea'. An enjoyable day was had by all and most managed to achieve all 24 checkpoints. **Cpl Richie Fisher** from the LAD was the first vet home, with **LCpl Hughie Rowlands** brushing aside the competition to start second to last and cruise home first for victory. A special mention must go to the gallant efforts of **Sig Robbie Buhler** who although only found a few checkpoints, managed to navigate back to the start muttering 'I never could master the left and right stuff, let alone north and south!'

TECHNICAL MAINTENANCE TROOP

Tp Comd **Capt (TOT) Alan Newberry**
FofS **WO2 (FofS) Steve Elsworthy**

TM Troop has been a hive of activity lately (honest), with such things as the Corsham hub commitment and second line inspections prior to RSIT. So much so that the TOT and FofS have been doing some of the second line inspections, but that is only the latest rumour, has anyone actually seen them? **Sgt Laurence Jarvis** has been busy in the workshop while **Sgt Kev East** found a spare afternoon to go off and win the Army Angling Fur and Feather at Aldershot's Gold Valley Lakes. He came back with an impressive Christmas hamper but would like to know where the wine went. The Troop would like to say farewell and thank you to **Sgt Kev** 'Have you seen the iron?' **Young** and a warm welcome to **Cpl Dana Grills** and **LCpl Dave Davidson.** On a final note **Messers East** and **Jarvis** would to like to say to the TOT and FofS 'Keep up the good work, we're off skiing!' So after reading this... Crack on FofS!)

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

We say a big hello to **SSgt Gaza Sullivan** all the way from the CTT at Woolwich, who takes over at Bedford TAC, welcome and don't try to avoid your COs interview, (broken down rover my foot!) We have to say a sad farewell to two stalwarts of HQ Sqn, namely **Mrs Iris Burton** (How will we ever replace you?) and **WO2 Mick O'Brien,** thanks for all your hard work over the past years.

SATISFIED SOLDIER SCHEME

- *Are you a satisfied soldier?*
- *Would you like to be attached to your home town ACIO for 5-10 days?*
- *Would you like to visit your old school and ACF to tell them about life in The Royal Signals?*
- *Would you like to help in recruiting soldiers into The Royal Signals?*

YES!!!

Then contact your Troop Office for details of
THE SATISFIED SOLDIER SCHEME

38 (CITY OF SHEFFIELD) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)



70th Anniversary of the Commissioning of Brig C. C. Fairweather CB CBE TD - 20 December 1998
Back Row (L-R): Capt A. L. Hayden - Adjt 38 Sig Regt (V), Lt Col D. SA. Hargreaves - CO 34 Sig Regt (V), Lt Col C. Wakerly - CO 2 Sig Regt, Mrs J. Wakerly, Mrs P. Griffiths, Brig S. G. Hughes - Comd 2 (NC) Sig Bde, Mrs L. Hughes, Col P. R. Davies, Lt Col I. W. Griffiths - CO 38 Sig Regt (V)
Front Row (L-R): Maj Gen A. C. Birtwistle, Mrs S. Birtwistle, Mrs A. Fairweather, Brig C. C. Fairweather, Maj Gen I. O. J. Sprackling - Master of Signals, Mrs M. Griffin, Brig J. H. Griffin - SOinC (A)

ANNIVERSARY LUNCH

On the 20 December 1998, 38 Sig Regt (V) hosted an Anniversary lunch for **Brig Claude Fairweather CB CBE TD**. The 94 year old retired Brigadier, who is a veteran of the Battle of Kohima, and his wife **Alice** were joined by the Corps hierarchy past and present to celebrate almost to the day the 70th Anniversary of his commissioning into the R Signals.

EXERCISE HEAD CHECK

This years CO's TESTEX was based at the Nesscliffe Training Area. The Regiment deployed under the pretence of a normal Regimental Comms Ex in the Midlands area, however, early on the Saturday morning, the true nature of Ex Headcheck was revealed.

The troops made their way to a camp near Donnington, where they were fed and watered, before they moved to Nesscliff Training Area and briefed

on the scenario of a downed aircraft carrying a hazardous cargo. The RAF Fire Service provided a realistic crash site complete with lots of aircraft wreckage, smoke, fire and the odd corpse or two. The troops then watched as the fire was extinguished and the fire team left as quickly as they had arrived. This left the bewildered troops to pick up the task of dealing with casualties and cordoning the area.

Life was not to be so easy though; the Squadrons had to establish command posts that were quickly inundated with numerous tasks requiring the skilful management of their resources. These included house clearance, vehicle recovery, confidence courses, VCPs, search and dealing with the press. The torrential rain and gale force winds played an important part in the weekend. Up until the last minute, there was a distinct possibility that the troops might be required in their real time MACA role, to help local authorities overcome the problems posed by severe flooding of the River Severn. Nesscliff Training Area was at the centre of this alert, with a planned watermanship stand being curtailed due to the sheer volume of water.

When Endex was called, the troops retired to the warmth of the camp for a smoker. The final test was a number of inspections to test the R3 capability of the Regiment including vehicle documents, personal equipment, technical inspections and roadworthiness checks.



RAF techno-babble means nothing to LCpl 'Griff' Griffiths

64 (CITY OF SHEFFIELD) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)

The Sheffield based communicating squadron continued its charity activities with an Inverness to Loch Lomond cycle ride. The 9-person team completed the 200 mile trip in just three days using roads and tracks for the most direct route. This event is one of a series of fund raising activities in aid of the Leukaemia ward of the Royal Hallamshire Hospital in Sheffield. To date the combined effort of the Regiment and The Fairleigh Club has raised over £3000 to provide direct benefits for the recovering and terminally ill patients of the hospital.



Cpl Gary Helliwell, WO2 (SSM) Jimmy Mees, Cpl Angela Elliott, Mr Alan Peckham, Mrs Mavis Peckham and Jacqueline Taylor

87 (CITY OF NOTTINGHAM) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)
EXERCISE NIGEL'S REVENGE

WO2 (SSM) Nigel Caldicott organised another one of his infamous military training weekends, cadets from Nottingham and Long Eaton joined in the fun by acting as enemy. The tough guys of the Squadron, famous for their participation on these weekends changed roles and carried out the DS tasks with a 'sadistic' enjoyment. **Cpl Paton** confessed that he had felt quite stressed getting things to happen 'to the plan'. Others involved in planning the weekend with the 'Master of Darkness' (SSM/SL) were **Cpl Dion Brittain, Cpl Ibbey Nevill** and **Cpl** 'Deer Hunter' **Willmer.** Well done lads, you may now get more to organise!

CONGRATULATIONS ON PROMOTION

Congratulations on promotion go to the following members of the Squadron: **SSgt Frank McCubbin** to WO2 (YofS), **Cpl Stu Nesbitt** to Sgt, **LCpls Nevill, Willmer, de la Billiere** and **Brittain** to Cpl, **Sigs Duffin, Doran** and **Rawlings** to LCpl. There have been major changes in the Squadron management team. We say farewell to **Maj Tom** 'McTavish' **McCappin** who goes for a well deserved rest to the 'Wendy House' as Regimental 2IC, and **Maj Andy** 'Rumpole' **Smith,** who has gone on promotion to be OC 64 Sig Sqn in Sheffield. A warm welcome to **Maj David Tomlinson,** our new OC. Welcome back to **Sgt Mandy Jones** who has just returned from nearly a year in Bosnia.

SDR EFFECTS

The Squadron's Recruiting Team **(SSgt Chrissy Bull, Cpl** 'The Valkerie' **Helen Mountney** and **Cpl Ibbey Nevill)** are extremely busy persuading soldiers from infantry units to join the Squadron following SDR.

NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION SUCCESS

Three members of the Squadron have just attained a Level 2 NVQ in Telecommunications: **Cpls Andy Doran, Ibby Nevill** and **LCpl Jason Rawlings**. Congratulations to them on a first for the TA, Corps and Regiment. Congratulations also to the two qualified assessors for all their efforts, **WO2 (FofS) Frank McCubbin** and **Sgt Carol** 'MS NVQ' **Lee.**



NVQ Practical, Sgt Crogan and Cpl Doran

Finally, happy birthday to **Capt Bev Swift** who leaves the Flirty Thirties and joins the Naughty FORTIES, The question is asked, 'Why didn't the Adjt get an invite to the party?' Answers please to the Squadron.

WHAT WAS THE ORIGINAL PURPOSE OF BLANDFORD CAMP? – FIND OUT AT
www.royalsignals.army.org.uk/museum/

39 (SKINNERS) SIGNAL REGIMENT

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS

CO **Lt Col J. Crackett TD**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) P. Anderson**

The last few months have seen the Regiment continue in a busy vein. On returning from the Christmas break, it was straight back in to a Regimental Training Weekend and the Brigade Study Period. The soldiers' trade skills and the Officers' knowledge of the Corps of which they are a part, were both immensely improved! Two weeks later the Regiment were on parade again for Ex Bronze Lynx - the first Regimental Comms Exercise of three. The Exercise was very successful with our tradesmen getting their first chance to brush up on rusty skills since Annual Camp - it was just like riding a bike! The Regiment would also like to welcome **Sgt Norman,** PSI Tech for HQ Sqn who joins us from Blandford. We hope you enjoy your stay.

HEADQUARTER SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj Nash**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Bloomer**

1998 PRESENTATION OF
LORD LIEUTENANT'S CERTIFICATES AND AWARDS
by LCpl Taylor

We assembled at the Artillery Grounds, Whiteladies Road, at 2.30 on 29 November 1998. There were many awards and presentations for members of both the Reserve Forces and the Cadets, with representatives from the Army, Navy and Air Force. Of the six Lord Lieutenant's Certificates being presented, four of them were to people from 39 Sig Regt: **SSgt Burn Sgt Marsh, LCpl Taylor** and **Arthur Cheetham,** who is now a civilian driver with the Regiment.

A Citation for each individual was read and mine was found to be rather humorous since I started in the RNR then on reorganisation moved to 37 Sig Regt (V), then on reorganisation moved to 71 (Yeomanry) Sig Regt (V), then on reorganisation again moved to 39 (Skinners) Sig Regt ('V). I was also presented with my Long Service and Good Conduct Medal and Bar. I had been looking forward to this presentation for a long time - a real milestone in my Reserve Forces' career.

After the presentation, photographs were taken and light refreshments given which finished the afternoon off very well. It had been a very pleasant day. I would like to take this opportunity to thank **Col Crackett, Capt Pengelley, Capt Cullen** and any other officers who have helped me over the years to make these awards possible.

L SQUADRON
5 (QUEEN'S OWN OXFORDSHIRE HUSSARS)
SIGNALS SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj R. D. Stone**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) G. T. Simpson**

1998 was an excellent year for the Squadron. A full and interesting training programme kept everyone occupied. The Squadron was granted the Freedom of Banbury with a parade taking place on 5 July 1998 and the Mounting of an Exhibition at the County Museum and the publication of a book to celebrate the Bi-centenary of the Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars. We have said farewell to **Maj Paul Wenlock** who commanded the Squadron and takes the full responsibility and all the credits for the events during 1998. We welcome back to the Squadron **Maj Robert Stone** who took command on 1 October 1998. We also bid farewell to **SSgt Andy Baird** who left us on promotion to join Exeter University UOTC. In his place we welcome **SSgt** 'Scouse' **Simcock** who has already attended Annual Camp, RTW 1, 2 and 3 and a 14 day Exercise in the Canary Islands - See Separate Report to see how arduous it was!!

If you're visiting
Bournemouth or Poole,
why not combine it with a visit to
The Royal Signals Museum
Blandford Camp
Tel: 01258 482248

THE YEOMANRY EXHIBITION
(QUEER OBJECTS ON HORSEBACK)

Following 12 long months of fund raising and collecting memorabilia by the Yeomanry Trust Members and the PSAO, an exhibition to celebrate the 200 Years of Oxfordshire Yeomanry was opened at the County Museum in Woodstock by the Duke of Marlborough on 20 November 1998. **Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal** who met Trustees, Members of the Squadron and QOOH Old Comrades Association, also visited the exhibition on 17 December 1998. The Corps TA Band led by **SSgt Jim Robinson** travelled down for the evening to provide a splendid fanfare. The exhibition will be touring Oxfordshire for the next 18 months. The Trust have published a book The Story of The Oxfordshire Yeomanry 1798 - 1998, £8.95 incl. p&p. Copies of the book and the dates and locations of the exhibition are available from the Trust Secretary on 01295 262178.



Maj Robert Stone, HRH, Lt Col John Crackett CO and Maj Paul Wenlock



HRH Meets Members of the Old Comrades Association



HRH being welcomed to the Exhibition by Col Tim May, who is President of the Old Comrades Association & Chairman of the Oxfordshire Yeomanry Trust, Cpl Mark Taylor and Sig Les Barnes provide the Lance Guard

VISIT BY BRIGADIER S. G. HUGHES CBE, COMMANDER 2 (NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS) BRIGADE & COTSWOLD GARRISON TUESDAY 19 JANUARY 1999

The Squadron Commander welcomed **Brig Hughes** to Banbury on an extremely wet and miserable training night. It was his first visit to 5 Sqn and Banbury. The Commander met all the officers and was then given a fully detailed brief on the Squadron. He then toured the garages and workshops meeting squadron personnel preparing vehicles and equipment for Ex Bronze Lynx.



Cpl 'Paddy' Ferguson
Are you sure you want a lift With 5 Squadron?



Maj Robert Stone presenting the Commander with a copy of the Yeomanry Book

THE SQUADRON CHRISTMAS FUNCTION 1998

On Saturday 12 December 1998 the Annual Squadron Christmas Party was held in the TAC. The organisers, **Cpl** (Now Sergeant) **Milner, Cpl Mark** 'Buster' **Taylor** and **Steve** 'Big Boy' **Brady** must receive special thanks for all the hard work in putting together a marvellous event.

The evening started with a bang with pre-dinner drinks, followed by a sumptuous banquet prepared by our own Master Chef, **Sgt** (Now Staff Sergeant) **Lee Kavanagh, Cpl J. C. Nick Hawkins, LCpl Sharon Scutt** and **Pte Sean Buckley.** After such a fine spread and in the absence of the PSI (Ops), **SSgt** 'Scouse' **Simcock** on duty in the Canary Islands! the PSI (Tech) **Sgt Robbie** 'I'm on Resettlement Sir' **Hall** presented **LCpl Sharon Scutt** with the much coveted PSI Trophy for the most improved soldier for 1998. The after dinner speeches were led by the OC, **Maj Robert** 'Helium' **Stone,** who made a presentation to his predecessor **Maj Paul Wenlock**. The OC also promoted **Sgt Kavanagh** and **Cpl Milner**. Well earned and congratulations to both of you. After the meal everyone retired to the bar where to the sheer amazement of all, including her husband **Ash**, the Adjt **Capt Bobby** 'Tinkerbell' **Davis** rang the bell. An invite for next year has already been sent to RHQ. Much more drinking, dancing and singing followed, led by **SSgt Paul Johnson** and fellow chicken fancier **Cpl Kev Durno.** Once more, thanks to the committee and chefs for a fantastic event.

FULL TIME RESERVE SERVICE (FTRS)

We wish **Cpl Nick Hawkins** every success in Fallingbostel with the RHF on his 12 months FTRS. Hope Bosnia is good, and **Sharon** misses you

CONGRATULATIONS

Well done to our two ACTC Pay Clerks, **Pte Lizzy Matthews** and **Pte Scott** (I came top Sir) **Garthley** on passing their Class 2 Course.

OPERATION NEW WORLD - AN ADVENTURE IN THE SUN

by SSgt 'Scouse' Simcock

The story goes something like this: On a dull, rainy Monday morning at the end of November 1998 the Regt YofS, **WO2 Mark** 'Fluffy Head' **Whiting** phoned up **SSgt** (PSI Ops) 'Scouse' **Simcock** at the TAC in Banbury. 'Scouse, there is a fast ball been thrown round. I need a volunteer from around the Regiment to go away in two weeks time to the Canary Islands to take nineteen women and four blokes on a civilian run course. If you know anybody that would like to go will you let me know as soon as possible?'

Once I picked myself up off the floor and stopped laughing I asked him if this was an early April Fool's joke - to which I don't think he realised what I was on about! Now what you must remember is that 'Fluffy Head' is not quite as quick on the uptake as most normal people. However, I eventually managed to persuade him that I would be the ideal candidate for the job - that is suave, intelligent, witty and desperate to go anywhere in the sun for free! After getting permission from the kindly **Capt Bob Sheldon** (PSAO) and trying to keep it a secret from as many people as possible (especially **Sgt Robbie Hall**, PSI Tech) and all the PSIs in the Regiment until it was confirmed I was on it, I then let it be known to as many people as possible. It was then a case of trying to get everything ready as quickly as possible. Fine details had to be worked out, for example, how many sunbed sessions would I be able to get in before I left (14 sessions in the end!) and what was the exchange rate at the moment?

The day of departure eventually came and I met up with everybody at Gatwick Airport. The first person I was to meet was **SSgt** 'Tel' **Smith,** 38 Sig Regt (V) (REME) - he was the other regular soldier attached for the 'Op'. 'Tel' had just had an operation on a certain part of his anatomy and was finding it quite difficult to walk without it being extremely painful - a fact that I was to chuckle over the next few days! In charge of Op New World was **Miss Anne Leonard MA**. She was the driving force behind the whole operation and an inspiration to all the students. This was **Anne's** 8th Op New World. She ran them all completely voluntarily and in her own time. Along with **Anne** were the two lecturers **Dr Colin Ryall** and **Tim Jenkins** MA.

Op New World is a self-help programme designed for young unemployed (18-25) and its main aim is to get participants off the unemployment register and into worthwhile jobs. Since it started in 1995 the success rate so far has been 90%. Applicants come from all over the UK working in partnership with Farnborough College of Technology. The programme provides a unique opportunity for young people to get restarted. There are three parts to the course all designed to enhance their teamwork, study skills in Environmental Science and practice these skills learnt on the two week fieldwork trip to the Canary Islands.

We spent two weeks on La Gomera, an island off Tenerife, doing forest regeneration in the Garajonay National Park. Much of that two weeks, **Tel** and I actually spent doing mundane every day army things like unblocking the toilets, cooking breakfast, cleaning up and basically being a jack of all trades and master of absolutely none! The normal admin jobs that every squaddie becomes adept at! We also had to take the students out every day on little 'hikes' up mountains (for which we never got thanked). Other lessons taught were survival skills, first aid skills, map reading skills - we even managed to get some night navigation in (well it was a 10 minute walk from the Spanish bar to the 'luxurious school' we were staying in). Fortunately we managed to spend a small amount of time at the beach - not as much time as we spent with some of the students in the local hospital where we became regular visitors, sprained arms, legs, infections, oh and of course **Tel's** little problem with his operation! However, my sunbed sessions back in Blighty came in rather useful as it meant I could go straight on the beach and cover myself in coconut oil!

The time came when we all had to depart and with duty frees all bought and packed away we returned to a rather cold Gatwick and thoughts returned of Xmas and what Santa was going to bring us all. Op New World was an experience not only for the civilian students but for me as well. It was very different being in charge of 24 civilian students and lessons were learnt on all sides. Hopefully now they have all got different ideas as to what a squaddie is really like and on my part I now don't think that environmental students are tree-hugging, eco-warriers ready to strap themselves to the nearest tree - well not all anyway!!!!!

Finally, Op New World is an incredible success and is well worthwhile. The drive and enthusiasm of the students and the lecturers amazed me at times. I was very privileged to take part in this field work trip and recommend this to anyone who would be interested in helping out. If anybody is interested in Op New World please send a SAE to me and I will get back to them as soon as possible!

Happy Xmas and New Year and may there be peace and goodwill in the New Year - along with a nice win on the lottery for all concerned at 5 (QOOH) Sqn in Banbury.



Miss Anne Leonard AM founder of Op New World and SSgt 'Scouse' Simcock outside the school

71 (YEOMANRY) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO — **Lt Col C. H. Turner**
RSM — **WO1 M. Godwin**

REGIMENTAL NEWS
WELCOME AND FAREWELL

The Regiment says farewell to one of its PSIs, **SSgt Brian Croxford,** moving to pastures new in Donnington with his family. We welcome his successor, **SSgt Dave Cooke**. He and his family are now trying to acclimatise rapidly after spending the early part of the winter in Cyprus.

68 (INNS OF COURT AND CITY YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON – WHIPPS CROSS AND LINCOLN'S INN

Sqn Comd — **Maj E. J. H. Marshall TD**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) L. Evans**

WELCOME AND FAREWELL

The Squadron says farewell to its erstwhile OC, **Maj Rupert Sawyer,** who leaves us to take up a staff appointment with the Territorial Commissions Board. We wish both he and his wife well for the future. To succeed him, we have great pleasure in welcoming as the Officer Commanding 68 Sig Sqn the newly promoted **Maj Eddie Marshall**. May you have a happy and successful tour in command.

70 (ESSEX YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON CHELMSFORD AND HARLOW

Sqn Comd — **Maj Simon Palmer**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) Paul Humphreys**

FAREWELL

The Squadron says a fond farewell to **Sig Liz Blaber** who is transferring to 265 (KCLY) Sig Sqn in order to combine her TA training with her studies at Sussex University. We wish her well and thank her for her service with the Squadron.

WELCOME

The Squadron welcomes **LCpl David Liddle** who joins us from 57 Sig Sqn in Cheltenham. We hope he enjoys his service with the Squadron.

VISIT OF COMMMANDER 2 (NC) SIGNAL BRIGADE TO CHELMSFORD

The Squadron received a visit from Comd 2 (NC) Sig Bde, **Brig S. G. Hughes CBE**. 882 Sig Tp from Harlow also attended the training evening. The Comd was initially briefed by the Sqn Comd and was then taken on a tour of the TAC, commencing at the Officers' Mess where he had coffee with the Officers and SNCOs. He continued his visit and saw Operators undergoing trade training in the classroom, Technicians under instruction in the workshops and the DE's and Dvr Lmn in the garages. At the end of his tour the Command addressed all ranks before moving on to an informal buffet with all ranks in the Squadron bar.



'The Management'
(L-R): Capt Tallents, Maj Palmer, Lt Col Turner, Brig Hughes, WO2 Humphreys



Brig Hughes baffles LCpl Laskey
(L-R): Brig Hughes, LCpl Laskey, Sig Evans, Sig Smith

KEEP IN TOUCH – PUBLISH IT IN *THE WIRE*



The Comd shares a joke with LCpl Wafer and Sig Marsh



Col Foakes presents Brig Brown with a farewell gift

OFFICERS' SUPPER NIGHT
FAREWELL TO BRIG COLIN BROWN

The officers of the Squadron, plus some former officers, held a farewell supper to **Brig Colin Brown** who has retired as the Squadron Honorary Colonel. The supper was a success and, as is the custom on these nights, speeches were made on behalf of the Squadron by **Col Stephen Foakes**, Dep Comd 2 (NC) Sig Bde as a former Squadron Commander. He then made a presentation from the officers to **Brig Colin**. In reply, **Brig Colin** made a memorable and moving speech. All ranks of the Squadron wish him well for the future.

265 SIGNAL SQUADRON - BEXLEYHEATH AND BRIGHTON

Sqn Comd	**Maj Hugh Robertson**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Keith Wrate**

The Squadron is busy preparing for the National TA Centre Open Day. More news next time....

NEWS FROM THE SQUADRONS

1 (ROYAL BUCKINGHAMSHIRE YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON (SPECIAL COMMUNICATIONS)

Sqn Comd	**Maj D. S. Raleigh**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) D. Scott**

It seems an eternity since the Squadron last featured in *The Wire*, but that's what happens when you're a busy operational unit. August saw the departure of **Maj Gordon Duncan** to Blandford. **Maj Duncan** commanded 602 Troop in Bicester, before the formation of 1 (RBY) Sig Sqn (SC) in Bletchley. The Squadron is immensely grateful to **Maj Duncan** for his hard work and dedication in what was a very challenging period. In his place **Maj David Raleigh** has made good his escape from HQNI and seems to have found excuses to visit most parts of the world already. At the same time the 2IC, **Capt Julian Gregory** also felt it was time to move on and we have welcomed **Capt David Goddard** from 94 (BY) Sig Sqn. **Capt Ros Brown** could not put off AJD any longer and handed over to **Capt Richard Newhouse,** another refugee from the Province. We wish **Capt Brown** the best off luck at AJD and subsequently at 35 Sig Regt.



The busy Autumn training programme started with the biennial camp at Jersey Camp in the Isle of Wight. This was an intense period of trade training culminating in a test exercise at Thetford. Time was also found for an NCOs cadre course, a fun packed sports day overseen by a slightly biased **WO2 (YofS)** 'Ginge' **Willlimont** and unfortunately PT including a stretcher race... thanks for that, **Sgt** 'JD' **Dennison.** The Camp was extremely successful and with the qualifications awarded, promotions were soon to follow.

EXERCISE SAFFRON SANDS 1998 - JORDAN
by LCpl Wayne Miller

Every year the resident Infantry Battalion in Cyprus holds overseas Training Exercises in the Middle East. 1 (RBY) Sig Sqn (SC) have provided a rear link detachment for the Exercises for the last three years. With 1998 being no exception, **Cpl Ann** 'I'm a networking guru for the REME' **Coombs** and myself had the pleasure of joining 1st Battalion Light Infantry in the deserts of Jordan for five weeks, throughout the months of October and November.

After the obligatory delays with the flight, we finally arrived in Jordan. The journey to Camp Habib from the airport was provided by a local bus company, and to say that it was scary would be an understatement. Was the driver asleep or just visually impaired? That we will never know, but the phrase 'white knuckle ride' springs to mind. With communications to Cyprus swiftly established, **Jim** and I began to adapt to Battalion life. Speaking from my own personal experience, I strongly advise all Corps personnel who are attached to the Infantry, not to address 'Colour Sergeants' as 'Staff' Whoops! Halfway through the Exercise our boss **Maj David** 'Honestly, I've never played Black Jack in my life' **Raleigh** flew out to Jordan and paid the detachment a visit. Not one to shy away from the hardships of being a real soldier, he declined the RQMS' offer of a luxury bed in the officers mess, and joined 'his boys' in roughing it on the floor in our 12 x 12! Good on you boss.

The detachment was lucky enough to be included in the excellent R&R package that the Battalion had put together. A visit to the Dead Sea was one of the biggest highlights. Speaking from personal experience, I strongly advise anyone who is going to be swimming in a sea with the highest salt content in the world not to have a shave prior to doing so! It really, really hurts. We also managed to visit the ancient city of Petra, and do some sea canoeing, and diving, in the Gulf of Aqaba. On returning to Camp Habib, **Cpl Jim Coombs** kindly volunteered me to represent the detachment at the remembrance parade which the Battalion was holding. What I did not realise, was that I would have to learn Light Infantry drill in the space of five minutes. Let's just say that I didn't quite cut the mustard! All in all, the Exercise was a great success for the detachment.

EXERCISE RUNNEL STONE 1999

Ex Runnel Stone is one of the most exciting Exercises of the year, held annually in different regions of Denmark. Designed primarily to test the Danish Home Guard, the Squadron invites various airborne and special forces Royal Signals units to recce and then attack installations which the Danes are guarding. This Exercise has a considerable history and attracts considerable interest within Denmark, from both the military and the civilian populations.

The Squadron deployed an advance party by ferry to set up communications at safe houses around the region. The main party then deployed on Friday evening, by C130 from Luton Airport to Tactical Landing Zones on the Danish coast. The TA soldiers love it - at 1600hrs there're at their civilian job, three hours later they're on patrol in Scandinavia!! Over the next 36 hours an intense period of close target recces, comms schedules, visits and attacks took place at a furious pace, before both sides declare victory at endex. Sunday afternoon the main party then board the C130 back to Luton for 1600hrs. Phew, what did you do at the weekend?

All in all, this was a very successful Exercise for the Squadron (and perhaps we'll invite you next time, if you're still with us MC). Next year should be bigger and better, with para infiltrations for those who've done the course.

THE LOOK FORWARD

Relaxation in a sunny climate was required and the OC and YofS got the latter, haring around at a very silly pace, considering the temperature in America and Bermuda for two weeks. All that for the recce of our three week Ex Global Lynx 3 to be held in March - if they'd tried to seek sympathy, their pleas would have fallen on deaf ears!! Watch this space for details of Ex Global Lynx 1. Back in the UK (briefly) **Maj David** 'I think I went to Bletchley once' **Raleigh** went off to visit more of the chaps, and **WO2 (YofS)** 'Ginge' **Willimont** took **Sgt** 'I work for the Foreman, honest' **Marvel** off to Norway, to recce the forthcoming skiing holiday (That is - 'communications exercise'). The year finished with a cracking Christmas party and a deserved break over the festive period, although 1999 looms with a range of Exercises in many countries throughout the world. It's a hard life.

EXERCISE SHORT LYNX

Whilst all the overseas exercises give the Squadron a chance to practice long range HF, basic comms skills need to be practised and honed to a fine edge. This is where the Short Lynx Exercises come in. Ex Short Lynx 7, in December, was just such a weekend exercise using training areas in Piddington, Hullavington and Bramcote (thanks, 30!) as well as our own TA Centre. Thanks to the efforts of **SSgt** 'Deano' **Poole** and **Sgt Colin Roberts** it proved a very successful deployment.

633 Tp are responsible for the Base Detachments. **LCpls Sue Jordan** and **Sarah Jakeman** put the youngsters through their paces, and although **Sig Stu** 'Sausage Fingers' **Adams** managed to delete half of the messages most of the traffic got out to the field eventually. 602 Troop's **LCpl Flo Jordan** was more concerned about simple survival up in Bramcote, as his crewman **Cpl Luke** 'Golden Boy' **Stanley** had managed to forget to pack both the heater and any pans to cook on. Ex Short Lynx 8 was a similar deployment organised by **Lt Angus** 'Paper Boy' **Evers**. Hoping that some of the success of 'Station X' would rub off, **SSgt Debbie Stock** deployed her Transportable Base to Bletchley Park and started decrypting messages about U-Boats. By Saturday morning, though, **LCpl Paul Evans** had reminded her that the War was over and comms to the field had been established.

In the meantime, **Cpl Mark Gott** had deployed his field det to Piddington, not exactly the home of creature comforts but an awful lot warmer than Hullavington where he had been on Short Lynx 7. Just recently promoted, **Cpl** 'Gotty' was keen to demonstrate his leadership abilities, dragging **LCpl Paul Dalton** out of the stores because 'he's a grafter and makes a mean egg banjo'. Hopefully he may have to do some work when in Belize next month!

20 ARMOURED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (200)

OC	**Maj J. E. Richardson MBE**
RSM	**WO1 (RSM) T. P. Crane**

VISIT OF THE DCINC LAND - MAJ GEN J. D STOKOE CBE
by LCpl Thompson

On the morning of the 3 November 1998, the Unit was visited by the DCinC Land, **Maj Gen J. D. Stokoe CBE**. The visit involved a brief visit onto the Squadron vehicle park to meet the troops followed by coffee with the Officers and Seniors which included a medal presentation with **Brig N. R. Parker,** Comd 20 Armd Bde in attendance. **Cpl Calum Black** was presented with his LS & GC for 15 years without getting caught, **Sig Bowring** was presented with his NI medal and finally myself **LCpl Thompson** was presented with my Joint Commanders Commendation for Op Resolute. Our wives were also presented with flowers and champagne was opened by the OC and RSM (pictured) to toast the recipients. It was a day in my career I will never forget as it is not very often you get to see an officer so far up the 'ladder' let alone speak to him. I must confess though that for once being known as 'Gobby' **Thomo** was a bit untrue as I was totally stuck for words. A meal was laid on for the recipients and all the families, seniors and Corporals from the Squadron. I would like to thank the OC and RSM for a memorable day and congratulate **Cpl Black** and **Sig Bowring** for their well deserved medals.



(Back Row): WO1 (RSM) T. P. Crane, Cpl Calum Black, Maj J. E. Richardson MBE, LCpl Thompson, and Sig Bowring
(Front Row): Brig N. R. Parker, Mrs Black, Maj Gen J. D. Stokoe CBE, Mrs Thompson and Mrs Bowring



The RSM and OC (In the rear) try in vain to open the champagne, the 'Tiff' has no idea!!

ROYAL CORPS OF SIGNALS SKIING CHAMPIONSHIP 1998

The Corps championships began on the 5 December 1998 for the Squadron's ski team. The team consisted of **Lt Rhidian Jones, Lt Paul Randell, Cpl Ray McLeod,** and **LCpl Morgan Lewis**. After spending an hour trying to leave camp due to the wrong type of snow falling, the team was off on what was to be a mammoth trip to Kaprun, Austria. If it wasn't for the fact that German Autobahns are all heated by underground radiators (a fact pointed out by **LCpl Morgan Lewis**) the team may not have got there at all.

Sixteen hours after leaving Paderborn, we arrived in Zell am See, just in time to begin skiing the same morning. The remainder of the Corps ski teams except the Brigades, had arrived two weeks earlier and already had an advantage over our very inexperienced minor unit team. The first week involved ski training, an hour on the slope at the end of the day to ski like lunatics and finally back home for a little snooze. Then followed **LCpl Lewis'** special compo surprise, a couple of beers and then off to 'Crazy Daisies' the local night spot for a 'couple of jars' until the early hours.

The second week was race week. The team had now found their race legs and were raring to go, first stop the Individual Giant Slalom. **LCpl Lewis** was first to go, having the greatest amount of seed points, next to go was **Cpl Ray McLeod**, followed by **Lt Randell**, and finally myself the illustrious captain with an all time low seeding of 61st out of 74. When I arrived at the bottom of the slope, my worst nightmare had come true. Three snow covered racers resembling my team, had all fallen, and all had set a precedent for the rest of the week. As a team we were destined to do badly, but all had gained a taste for racing in their first season and all were itching to return next year to set the records straight.

EXERCISE PIPEDOWN XXXIV
DIVISIONAL SKIING CHAMPIONSHIPS 1999

The Divisional ski championships, began in early January in Les Contamines, France in the shadow of the great Mont Blanc. The ski team had one change to that of the Corps, with **Lt Randell** losing his place to the Chief of staff **Maj Tim Lai**. With the inclusion of the 'Skier from Geneva', the team was greatly improved, and looked quite formidable. That was of course until we all started falling with great style once again. The week passed quickly without event, except Chamonix and Hotel a la Bank foyer, but some things are best kept quiet. The OC, **Maj Richardson MBE** arrived towards the end of the week with his illustrious driver, the 2IC, **Capt Nick O'Kelly**. Before we knew it the championships were over and the prize giving was upon us. A congratulations goes to **Maj Tim Lai**, for winning the Individual Slalom, the Veterans Individual Slalom, and the Veterans Individual Combination. A well done also goes to the team for coming third in the Minor Units Team event and for winning the scruffiest team award. To all the other teams, all the best and we look forward to 'Crazy Daisies' next year.



The Team L-R LCpl Morgan Lewis, Maj Tim Lai, Lt Rhidian Jones and Cpl Ray McLeod



Lt Jones shows us the correct skiing position



Cpl Ray McLeod starts with impeccable grace and style

BRITISH ARMY (GERMANY)
INTER UNIT BADMINTON CHAMPIONSHIPS 1999

The Championships were held at Hammersmith Barracks on the 8/9 February 1999. The unit entered a team under the organisation and training of **Capt Mick Bohanan**. After two weeks of training the team pairs were chosen and a battle plan drawn up. The plan was simple, pair one **Capt Bohanan** and **Cfn Ritchie Stoneman** would win all of their games because they were unbeatable, pair two **Cpl Roberts (RLC)** and **WO1 Graham Du-prat** would then win some and lose some, and pair three **WO2 Dave Bobbett** and **Sgt Rog Moore** would hopefully pick up the odd point here and there.

With the plan in place we started the day with high expectations of trophies and medals only to be beaten by last years runners up 32 Engr Regt 3-0. However, the team bounced back well winning against 2 RTR 3-0, 2 CGS 3-0 and then 3 AAC 3-0, This set up a thrilling last match against HQ 1 (UK) Armd Div with second place up for grabs. The first match **Cpl Roberts** and **WO1 Graham Du-prat** was a heated confrontation which went right down to the wire (excuse the pun), however, HQ 1 (UK) Armd Div scraped a 2-1 win which meant our next two teams must win in order to achieve 2nd place. So, next up were **Sgt Roger Moore** and **WO2 Dave Bobbet** who, despite being our weaker team achieved a good 2-0 win. This meant that the very last game would decide the final positions. **Capt Mick Bohanan** and **Cfn Ritchie Stoneman** went into the final game confident of victory but found their opponents equally as determined to win. The match was played at a great but skilful pace which entertained the watching crowd to the end, but unfortunately, HQ 1 (UK) Armd Div triumphed 2-1 to take this years' runners up place.

The final positions were as follows:

Winners	32 Engr Regt
Runners up	HQ 1 (UK) Armd Div
2rd Runners up	20 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (200)

A special mention must go to our captain and coach **Capt Mick Bohanan** who recently won the open doubles and the veterans doubles while bunking off work at Chilwell in the UK, well done.

ALPHA TROOP

by Cpl McDonald

Tp Comd — **Lt R. Jones**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt M. Payne**

As Alpha Tp moved from the old year to the new, the workload was increased in preparation for the up-coming RSIT inspection due in February, with some notable grafting and good first and second line inspection results from all but **Sigs Bruce Morrison** and **Mat Dorling** in particular. This was mainly due to the amount of personnel that were on courses and detachments. These included: **LCpl Andy Nolan** (Class 1 Upgrading), **Sgt Steve Mayell** (SAA) and **Sig Mat Coverly** (PTI), courses which they all passed. We also wish luck to **Cpl Don Garner** (SAA), **LCpl Ross Thurbron** (RSCC) and **Cpl John Reardon** (DMI's again) on their various courses. We should also mention **LCpl Keith Knox** who has the pleasure of spending the winter at BATUS and the 'Sin-Bin' in particular.

We would like to say farewell to **LCpl Crowder** on his posting to 1 Mech Bde and **Cpl McDonald** who is moving to 30 Sig Regt and welcome **LCpl Benson**, and **Sigs Brough, Hepworth** and **Wilkinson** into the Troop. Congratulations go out to: **Bruce** and **Corrie Morrison** and the birth of their daughter **Courtney, Ross** and **Kirsty Thurbron** on the birth of their son **Ethan** and finally **Andy Nolan** and **Sarah Booker** on the birth of their daughter **Hannah**.

BRAVO TROOP

Tp Comd — **Lt P. N. Randell**
Tp SSgt — **Sgt J. Crabb**

The run up to Xmas whilst largely an alcoholic blur was considerably eased for the B Fleet crew thanks to **Sig Rachel Reeve** and **Sig Steve Bowring**. Thankfully the shipment of calendars arrived intact, if only the same could be said for the Rover! Post Christmas, the Troop immersed itself in an alternating cycle of pre-RSIT maintenance and PT. Newly appointed PTI **Sig Andy Moss** descended upon the Troop and Squadron like an avenging angel. His mission to fight Christmas flab has been executed with a vengeance. Will we survive or is the Squadron soon to be manned by waifs with arms like Garth? Watch this space!

Congratulations to **LCpl Tony Ramwell** and **LCpl John Spinks** on their first (better late than never Spinksy!) and to **Lt Randell** on saving his last cornflake token and dropping the '2nd'. A large welcome to **Cpl Tris Dunbar** who gains the Fleet Managers hot seat and goodbye to **LCpl Evans** to Ireland.

SUPPORT TROOP

Farewell to **Sgt Deegan** and his wife **Anne** off to Bruggen and in his place we'd like to welcome **Sgt Leigh Northeast** and his wife **Silvia.** We hope they enjoy their tour here and don't find it too stressful. We would also like to welcome **Sig Sarah Billany** from the factory, the learning curve starts here! Congratulations to **LCpl Chris Mooney** and his wife **Mirelle** on the birth of their daughter **Brittany**

MAINTENANCE TROOP

A warm welcome to the new arrivals, namely **Sgt Nigel Kenyon** and his wife **Caroline** from 7 Sig Regt. Also welcome to **Cpl Al Crossman, LCpl James Alexander, Dave Trot** and **Cfn Richard Stoneman** and his wife **Michelle**. Also welcome to **LCpl Darren Ormiston** and his wife **Christine**. Hope you have all settled in now and have a great tour with the Squadron. Goodbye and goodluck to **Cpl Leslie Jay** who's off to 1 Sqn (Special Comms), well done on passing the course. Also farewell to **Cpl Mark Evans** and his wife **Lisa**, not moving very far to the Unit down the road, QRH. A very quiet period as far as activities go, but a very busy month work wise, what with 1st lines, 2nd lines and now to top it all RSIT around the corner, what more joys are they going to throw at us.

4 ARMOURED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (204)

Sqn Comd — **Maj A. H. Campbell-Black**
RSM — **WO1 (RSM) D. W. Craig**



WO1 (RSM) Gary Waters hands over to WO1 (RSM) Dougie Craig

42 DISTANZMARCH THUN SWITZERLAND
5 DECEMBER 1998



The 'Black Rats'
(L-R): Sig Robertson, LCpl MacLabagn, Sig Burke, LCpl Taylor, LCpl Walsh, Cpl Bapty, WO2 (RQMS) McNaught, Sgt Hughes, Sig Dinsdale (*Photographer 2Lt Hill*)

Preparation for the Lanyard Trophy started early this year, with some light training before Christmas culminating in our entry to the 42 Distanzmarch, in Thun Switzerland. This was a march against the clock, the aim, to cover the greatest distance in the allotted time. It was an arduous course in and around the area of Thun, with a team of ten men, each carrying 20/25lbs. The march started at 1400hrs, to ensure that teams covering the greater distances would complete their march during darkness. We set off at a good pace and in high spirits, with a fresh snowfall from the night before, but the sun was shining. Our route took us around the large lake outside Thun, passing through several control points where each team member had a control card stamped by a Swiss army official. We maintained a good pace and completed the first half of the course in 3½hrs, some 15 miles, sporting our BLACK RAT T-shirts. However, once we had lost the light, the temperature plummeted, hats coats and warm jackets were the order of the day. Unfortunately the melting snow also now had frozen, causing a considerable problem underfoot. This second half of the course seemed to drag on, but eventually we arrived at the finish at 2135hrs, having completed some 33 miles - the greatest distance covered by any of the 130 teams who entered the march.

During the prize giving the next morning, each team member received a medal, the team received a ceremonial bayonet and Napoleonic snowshoe both inscribed. At this point it was also announced that the BLACK RATS, were the first ever British Army team to enter the march in its 42 year history. I would like to thank all the team for their efforts in training and in the march, and welcome any new members. (Hope you like blisters).

OSCAR TROOP

Tp Comd — **Lt R. J. Odling**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt K. Johnson**

Oscar Tp would like to take this opportunity to welcome the following people to the Troop, **SSgt Johnson, Sgt Oliver, Sig Cole, Sig Roberts,** and **Sig Trotter**. On a sadder note we say farewell to **SSgt Heaton** (11 Sig Regt) and **Sig** 'Dodge' **Dodgeson** (30 Sig Regt) the Troop wishes them the best of luck in the future. Also we welcome back **LCpl Smith** after six months at BATUS Canada.

Four members of the Troop took part in the Squadron's Skiing Exercise (Ex Snow Rat) in Austria. This was held in Zell-Am-Zee over November and December 1998. We managed to stay out of barracks (and hospital) for a full month in training in Alpine Skiing, ski touring and cross-country skiing. The Squadron's two ski instructors **Sgt** 'Homer' **College** and **LCpl** 'Nige' **Stiff** managed to plan an excellent training programme that taught us how to ski down the slopes, then across them before going up them and eventually into the mountainside with snow holes. Hard graft from day 1! Ski touring and cross-country training seemed to still be a novelty, at least for tourists in Zell-Am-Zee, so we certainly stuck out from the crowd. This was more because of our lack of style than anything and helped during Apres Ski when certain members of the exercise only managed a few lines of conversation before falling asleep (even when not talking to **Lt** 'Crash'



LCpl Rob Sirgnano with his explosive handbag

Odling). Despite this, we all enjoyed ourselves thoroughly, learnt a great deal about skiing and continued to get paid for the duration of the Exercise. You can't say fairer than that.

RANGE DAY WITH A DIFFERENCE

by Sig Kev 'Pepperami' Bishop & Sig Nigel 'Old Man' Wilcox

It all started early with a nice leisurely drive to Haltern, which took twice the time due to **Sig Tony** 'Marlon' **Brandon's** 'ability' to drive. Once there the range was set up, briefs given and it was time to test our skills on the out door trainer with some expert tuition from **Cpls** 'Gaz' **Christie** and **Andy** 'Scouse' **Delaney**. There were some good 'K' Kills, much to the excitement of **Sgt Dickie** 'Range God' **Dyer**. Then it was time to fire the 94mm Rocket something that only two of us had done before. The 45 LAWs were unpacked and were kept under the watchful eye of **WO2 RQMS Vince McNaught** who for all we knew had acquired them off the back of a lorry.



WO2 Vince McNaught asleep with his rocket

With **Sigs Bishop** and **Fiona** 'Fifi' **Francis** to fire first, they were joined in the firing bays by the safety instructors and a good job too, because they were needed for the very first rocket which refused to fire. It was up to **Sgt Dickie Dyer** to make it safe and remove it from the range, to be disposed of safely. With little drama the rockets were fired until it was time for **Sig Nige Wilcox** the most nervous man on the day to fire his. After some slick drills and good spotter rounds it was time for a big bang, only we got a small fizz, and shout of 'CHECKFIRE' and a very distinct smell, after 60 seconds the rocket was made safe and **Sig Wilcox** ran like the clappers, shame it wasn't his BFT! All that remained was to destroy the two misfires. **WO2 Mcnaught** and **Sgt Dickie Dyer** took on this enviable task. After planting the PE they too made admirable BFT times before the biggest bang of the day. A special mention must be made to **LCpl Robert** 'Efficiency' **Sirignano**, who after years of training managed to blow up the ground 200 metres in front of the tanks. GOOD EFFORT ROB!

SUPPORT TROOP

Tp Comd	**Capt (QM) Smith MBE**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt P. Buckley**

CCE

by LCpl Jason Hawksworth

My future in the Royal Corps of Signals was looking bleak in November 1997, I was doing very well within my own trade as Tele Op Radio, I'd achieved all the right grades, and expected to come off the next board. The results of the board came, I was not promoted and I was informed that my service was to be terminated ie: I'd be leaving the Corps the following October. After lengthy discussions, my OC asked me if I'd given any thought to a retrade as a Stores Accountant. I felt that I still had so much to offer that I had to give it a go. The course started in April at Blandford, followed by C+E and HAZMAT in June. During this period I had a fantastic time, and met many new friends, so if any one is in the same boat as my self, I'd recommend they go for it, the future for me is now looking much better. I've since passed my class 2 up grading course, and a MHE course, the department I work for is excellent, but hard work, and now I'm finding all my doors wide open.

FROM BLANDFORD

by Sig Leeroy Thewlis

I arrived in Osnabruck on Monday where upon I was met by **Sig Bryden** who had done the hard work of getting me a bed space complete with bedding and a message from the then MT Sgt. **Sgt Doughty** had left the message that I was to deploy on Exercise Ulan Eagle and on Wednesday there I was in Poland. Within a few hours of arriving in the training area I had met the QM, **Capt Smith**, and it was not long before I became very familiar with the guard roster too! During my first week I started to meet more of the lads and lasses that I would be spending my next three years with, like **Sgt** 'me,me,me' **Pryce** and **Cpl** 'where's the kettle' **Reynolds.** As the Exercise went on I started to get more involved and not only was I stagging on, I was also sent on rolling replens. It was during one such replen I learned that even with a GPS you can still get lost, mind you I have found (to the loss of **Sgt Doughty** that it isn't that difficult to lose a GPS)! Needless to say it was a short, sharp introduction to the

7 ARMOURED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (207)

Sqn Comd	**Maj Andy Bristow**
RSM	**WO1 (RSM) Colin Milne**

ALPHA TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt Helen Murphy**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt James Runchman**

With the festive season over, the Troop is settling into the start of the training year, but the hard work still continues. January saw us deploying on Ex Jerboa Launch, aimed at getting rid of a few Christmas cobwebs which it certainly succeeded in doing. Shortly afterwards we packed the wagons again and headed out to the Hohne Training Area to take part in Ex Jerboa Charge, a Troop level Exercise to prepare both Troops for the Squadron Test Exercise, ended up being as much a test for the LAD as for the Troop, with four wagons coming down with faults.

Congratulations to **Cpl Phil Jenkinson** on his marriage to **Teresa**. Meanwhile certain members of the Troop have kept the Med Centre busy especially **Sig Gaz** 'Jim Miller' **Ayto** with his laminated sick chit and **Sig Jase Court** after his skiing exploits. Hello and welcome to **Sig Tony Muers, Sig Kevin Cannon** and **Sig** 'Magic' **McDermott**, all straight from the factory, who got here eventually after an unplanned detour to RAF Bruggen.

BRAVO TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt Adam Corkery**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Dave Sloane**

Firstly welcome to **Cpl Rob Luke, Sigs Mark Jessop** and 'Johnny' **Cash.** We hope you enjoy your time here. Secondly farewell to **Sig Ian Danter** and his wife **Stephanie** who go to 3 Div. After a good Christmas break all the troops returned refreshed and in high spirits ready to start the New Year. We came straight back in at top speed with a good Exercise to start the year with as it gave some of the new lads an insight into the year ahead. As this was a Troop Exercise we thought the last night would be the best time to say farewell to **Sig Danter** in true Bravo Tp style - enough said! This was then followed by a Squadron Exercise one week later called Rats Link. In this Exercise all the Squadron assets were deployed and all the lessons learnt on Ex Jerboa Launch were tested. Again, all objectives were achieved with a few new lessons learnt. Special mention ought to go to **LCpl Beevers** for his outstanding efforts with the Kipling. This was followed by another Troop Exercise one week later made enjoyable by large quantities of 5.56mm and GPMG rounds to play with - just don't mention cam nets to **LCpl** 'Titch' **Meakin** or track bashing to the Tp Comd! The year ahead is uncertain but B Tp feels ready and willing to meet the challenge!

SUPPORT TROOP

QM	**Capt (QM) Dave Wilson**
RQMS	**WO2 (RQMS) Rod Cowan**

We'd like to wish a big farewell to the QM, **Capt Wally** 'warm fuzzy feeling' **Drain** and his wife **Jackie**, who are leaving us to go to 7 Sig Regt on or about the 9 February 1999, (on promotion to Major and of course assuming that the QM doesn't get demoted to Cpl after the LSI). Also a big welcome to **Capt Dave Wilson** who joins us from 1 ADSR, we hope you enjoy your time here. **LCpl Dean** 'eck! eck!' **Lightbody** who is also leaving us to go to 7 Sig Regt (as the QM's brew boy). Good luck to **LCpl** 'Taff' **Elston** on his. A big welcome to **Sig Phil** 'Black-eye' **Brown** and to **LCpl** 'Shortie' **Long** who's not here yet but can get a slab in when he arrives. Congratulations to **Sig Ronald** 'ooh la la' **Pierrepont** on forthcoming promotion and posting to 30 Sig Regt.

GENERATOR BAY

We'd like to send congratulations to **Cpl** 'Taff' **O'Connor** on his promotion to Sgt (watch out 14 Sig Regt). Another farewell now to **Mr Lee McKone** who has traded in his uniform for an easy, breezy life on the rigs. A big welcome to **Sig** 'Geordie' **Soppitt**, who on one of his first trips to Sennelager took a detour past Hamburg (next time use a map). Last but not least, congratulations to **LCpl** 'Den, four slabs' **Nordon** on his promotion to Corporal.

QUARTERMASTER'S DEPARTMENT

Congratulations to **WO2 (RQMS) Rod** 'dancing man' **Cowan** on his recent selection for promotion, the Sgt's Mess will miss you strutting your funky stuff!

Recently the Dept has continued to work towards ensuring that the Comms troops are provided with the best possible service and support. **Sgt Al English** is preparing for civvy street (18 months too early!) dream on Al! **Cpl Andy Carrick** is sweating on the next promotion board, but **Cpl Carrick** if you get any thinner you'll dissolve. **LCpl** 'Robo' **Robinson** continues to strive for physical perfection, its a pity its not during Squadron PT as he's not often there (he says he does it in his own time!) The remainder of the team are doing nicely, especially **Sig** 'Blodwin' **Davies** the new Corps recruiting pin up.

THE SKI TEAM 1998/99

by Sig Court

On Saturday morning, the 5 December, four people sat in a white minibus speeding down the A7. Destination, Kaprun near Zell-Am-See in Austria. Yes these four people were the 7ABSS Ski Team. They were **Lt Adam Corkery, Cpl Jim Bean, Sig Phil Green** and **Sig Jase Court**.

We were given one week to train before competing in the Royal Signals Championships. After arriving at our accommodation we went out to explore Kaprun. While socialising over a few drinks we were suddenly attacked by some large monsters with whips and bells - don't ask! Apparently it is part of the Austrian culture to go out dressed as monsters and whip all the naughty people on 5 December while St Nicholas goes around giving presents to all the good people.

It was a well organised event with about 75 competitors from the UK and Germany and went smoothly and uneventfully until the end. Or did it? The idea behind these two weeks was to prepare us for the Div. Championships which were held from 9 - 19 January in Les Contamines, France. So it was that on another Saturday morning after Christmas we were again sat in the minibus getting ready for an eleven hour drive with twice as much confidence as before. The standard of skiing was very high with many teams having apparently done little but ski for the whole of the preceding year. The team this time was made up of **Lt** 'I can ski better than you' **Corkery, SSgt** 'Admin' **Runchman, Cpl** 'Stay out of my kitchen' **Bean** and **Sig** 'Egg It' **Court**. Again the organisation was 100% and everything went smoothly except for the fact that one of the team was wiped out by the dreaded Snowboarder on the second to last day which left him with a broken clavicle .The victim was in fact me and I would like to say thank you to my OC and the organisers who made sure I got off the mountain safely. Even with this loss to the team, 7ABSS managed to do well and should be a strong force in next years competition (assuming we're not in Kosovo!) Finally thanks to Cotswold The Outdoor People for their sponsorship and well done to the team for hard work and good results.



The Victorious Ski Team
(L-R): Cpl Bean, SSgt Runchman, Sig Court, Lt Corkery

19 MECHANISED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (209)

Sqn Comd	**Maj N. A. W Pope**
RSM	**WO1 (RSM) S. Mitchell**

As we enter 1999, the Squadron wishes **Capt J. Howell-Walmsley** congratulations on his commissioning, and good luck in his posting to Northern Ireland. We extend a warm welcome to **WO1 (RSM) S. Mitchell** and his family, as he takes up post in sunny Catterick. In addition we thank **RQMS J. Gibson** for his valiant work in the QM's Dept, and congratulate him on his promotion to WO1 (RSM) and posting to London.

EXERCISE PUIG EBOR DECEMBER 1998

by Lt J. 'Loose rock (don't ask)' Toze

Shock! Horror! The OC had agreed to allow both troop commanders to go on adventure training at the same time! Not wishing to allow him time to reconsider, **Lt J.** 'Micro-wire' **Griffiths** and myself were on our way to Spain faster than a thousand speeding gazelles. With a tear in our eye at missing the decoration of the mess (..maybe not), we embarked on two weeks rock climbing in the Costa Brava, carefully shepherded by our expedition leader **WO1 (RSM) J.** 'Guru' **Howell-Walmsley**. On arrival at Alicante airport the eight of us headed for base camp…the Flamingo Playa hotel in Benidorm, and set about establishing ourselves. It immediately became apparent that the winter population of Benidorm is of an average age of about seventy, much to the delight of **LCpl Eddy** 'Crack monkey' **Banks** and his never ending collection of Yves Saint Laurent shirts. That night rock tactics were discussed, and a devious and cunning cover story concocted to explain our presence in the geriatric capital of Europe. By day climbers embracing the rock like mountain goats on Viagra, by night the co-op climbing workers, or C2W as we liked to be known. Over the next two weeks we climbed on over a dozen crags, single and multi pitch stances, bolted and traditional pitches. The climbing was simply fantastic, typically conducted in idyllic surroundings with temperatures of around 25 centigrade. Highlights including **Sig Mary** 'Rock vixen' **Andersons** belay beastings, **Cpl John** 'Rock fossil' **Hart's** siesta at the top of a pitch (something he will never let us forget), and some random civvy and his amazing gravity boots. However, highlight of the week came when **WO2 (FofS) A.** 'Turfa (as in winch) tortoise' **Williams** demonstrated his patented climbing technique. This involved making grunting noises (which should have resulted in David Attenborough flying in to investigate migrating elephant seals), whilst making a grab for anything to hand, animal, vegetable or occasionally mineral. By night the weary party entertained itself with extensive karaoke therapy, relaxing Line Dancing and interaction with the indigenous population. Entertainment award must however go to the RSM, when he appeared in the bar dressed in a pink ladies shell suit, posing as a bag filler for the co-op!(he nearly bottled..). I take this opportunity to thank **WO1 (RSM) J. Howell-Walmsley** for all his hard work in organising the expedition and hope his dislocated toe, gained as a result of a particularly tricky move on concealed and wet limestone, recovers fully! In addition, a word of warning to 15 Sig Regt, don't let this man within fifty feet of a karaoke machine!

P.S. If you don't believe the shell suit episode, we have the photos!

BRAVO TROOP

Tp Comd — **Lt J. Toze**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt M. O'Brien**

1999 and back into the swing of things for Bravo Tp. A JNCO cadre behind us, we now look forward to spending much of our time down in Bulford, as we work towards Brigade FTX in September. In the Troop office things continue apace, **SSgt M. O'Brien** continues his abstinence from alcohol, despite the occasional 'Wee' lapse. **Sgt M. Toes** (yes there are two Toes/Tozes in the Troop!) continues to suffer under the dictatorial brew making regime, and I continue to strive to avoid tasks from the 'Evil' 2IC, **Capt C. Vaudin**! In the crew room we have a number of recent additions, **Signallers Kemp, Richard's, Robinson** and **Tunnycliffe** aka 'Tuna fish', good luck and may the force be with you. We also welcome **LCpl Hankinson** and **Cpl** 'Nice haircut' **Kiff** to the fold. Promotions have also struck, and congratulations go to **LCpl E. Banks, LCpl C. Petty, LCpl C. Watts** and **Sgt D. Leask**. Farewell and good luck to **Cpl Davis** and his family, as he moves into civvy street. Shocking news has also reached the Troop of **Sgt R. Enderby**'s temporary relocation to the guardroom as RP Sgt. We look forward to a new diplomatic regime in this part of the Squadron.

Publish it in
THE WIRE
The Editor is always pleased to receive interesting articles

24 AIRMOBILE BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (210)

EXERCISE MUIR MARATHON

Ex Muir Marathon was the Squadron's much awaited expedition to complete the world famous 210 mile John Muir Trail, with the final phase being the ascent of Mount Whitney (the highest mountain in the United States of America, standing at 14,497ft). With California being the venue and only a maximum of fourteen people going on the expedition places were hard to come by, eventually though the volunteers were whittled down to the final selected group.

The start of the expedition couldn't have gone better with our cheap Northwest American airline tickets being swapped for British Airways and after a night in Los Angeles we made our way to Yosemite National Park. Our first night in the wilderness made us all think twice about what we were doing, with stories about bear attacks being floated about by the park rangers. This caused some panic and we ended up spending a large chunk of expedition funds on bear boxes to store our food in. (The correct storage of food was also a constraint placed on us by the Park Rangers). The thought of the expedition being a holiday soon diminished on the first day when we confronted our first hill and the 60lbs that we were each carrying didn't help to change our minds. Whilst the main party was grafting hard in the outback the initial admin team **Sgt Andy Wyatt** and **LCpl Tudor Williams** decided to introduce themselves to **Jill Dando,** who was filming the holiday programme in the area. They also spotted the only bear of the expedition, however, unlike the Jill story they couldn't provide us with photographic proof of the bear meeting. On our first night out the hierarchy **Capt Andy Coulston** and **2Lt Dan Ashton** decided that bear stags would help them to sleep better at night, so one tent at a time we took it in turn to do our two hours. Not a peep was heard until **Sig Karen Abbott** took her turn on guard and demolished the peace and quiet with a piercing scream. She came face to face with a fox as she was getting out of her tent, in time honoured tradition not one bloke came to the rescue as thirteen burly squaddies all pretended to be asleep!

Apart from a few sore feet and some spectacular scenery the rest of the expedition went along smoothly and two weeks later Mount Whitney came into sight. The ascent to the top took us two days with the views from the summit being breath taking.



Conquest of Mt Whitney completed, with all team members present

Equally as breath taking was **Sig Tony Richardson** taking a three-day old Big Mac out of his bergen and handing it round for a unique photo opportunity.



Nobody mentioned snow in California!

After the descent we spent a scorching day sight seeing in Death Valley whilst transiting to Las Vegas. Vegas proved to be an ideal place to let our hair down for a couple of days before we went back to Los Angeles. A trip to Disney Land proved a hit with the big kids and Universal Studios the next day was just as popular. Eventually all good things come to an end and even though the expedition was hard work everyone had a once in a lifetime trip that none of us will forget.

EXERCISE PHOENIX ASH

The Squadron found itself in the rare and enviable position of having some spare time, that is time when we weren't running around like headless chickens, which meant that the three Troops had the opportunity to plan and run their own, Troop Level Exercises. The Exercises all went under the moniker of Exercise Phoenix Ash, and that is where the similarity ends. This is their story . . .

ALPHA TROOP

Alpha Tp deployed on a Troop Level Exercise to Dartmoor in October. The weather was booked by some Jack-the-lad who decided he'd test the OC's ability to stay calm when his world was falling around his ankles. As the storms took grip of the West Country, the wind took grip of Brigade Main and promptly destroyed it! The inter-generator standing jump competition also took place that night with the winner being CV 1's gene achieving a convincing 25ft. As if that wasn't enough, it then began to rain.....again. The Troop's attached REME VM decided he was bored and needed a challenge when he bogged a rover in up to its axles...and then it began to sink!.....and rain. No injuries had occurred to Troop personnel until the final evening when during a spot of Inter-Troop rugby training they sustained a sliced eyebrow and a set of broken ribs.

BRAVO TROOP

Bravo Tp's Exercise was held in the somewhat bleak and hilly area of Otterburn, which is located in Northumbria, about 70 miles South of Edinburgh. After the first hour of the twelve hour drive up north, the first casualty of the war was the POL truck, which unfortunately was also carrying most of the rations and cooking equipment. Despite this rather inauspicious start, the training began fairly smoothly and the communications phase began first thing on the Monday morning. Luckily

for us, **SSgt May** and **Sgt Owen** who were making their own way up, passed the distressed Truck and cross loaded the rations. That piece of good luck, coupled with the ingenuity of attached chef, **LCpl Duffin** meant that at least we wouldn't go hungry. The first phase went fairly successfully, with the Troop establishing the longest HF radio link in over 18 months with Alpha Tp who were located on Dartmoor, and the Ptarmigan crews cutting their teeth on the basic principles of working in a command post. The next phase put the lads in a totally unfamiliar situation, as the Troop management took a step back, and command appointments were given to various people.



Sig Richardson called his raft *Titanic*!

SUPPORT TROOP

It all started quite badly with wacky races on the square and then the cluster with the first set up but once on the road things settled down. First we moved down to Portsmouth with success and with good instruction moved in apart from **Sig** 'I owe a crate' **Comery**, who decided to bog his vehicle in. Each person had a task to complete and everyone worked very hard. The sea crossing went superbly and the move up to Bath also went well. Although the Troop was full of new members moving into location was done with true skill (I wonder if it's something to do with only wanting to do it once!) The next phase was the driver training, and again **Sig Comery** lived up to expectations by nearly breaking a truck and blaming someone else. Overall it was a successful Exercise and everyone learnt a great deal - including **Sig Comery**!

EXERCISE GRYPHONS SCHUSS 1999

With last years' Squadron Skiing Exercise having gone so well, it seemed only the decent thing to do would be to kick the a$%& out of it and ensure a repeat performance this year. This time, a happy band of 27 officers and soldiers from both the Squadron and the Brigade Headquarters packed themselves into minibuses for the 800 mile trip to Tignes, France. After an uneventful (sic), journey we arrived to find that we couldn't take over our accommodation for another seven hours – it's a good job we hadn't yet discovered the Crowded House bar!

After the initial hassle, the time came to hit the slopes. Although initially extremely cold, the skiing conditions were perfect, and with the added convenience of being able to ski directly from the hotel to the ski lifts the scene was set for an excellent week. After ski, is of course time for Après Ski, and whilst Tignes is no Val D'Isere as far as night life is concerned, there is still some fun to be had. Happy hour in the Crowded House proved to be the absolute favourite, and when **Cpl Webster** won a free round, things became interesting. If you disagree, then consider that the round he had just ordered came to approximately £100 pounds, and maybe you'll get the picture!

The cross country skiing was provided thanks to **Cpl Adam** 'Weasel' **Horton** from ATR Bassingbourn, to whom many thanks are owed. Many thanks also go to instructors **Maj (QM) Ben Britton, Maj Allan Docherty,** and **Capt Tim Marston** without whose help the Exercise would not have been possible. The Exercise again, was a resounding success with excellent weather for all but the last day, and a great bunch of people to share it with – roll on Schuss 2000!

ALPHA TROOP

Tp Comd — **Lt D. Ashton**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt C. McKenna**

The new year started with Ex Parthian Shot. The Exercise took place as usual in sunny Thetford. We were given an opportunity for some of the new Wolf Landrovers to fly for the first time with some unexpected dented bonnets (looks like JATE have got to have a rethink). The rest of the Exercise was uneventful until the last day when we had the satisfaction of watching the Staff unexpectedly set off on a four mile tab back to camp.

The Troop would like to welcome newcomers **Sgt McGuiness, Cpl Heynes** from Bravo Tp, and **Sig Smith**. **Cpl Jo Ruth** from 3 Div and **Sig Jase Williams** from the factory. Best wishes also to **LCpl** 'Titch' **Vellacott** who is on tour in Kosovo, **LCpl** 'Slasher' **Slaughter** who is posted to Ireland and **Sig** 'Pez' **Perry** who is currently trying to be the first person from 210 to pass P Company. This week we have also lost **Sig Gaz Lawson, Sig Nick Kershaw** and **Sig Andy Bellamy** to 1 Royal Scots, lets hope they enjoy their six month tour of Ireland. Farewell to **Sig Whale**, and congratulations to Tp OC, **Lt Ashton**, on a long awaited and well deserved promotion to Lieutenant, also to **Cpl Wilson** and **Cpl Hill**, and **LCpl Moran** on promotion.

BRAVO TROOP

Tp Comd — **Lt G. K. Bowdler**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt A. May**

It was a long Christmas period with lots happening. **LCpl** 'Log' **Stewart** arranged the Troops' Christmas party, which was attended by over 50 people, including the OC Squadron and the RSM. All who attended agreed that **LCpl Stewart** did a excellent job. 1999 started with Ex Parthian Shot. It was a five day Squadron level Exercise held at STANTA, which involved Troop level training, individual detachment drills and helicopter deployment drills.

Congratulations go to **Cpl Jase Curley, LCpl Chris Marshall, Cpl Kirk, Cpl Barringer,** and **LCpl Tucker** on their respective promotions. We would like to welcome **SSgt May** and family from 3 Div and **LCpl Bettle** from JCUNI, **LCpl Chris Guntrip** and **Sig Rob Hack** who have joined us from 11 Sig Regt. We also welcome **2Lt** 'Mogs' **Southern** who has joined us for a few months between Sandhurst and her Troop Commanders course at Blandford. The Troop would like to say goodbye to **Cpl Rob White** who has gone to 2 Sig Regt and **Cpl Kev Kiff** who left for 19 Mech Bde, both of whom left on promotion. Extra special Troop farewells and best wishes go to **Cpl** 'Spike' **Poole, Cpl Steve** 'Bish' **Bishop MBE** and **LCpl John McNally** who have now left the Army. Finally, **Cpl Paul Kirk** and **Sig Marie McKenzie** have decided to do away with MCM Div and breed their own new Troop members. Congratulations on your new daughter **Natasha**!

SUPPORT TROOP

Tp Comd — **Maj (QM) Ben Britton**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt Phil Latimer**

1999 - and the festivities are over. Time for Exercise - under the guise of Parthian Shot, our first under the new Sqn OC, **Maj Ivan Hooper**. We deployed to Stanta and Ech set up as Admin Support for the first two days (before returning to camp!). After that Diamond 3 took over with the only eventful moment being **Cpl Critchley** inadvertently somersaulting from his DAF and breaking his little finger! Injuries aside, everything else passed off uneventfully as we shook ourselves out into our routine ready for Gryphons Flight in late February. Hello to **SSgt Del Elesmore** and **LCpl Edwards** to the LAD, and **Sgt Makings** as the new Provo Sergeant, **LCpl Williams**. The Troop would like to congratulate the following on their well deserved promotions: **Cpl** 'Wolfie' **Oldfield, Cpl Hall,** and **LCpl Hall** (no relation), **WO2 Knight, WO2 Tomlinson, LCpl Fulton, Sig Comery** . Cheerio to **Sgt Davis, Sgt Wyatt, LCpl Barker** and **LCpl Hall**. Sad farewells go to **SSgt Tony Taylor**, posted to 10 Regt, **Sgt Davis** to RSS Blandford, **Sgt Wyatt**, and also **LCpl Barker, LCpl Hall**. Good luck to **Cpl Tipper** who has gone to make her way in civvy street. Finally, well done to **Cpl Thompson** and family on the birth of their new daughter.

243 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Calling all ex members of the Squadron both young and old, serving or retired.

The Squadron is currently in the process of creating and placing an order for a Squadron Tie.

We are extending an invitation to the aforementioned to take this opportunity to place an order with the Squadron for a Tie.

Additionally Squadron plaques are also available for purchase.

For further information contact the SSM on 01980 672618 or Bulford Mil 732 Ext 2618, alternatively contact the Sqn 2IC on 01980 672617 or Bulford Mil 732 Ext 2617.

5 AIRBORNE BRIGADE
HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (216 PARACHUTE)

Farewell to **Capt Steve Morgan** on his departure to Blandford to take on the role of OC Mil Training and good luck to **Sgt Sean** 'Chimp' **Oliver** who has headed to 4 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn in Osnabruck. Also, farewell and Bon Voyage to typist **Miss Angela Neilson** who has decided to put away her secretarial skills to travel around the world.

Finally, congratulations go to **WO2 (YofS) Tony Redman**, **WO2 (RQMS)** 'Geordie' **Marshall** and **WO2 (RCWO) Dave Rollins** on being selected for promotion to WO1.



WO2 (RQMS) 'Geordie' Marshall gets the good news from OC Sqn, Maj Scott Workman

ALPHA TROOP

Tp Comd	**2Lt T. W. Day**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt K. Read**

In early December the Troop deployed on the Squadron's Ex Winged Lanyard, an opportunity for the new OC Squadron to observe everyone operating in their operational roles. For a bit of variation we found ourselves heading, once again, to Salisbury Plain to a forward mounting base where we awaited orders to deploy. The following morning, Para tac and two elements of Brigade Main were flown to locations by Royal Navy Sea Kings with landrovers and trailers underslung, the remainder executing a road move. The quick establishment of 'Main' enabled a fluid change of control from Para tac. Opportunities for sleep over the following three days were few and far between, as Alpha Tp and Bravo Tp swept across the plain, alternating control. Wet weather and an excess of mud added to the hilarity as each 'set-up' was followed by an almost instant 'tear down.' Special mention must go to **Sig Percy** 'Diesel Kid' **Thrower** who took the time to show us that generators cannot run on any other type of fuel but Benz. The remainder of the Exercise ran relatively smoothly with a return to Barracks via the Tidworth wash-down.

Almost immediately on the return from Exercise, the Squadron was across to Maida Gym to support its boxers in the Army Minor Units Boxing Semi-Final, where Alpha Tp's **LCpl Loddy** 'Killer' **Jones** and **Sig Brett** 'Bruiser' **Appleyard** made their boxing debuts.

Christmas followed with a welcome break from work, returning in early January and a potentially quiet period enabling members of the troop to get away on courses. **2Lt** 'Doris' **Day** got the opportunity to relive his favourite moments from the film 'Backdraft,' when he attended an action packed week of fire fighting and a just a little revision on fire regulations in order to fulfil his role as Unit Fire Officer! **Cpl** 'Ted' **Page** retreated to the confines of 77AEC for his EFP, **Cpl Eddie** 'GAS, GAS, GAS' **Cochran** completed his NBC Defence Instructors course and congratulations go to **LCpl Scotty** 'G.I.' **Finn** and **Cpl Adam** 'Dog' **Barker** on finishing their Jumps course as they join the airborne brotherhood. Whilst the Troop deployed to the familiar contours of the local training area for an exercise plug-up, **SSgt Kev** 'Kebabs' **Read** and **Cpl** 'Ted' **Page** avoided getting muddy by slipping away for a two day Stick Commanders Course. Finally congratulations to **Sigs Dave** 'Skinny' **Reid** and **Andy** 'Crabby' **Crabb** on their promotion to LCpl just before Christmas. Preparations are afoot in Alpha Tp as the Exercise silly season takes hold, starting with Ex Cold Avenger in mid February, followed soon after by Battlecamp.

BRAVO TROOP XMAS MISSION: DEBRIEF

Tp Comd	**Lt M. J. Wong**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt S. Gorton**

As Christmas approached, the opportunity arose for a group of us to leave the haunts of South Cerney and an Exercise to meet up with the rest of the Troop for a one-night mission. To that end **Sig** 'Blackstuff' **Blackmore**, **LCpl** 'Digger' **Barnes**, **Sig** 'Jay' **Dine**, **Sig** 'Bumface' **Standing** and **LCpl Dave Blaney** along with the IC of the patrol **Lt** 'Chopper' **Wong**, RV'd with the rest of the Troop patrol in a bar in Bournemouth.

With the sole mission of the patrol centred around seeing 'Tom Jones' in concert, it was deemed that the dress should be 'Websters' with the majority of the Troop complying much to the amusement of the general public. We were joined by **Cpl** 'Spud' **Fawcett** and his specialist 5ft fibreglass guitar, and numerous attachments of ex-Squadron personnel on courses at Blandford including **Cpl Gaz** 'Mrs.Doubtfire' **Christie**. It was soon time for the patrol to finish their drinks and cross the start line into the BIC for the concert. After the initial break-in through the main doors, past the die-hard fans, we were joined by two local partisan security staff who pledged to give us their undivided attention during the course of the operation.

The first half the concert was quite uneventful (no skirmishing) except for the seats behind us being vacated due to a blockage of Tom Jones by a sea of afros. The first part of the concert was aimed more at the avid fans with the patrol unable to recognise any of the soulful ballads (**Sgt Jones** not included). The second half of the concert took on a whole new lease of life as the crowd heard all the familiar favourites including 'Delilah,' 'Kiss,' and other love anthems. 'You can leave your hat on' was undoubtedly the most memorable song of the evening. The opportunity arose at one point for the patrol to spill out into the aisle, semi-clothed and in extended line, to perform a Troop jig. It was around this time that **Cpl** 'Skids' **Dawson** (An undercover Alpha Tp agent) decided to follow the womens' example who were offering their undergarments to Tom Jones. He removed his paisley briefs and casually walked up to the stage and handed them to Tom who tactfully accepted the kind gesture. After the concert we headed across town in search of further amusement, in retrospect it was not suprising that a Troop of blokes in 70s gear were refused access to any night-club they approached. Thanks go to **Cpl** 'Paddy' **Howe** for organising the evening and to Alpha Tp for transport.

Congratulations to **SSgt Steve Gorton** on his selection for promotion to WO2 and to **Sigs Dan** 'Geeky boy' **Smith** and **Andy** 'Bumface' **Standing** on their promotions to LCpl. Special mention to our two boxers, **Cpl Al** 'Gurrung' **Joy** for captaining the Sqn Boxing team and **Sig Kelly-Rutherford** for being awarded 'Best Bout of the Evening.' Finally, welcome back to reality for **LCpl Rick** 'It's nothing to do with me' **Turner** from his six month jolly in Canada.

ARMY MINOR UNITS BOXING SEMI-FINAL

by LCpl 'Loddy' Jones and Sig Brett Appleyard

Due to various operational commitments around the Army the Sqn secured an automatic place in the semi-finals of the Army Minor Units Boxing. At the start of September of last year, a squad of potential boxers began the long process of preparation which is necessary before they can enter the ring.

Initial fitness training was planned and conducted by unit PTIs, as individuals set out to establish a strong base of fitness. Once the training was well under way, a new element was introduced to the boxing training under the guise of **WO2 Si Murray** who immediately set about conditioning the boxers with more concentrated preparation. Brick runs, ton-ups, abdominal burn sessions, baselines and daily sparring increased the intensity and level of fatigue; The squad that had originally set out on the training was starting to whittle down due to injury, many of them caused by **Sig Tony Mason** or **LCpl Andy Good**'s right fist. As time went on, weight became a problem with 10 mile runs wearing bin bags becoming a regular occurrence for certain members of the team, namely **Sig Brett Appleyard** and **Sig Mason**. Needless to say, it became apparent that some people had natural ability, **Cpl** 'Dancer Boy' **Joy** found very few punches landing on him in sparring. 'Hell Week' arrived before we knew it, with **WO2 Si Murray** now ably assisted by the expertise of **SSgt Graham Smith**. Each day began with a 10 mile run, which was quickly followed by a Gym session. In order that we didn't become too relaxed, pressure sparring and pad-work completed the daily routine with the result that everyone was in a continual state of exhaustion. A wind down week followed to allow individuals to regain some energy and start to focus, before the fight.

The Squadron Boxing Team had been paired off to fight against 518 Pioneer Coy RLC for a place in the final, and on the evening of Monday 14 December 1998 both units filled the seats surrounding the ring at Maida Gym to support their respective teams. Tension began to rise amongst many members of the team, as they weighed in on the day of the fight and the significance of the event that was about to take place sank in!

Flyweight **Sig** 'Taz' **Kelly-Rutherford** kicked off the evening as he entered the ring to face his pioneer opponent, his determination evident as he overpowered him for three rounds and secured a convincing win. **Sig Brett** 'Skinny' **Appleyard** fought hard despite being knocked down, eventually losing on points and **Cpl** 'Dancer Boy' **Joy** met his match, battling on for three rounds and losing by the slimmest of margins. Light middle-weight **LCpl Loddie** 'Killer' **Jones** dominated the majority of his three rounds resulting in a convincing win and **LCpl** 'Clubber' **Good** won his first 'stripe', knocking out his opponent in the second round. **Sig** 'Basher' **Mason** fought to the bitter end of three rounds and lost on points as supporters on both side screamed encouragement to their respective boxers. With both teams on equal points Welterweight **Sig** 'George' **Cloney** fought an extremely close three rounds. Despite returning to his feet after being knocked down in the third and final round, the fight was stopped and 518 Pioneer Coy RLC secured their place in the final.



The Squadron Boxing Team

Congratulations go to **Sig** 'Taz' **Kelly Rutherford** for winning 'Best Bout of the Evening' and to **LCpl** 'Clubber' **Good** on receiving his first stripe, both of which were awarded in the end of match presentation. Thanks go to **WO2 Si Murray** and to the others that assisted in not only training the team but who also ensured that the evening ran smoothly.

EXERCISE WINTER WARRIOR 1999

by Sig Chris Woodall

Ex Winter Warrior is an annual skiing exercise designed to instruct beginners and Novice skiers to Bronze and Silver level respectively, in both Nordic and Alpine skiing. The Exercise started with all the students assembling at Chelsea Barracks in London, travelling from a variety of different units around the UK. The coach journey to HochFilzon in Austria was long and tiring, made significantly worse by the two coach drivers who resembled the teletubbies and refused to stay off the microphones.

Needless to say, when we arrived we were all tired. We were greeted by the STS Staff and the ski instructors who quickly helped us to sort out rooms and luggage before ushering us downstairs for a welcome brief by the Chalet Staff. Dinner followed, which was not only welcome but of a considerably better standard to the cuisine back at camp!

The first phase of the Exercise was three days dedicated entirely to Langlauf skiing, and whilst the majority might not have found it as enjoyable as the Alpine skiing it was accepted that skills had been developed which enabled faster progression during the later Alpine phase. To complete the Langlaufing there was a Bronze award assessment where **Cpl John** 'Salt Shaker' **Hilton** achieved Silver, the only individual to do so, followed by a 5km Langlauf race which was won by **LCpl Tim** 'Lager' **Donoghue**.

The Alpine phase followed for the next nine days, with a day for each group to be introduced to ski-touring. The groups were issued with ski-passes and introduced to the T-bar lift which took me a whole morning and some of the afternoon to get to grips with, much to the amusement of the local Austrian brats who start skiing when they are still in nappies. The next few days saw a steady improvement in everyone's skiing ability. The social activities continued, with **Sig Steve** 'Grenade' **Jones** debating with other members of the course on the poignant aspects of being 'Airborne' with a little assistance from **Sig Dave** 'Dangerous' **Armstrong**. **Sig Matt Grix** got to grips with cow bell ringing, and **Cpl Hilton** demonstrated how salt is thrown over the shoulder to blind the devil, the variation in the theme with the throwing of the salt shaker, missing the devil and hitting an oblivious bystanders head.

The Alpine skiing phase concluded with a Bronze award assessment followed by a downhill slalom race, won by **Sig** 'Dangerous' **Armstrong**. The final evening saw an award presentation and farewell drinks before setting out for an enthralling drive back to the UK. The exercise was thoroughly enjoyed by all those who took part from the Sqn. Thanks go to the STS staff who looked after us and cleaned up the mess and to the BASI who was responsible for ensuring we could ski proficiently by the end of the exercise. A fantastic way to start 1999!

238 (LONDON) SIGNAL SQUADRON

SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS

Sqn Comd	**Maj Steve Hunt**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Ewan Hall**

Congratulations to **LCpl Mick Ambler** on gaining promotion to local Cpl and after such a short time in the Sqn. 238 is clearly the place to be if you want to further your career. Congratulations also to **Sgt** 'Schoffs' **Schofield** and **Lynn** on the birth of baby **Joshua** and to **Cpl Debs Walker** and **Pete** on the birth of their baby son. Welcome to **WO2 (SSM) Euan Hall** and family, who are in the process of an extended take-over from **WO2 (SSM)** 'H' **Wells**. **SSM Hall** has arrived from 621 EOD and so hopefully will be able to explain some of the mysteries of the EOD world. Welcome also to two athletes attached to the Sqn. **LCpl Sophie** 'Sadist' **Morris** the new PTI, who is a less than welcome addition to early morning PT and to **LCpl Carmen Michelska** who brings some expertise to the stores. We hope that both of your sporting careers flourish in the Squadron.

The Squadron bade farewell to **Lt Col (Ret'd) Brian Haw** from Comms Branch London District after 42 years service. He has been an invaluable ally to the Squadron, particularly during ceremonial events when he will be remembered for some great phrases when things look like they may be in danger of going pear shaped, such as 'chin forward and step out'.

The New Year was launched with a Training and Development drive (otherwise known as Investors in People) to ensure that the Squadron is in place for assessment during 1999. The NVQ assessors have been around again and a number of people are tantalisingly close to completing their assessment, the charge being led by **Mrs Laura Allan** from Civil Admin Office.

MIKE TROOP

Tp Comd	**Maj Richard Howes**
Tp Sgt	**Vacant**

Welcome to **LCpl Paul Smith** who arrived from Blandford and has already distinguished himself by falling into every puddle in Battersea Park during PT. **Mr Paul MacArthur** is a welcome addition to the Public Address (PA) System Sect. **Paul** had previously served with the Squadron in uniform and has returned in the guise of an ME (T). It has been noted that his first job was to install a sound system in the gym, now that he no longer has to do PT himself.

Upgrading tests have been completed and congratulations on gaining their B2 TeleMech assessments to **Sigs Stu Blevins, Piers Daw, Keith Ford, Ben McFaul, Chris McGuire** and **Ayesha Muhammed**. **Sig Keith** 'the Beef' **Ford** had to squeeze his upgrading between cricket matches, and to celebrate his success, is representing the Corps on tour in Barbados - its a tough life but a Tele Mech has to do it.

The Troop keeps very busy. Radio Sect claims to have almost buckled under the strain of barrack radio maintenance site visits but it has been noted that they have rarely been seen in uniform, so we have to believe them when they say that they are off in civvys again. Systems Sect is knee deep in the work of the ACISG. They are all now past masters at repairing printers after their last course, acquiring PCs from destinations far and wide, planning and installing LANs for customers and visiting units to debug the many anomalies discovered across London District. They have been assisted by **Mr Stuart Johnstone** and **Mr Martin Bryant** who are heading up the Y2K testing programme. They have tested around a third or the district to date with about a 15% full compliancy - and they think they are going to get Christmas leave!

PA Section are preparing for their next task, which will be the presentation of New Colours to 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards at Windsor and we anticipate another photograph of the Section in the foreground and the secondary activity of a 'Royal' presenting Colours in the background.

OSCAR TROOP

Tp Comd	**Maj Dave Gilchrist**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Karen Ripley**

The Troop welcomes **Cpl Chris Vallance** and his wife **Helen**, who arrived just before Christmas and wish you well for your tour with the Sqn. **Sgt Debbie Gosnell** has moved from the Help Desk to the ADA and so is now rarely seen in the light of day. **SSgt Karen Ripley** has returned to the Troop after knee surgery, much to the delight of the CO2, **Mr Tony Davis** who no longer looks so worried when someone shouts 'shift rosters'. **Sgt Sandra Thompson** is away on her Sgts Course, we await her return and **Sgt Fergie Anderson** is planning yet another trip to Nepal where he will provide much needed expertise to the Squadron expedition to Nepal in April. The Troop combined with SHQ in the Squadron Challenge Shield Cup and came out easy winners in the first event - Badminton.

RADIO TROOP

Tp Comd — **Capt Kerry Levins**
Tp Sgt — **Sgt Scoffs Schofield**

The Troop would like to extend a warm welcome to **Sig Stu** 'haven't a clue' **Parker** from Blandford who was last seen 'bracing up' even to the monitors when the Squadron was Compulsory Drugs Tested. It requires a great feat of ingenuity and skill to 'brace up', hold the bottle, and hold one's . . . After the hectic ceremonial season at the end of last year the Troop has been able to concentrate on a trade training exercise, with vehicles borrowed from the Honourable Artillery Company (HAC) and the completion of ATDs. The Troop form the core of the Sqn shooting team training for CORPSAAM and the London District Championships, and is permanently being raided to support Training Wing as the demands on them increase. **Cpl Steve Hook** is the latest 'victim' to be taken. **LCpl Darren Pond** has returned from his Combat Survival and Resistance to Interrogation course, looking much paler and thinner than when he set out. However, it appears that he did learn something, when debriefed by the SAS instructor at the end of the course, he is believed to have said that it was 'need to know' why a member of the London Ceremonial Troop should be loaded onto the course.

If responding to any advertisements in *The Wire* please mention that you saw it in your Corps magazine

241 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd — **Maj Dave Wright**
SSM/Ops — **WO2 (YofS) Wilf Wedge**

IMPERIAL SERVICE MEDAL - MRS ANN BLAKEMORE

Mrs Ann Blakemore started her Civil Service career on 2 April 1973. She was initially employed by 264 (SAS) Signal Squadron, working as a telephonist in the telephone exchange in Bradbury Lines. This small exchange in 1973 consisted of two operators. Over the years the Camp was re-named Stirling Lines and the exchange went to 24-hour working. On the 15 July 1985, **Mrs Blakemore** was promoted to Exchange Supervisor and later regraded Support Manager Grade 3. After 25 years exemplary career with the Civil Service **Mrs Ann Blakemore** is awarded the Imperial Service Medal and is seen in the photograph being presented with her medal by **Maj Dave Wright**, OC 241 Sig Sqn.



SQUADRON VISIT TO HMS *INVINCIBLE*

A party of twelve personnel from various departments in the Squadron visited HMS *Invincible* when it was recently in Liverpool Docks. The visit was arranged by our own ex-matelot (12 years ago), **Mr Allan Whiteside,** who is the CO2 in COMMCEN Preston. The prime purpose of the visit was to see the Navy's Main Communications Office and on board communications. This was a real eye opener for us in 241 Sig Sqn seeing torn tape still in use! Part of the tour of HMS *Invincible* included the flight deck and the Admiral's office. **CO1 Vic King** decided that if he hadn't joined the RAF he could have been an Admiral? He was later spotted testing out the Admiral's chair. The lady telephonists from Shrewsbury OAC seemed particularly interested in the sailors' very confined living quarters, or was it the sailors themselves? Well you know what they say 'All the nice Tels love a sailor' nice one **Vic**.



(L-R): Sharron Birch, Alison Jennings, Jan Oliver, Vic King, Sylvia Bedford, Brian Lewis on one of the lower decks of HMS *Invincible*

At the end of the visit we seemed to be on an obstacle course: climbing ladders, squeezing down narrow corridors, taking detours around the on board aircraft, not to mention getting lost. We eventually disembarked. Us going, we later learnt, was a relief to the ship's company as one of them was over heard to say, 'If **Vic King** mentioned once more that his son flies helicopters off this ship we were going to throw him over board,' so were the staff of 241Sig Sqn.

FOCUS ON COMMCEN KINETON

by Mr Alan Carter

This month's focus is on **Mr Alan Carter** the Communications Officer Grade 4 working in COMMCEN Kineton. **Mr Carter** joined the Civil Service on the 16 January 1961. He was just 16 years old and the job had been held open for him whilst he finished his school years. **Mr Carter** was the first civilian to be employed in COMMCEN Kineton. The post was only made civilian mid 1960. The COMMCEN in CAD Kineton as it was in 1961 was based in a Nissan hut at the top end of the barracks. **Alan** worked in the Nissan hut for 15 years when it was decided to build a longer lasting camp for the old Nissan huts had seen better days and the COMMCEN had a temporary move.

The COMMCEN and **Alan** along with it, moved to what is now the pay office in BAD Kineton. This short-term move lasted six years until the 2 April 1982. Then the new custom built COMMCEN was ready for **Alan** to move into. Those historians amongst you will realise that this is just days before the Falklands war and for the first and only time in the history of COMMCEN Kineton 24 hour working was started.

Mr Carter is still working in COMMCEN Kineton and the last time he took a day off other than stand downs or annual leave was in 1973 when he had an eye infection, not a bad record. Pictured below is **Mr Alan Carter** in COMMCEN Kineton.



242 SIGNAL SQUADRON

HEBRIDES SIGNAL TROOP SIGNALS BID FAREWELL TO THE HEBRIDES

Tp Comd — **WO1 (FofS) Dave Alexander**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt 'Smudge' Smith**

For those that are unaware the Outer Hebrides or Western Isles of Scotland lie some 50 miles Northwest of the mainland of Britain. They are a chain of islands stretching from the Butt of Lewis in the north to Barra Head in the south, a distance of some 125 miles.

The Royal Artillery Range on the Hebrides was established in 1957. It was to accommodate the firing of a new generation of missiles, utilising the little used sea area extending 100 miles westward of North Uist, Benbecula and South Uist. The presence of the Royal Signals on the Hebrides stretches back to those early days of the Range. At its peak 632 Signal Troop (Hebrides), as it was called back then, consisted of some 40 Royal Signals personnel, of varying trades, some of which don't even exist now! This 40-strong Troop also included a five man detachment of Royal Signals personnel based on the island archipelago of St Kilda, the most isolated group of islands in the British Isles, lying on the edge of the continental shelf a further 42 miles out into the Atlantic Ocean. The purpose of this Detachment was to provide communications support, in the form of a small COMMCEN, for the team of Royal Artillery personnel maintaining the surveillance and tracking radar's.

St Kilda itself is now a World Heritage site and boasts not only the highest sea cliffs in Britain at 1300 feet and the highest stac at 627 feet, but is also an ornithologist's dream! It has been uninhabited since 1930, when the small island population was evacuated. This was at their own request due to the harsh conditions. The regular storms on St. Kilda are of a ferocity unequalled elsewhere in the United Kingdom! However, a visit there is awe-inspiring.

Since the hand-over of the Range from the Royal Artillery to the Defence Evaluation Research Agency in April 1998 the permanent presence of the last remaining Royal Signals technician on St Kilda has been removed, being replaced by a fortnightly maintenance visit by helicopter or LCL. Hebrides Signal Troop is now reduced to an 11 strong team. This consists of military and civilian technicians and telecommunications mechanics headed by the Troop Commander, **WO1 (FofS) Dave** 'Lord Lucan' **Alexander.**

The Troop will cease to exist on or about 31 March 1999. So by the time this goes to press it is highly likely that the military members of the Signal Troop will have moved further afield. The Royal Signals colours will have been lowered from the Hebrides skyline for the last time and all that remains is for those who have served here, both past and present, to reminisce and bid those who are staying behind good luck for the future.



Rear (R-L): Cpl 'Billy' Stennett, Mr Mick Collins, Sgt 'Swahili' Munro, Mt Nick Phillips
Front (L-R): Sgt Steve McRostie, SSgt 'Smudge' Smith, WO1 (FofS) 'Lord Lucan' Alexander, Mrs Sharon Wicks, Sgt Joe McGinness
Absent on duty: Sgt 'Schools-out' Linnear, LCpl 'Mouse' Lane

HQ LAND - GENERAL'S CUP 1998

The General's Cup 98 consisted of Branch teams competing in 11 sports, run concurrently throughout the year. Superstars, the final event, was won be **SSgt Taff Burdge** and **Sgt Jim Robertson** after a gruelling 50 Press-ups, 3km Run, 20 Chin-ups, 5km Cycle, 20 Dips and 1200mtr Row in the fastest time possible. The winning of the Superstars event ensured that the General's Cup overall competition was won by the Signals and attached branches. The COS LAND - **Maj Gen Trousdell** made the presentation of the General's Cup to **SSgt Taff Burdge.**



Chief of Staff (COS), Maj Gen P. C. C. Trousdell presents SSgt 'Taff' Burdge with 'The General's Cup'

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243 SIGNAL SQUADRON

A ROUND-UP OF SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS

Things have been relatively quiet here in the ivory tower, speculation remains, regarding the possible move of the HQ to Wilton and will no doubt continue for some time yet. The Sqn Comd, **Maj Andy Walker** has been busy finding his way around the unit, since his arrival in September, the reorganisation of the Divisional boundaries have kept him busy behind his PC, putting together a cunning plan, in reaction to the changes. The 2IC, **Capt (Retd) Bob Wright,** remains as ever the calming influence around the HQ and continues to guard the Squadron coffers with vigour. **WO2 (SSM)** 'Paddy' **Morrow** busies himself trying to raise moneys for the local branch of MENCAP as well as extending his lunch breaks to incorporate some serious training leading up to the Army Cross Country Finals which he will be recovering from as you read these notes. **Pauline** our resident Chief Clerk who is often the first point of contact with the unit, still manages the occasional smile as she goes about her duties. We welcome **Charlotte Oliver** to the Civil Admin Office, **Charlotte** joins **Lynn** who has been contemplating suicide (only joking) due to her heavy work load. **Chris** and **Pete** continue to beaver away in the SQMS department. **Anne** our typist continues to decipher our scribbles and in the SSMs case put things into plain English without complaint. The Squadron as a whole has submitted entries for both the Corps SAAM and the Lanyard Trophy again this year and the training for both these events has commenced.

T TROOP

by Sgt Jim Robertson

Well done to **Cpl** 'Greggs' **Gregory** on finishing the 'Big Apple' New York marathon in a time of 3hrs 22mins and raising £400+ for charity. Congratulations go to **Cpl Stu Powney** on his recent promotion. Welcome to **LCpl Go Golightly** who joined the unit direct from Trg Blandford. Farewell to **Cpl Jim Harding** and his wife **Paula** who leave us for civvy street.

ONE YEAR ON - CISCC, HQ LAND COMD

Of the 20 or so people who now meet the needs of PC users globally, fight battles with generals over policy and get frustrated by users locking themselves out, only five are military. The team currently comprises, **Maj John Floyd** OC, **WO2 Paul Gee** NT Admin, **Sgt Dave Almond** NT Admin, **Sgt Elly Pomeroy** NT Admin and **LCpl Cath Young** Helpdesk. During the past 12 months there have been a great many changes within our establishment. Not only has the organisational structure of the detachment changed, but we have been subsumed into the workings of 2 (NC) Sig Bde, Corsham. This we are told will improve the cohesive assistance to users, by providing a more effective maintenance support structure.

This time last February, what was a small and neatly packaged group, slowly began to grow as demand for support increased. As the system designed by HQ Land Command, the Integrated Staff Information System (ISIS) spreads further afield, sites around the UK and as far away as Split, Banja Luka and Germany are more frequently calling for assistance. For many users of the humble PC, CISCC Help Desk is an ever increasing end point for assistance. Presently the help desk receives on average some 4 to 450 calls weekly, many of which are answered at that time, but for a few, greater assistance is required, which is when the smaller teams such as NT Admin, UNIX and Taskings are passed the task. NT Admin is presently a team of eight with five civilian grades, 4 EO's and 1 HEO (The Boss Lady) with three military positions should there be a need to deploy equipment. We have had to endure various training packages to enable our support for over 1000 on site users, not least of which have been NT Workstation, Server and Enterprise, MS Exchange, MS SMS and MS SQL. Any would-be contenders for the two posts becoming vacant in the next 12 months should contact **Maj John Floyd** at Wilton on 733-3512.

In support of an ever decreasing area of use, is our UNIX team. This little backwater group are a specialist team of three, supporting many project such as Capital, ADMIS QP24, ROSS, BMS and MAPPER. Taskings is yet another small support team within our organisation. The team of three, provide all the new hardware deployment support within the site and ensure sufficient stocks are held in our stores.

249 SIGNAL SQUADRON
ACE MOBILE FORCE (LAND)

Sqn Comd	**Maj D. J. Foulkes**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Cummings**

CHANGEOVER OF OFFICER COMMANDING

On 16 December 1998 the Squadron bid farewell to **Maj Peter Holliday** as he finished his tour as OC. Due to it being the Christmas period he actually managed a total of three leaving functions during his final week. The first was with the Sergeants to the Officers' Mess, closely followed by a superbly organised Squadron Dinner Night and culminating with in the Squadron Christmas function. **Maj Holliday** was not able to enjoy the Christmas function as much as he would have liked, due to an eye injury gained in that afternoon's Officers & Seniors v Soldiers rugby match (which the Officers & Seniors won). We wish him all the best at his new post, instructing on AJD at Camberley. On 17 December 1998 the Squadron welcomed the new OC, **Maj Jim Foulkes**, who had made the extremely long trip back across the road from the post of Adjt 3 (UK) Div HQ and Sig Regt, returning to the Squadron after an absence of two years.

EXERCISE DRYSHOD

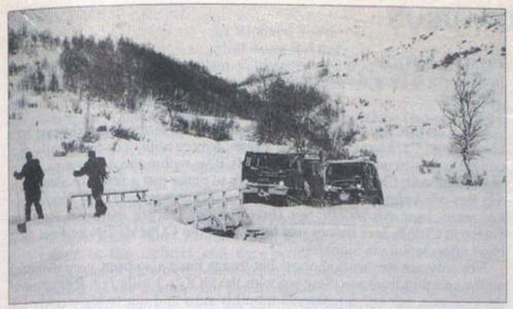
by Sig Gaingee and Sig Smith

On the 4 December the main body of the Squadron departed from the familiar confines of its compound to Okehampton Camp, Dartmoor, for Ex Dryshod. The Exercise is designed to give the newer members of the Squadron an insight into life in a cold weather environment prior to deploying to Norway.

The week was split into two parts. The first three days were spent in the classroom, absorbing the endless but important stream of survival techniques (along with the occasional horror story) needed for the Squadron's annual cold weather deployment. The skills taught included how to dress in a cold weather environment, how to treat cold casualties, numerous lessons on pocket contents and, most importantly, not to touch your ski pole with your tongue because it will not come off again (somebody manages it every year!).

The second phase was spent out on the rough, unforgiving hills and tors of Dartmoor. This began with a night navigation exercise during which the terrain proved treacherous to inexperienced hill walkers, such as **Sig** 'I can drive' **Bailey** and **Sig Gallager**, both of whom would frequently disappear up to their waists in mud. **Sig** 'Don Juan' **Beat** accompanying us from 21 Sig Regt (AS), managed to launch himself over a wall and dropped head first into a pool of stagnant water. This was a source of obvious entertainment for the rest of the team and thereby caused a great increase in morale. The next morning, after spending a comfortable night in our four man tents and hearing tales of Norway that all began with 'in Norway....', we set off on another navigation exercise. This time it was somewhat less hazardous, as the bogs were easier to negotiate in daylight. We were split into five teams, each carrying 70lbs plus comms equipment, and covered over 20kms during the day. Most teams did arrive by the time night drew in, cold and wet but with high morale, ready for the final day.

The final day began with simulated casualty evacuations. We were tasked, with the aid of 'helper sledges', with carrying several of the larger members of the Squadron such as **Sgt** 'Small Piece' **Ashman**, **Cpl** 'Haystacks' **Hurst**, and **LCpl** 'Blobby Bob' **Abbott** to an evacuation point via a swamp, a stream, a fence and a hill! But the grassy hills of Dartmoor proved a little more difficult to manoeuvre the sledges over, than the snowy slopes of Norway. Casualties were dragged through, rather than carried over the water, thrown over the fence and bumped up to the evac' point! After this we returned to camp where many a tired, cold and numbed brain attempted the closing written examination, in which **LCpl** 'Tech Burly' **Longworth** achieved top marks. In all it was an informative and thoroughly enjoyable week, one I would not hesitate to repeat, especially if the weather was a little more forgiving.



249 Signal Squadron in Norway

EXERCISE SNOWHOLE 1999 – NORWAY

Ex Snowhole 1999 was a training exercise conducted by the UK's AMF(L) contingent in Norway, in order to train personnel in the skills required to operate in a cold weather environment. The Exercise consisted of three separate, but concurrently running parts. The Cold Weather Warfare Instructors course (CWWI) and BV 206 Instructors Course (BVI) were run from Brandset Camp, while the Novice Ski and Survival Course (NSSC) was run from Bomoen Camp, Voss. In addition to being excellent individual training, the purpose of all three courses was to ensure that the UK contingent retains its collective ability to operate in a cold weather environment. Next year there will be a longer, full squadron deployment to Norway, which will culminate with an AMF(L) FTX in Poland.

The first NSSC started like many others in previous years - late. Due to problems with the RAF aircraft the course finally arrived at Bomoen Camp 12 hours later than scheduled. The course started the following day with various mandatory lectures and lessons in basic skiing techniques. The course is physically demanding and requires a high degree of personal skills. Its main aim is to teach soldiers how to survive in a cold weather environment and, of course, to stay upright and move on skis. As with any such course there are many highlights, most of which are at the expense of others. Two are worthy of mention; firstly **Sig Russ** 'Son of Kev/fingers' **Wellburn** who managed to sustain a cold weather injury (frostnip) after only 30mins on skis. Secondly **WO2 (YofS) Tac** 'Robin Cousins' **Bartlett**, who managed to injure himself on the Saturday night Car park ice skating gala, needless to say he was the only contestant!

The finale of the course was the Cold Weather Warfare Training where, apart from digging in company harbour areas, the main source of entertainment was the OC, **Maj Jim Foulkes**, who whilst playing 'enemy on skis' with the instructor's course, was viciously attacked by a four man tent pit resulting in him sustaining a nasty nick to the forehead. The course finished in the same way it had started - late. This time the aircraft managed to be 30 hours late, however, any animosity that might have been felt was quickly assuaged by the sight of the next course arriving at the airport.

SWISS TECHNICAL AVALANCHE COURSE, ANDERMATT

by Lt Preston

Whilst working hard with the Staff Officers of Hiedelberg and their Norway training, I was offered the opportunity to attend the Avalanche Course in Switzerland. This course is run by the Swiss Army for any NATO countries and lasts two weeks. There had been no British Army attendees thus far and I joined **Capt Crossman** RLC, as the first two British Officers on the course.

Andermatt is two hours train ride from Zurich and is 1445m above sea level. The population is 1450 people and depends on tourism and the military for income. The Course centres around the Mountain Combat Training Center and the Barracks which have existed since 1967. Three local mountains dominate the valley. The largest is the Gemsstock which stands a lofty 2963m high and provides excellent downhill opportunities. Smaller but with the ski lift just outside the back door of the school is the Gutsch (2344m). This was the location for much of the training. The course being multi-national uses four languages. German, French and Italian are the three national languages of Switzerland, whilst most people speak good English as well. The opening address given by **Lt Col Gnos** was in each of the four languages, an impressive skill. Once into the course the different groups were split up into language groups as hearing the same information four times rapidly became tiresome.

The opening days covered avalanche principles the Swiss way. We examined many factors in great detail, including the size of individual snowflakes, snow temperature, humidity and stability of each layer - this becomes in depth science very quickly. The medical side of training was taught by the local doctor, resident in the main hospital of the area and experienced in treating cold weather injuries. The emphasis was on sharing the experience of the mountain rescue team members on the course. The big areas of debate were 'after-drop' and 'CPR'. The after-drop is the effect of moving a casualty after they have suffered the initial affects of hypothermia. The body pulls the warm blood into the core of the body leaving the extremities cold. The important areas stay warm as long as the blood does not move around too much. Excessive movement will reintroduce the cold blood to the heart area and will kill the patient. CPR is often given at the scene of an avalanche accident. However, if you start CPR then you must be able to continue treatment all the way into the hospital. This may slow down the evacuation and the patient may benefit from remaining in deep freeze until they reach the hospital where the Swiss now practice open heart massage and a gradual warming of the blood.

Another aspect of the course which scared both of the British officers attending was the explosives section. Plastic explosive is used to stop the build up of snow on steep slopes, initiating the fall of snow before it can hurt anyone. The Swiss having more relaxed regulations than the British would happily prepare explosive charges in the classroom. I am no expert on the British regulations, but my ATO colleague assured me that detonators are not usually allowed inside without extra precautions. Even more worrying was the method of carrying the detonator and fuse cord around the neck to avoid dropping it! Once on the range the excitement continued. The charge was prepared by adding an initiator or small percussion cap device to the end of the fuse wire. This needs both hands and so the student crouches forward to keep the charge dry with 100gm of plastic explosive between his knees. Once the charge is attached to a retaining cord it is thrown into the avalanche prone area, grenade style. The student then makes a hasty withdrawal and puts his fingers in his ears. Health and safety at work hasn't reached Andermatt yet! The course awarded each student with a diploma from the Mountain training centre and gifts a plenty. It is an excellent course which shows Norway trained personnel the alpine way of doing things and offers a wealth of new information.



Lt Preston after a more spectacular fall

EXERCISE WINTER LINK

The Squadron deployed to Norway this year in two halves. Whilst one half were cold weather training **SSgt (YofS) Currie** had the pleasure of running Ex Winter Link for the remainder back in Bulford. Ex Winter Link was designed to train the new operators to the Squadron and revise the 'old and bold' on some of the equipment, procedures and skills required to provide effective communications within this unit's unique role. The first phase of the Exercise was classroom based with instruction on a wide array of subjects, including Communications in an Arctic Environment, the data entry device 'Kipling', AMF(L) Voice Procedure, and the PRC 320 (which many operators claim never to have seen before) to name but a few. Once the theory was out of the way the 'students' were let loose on Salisbury Plain where they practised and were tested on what they should have learned in the classroom.

Over the next four days not only were their communications skills tested but the map reading and driving ability of the Squadron's finest were put to the test. Students were given the grids of stands which were strategically placed across the length and breadth of SPTA, where upon arrival they were given practical demonstrations on how the unit provides communications for a truly multi-national force. They were then practically tested on what they had been taught throughout the week by the Squadron's more experienced 'gurus'. The students were particularly impressed by the Kipling stand, where **LCpl** 'Johnny' **Whitrow** made them run around a field several times before testing them. Says **LCpl Whitrow** 'It's all part of a realistic scenario'. Really!!

The Exercise proved to be a huge success with not only the newer arrivals, but many of the more experienced operators learning some new and varied skills, skills that are particular to this unit with its unique role as the AMF(L) Radio Squadron.

251 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj John Oakes**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Jim McNaught**

HAIL AND FAREWELL

Hail to **LCpl Jules Dolan** from 16 Sig Regt. Farewell to newly promoted **Sgt Brenda Cooper** and congratulations on her transfer to the PT Corps and sadly to **Cpl Tracey Hayes** who goes to civvy street.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to **Cpl Wendy Boardman** and **LCpl Nicki Dean** on their respective promotions. Welcome to our 'new arrivals' and congratulations to **WO2 (SSM) Jim McNaught** and **Alison** on the birth of their son **Robbie, Cpl Helen Sherean** and **Tony** on their first child **Rhys** and **Cpl Tracey Hayes** and **Ali** on the birth of their son **Dillon**.

251 SIGNAL SQUADRON GIVE JEANEROUSLY

by SSgt Glynis Watton

The countrywide charity 'Jeans for Genes Day' is organised for our Squadron every year by one of our civilian staff, **Mr Derek Keen** (CO1 Comms Tp. He did an excellent job of recruiting most of his civilian staff to set up all sorts of stalls, including the infamous 'bacon butty' stall, run by **Mrs Sue Halligan**, on HQ 4 Div's front lawn. The Military element of the Squadron had to first complete their annual CFT before they could swap their combats and boots for jeans and a comfy pair of trainers to hobble along on blistered feet to relish the delights of succulent bacon and sausage butties. The day was a resounding success and **Mr Derek Keen** was delighted to present the 'Jeans for Genes' charity (medical research into blood disorders such as sickle cell), with a cheque for £869. A big thank you to everyone who supported this worthwhile charity. The day was made even more special for **LCpl Wendy Boardman,** who was informed on an impromptu parade, by the ASSM of the day **SSgt Watton**, of her promotion to Corporal, well done **Wendy**.



LCpl Boardman on the 'Jeans for Genes Day' after being told of her promotion to Corporal

COMMS TROOP

by LCpl Nicki Dean & Sally Patrick

Tp Comd **Capt Mick Purves**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Glynis Watton**

The COMMCEN element of the Troop has had a very busy time of late combining Christmas and new year leave with covering all our commitments to our dependant COMMCENs within the 4 Div area, such as Marchwood, Chatham and Shorncliffe to name just a few. We also have **Sgt Bev McAuley** on detachment in Bosnia at present and look forward to her return later this month. **Sgt Ray** 'jammy' **Carter** is on Ex Trumpet Dance in Canada (see it does pay to work in the COMMCEN and get first hand information via Signals!).

Not only are we 'workaholics' but things have also been very eventful on the sporting front too. Starting with the GOC's 3 mile Fun Run around the Garrison, our OC Squadron's monthly runs and our twice weekly PT sessions - phew!! At least we are getting fitter. Staying on the running front congratulations go to **LCpl Nicki Dean** on winning the 4 Div Cross Country championships in December 1998 and **LCpl Jules Dolan** for getting selected in October 1998 for the Corps Basketball Team.

Looking ahead to future events, our Tp SSgt, **SSgt Glynis Watton,** has managed somehow to persuade quite a few of us into competing in the Fleet half marathon in March to support our local nursery, Queen Mary's, as they are celebrating their 100th birthday this year, coupled with the fact that her son **Thomas** and other members of the Squadron's children attend there!! With all this running, running, running, no wonder some members of the Troop get withdrawal symptoms and a little distressed if a day's training is missed (staff!). Good luck to everyone in March.

SQUADRON XMAS FUNCTION 5 DECEMBER 1998

by Sig Dave Hunter

The Squadron Christmas function was organised this year in plenty of time by the committee headed by **Sgt Shaun** 'Where has your hair gone?' **Curry**. He delegated tasks down to his committee - **Cpl Wendy Boardman** and **Sig's Dave Hunter, Ruth Harkness** and **Bret Merrick** who all did a brilliant job. ALAS has no one yet realised that **Sgt Shaun Curry** has the MIDAS touch to everything he comes into contact with!! Yep, you've guessed it, with two days to go before the function was due, lo and behold the NAAFI was put out of use!! Oh well never mind there's always next year we all thought, - Oh no, you've got two days to find another location was our ever optimistic **SSM Jim McNaught**'s thoughts!

So the SSM's wish was our command and yes another venue suitable to our needs (it had a good bar) was found and hurriedly decorated. There are not many occasions when both the civilian and military element of the Squadron can get together socially and this proved to be an excellent evening with everyone having a fabulous time with the civilian staff winning all of the raffle prizes! One of the highlights of the evening was when **Sig Bret Merrick** was the only male to brave the dance floor to 'girls just want to have fun', thankfully all the hierarchy had by then left - enough said!!

280 (UNITED KINGDOM) SIGNAL SQUADRON (LANDCENT)

Sqn Comd **Maj Simon Hutchinson**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) McKenna**

The arrival of 1999 heralds a new direction for the Squadron. This year we are due to receive new equipment in the form of DCM, Deployable Communication Modules, to replace the old RMA system. Our lords and masters in NATO are reorganising and later this year HQ LANDCENT ceases to exist. Meanwhile a question mark remains over our future in Francisca Barracks - so it should be a remarkable year for the Squadron as well as a busy one. Our commitment to Bosnia and the Multi - National Signal Group (MSG) continues, Charlie Troop have now taken on the reins of Deployment Troop for the next four months and the lucky few deployed following a few weeks of instruction at Laina. Post Christmas has seen the Squadron involved with the annual 'Storming of the Gates' as well as a Charity Chocolate Trade fair - much to the joy of team leader **Lt Emma Rae**.

AWARD FOR BOSNIA

Cpl Tony 'Clark Kent' **Caban**, prior to Christmas received a certificate to mark his 'Outstanding Duty Performance during 1998' from **Lt Gen Adams** US Army, Deputy Comd LANDCENT. The award was presented to **Cpl Caban** and twenty two other Officers and soldiers from Headquarters LANDCENT to mark their contribution to the SFOR mission in Bosnia. **Cpl Caban** had only recently returned from an 18 month continuous tour in theatre working at HQ SFOR in Sarajevo.



Cpl Caban (centre) and other certificate recipients from the LANDCENT Signal Group

ALPHA TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt Richard Todd**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Tony Barker**

Boxing Team - After a hard Christmas of eating and drinking the boxing team has just started training in an effort to beat the 7 Sig Regt team in the up and coming boxing tournament. There are three people in the team from Alpha Tp **Cpl Steve Slaughter, Sig Remi Osbourne** and **Sig Robert Smiejkowski**. Currently they are on a top secret training programme back in the UK. Good Luck to them all in their future fights.

Troop Debrief - As **Lt** 'Queeny' **Todd** was departing on his Captains course he instructed the Troop to organise a Troop Debrief for his return. When he returned he didn't quite know what had happened. While he was away **Cpl Dougie Icke** and **Sig Nige Foulkes** had formed a cover band with guitarist **LCpl Kurt Molden** from Charlie Tp. They played to their first crowd at the Debrief and they went down a storm. After their outstanding debut they were asked to play the storming function.

Storming of the Gates - On the 29 January 1999, Alpha Tp started a weeklong fatigue party to work on setting up the annual Storming of the Gates function where the German population is invited to camp for an almighty party. They all arrive in carnival costumes and **Sgt Greg Valentine** had great fun trying to walk off with whichever parts of the costume were left lying around. One of the organisers, **LCpl Dave Turnbull**, was on the verge of pulling his hair out when the disco didn't arrive until two hours before the start. After the stress of setting it up everything went smoothly, well almost.

Hellos and Good-byes - The Troop would like to say hello to **Sig Steve Lloyd, LCpl Guy Gladish** and **LCpl Neil Wright,** and good-bye to **Lt** 'Queeny' **Todd** and **LCpl Dave Turnbull.** Hope that they have a great time in Blandford. Also farewell to **Cpl Leon Teasdale** who is not the leaving the Squadron but is the moving to the newly formed Comms Support Section.

CHARLIE TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt Emma Rae**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Kev Smith/SSgt H. Baker**

Troop 'Hellos' and 'Good-byes' - Firstly, welcome to the new members of our Troop just arrived in from Blandford: **LCpl** 'Cookie' **Cook, LCpl** 'Alcoholic' **Rickard, Sig** 'Greyman' **Clarke** and **Sig** 'Rock fan' **White**.

Sadly we have to say goodbye to an older member of our Troop, **SSgt Kev** 'Green is Mean' **Smith** is leaving us to join 2 Sig Regt in York on promotion as a WO2. Don't listen to what the Squadron says about you, Charlie Tp think you are really an Okay guy! The leaving was celebrated/mourned by a night at the local bowling alley: Techs versus Operators versus Lineys. The technicians won, mainly due to **LCpl** 'Strike' **Rickard**'s skill, whereas the Operators had the hindrance of **LCpl** 'Strike Out' **Simmonds, LCpl** 'I really love you' **Carle** and **Sig Jan White**. The Lineys, however, had the aid of **Sig** 'I'm really a Op' **Holland**. Our 'new' Troop Staffey is **SSgt** 'H' **Baker** who is coming in from training - GOOD LUCK!

Deployment - On the whole for the past month the Troop has been kept busy, prominently with the build up for the Troop's deployment to Bosnia - Charlie Tp obviously selected to deploy first within the Squadron's 'Operational Readiness Cycle'! With the whole Tp finally passing through IRT and getting Admin matters 'squared away' our three finest deployed: **Cpl** 'F-H' **Featherstonehaugh, Sig** 'Interesting' **Si Richens** and **Sig** 'Greyman' **Phil Clarke**. They are now living life on the edge in good ol' Banja Luka, while the rest of us are on QRF 24hrs NTM to join them. We welcome back **LCpl Theobald** and **Sig Lowe** from the 'War Zone'.

Troop Stars - It seems that we have two budding young Bobsleighing champs in our Troop **Sig** 'Heed' **MacDonald** and **Sig** 'Wildebeest' **Wildridge** who during December represented Britain in the Bobsleigh Championships in Norway. Remember you still haven't brought your crates yet for getting your ugly mugs in the Sixth Sense!

Courses - Well done to **Sgt Wayne** 'How many courses?' **Dunbar** for passing his NMS course in Latina. **LCpl** 'Simmo' **Simmonds** on passing his Cronos Users course and **Sigs** 'Greyman' and 'Interesting' on passing their IDNX courses also in Latina.

We also have three future Raging Bulls in our Troop who will be representing the Squadron this month in the Boxing Championships against 7 Sig Regt: **Cpl** 'Rocky Marciano' **Bailes; LCpl** 'Sugar Ray Cookie' **Cook** and **Sig** 'Prince Nobby' **Styles** -let's hope they do a better job than they do on Friday and Saturday nights! All the above gossip supplied by **LCpl** 'I don't owe any crates, Boss' **Molden.** (Message from the Tp Ed: Now you do!)

THE STORMING OF THE GATES CEREMONY FRIDAY 29 JANUARY 1999

The 'Storming of the Gates' is an Annual Ceremony where the local German Stadt attempt to gain access to Francisca Barracks via the front gate and we have to try and stop them. The German town folk of St Tonis arrived just after six o'clock on a cold, crisp January evening with Drums beating fiercely and the Band playing too. This year our German friends succeeded once again despite the valiant efforts of **Cpl** 'Ginger Peewee Dougie' **Icke** and **Sig** 'Spotty Sharlie' **Lister** and CO. After the first shots were fired, the 280 (UK) Sig Sqn Green Terminators were knocked back, by the huge onslaught of the local population. This allows the German Carnival Prince and OC Sqn to have 'Welcome Drinks' adjacent to the Guardroom.

Once everybody was ready, the resident Piper, **Sig** 'Mac Swede' **MacDonald**, led the whole procession of families and local German friends down to the Gymnasium for the rest of the proceedings. The Bar was swiftly opened and everybody mingled and enjoyed the spectacular



The OC greets the Carnival as they storm the gates, armed with suitable refreshment and silly hats

entertainment from the St Tonis All Girl Dancing Team. After the Dancers, a short but very sharp set of tunes were played by the Piper and once he was finished he then received a large Scottish Quaich of Whisky from the Carnival Prince (obviously thoroughly enjoyed!). There was also a popular, if unscheduled, appearance by **LCpl** 'I can drum better than the next' **McPhie**.

The next event was 'It's a Knockout' hosted by **Sgt Trev McSween.** The game consisted of two teams with the 'Brits' on one side and the 'St Tonians' on the other. Each team had to win a series of relay races whilst, perhaps, under the influence of one or two beverages! Unfortunately for us we need to go on Remedial Egg and Spoon Races as the St Tonians, however, won the contest. **SSgt** 'Julie' **Strangeways** and **Sgt** 'Vinnie' **Vincent** (RLC) and Crew provided the Catering. All the food was magnificent and a very big thank you goes to all the chefs for all the hard work before, during and after the Storming of The Gates.

Once everybody had had their fill, the very in-famous Rock 'n' Roll band the 'Happy Flowers' took control and played us into the wee small hours of Saturday morning. The Happy Flowers are **Cpl** 'Ginger Peewee Dougie' **Icke** on Rhythm Guitar and vocals, **LCpl Kurt** 'The German' **Molden** on Lead Guitar and vocals and **Sig** 'Niggsy Nige' **Foulkes** on Keyboard. The lads gave a splendid performance and did the United Kingdom, the Royal Corps of Signals and 280 (UK) Sig Sqn proud. I don't think it's the last we'll hear of them. Next stop Top of the Pops.



The Band of the Stadt, St Tonis

MOTOR TRANSPORT TROOP

MTO **Capt Kevin Jones**
MT SSgt **SSgt Rick Nolan**

The festive season is now over, and the Troop management would like to welcome back all the members of MT Tp, including them. We all know coming back from Christmas and New Year leave can give soldiers the blues. But alas the Troop didn't get the chance; we were straight into OC Squadron's Troop inspection within the week. Three Cpls, four LCpls and four Sigs under the guidance of the Troop seniors, managed to prepare the Troop up to and above the standards required. (Rumour has it, that we really only had to fine-tune a well oiled classic piece of machinery). We have no idea where these rumours started! It was a great effort by a small Troop, well done everybody.

We have two new arrivals to mention, **Cpl Mark** 'Sibby' **Sibbald** and family and **Sigs Chris** '?' **Crowder**, 'Sibby' BFG, Chris Gne Bay, good luck lads. We also say goodbye to **Sgt Dave Honeyman** and family now at Bassingbourn, **Sig** 'Jacko' **Jackson** to 216 (Para) Sig Sqn and **Sig** 'Scotty' **Wilson** to 33 (TA) Sig Regt, we wish them well for the future.

Last but not least we must congratulate **Sig** 'Grant' **McDougall** who is now a well deserved LCpl 'Well done'.

KOLN CHOCOLATE FAIR

On the 4 February 280 (UK) Sig Sqn and 220 Sig Sqn were tasked to go to Koln and collect as much chocolate as they possibly could from the annual, world famous, international confectionery fair. The chocolate collected was on behalf of the charity Scottish European Aid (SEA) and sent off to the people of Bosnia.

The 280 Sig Sqn team was under the leadership of **Lt** 'Scoffalot' **Rae** and **SSgt** 'Pass me some choc' **Weavers** and was comprised of a coach load of chocolate collectors hand picked out of Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, MT and LAD - in fact people volunteered from every nook and cranny. Everyone took part in the collecting (when they weren't eating) and seemed to be fully (excuse the pun) enjoying themselves. This was probably one of the most anticipated tasks of the year, as the soldiers were allowed to sample the delights as they searched - a good motivation technique!

The chocolate collection started around 1100hrs on the Thursday with a quick brief of the most important things, for example the location of the 'temporary stash points' and areas in which the collection was restricted, etc. The importance of these stash points was realised as there was so much chocolate which could be collected and needed to be watched/guarded from the German public. Also we were restricted to a certain part of the British area of the building and maps were issued to 3-4 man groups, as the hall was so big some may have strayed in other areas (especially the yank sections)! The collecting carried on until around 1400 hrs in a style that was last witnessed on 'Supermarket Sweep'; by which time people were starting to tire, (a full bag of Liquorice Allsorts weighs a lot as some Germans found when they tried to walk off with some of our bags). When the collecting finished, the hard part started. Loading all the chocolate onto the trucks, and trying to keep prying fingers away - this proved more difficult than expected. Apart from the hungry Soldiers, like **Sig** 'I will kill you all with my large lollipop' **Hall** there were many civilians just dying to get their hands on the chocolate we had nabbed. The day was 'livened up' with the help of **Sig** 'Heed' **MacDonald**, who turned up with his Bagpipes and soon had the Belgians screaming for more, much to the disgust of the rest of his unit. He was then spotted, strutting his stuff for the rest of day in the Belgian sector.

At the end of the day, everyone enjoyed themselves, mostly through the weight of their personal baggage. The chocolate should bring a few more toothless grins from all the kids in Bosnia and a few more patients for the dental services. Well done lads!

BRAVO TROOP

Tp Comd	**Capt Craig**
SSgt	**SSgt Weavers**

The Troop arrived back after Christmas leave raring to go…Honestly! With a few people in desperate need to get back into PT judging by the waistlines, mentioning no names! The Troop is now almost back to full strength with **Cpl Tom Atkinson, Cpl** 'Gilly' **Gilbert, LCpl Jim Cunningham** and **LCpl** 'Robbo' **Roberts** returning from Bosnia, but that could all change again with the people putting their names down for some daredevil courses. **Sgt** 'Baz' **Glinton, Sig** 'Emily' **Watts, LCpl** 'Death Wish' **King** and **Sig** 'Chipmunk' **Lloyd** all going paragliding for two weeks …Good Luck!

We would also like to welcome **LCpl** 'Cary' **Grant** into the Troop and sadly say Goodbye to **SSgt Tom Davies** who moves into the training wing and **LCpl** 'Cyclops' **McGlinchey** who moves into the Comms Support Troop. Good luck to the both of you.

QUARTERMASTER'S DEPARTMENT

QM	**Capt Steve Toms**
RQMS	**WO2 (RQMS) 'Brummie' Cox**

The Department has suffered a severe decrease in manpower over the past months. February brought another loss with the departure of **LCpl** 'Percy' **Percival**, who was posted, to AFCENT on promotion. **Sig Gavin Beatty** received another selection for promotion, although no posting - could he be staying here? **SSgt** 'Rob' **Melotte** is currently at Hedley Court; friends and acquaintances will be pleased to hear that he is making great advances on the road to a full recovery. Keep up the good work Rob. **Cpl** 'Cozy' **Powell** is enjoying the dizzy height (swinging on the cross bar) as the Corps 1st choice goalie! As a long time supporter of Preston North End, his ambition of one day playing for the Lillywhites has come one kick closer or so be believes.

SSgt Dave 'hate the cold weather' **Maw** and family spent Christmas and New Year at the Mother-in-laws. Any regrets? No not at all, his Mother-in-law lives in Goa, India and at this time of the year the temperature is a cool 34°C! **Jane** 'Tailoress' **Jones** is welcomed back to the department after a long period of recovery from a RTA before Xmas.

COMMUNICATION SUPPORT SECTION

Towards the end of 1998 it was decreed that the Squadron would reorganise to prepare for the arrival of the new communication equipment, DCM. A part of the re-role involved the creation of a new section, rising from the ashes of the old TM Section. A selection of operators and technicians were posted across, to be guided by **SSgt (FofS) Rick** 'I was not snoozing' **Griffiths** and **Sgt June Valentine**.

The new improved section OC is the Tech Adjt, **Capt Dave Stewart** and it consists of **Cpl (Mr) Tony Caban, Cpl Dave Walker, Cpl Damien Thorpe, Cpl Leon** 'Rockie' **Teasdale, Cpl Andy Shaw, LCpl Si Harris, LCpl** 'Mac' **McGlinchey, Sig Jo Ellison, Sig Martin Sherriff.** They are responsible for coordinating the response for all computer and telephone matters, the training of technicians and personnel on the Squadron unique trunk communication equipment, the RMA system. This year we have also taken on the co-ordination of the year 2000 action.

SQUADRON ADVENTURE TRAINING IN BAVARIA
18-31 OCTOBER 1998
by LCpl King

Due to commitments in Bosnia there's not been a lot of time for the guys to let their hair down, so the Squadron arranged two weeks Adventure Training in Bavaria. The advance party left camp a few days early to check that everything was ready for the arrival of the first group (ie: get the beers and crisps stocked). Unfortunately their map reading skills were not up to scratch as **Sgt Stebbing** and **Sgt** 'SI' **Dunford** couldn't seem to meet up with **Capt Craig** anywhere. Eventually they found each other after a lot of phone calls back to camp, and started the serious business of checking out all the beer, I mean gear for the climbing and trekking. The first group set off on the morning of 18 October in two minibuses. A few people in the group were nursing hangovers, but they had plenty of time to sleep them off on the nine-hour journey down to Bavaria.

The accommodation was not quite five star, but none the less very comfortable complete with bar and TV room. The group was split down into two subgroups, one trekking with **Capt Craig** and **Sgt Stebbing**, the other rock climbing and abseiling with **Sgt Bob Dunford**. The RSM, **WO1 McKenna**, joined in with the walking group he wasted no time in donning his wellingtons and bobble hat and took his place at the back of the group. The group had placed its trust in the map reading skills of **Sig** 'Emily' **Watts** and **Sig** 'Ski' **Smiejkowski**, by the end of the day the whole group was coffeed out after stopping at every café on the mountain. (They were also only four miles away from the minibus and on the wrong side of the mountain!) After the RSM had dished out extras to the failed map-readers we caught a lift back to the hut for some well deserved scran. The Chefs, **Pte Gary** 'Bomber Jacket' **Morrison** and **Cpl Matt Parkinson** had been slaving all day to prepare a feast fit for a king - beans on toast.

On the Wednesday **Capt Craig** had arranged a day with a difference, rafting in Austria down the River Im. After a long frozen journey in the snow, we arrived at the wild water. We were all kitted out in the latest trendy wetsuits complete with designer rips. The rafts turned out to be inflatable canoes, but this did not affect our morale. The water temperature, however, was a different matter - it was freezing. **Capt** 'Scuba diver' **Craig** spent more time in the water than on top of it, whilst **Sgt** 'Deadly' **Dunford** made sure he wasn't the only one who felt the icy depths. After a couple of hour's fun on the water, everyone was happy to get out to thaw out. On Thursday night the local German shooting club invited us round for some drinks, shooting and a strange game involving two people lying on the floor and fighting with their legs in the air.

On the final day of the week before the journey back everybody had a choice for their R&R day. The more adventurous going skiing on the Stubai Glacier in Austria, the less courageous shopping in the PX in Garmich. On the Sunday it was a quick turn round of the hut and then back on the buses for the long journey back to camp, after a hard but enjoyable week.

11 Signal Regiment

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MEDAL PARADE 6 NOVEMBER 1998

To mark the formal end of the Squadron mission in Bosnia the Squadron held it's final medal parade. Twenty-four members of the Squadron received their NATO medals representing the last members to deploy to the Former Republic of Yugoslavia. The remainder of the Unit was on parade to celebrate the end of two years of operational commitments. During this period 11 Officers, 77 Senior ranks and 147 other ranks have deployed in support of SFOR. The inspecting officer was **Col Peter Innocent** late Royal Signals DACOS CIS at headquarters LANDCENT. The Oberburgermeister of St Tonis, **Herr Schwarz** joined him, in presenting the medals with musical accompaniment provided by the Band of the Dragoon Guards. Following a week of intensive practice under the expert gaze of the RSM the parade was expertly executed - which was surprising considering the number of Port fines the Officers managed to build up during the practices (think yourself lucky it was only two bottles **Lt Todd**!)



Col Innocent presents Lt Emma Rae with her NATO medal

RETIREMENT OF MAJOR COLIN STEPHENS

Maj Colin Stephens retired from his post as Camp Commandant in November after almost 46 years of service. **Colin** enlisted into the Corps as a boy soldier at Catterick in March 1953. After a varied career which saw service in Malaya, Northern Ireland, Cyprus and Germany he was commissioned in 1974. Having completed tours with 8 and 7 Sig Regt he was granted a Regular Quartermaster Commission in 1979 and posted to 31 (GL) Sig Regt (V). His final tour was with 7 Sig Regt as Quartermaster Technical where he was instrumental in the introduction of PTARMIGAN into 1 (BR) Corps. He took early retirement in 1986 aged 50 in order to pursue a Retired Officer career. He joined 28 (BR) Sig Regt (NORTHAG) as Quartermaster Admin and remained so until disbandment of the Regiment in December 1993. On the formation of 280 (UK) Sig Sqn he took up the post of Camp Commandant. The Squadron wishes **Colin** and **Jutta** all the very best for a well deserved retirement to Kent.



Maj Colin Stephens who retired after 46 years of service, with Sig Brad McCallum

BATTLECAMP 13-20 NOVEMBER 1998
EXERCISE FRAN ARCHER



Sgt Chris Porter and his Section on Battlecamp

One of the more interesting facts that came to light following the end of our mission to Bosnia is that the Squadron had not been able to deploy into the field, in its entirety, since 1994. Ex Fran Archer was to remedy this fact with an eight-day battlecamp on Haltern Training Area. The Exercise was the brainchild of **Capt Russell** 'Fantasy-world' **Edwards** who spent many hours slumped over his PC thinking of nasty ways to keep us all occupied. The Exercise scenario was based on the imaginary country of Carthage, a country not too dissimilar in size to Germany, that had begun to fragment due to ethnic rivalries - not unlike Bosnia. The resultant ARRC peace support operation saw the Squadron deploy as a dismounted company to the 'Republic of Illyria'. The Squadron deployed as two platoons - who quickly established their own platoon patrol bases, from the bases they mounted patrols, snap VCPs and ambushes against the local warring factions. The 'enemy' was provided by 990 (German) Signal Regiment, one of our sister units within the LANDCENT Signal Group (LSG). Their promise to bring a few extra 'Gucci' pieces of kit to help the Exercise was well and truly kept when they brought enough ammo and pyrotechnics to start the next World War as well as some very 'sexy' Special Forces gear. This included Night Vision Goggles, which gave them a distinct advantage! Refugees and the attentions of aggressive TV crews (as provided by BFG Media Ops) combined to ensure there was never a dull moment. The highlight of the Exercise was the opportunity to train with WARRIOR armoured vehicles, as provided by the 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Wales. The RRW brought four WARRIORs from which the platoons were able to practice armoured infantry tactics as well as have the chance to 'cabby-about'. The Exercise culminated in a 3-day live-firing package - an excellent end to what was a busy and challenging Exercise.



Two platoon de-bus from the WARRIORS

JOINT COMMUNICATIONS UNIT FALKLAND ISLANDS

SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS

Sqn Comd	**Maj Julian Bunce**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Balsdon**



Maj Julian Bunce places a wreath on the grave of Maj Mike Forge

It has been a fairly hectic last few months and much has happened. The Squadron was delighted to see the Commanding Officer and RSM down here away from the hustle and bustle of Banja Luka. We hope that they enjoyed their stay. The CO gave a presentation to the Officers and SNCOs about the Regiment's role in Bosnia and we certainly have the better option out here. The penguin racing in 'Sharkies' was a huge success thanks to the efforts of Power Section as was the Christmas party. Their efforts both in the bar and running it have been commendable. With four months down and only two to go most of UHQ have skived off on R&R by now with the exception of **Lts Rob Francis** and **Karl Jeeves**.



Lt Karl Jeeves and Lt Rob Francis and friends What's all that about?

They have delayed their trip to Ascension until early February in the hope that they will still have their tans on return to Herford. Everyone in the Squadron has worked extremely hard over these past months especially during the recent TOC Out and are to be congratulated for their efforts.

LATER ENTRY - 1 (UK) Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt are busy preparing to hand over to 2 Sig Regt after a fairly hectic tour and we wish them the best of luck. The squadron has had an excellent tour and a great deal has been achieved, we even managed to convince a couple of our RAF colleagues to come to PT! The JCUFI football team have been doing well, leaping from the bottom of the league to the final of the BFFI Cup, well done to all the team and many thanks to **Pte** 'Eddie' **Edwards** for his efforts as team manager. Our congratulations go to the SSM, **WO2 Al Balsdon** on his promotion to RSM – standby 15 Sigs, get your PT kit out! We also say goodbye and congratulations to our Sqn Clerk, **A/Sgt Rob** 'Chief' **Clarke** who is marrying his fiancée **Linda** whom he met early this tour - we wish them all the best!

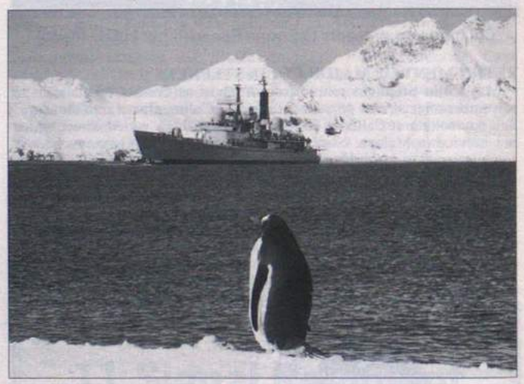
SOUTH GEORGIA LSD SIGNALS DETACHMENT

Det Comd	**Sgt J. Barsley**
Tech Sgt	**Sgt Tye**

LIFE IN THE FREEZER

by LCpl Craig Law

After three days enduring some of the worst sea conditions that nature could throw at us, we finally arrived. Our destination had been South Georgia, a small isolated island in the South Atlantic, 800 miles west of the Falklands. As we arrived at Grytviken Baynwe could not help but be awe struck by the natural beauty of the carved glacial landscape crowned by its snowy peaks.



HMS *Edinburgh* in South Georgia

After a quick and successful hand-over, littered with unwelcome comments such as, 'Glad we're not here for Christmas,' **Sgt** 'Jase' **Barsley, Sgt Tony Tye, Sig Si Knight** and myself, **LCpl Craig Law,** watched helplessly as HMS *Edinburgh* sailed over the horizon taking our morale with it. Luckily there was no time for depression to set in and we were soon thrust out into the mountains on a week-long survival course. The Marine in charge soon had us chucking ourselves off cliffs, living in snow-holes and hurtling down mountains with only an ice-pick and a prayer for brakes.

The island is supplied by a combined services operation. The Navy supplies the bulk by ship and the RAF throw the remainder out of the back of a Hercules into the sea before raising comms and telling us that they have arrived. This makes for an extremely desperate race to reach the packages before they sink just in case they might contain our mail. After many hard working days and entertaining nights, the det, under the influence of a mental hangover took a vow to stop smoking, cut down on drinking and sweat more in the gym. The aim was as 'Jase' put it 'to get massive'.

Fuelled with our new vision and improved morale we cruised through the next two months sober, enjoying greater lung capacity. The changeover of the Engineers Det produced minor problems with our training due to the introduction of the compulsory 'theme night'. Having the bar filled with palm trees for the Hawaiian Night and a strict no clothes policy for the Naturist Night has taken South Georgia's entertainment to new levels of depravity.



Sig 'Ade' Hoskins on board HMS *Edinburgh* en route to South Georgia



South Georgia has an abundance of wildlife ranging from Orcas, elephant seals, penguins and a couple of marines who wander around aimlessly quoting Alan Partridge and trying to convince people to be 'at one with the mountains'. With more than half the tour now behind us and countless projects completed, the countdown to HMS *Morale*'s arrival and our departure has begun. The Tour has thus far been a complete success and thoroughly enjoyed by all. We all feel that we have been part of a once in a lifetime experience and I would recommend it to anyone.

EXERCISE SAUNDERS GOOSE

Ex Saunders Goose was an 'adventurous' training exercise on the north coast of West Falklands. So far three trips have been made to the island that is a veritable Paradise if such a thing could exist within the Falklands. Its white beaches and turquoise seas would have been more at home in the Carribean than the South Atlantic and the wildlife is prolific. Four species of penguins, albatrosses, elephant seals and much more. Perhaps we've just been down here too long! My plan to name the Exercise 'Saunders Swan' was vetoed by the Sqn OC who insisted that it wasn't a swan but Adventure Training so 'Saunders Goose' it became, like a swan only slightly tougher. **2Lt** 'Olie' **Dinnis,** the Squadron's pet Young Officer led the first trip, taking with him an assortment of characters from RADCON. With the likes of **LCpl** 'Smiler' **Breaks** and that terrible twosome of **Sigs Bond** and **Hogg** it was never going to be a serious affair. A great deal of fun was had by all, hill-walking and penguin spotting being the main features. Trouble getting space on the chopper meant that for future trips the numbers had to be cut down to five. **Lt Rob Francis** led the next expedition with **Sig** 'Ade' **Hoskins** and a trio from the RAF (just to prove that we're a tri-service unit) in tow. Actually venturing more than a few hundred yards out of camp without a Land Rover reaped excellent rewards. We discovered a huge colony of Rock Hopper penguins and albatrosses, both of which allowed us within feet of them to take photos, as well as climbing Rookery Mount to get an awesome view of the island. The weather was excellent and thanks to one of the RAF girls who brought sun cream, we didn't get too burnt. **Sgt Dave Cascarino** wasn't so lucky with his trip and got pretty soaked but once again a cracking time was had by all. The aim is to repeat the Exercise over as many more weekends as possible in order to get people out and about to see some of the attractions that these islands have to offer.

ALPHA TROOP/RADCON

IC RADCON	**Sgt** 'Daz' **Bailey**

Well another few months have passed and the infamous RADCON JCUFI is still ticking away. Not a lot has happened over the last month or so but the 1 Div's best have been doing what it takes to keep busy and not become cabbages unlike the guys in SYSCON!

I think that it would only be fitting to begin by saying goodbye to the lads who have recently come back from South Georgia after a gruelling six months of smoking, drinking and generally getting fat and lazy. They all have fascinating tales from their tour of that idyllic island. **Sgt** 'Jase' **Barsley,** well what can be said about such a fine man, except congratulations, you have definitely won the golden blanket this time. Well done to **Sgt Tony Tye** on his promotion, no doubt we'll get even less work out of you now. **LCpl Craig Law** has had a fine tour, his dull Scottish drone has kept us all amused for hours at our end and will be sadly missed. **Sig Si Knight**, well was it just a holiday romance, will the tash last? He is now one step closer to his dream of becoming an adult film star after featuring in that brilliant programme 'Scene Here'. Every one has to start somewhere! Well thanks to the SG lads who helped make our job even easier.

Sgt 'Daz' **Bailey** is still doing a fine job of running RADCON, all the lads can say is 'Sgt B, enjoy it while it lasts, for soon you will be a Cpl again and then the fun begins!' **A/Cpl Ian Wilson** still does ten hours of nothing a day. Its obviously the way ahead as he is leaving us to go to 20 Bde as a Cpl with **Sgt Bailey**. We wish them the best of luck and they will be sadly missed on the tank park. What of Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dumb otherwise known as **Cpl** 'Fraz' **Reid** and **Cpl Steve Read**. Well 'Fraz' was devastated recently when he found out that Scotland had been knocked out of the World Cup. The fact that it happened over six months ago may, to the casual observer, seem strange. Then again, 'Fraz' is a little strange. **Cpl Steve Read**, not a lot to say except 'Land Rovers are not amphibious!' **LCpl Si Kenny** is currently trying to organise his next posting to 249 Sig Sqn where we are sure that he will be MED Ex'd from most of the major exercises, why break the habit of a life time. **LCpl** 'Chaz' **Charnley** is posted to 21 Sig Regt where he will probably get a call every time **Si Kenny** requires replacing. **LCpl Charnley** is extremely sad to leave his 436 so let's hope that 21 Sig Regt have one just for him. **Sig** 'Ringo' **Wringe** has had an eventful tour under the wing of **LCpl** 'Chaz' **Charnley** and will no doubt soon be joining the ranks of 22 ... 212 that is. The girls, **LCpl Nicky Needham, Sigs Becky Hogg**, **Michelle** 'Evel Knievel' **Bond** and **Lucy** 'Locket' **Corlett** have had a busy tour and have proven to be a valuable asset for the procurement of 'gimmies' (we're not sure how they do it, what is their secret?) **Sig** 'Fifties Throwback' **Hendrick** is currently in high spirits as the rumour is that the MoD is buying in a job lot of Viagra. **Sig Andy Cunnington** has kept himself busy doing lots of fiz and congratulations to him as he has done well, now all that you need to do is dye your hair! **Sig Jim Hewitt** is still keeping us amused with his attempt at being a PTI. Last as always, our very own cross between Shaft and Will Smith is **LCpl** 'Smiler' **Breaks** who has recently started doing shifts in the Radio Ops Room – all we can say is 'Smiler, don't give up your day job!'

CHARLIE TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt** 'Jeevsey' **Jeeves**
SSgt	**SSgt** 'Taff' **Jolly**

Once again it has been a hectic time for C Tp as a number of major projects loom in the wings the Sections, ably led by the Sergeants, continue to work the men hard

Fits Section - continues to battle to maintain kit that really wants to retire and move to a bungalow in the country. The Section is forever deploying to the remotest of sites at the shortest notice in an effort to keep everyone talking to one another, this is playing havoc with **Cpl Duffy**'s social life. He has, however, managed to find himself a pen pal. Well the boss found him one.

LATER ENTRY –The New Year is upon us and the FITS Team has stepped up a gear. FITS is one of the busiest sections in JCUFI and we are now heavily involved in the Digi FITS upgrade with our random civvys from COGENT ably assisted by the two reinforcements drafted in for the project, **SSgt Dave Gill** from Blandford and **LCpl Haley Moore** a volunteer from our sister Regt, 3 Div (Boo! Hiss!)

Obviously, with our tour concluding in February, there has been some concern about the fact that the cut-over from FITS to DigiFITS takes place between 17 February and 2 March. Have no fear great overlords of JCUFI, to aid the smooth transition, the FITS team have volunteered to be amongst the last to leave the battlefield and won't depart until the 24th. That is except for **LCpl Ali Jamieson** our resident civvy from the TA, whose reply to the request to step forward, was to step back. Our FIADGE Mountain men have once again acquitted themselves with honour, doing their level best to win more awards and drink more beer than their RAF colleagues. All three of them will be leaving on 20 February with the main body after their very short hand-overs.

Sadly we will not see the fruit of our labours down here up and running, as we will be leaving the easy bit to 2 Sig Regt. In the mean time, ciao, and remember, 'its not the end of the world but you can see it from here!'

Fiten Section - still disappear off everywhere at curious times of the day, **Sgt Treadwell** dutifully followed round by his faithful vassals, **Cpl Bartle** and **LCpl Gemmell**. The latter two can now been seen furiously working on their fitness gently encouraged by the Troop OC. Syscon are all currently furiously revising for their T3-2 exams with varying success. The army lads continue to be called the Syscon Mafia, kept in check by the influence of **LCpl Lee. Sig Crossley** and **LCpl Caffrey** have now nicknamed themselves as 'The Faults Dream Team', after fixing three priority one faults in a day.

Charlie Tp HQ muddle by as best they can, being grumpy because the OC has given up alcohol. **Lt Jeeves, SSgt Jolly** would like to say thank you to all of Charlie Tp for all your hard work and dedication, well done!

Line Section – *LATER ENTRY*



Back row (L-R): Cpl Korba, Cpl Prout,
Sgt Cascarino I/C Line Section, Sgt Treadwell I/C Fiten,
LCpl James, Sig Durrans, Sig Mark
Front row (L-R): Cpl Bartle, Sig Simm,Sig Smith, LCpl Gemmell.
Absent on duty: Cpl Richards, LCpl Ferguson, Sig Woodcock,
Sig Fisher

Well the tourex draws near for the Divvies of line Section, the 'trickle posting' Tele Mechs will be sad to see them go. Having said that the majority of the Tele Mechs leave around about the same time. Without a doubt Line Section have been one of the busiest departments of JCUM, if not the whole of MPA, in the last five months. At the time of writing, the Telemechs of 81 Sig Sqn (V) have arrived in theatre to rewire the TOC frame - this being the last phase of the ongoing project. The author would like to take this opportunity to thank his Divisional Linemen for the total professionalism and dedication they have shown in making an extremely hard job look easy - you are a credit to your trade guys! I feel they must get their names in print - it will cost them a pint anyway!

Cpl Phil 'Oh sailor' **Korba**
Sig Dave 'Catalogue Boy' **Durrans**
Sig Paul 'Our aquatic friend' **Fisher**
Sig Dave 'Chunky Monkey' **Mark**
Sig Colin 'Colson' **Simm**
Sig Chris 'Gob' **Woodcock.**

On the sad side, I would just like to let every body know what it is we have been up to for the past five months! A total of 1064 faults have been cleared, 79 works orders have been installed, a new test point has been put on line, the standby operations centre has been completely rewired, three projects have been completed, including the MQ re-cabling, half of the corridor phones in the accommodation, all this and not a mention of the 27,000 fast balls that have come from either **WO2 FofS Dave Jones** or the Tech Adj, **Capt Lee Wookey**, on the subject of fastballs OC C Tp, **Lt Karl** 'Phsyco' **Jeeves** must get a mention as the No1 harbinger of bad news! Mentions must go to the Telemechs in the section;

Sgt Dave 'Fat boy - I don't RAAAH much' **Cascarino**
Cpl Andy 'I love Bev' **Prout**
LCpl Darren 'Pumpkin' **James**
Cpl Pete 'Wibble' **Richards**
LCpl Martin 'I hate you all' **Ferguson**
Sig Bev 'I Love John not Andy' **Smith.**

In addition to the Mechs and Linies up at ACC, our resident exchange techs have played a major part in our role here, especially on the morale side! We have all enjoyed laughing at **Sgt Tim** 'It's all pump' **Treadwell**, **Cpl Nick** 'Pedo' **Bartle**, and last but not least **LCpl Archie** 'spank me' **Gemmell.**

Power Section - are hard at work servicing and doing a good sideline at being bar managers and bar staff. Thank you to the whole Section for their hard work in preparing the bar for the Christmas Party, on 12 December. Apparently everybody had a great time! However, everyone will deny any involvement in an incident with a canoe. Well done to **Sig Sherlock** for retaining his Army Judo title (the trophy looks very nice sat in my office). **Sig Fisher** spent an enjoyable two weeks as driver for the CSE Show Dancers, one of whom he has now fallen in love with, little does he know!

LATER ENTRY - Routine is the game for Power Section as the end of 1 Div's tour draws ever nearer. The light is at the end of the tunnel, but the work load is still plentiful with all the cabins requiring cleaning and painting prior to the hand-over in mid-February to 2 Sig Regt. Everyone is working hard flying about the islands and in **Sgt John McKillop**'s case getting pretty sunburnt in the process (loads of work done there then..). **LCpl Steve Smith** is clearing ready to go on his upgrading course at sunny old Blandford, leaving **LCpl Chris Heap** to carry the can while **LCpl** 'Don't call me Shorty!' **Sherlock** mans the heli-ops/MT desk. The Golden Bowl Award for pure gluttony has been awarded to **Sig** 'Dinger' **Bell** for demolishing two kilos of chips prior to a bag of sausages and a box of King Ribs for breakfast! The section would like to congratulate **LCpl Sherlock** on his promotion, there's hope for us all yet.

UQMS DEPARTMENT

With the army element now gearing up for the hand over to 2 Sig Regt in mid February, the UQMS **Sgt** 'Sholly' **Martwich** commiserating his 40th birthday and a Board of Officers and the usual MFO Box confusion, the first two weeks of January have been a harassed and hectic blur! **LCpl** 'Civvie' **Milne** and **Sig** 'Growbag' **Grossmith** have been holding the fort while Q reconstructs his ammunition account and looks for a new stores wagon.

223 SIGNAL SQUADRON
(JOINT SERVICES SIGNAL UNIT DIGBY)
RAF DIGBY

SITUATION GENERAL

As we at Digby finally sober up after what can only be described as a rather 'blurred' Christmas, it is time to look to another year. We are already in receipt of our new issue of 'OFFICER 99'. A warm welcome to **Flt Lts Darren** 'bouffant' **Thorley, Rob** 'schoolbag' **Keir** and **Mick** 'loose minute' **Warren** and a welcome return to **Flt Lt Andy** 'Don't I look hard in Combat '95?' **Calder** who has returned from overseas. The Squadron is still trying to decide if this make our issue of 'OFFICER 99' redundant or not? In other news the OC in an effort to be nearer to his beloved troops has moved out of the luxurious elegance of his Executive Suite office and is now slumming it with the rest of us. However, there has been a marked increase in the number of people using alternative exit routes since his arrival. I can't see any connection myself..

We have also noticed strange people lurking in the back of our cosy JSSU and wearing that outlandish camouflage kit. Heaven forbid they are actually doing regular PT and working outside even in bad weather. The guys from SSSU, now recognised as 4 Squadron have well and truly made their mark since arriving, especially in the 'social' arena. Rumours are that the QM and RQMS have issued them with extra large wallets and big hands, no wonder the young ladies are flocking around them.

1 SQUADRON

Sqn Comd — **Maj Calum Clark** (R Signals)
Sp Offr — **Capt Steve** 'short but sweet' **Palfreyman** (R Signals)

ALPHA FLIGHT

Duty Ops Officer — **Lt Stu** 'Chocolate Chip Cookie' **Whittley**

A FLIGHT NEWS

by JT Sarah 'Tracey, get the brews in' Peapell

It's been a real quiet time on A Watch this month. I think after the parties over Christmas we are all nursing sore heads and very unhealthy bank balances! But wasn't it a pleasure to see the Boss behave himself for once at the Xmas bash. I'm sure it had nothing to do with his girlfriend being present. Hellos this month go to **WO2 Dave Fuller** supposedly back from Cyprus (we think he picked up his tan in the Gym), **Sgt Simpson** (back from Bosnia and is still, funnily enough, a silver tongued cavalier), **JT Soley** (welcome to Digby matey), **JT Tremlin** (back from FI, god damn your eyes), and **Cpl Rose Groocock** (who also hails from FI, and has a big love heart above her head after getting engaged recently. Congrats from all of us). This must be the month of lurve for A Watch (and no, nobody else is pregnant) but congrats go to **JT Jacqui Goodson** and **Neil** for their recent engagement. (Bless.)

Goodbyes go to **WO2 Jim McGhee**, (off to a cushy day job, you traitor you), **Cpl Kerry Smith** (also off to days and leaving vacancies in every secondary duty on the watch), **Cpl Sarah Lee** (off to Cyprus to get a tan. No bar snogging while you are over there either ya hussy), and **JT Tony Bellis** (off to 2 Sqn. You may be a deviant but we'll miss you – who else is guaranteed to lower the tone within two seconds of opening their mouth?). Hello and goodbye also to 'Dusty' **Millar,** returned from Bosnia and now off to Civvy street. Just practice this phrase... 'Would you like fries with that Sir? The only really worthwhile activity, not involving alcohol, that the flight has done recently is a piece of work for 'charidee mate'. One of the flight charities is St Francis School (a local school for children with disabilities or special needs). As part of their ongoing environmental development plan, the school decided to plant nearly 100 trees in their grounds. Step in A Flight. With a speed and horticultural ability that would have shamed even the great **Alan Titchmarsh**, we dug the required holes. The children themselves planted the trees and we were privileged enough to be asked to plant a redthorn tree on behalf of JSSU Digby.



'Members of Alpha Flight planting a tree at St Francis School
(L-R): Petty Officer Joe Carver, JT Danni Cunningham,
Cpl Buchannan and Lt Stu Whittley

Congratulations also go to **LCpl Steve Fox** and the Boss for joint first in the tight trousers competition. Must be all them chocolate chip cookies and 'jack' brews. You both looked very sexy (honest), but I think 'Foxy' just pipped the Boss due to his rather attractive ballet tights worn whilst on his Mountain Proficiency Course. Oh how we swooned. It hasn't been a good time for young 'Foxy' there is this dreadful rumour that he actually forgot his tent whilst on the course and other rumours have circulated that he behaved very badly whilst on Corps rugby duty. Any romantic gifts please address to **Cpl Sara Peapell**, A Flight. Not that I'm desperate or anything you understand.

4 SQUADRON

by WO2 (Supyr R) Mark Jordan

The purple fluffy lot in 1 Sqn have finally let us have our say about what we actually get up to. After all we have almost been here a year. Any way we arrived at Digby after the break up of Comms & Sy Gp (UK). Now falling under the label of 4 Sqn we are still carrying out our support of overseas deployment with technical and logistical supplies and expertise (well one out of two ain't bad). As a result we are drawn from a wide group of trades within the Corps. We also have our own supply of Int Corps and RAF personnel which ensures our contribution to the prevailing Services theme of 'Jointery'. Much of our time here in sunny Lincolnshire has been spent establishing ourselves and fitting into our office spaces, whilst still trying to support operations. The formation of the JSSU caused another small re-organisation, but we are now firmly settled and our good work continues. We have to support operations in various European locations. We also have outlying detachments within the UK, at VSSS and JSSU Oakley, so we are spread far and wide.

As far as the social aspects of life go, we have been 'having our usual knees-up when we can manage it'. We did have an excellent 'Murder Mystery' party. After all it was a good chance to stab the Boss in the back!

M FLIGHT

Flt Comd — **Lt Anna** 'eligible for marriage' **Janes**
2IC — **SSM Tim** 'silent but deadly' **Smith**

M FLIGHT NEWS

by LCpl Jim Patton

Well, here on M Flight we've got all the customary 'hellos and good-byes' so lets reel those off. We say goodbye to **Capt Sam Harrild** who leaves us for a six month stint in Bosnia, **Sgt Tim Stevens** departs for his Supervisor Radios course, **CPO Matt Helm** is off on a four week leadership course, **Cpls Steve Dunsmuir, Neil Crispin** and **Mark Ozanne** leave us for a stint in Northern Ireland as are **LCpl**'s **Tommy Scanlan**, and **Adam Routh**. **LCpl John O'Hara** is off on a lovely break to the Falklands Islands. Meanwhile **Cpl Debbie Alderton** and **LCpl Si Doherty** are at Chicksands on courses, and finally, not going so far is **JT** 'Stick' **Powell** who leaves us to start work at 2 Squadron, nice work if you can get it 'Stick'!

Moving onto the hellos and welcomes - to our new OC, **2Lt Anna Janes**, **Cpl Norman Wiseman** who joins M Flight as do **JT**'s **Des O'Donnell** and **Ingrid Brown**. To top all that off, we must congratulate **LCpl** 'IT' **Wright** and her husband **Ian** on the birth of **Morgan Kingsley** who arrived weighing a healthy 71b 7oz on 5 January.

Let's move onto the sporting front now. but lets start with something gentle the Junior Ranks Pool Competition has been running recently, unfortunately all M Flight hopes were ended at the quarter-final stage with **JT Baz Pilling** and **LCpl Jim Patton** crashing out of the competition, better luck next time lads! We'll move onto something more straining now, and at the recent boxing evening where an RAF select took on a Notts/Lincs select team, the only M Flight involvement was **Cpl Tina Whale** and **JT Fleure Angle** volunteering to be hostesses! The RAF Skiing Championships held at Les Menuires (excuse spelling!) on the 9-23 January involved our own intrepid **JT**'s **Dan Langford** and **Fleure Angle** competing, although they won't divulge to us how they did! Surely it couldn't have been that bad, all limbs are still intact and unbroken! Leading the way on a trip to the Peak District held on 20-22 January, **Sgt** 'Lofty' **Fairhurst** of the RAF decided to show all us Army people how to get lost in the wilderness for a couple of days and I have to say, he did rather well !!! Better leave the map reading to us in the future 'Lofty'!

Finally, before we say goodbye for this edition, we have to mention the Christmas function held in conjunction with B and D Flights, with our own **LCpl Tommy Scanlan** winning £50 worth of shopping vouchers, which his fiance **Sarah** will no doubt have spent for him by the time he goes to - Northern Ireland! A good night was had by all, from what we can remember!

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NEWS FROM THE TROOPS

642 SIGNAL TROOP

The Troop successfully transformed their organisation in two key areas in 1998. The military contingent now control and manage Customer Services, giving them responsibility over the Main Distribution Frame and dealing with customer complaints, whilst the local employed civilian workforce look after the cable infrastructure under the guidance of the PTO, **Mr Ernest Peralta.**

Customer Services has been in operation for the whole of 1998 and in that time the department has catered for all of Gibraltar's needs. This has made their year an intense one especially in the areas of Data Communications and Fibre Optics and serves as a precursor to what will be asked of them in 1999. The lads have been heavily involved with the Secret and Non-Secret LAN installations thanks to the intervention of **FofS** 'Bagsy' **Bain**, thanks for that 'Bagsy', we telemechs never needed food and sleep anyway, we only did it to be social. 1999 is already shaping up to be an even busier year with **Sgt** 'Yorkie' **Sowden** submitting a number of large SWS projects to enhance CIS Gibraltar's role.

The highlight of 1998 must be the visit of the Signals Officer in Chief (Army), **Brig John Griffin**. The SOinC kindly accepted our invitation and visited between 10 - 12 November 1998. His visit presented the opportunity to award the LS&GC to **WO2 FofS** 'Bagsy' **Bain**, GSM to **LCpl Gary Watson** and the Accumulated Campaign medal to **Cpl** 'Gilly' **Gilchriest**. His programme gave a balanced mix between CIS and local history with visits to Kings Chapel, Garrison Library and the WWII tunnel tour. A delightful excursion around Gibraltar on HMS *Ranger* was arranged through the Gibraltar Squadron. Our thanks to **Col John Sankey OBE** and **Lorraine** for accommodating and hosting the SOinC at Air House. The visit proved to be a valuable PR Exercise for 642 Sig Tp.

The Troop also had the privilege to host **Maj (Retd) Brian Campbell** from MCM Div Glasgow who visited between 24 - 27 November 1998. A rare opportunity for the boys to receive the current road-show news on the new trade structuring followed by the all too important soldiers interviews. His presence paid dividends with the immediate promotion to Acting Corporal for **LCpl Gary Watson**. Well done **Gary**, don't forget the slabs.

The image of Royal Signals in Gibraltar continues to grow although the OC, **Capt Paul Wilson,** took it a little bit too far by getting mentioned on local television, radio, newspapers and internet over his disputes with the local workforce. Feelings of tyrannical rule with imperialist boot are phrases that spring to mind! He who oppresses the poor is like a driving rain that leaves no crops. The OC survived the onslaught and will stay on an extra year to see through his reforms. The new telephone exchange continues to elude us and it is with great credit to **Sgts Dave Hunt** and **Mick Holloway** who will keep on nursing the old monster for another year. We wait in expectation for a reprieve from this punishment when it is hoped that the new exchange will arrive by October 1999. The Troop has also been extremely busy in restoring customer confidence in the ageing Satellite Television cable network. Responsibility for maintenance will transfer to SSVC later this year when that too benefits from an injection of funding for redesign.

ARRIVALS AND FAREWELLS

In 1998 we said goodbye to **Sgt Bob Maxted** who left on promotion, **Sig Jim** 'Terminator' **Stocks** and **Sgt Ian Travers**. In their place we welcome **Cpl** 'Gilly' **Gilchreist** with his wife **Emma** and newborn daughter **Niamh** and **Cpl Gary Watson.**



Back Row (L-R): WO2 (FofS) 'Bagsy' Bain, LCpl Gaz Watson and Cpl Gilly Gilchriest
Front Row (L-R): Mrs Nikki Bain, SOinC (Army) Brig J Griffin, Mrs Emma Gilchriest with Niamh

SPORT

THE ROYAL CORPS OF SIGNALS ALPINE SKIING CAMP AND CHAMPIONSHIPS 1998/99 SEASON

ZELL AM SEE, AUSTRIA
21 NOVEMBER - 19 DECEMBER 1998

The start of the new ski season saw 75 members of the Royal Signals and 15 members of BLAST (British Ladies Army Ski Team), arrive in Zell am See, Austria, to embark on this season's training. Teams had travelled from all over BF (G) and the UK. A special mention must go to 15 Sig Regt from Northern Ireland, who owing to breakdowns, took over 50 hours to complete the journey. The following weeks saw complete novices learning to ski as well as more experienced skiers striving towards better technique, which would allow them to throw themselves down ever steeper slopes at ever increasing speeds. The snow conditions were excellent with a surprising amount of early season snow falling throughout the period, thus ensuring that as well as developing everyone's technique, the better skiers were able to 'play' in some deep powder.

The Camp was organised by 16 Sig Regt, **SSgt Andy Brown's** exhaustive planning and hard work ensured that the Camp ran smoothly. Under his expert guidance the assembled masses were split into groups of ability to be trained by other ex-army skiers. The progress made throughout the initial three weeks was obvious when put to the test in the first week's racing.



Sgt Carpenter (7 Sig Regt) - GS Run

The final week, 'RACE WEEK', was to be an extremely close event. The programme included both a Team and Individual Slalom and Giant Slalom (GS). The final day was to be either a Super Giant Slalom or a fun Parallel Slalom event, however, poor weather conditions on the Monday resulted in no racing, so the programme was slipped by a day and only the Slalom and GS events were run. Several teams were tipped for the title of 'Team Combination winners'. Last years winners, 16 Sig Regt were not the expected Hot Favourites, 2 Sig Regt, 7 Sig Regt and 14 Sig Regt all had a good chance of winning. The individual competition was also extremely close, with a number of newcomers featuring in the proceedings alongside more established performers. Other titles that were to be decided included Women's Champion, Junior Champion, Veteran Champion, Novice Champion and most improved skier. In addition there were a number of funnies which included slowest time, best crash, longest serving gatekeeper and The Banana prize, this was awarded to the person who had made the most mistakes throughout the competition. It was won hands down by **Cpl Andy Dawson** from 14 Sig Regt. He was one of the hot favourites to win the individual prize, he was also his Regiment's, Number One skier. Mistakes ranged from missing the first gate, to missing the last and to breaking the start beam before he was ready to go, ie: starting the clock running.

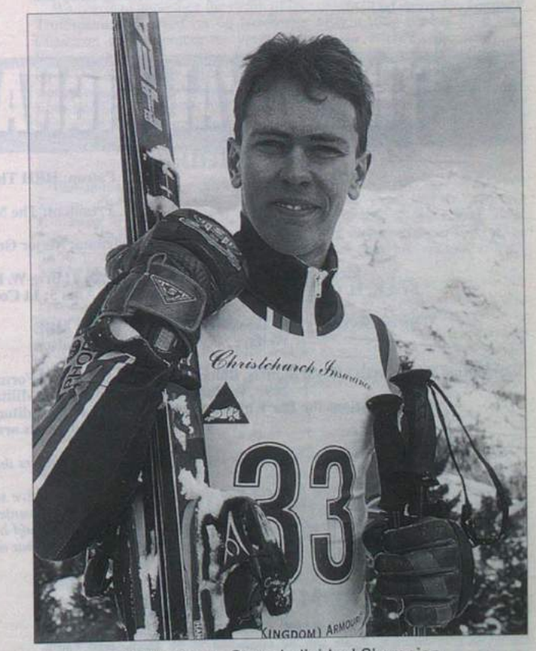
Although these mistakes cost the Regiment the Team GS gold, excellent performances by his fellow teams members, **Sig Taylor, LCpl Johnston** and **LCpl Sweeney**, in both, the team GS and Slalom, allowed 14 Sig Regt to came away with the Team Combination title.

The team GS title was handed to 16 Sig Regt due to mistakes from other teams, along with **Cpl Dawson's** antics, 7 Sig Regt made a mistake with team selection which cost them dearly. The 16 Sig Regt team consisted of **Capt Crawford, Cpl Turnball, LCpl Orange** and **Sig Cox. Sig Cox,** who only skied for the first time in March on BWT, was to go on to win the Novice prize with a number of excellent performances. The team Slalom event was won by 7 Sig Regt, fortunately for them they got their team selection correct and managed to hold off a strong challenge from 14 Sig Regt who were narrowly beaten into their second runners up position, this was good enough for them to claim the team prize as 16 Sig Regt could only manage third place.



14 Signal Regiment - Corps Combined Champions
Sig Taylor, LCpl Sweeney, LCpl Johnston, SSgt Clark, 2Lt Stewart, Cpl Dawson

The Individual Events were dominated by some excellent skiing from **Sig Taylor**, of 14 Sig Regt, who surprised everybody with two excellent races, coming third in the Slalom and fifth in the GS. This performance was good enough to earn him a very respectable third position overall in what was his first season's racing. The Individual Slalom race, which was the decider, proved to be especially nail biting for all those concerned. The first run saw **Sgt** 'Cappo' **Carpenter** from 7 Sig Regt fall, he completed the course eventually, in a time which cost him the overall Individual combination winner, after an excellent second place in the GS he was understandably annoyed. This, along with top seed disqualification's of **Capt** 'Cindy' **Crawford** and **Lt Kate Simmonds**, the latter of whom lost the Royal Signals Female Championship on the first run, saw the prize board open up to all comers. An outstanding performance by **LCpl Tony Orange** saw him lift the Slalom Title, this win and his steady performance in the earlier GS ensured that he would claim the second place in the individual combination competition.



Sig Hartigan - Corps Individual Champion

Sig Hartigan, 7 Sig Regt, was to become the eventual overall Individual Combination winner, his first place in the Individual GS and his second place in the Slalom were more than enough to ensure that he was to become the 1998/99 Royal Signals Individual Combined Alpine Skiing Champion; a thoroughly deserved award for sustaining an excellent performance throughout the week.



LCpl Jo Neil (264 Sig Sqn) - Female Champion

As for the other prizes that were on offer, **SSgt Rob** 'OAP' **Allen** of 15 Sig Regt, proved that the 'Old Un's' could keep up with the younger members of the field, when he became the Veterans Champion. **Sig Taylor**, of 14 Sig Regt, became the Junior Champion as well as claiming third place overall. **LCpl Jo Neal**, of 264 Sig Sqn, was the women's combined champion with **Capt** 'Ouch my nose' **Dallyn** from HQNI, runner up. **Sig Raw**, from 1 (UK) Armd Div Sig Regt, was the most improved performer gaining 29 places on his initial seeding. The Minor Units title was lifted by 7 Bde Sig Sqn. The toughest decision to be made was, who had the most spectacular crash? After much deliberation it was decided that **Cpl** 'Super Richie' **Turnball,** from 16 Sig Regt, was the winner, for his 'flight' in the Individual GS. **Cpl McChesney** and **Sgt Watkins** claimed the Longest Time and Longest Serving Gate-Keeper awards, both are from 15 Sig Regt.

The entire month proved to be both extremely enjoyable and rewarding. Congratulations must go to each and every competitor for the spirit in which they all conducted themselves. Excellent displays of sportsmanship and camaraderie where abundant throughout the event. This coupled with the fact that it was the largest ever Championships the Royal Signals has seen can only bode well for the future of Alpine Skiing in the Corps. This year Alpine skiing within the Corps has been sponsored by Nortel Communications Ltd, the sponsorship deal over two years is being put to good use. It will help improve the equipment and facilities used by all the competitors at the Championships. Finally, a big thanks from all of the competitors to all of the training staff, led by **SSgt Andy Brown**. We all look forward to next year, when hopefully an equally rewarding Camp and Championship can be held.

RUGBY

ROYAL SIGNALS v RMAS 13 JANUARY 1999

The match was played at Sandhurst under very wet and windy conditions. The Corps side dominated the set scrum and struggled at the lineout. However, the Forwards still managed to produce good ball. The conditions did little to promote good running rugby and the game developed into a battle of rucks and mauls. The Corps led at halftime by twelve points but the determination of RMAS cut this lead down to seven and in the last minute of injury-time RMAS went over for a try in the corner and converted with the last kick of the game. The final score was 29 all.

ROYAL SIGNALS v RLC 27 JANUARY 1999

The match was played at Blandford under near ideal conditions. The Corps started off badly eight points down and only five minutes played. The Corps pack then began to dominate the set piece play but continually gave away penalties, 27 throughout the match.

The Corps led at half time and quickly settled into the second half with the pack again dominating play. However, three pushover tries were disallowed and a collapsed maul won a penalty that was converted. **LCpl Dorking** played his last game and scored the final try to give the Corps a deserved win at 23 – 12. The Royal Signals remain at the top of the Merit One Table as the only unbeaten team.

CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS

LCpl N. Dean from 251 Signal Squadron, won First Place in the Women's Army Cross Country Championships held at Longmoore Training Area on 3 February 1999.

HOCKEY

The Royal Signals Men's and Royal Signals Women's Hockey Teams played their respective Teams from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst on 3 February 1999. The results were as follows:

Corps Women	v	RMAS (a mixed side)	2 –1	Win
Corps Men	v	RMAS	2 – 0	Win

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The Association communicates with its branches and individual members through the pages of The Wire, *which contains accounts of Branch affairs as well as a forecast of Association events.*

Branch Secretaries are asked to check that their Branch members receive sufficient copies of The Wire. *Association HQ can arrange for copies to be delivered in bulk to Branch Secretaries for further distribution if this is convenient: it helps us save on postage.*

Dates of Branch events can always be published in The Wire *and should be submitted to the Editor. We also welcome letters, requests to contact old comrades and announcements of births, marriages and deaths. We hope that each Branch will contribute a short account of its activities, preferably with photographs, at least once a year.*

NOTES FROM THE AO'S DESK

Branch News - John Pell has been elected as the new Hon Secretary of the Doncaster Branch. **John** can be contacted at 36 Homestead Garth, Hatfield, Doncaster DN7 6RN. Tel: 01302-843020. **Gerry Hunt**, after putting in so much effort to get the Branch up and running, is now Chairman. **Tom Evans**, Hon Secretary of the Torbay Branch, has a new tel number; 01626-204354. Due to her work and TA committments, **Jayne Burn** has decided to stand down as Hon Secretary of the Bristol Branch. **Ray Rigg** has been elected as the new secretary - his address is; 65 Kings Drive, Bishopston, Bristol BS7 8JQ, Tel: 0117-9241925. Work commitments have also caused **Peter Bruce** to reluctantly stand down as Secretary of the Loughborough Branch. **Mrs Lesley Banyard** has agreed to step into office, and her address is; 'Rose Villa', 42 Glebe Str, Loughborough LE11 1JR, Tel: 01509-557686. Lack of mobility has forced **Cyril Foster** to stand down after nine years as Hon Secretary of the Coventry Branch. **Mick Lowndes** has been elected to office and can be contacted at; 39 Aldrick Ave, Tile Hill, N Coventry CV4 9LS. A warm welcome is extended to those new to office and may I send my personal thanks to **Gerry, Jayne, Peter** and **Cyril** for their hard work and co-operation, which made my job that much easier. **Ian Lorimer**, Hon Secretary of the Preston & Blackburn Branch, has a new telephone number; 01254-663496. Could you spare a little of your time to serve on your Branch's Committee? I am sure that any offer of help would be much appreciated by the Branch.

Founder's Day at The Royal Hospital Chelsea - Founder's Day this year will be held on Thursday 10 June, when **HRH The Prince of Wales** will be the Reviewing Officer. I should soon have a limited supply of tickets, which are for those who served in the Army, rather than families and friends. We have been advised that the Public are now admitted to the Governor's Review, a full dress rehearsal for Founder's Day. This takes place on Tuesday 8 June. Tickets are not necessary. Admission is by the Chelsea Gate, but there are no parking or refreshment facilities. Spectators should be seated by 0930. For security reasons, the Hospital would welcome knowing if anyone intends to go so that, should the security situation deteriorate and they have to cancel the event, they can inform people.

1999 Reunion - As if any reminder is necessary, the Annual RSA 'Old Comrades' Reunion will be held at Blandford over the weekend 26/27 June. Individuals who have not yet received their copy of the Instruction should contact Association HQ. Branch members should contact their Hon Secretary for details. Don't forget that the Princess Royal Day Parade, by the serving soldiers of the camp, will start at 1030 hours on the Saturday. All members of The Association, their families and guests are welcome to attend.

Catterick Camp 1950 - Jim McNish has very kindly sent me his first edition copy of 'Catterick Camp and Barnard Castle Business Directory and Yearbook' from 1950. This absolutely fascinating book is being donated to the Museum - it lists all the units in Catterick at the time, plus the names of all the officers. Many thanks **Jim,** your book will be lovingly treasured by the Museum. As a result of this, **Ken Bunstan** was delighted to receive a few more names of those who served in No1 Independent Selection Trg Sqn and has already made contact with one of them.

New Life Members - A warm welcome is extended to the following recently enrolled Life Members of The Association. To those who recently left the Corps at the end of their time, we wish them good luck in their second career and hope that they will remain in contact with us.

Rank	*Name*	*Branch*	*Served*
Sig	Matthew Phimister	RHQ	1977-84
LCpl	James McNish	RHQ	1950-52
WO1	John (Paddy) Crooks	RHQ	1963-88
Cpl	Eric Yeates	RHQ	1939-46
Cpl	John Nolan	RHQ	1959-65
Cpl	David Housley	RHQ	1975-98
Cpl	Dave Roberts	RHQ	1967-76
Capt	Lisa Giles	RHQ	1988-98
Capt	Adam Hillary	RHQ	1992-98
Col	Mike Yolland	RHQ	1963-98
Maj	Colin McGrory	RHQ	1980-98
Capt	Owen Bryant	RHQ	1988-98
Cpl	Jim McCready	Swindon	1979-94
LCpl	Colin Burford	Birmingham	1955-58
Lt	Tim Jeffrey	RHQ	1994-98
Cpl	Justin Hender	Colchester	1988-98
Lt	John Lawrence	Colchester	1946-48
LCpl	Andrew Armstrong	RHQ	1991-98
SSgt	Paul Chesters BEM	RHQ	1982-99
Sig	John Field	RHQ	1951-60
Sig	Gareth Hopkins	East Kent	1998
Cpl	John Warke	12/15/18 AFSR	1948-54
WCpl	Vera Cockell	RHQ	1943-46
Dvr	John Stockdale	Beverley Ex-Boys	1952-58
SSgt	Phillip Matthews	Dorset	1976-98
Sgt	Kevin Parkinson	RHQ	1985-98
Sig	Christian Ardron	RHQ	1992-99
Sig	Bleddyn Butt	RHQ	1990-99
tbc	Geoff Farrow	Doncaster	1955-58
tbc	Graham Kenyon	Doncaster	1959-61
tbc	Norman Pickering	Doncaster	1942-44
tbc	Albert Kendell	Doncaster	1948-49
Cpl	Leon Miller	RHQ	1992-99
Sgt	David Robertson	RHQ	1960-79
SSgt	Alex McAlpine	RHQ	1974-98
Cpl	Dave Thomas	RHQ	1988-99
Cpl	Sean Dolan	RHQ	1993-99
Sig	Nicholas Clowes	RHQ	1993-98
Cpl	Joel Naden	RHQ	1988-98
WO2	Stephen Grantham	RHQ	1975-98
WO2	Dave Marriott	RHQ	1975-98
Sgt	Christopher White	RHQ	1981-98
Sig	Scott Shepherd	RHQ	1992-98
Maj	Michael Kerr	Catterick	1966-date
Cpl	Mark Parker	Catterick	1978-93
Sig	Dennis Woollard	RHQ	1946-48
Sgt	Frank Corser	RHQ (Canada)	1944-47
Lt Col	Chris Harper	RHQ	1970-99
Sig	Lee Wood	RHQ	1993-98
WO2	Roger Robinson	RHQ	1975-98
WLCpl	Sara Harkin	RHQ	1991-98
Cpl	Alexander Rankin BEM	RHQ	1971-93
LCpl	Stuart Jessup	RHQ	1979-92
Lt Col	Geoffrey Davis	RHQ	1939-67
Sig	K. Makin	Huddersfield	1947-49
SSgt	Mark Barrass	N Ireland	1980-date
Sig	Raymond McCarthy	Liverpool	1951-56
Sig	B. A. G. Murphy	North London	1969-73
LCpl	Darron Mark	RHQ	1988-98
LCpl	David Llewellyn	Cornwall	1980-86
LCpl	Chas George	RHQ	1985-99
Cpl	Joe Crotty	West London	1946-49
WO2	Colin Riddell	RHQ	1975-99
Cpl	Lance Malin	RHQ	1985-98
LCpl	Daniel Boyle	RHQ	1992-98
Sig	Donald Furnell	RHQ	1944-47
Cpl	Julie Silver	RHQ	1972-79
Cpl	Peter Aldcroft-Colling	Preston/Blackburn	1989-99
WCpl	Ellen Baker (Nee Rutter)	RHQ	1952-55
Cpl	T. Dale	Middx Yeomanry	1976-85
WO1	Mike Williams	RHQ	1975-98
Cpl	Dennis Crowe	RHQ	1945-48

ALDERSHOT BRANCH

In February we enjoyed our first social gathering of the year when a Curry Lunch was arranged for us in his Mess by **Joe Fairbairn**, who not only is a highly valued member of our committee, but no less a person than Garrison Sergeant Major. We were glad to see many of our members who live on the periphery of our area. Our thanks go to **Joe** and the members of his Mess for such a pleasant day. We look forward to our 50th Anniversary Dinner in April, a very special occasion for the Branch.

BRADFORD BRANCH

We are a very small Branch but we have loyal members who attend every meeting. Since we started holding our meetings at 1pm we find it is much better and we now meet at the Polish Ex-Servicemen's Club, where we are always welcome. In November members and their wives had their Christmas outing to Mother Hubbard's Fish Restaurant. Everyone enjoyed themselves. Our next get together was on 25 January when we celebrated the Golden Wedding of **Alma** and **Jim Robson** of Skipton. The ladies provided the buffet. After joining the army in Maidstone, Jim trained as a wireless operator at Catterick. He served with the Orkney and Shetland Defences for a short while and was then posted to India. Here he joined the 17 (Black Cat) Indian Division in Burma 1945. He returned to England in 1947, met **Alma** in the June of that year and they married 15 January 1949. We wish them well for the future years.

A number of us went to the annual Remembrance Service at Eden Camp, near Malton, North Yorkshire on Sunday 13 September. We shared a bus with the ATS Ladies and the Dunkirk Veterans Association. In spite of a chilly wind it was a very enjoyable day. I always find it amazing the number of veterans that are on parade. There were also about one hundred Standards. The numbers just seem to increase each year.

We regret to announce the death of one of our past Chairmen, **Clifford Thompson**, who died on 18 November after a long illness. Cliff was Chairman for a number of years and always attended the Catterick Reunions. He was a wireless operator in an armoured vehicle and landed on D-Day with 3 Div. Members of the Branch attended the funeral. We were pleased that a member of 3 Div Sigs Reunion Club and his wife came from Leeds to attend the funeral, as Cliff was a member of the Club. We have to thank **Mr Templeton**, the secretary, for arranging this.

BRIGHTON BRANCH

Our January meeting can often be a problem. Last year icy winds from Siberia cut attendance to six. This year we were luckier. **Gordon Holloway** asked everyone to bring Service photos, of times long gone. These photos caused much merriment. But some matters had to be mentioned in whispers. Some folks, now bald, once had masses of hair! Say no more!

Come February we had our AGM. We were delighted to have our President, **Brig Colin Brown**, with us to preside over our proceedings. No increase in subs meant a peaceful meeting! **Dee Barber** was re-elected as Madam Chairman, **Joy Lovelock**, of course, as our Treasurer and **Philip West** as Secretary. **Gordon Holloway** as Events Organiser, with the two Committee members being **Audrey Chircher** and **Joe Morrison** remaining on the Committee with the addition of two new members **Ken Brown** (Burma Star) and **Steve White.**

We had our bi-monthly coffee meeting recently and eighteen members came. Everyone had a great 'natter'. It was held at a very pleasant hotel just outside of town with ample parking. Your humble scribe was delighted to have been able to attend.

CHESTER BRANCH

The Branch celebrated their 53rd Annual Dinner and Social evening at the Royal British Legion, Upton.

The principal guest was the Commander 11 Sig Bde, **Brig J. R. B. Cook**, who, in his address, referred to 'The New Style British Army' organised to instantly react to any military crisis, anywhere in the world as self sustaining units of wide capability. Whilst the Armed Forces were generally being cut, the Royal Signals were being reinforced, in recognition of the vital role that flawless communication makes in the success of any military operation. It is not generally known, but wherever there is unrest, be it the Gulf, the Falklands, or anywhere, there is an attachment of Signals personnel on the scene relaying up to date information. The Brigadier went on to refer to the extremely high level of training that recruits achieve, such as that International Electronics Companies jockey to place ex-Signals people on their payroll. He observed that youngsters, looking to their future, could do no better than to apply to join the Royal Signals when the new recruiting campaign begins.



Alyn Jones and Keith McTigue

One of the highlights of the evening was the presentation of the greatly prized Fifty Years of Service to the Royal Signals award to **Ken Hadfield**, and also Honorary Lifetime Memberships to Associate Members, **Alyn Jones** and **Keith McTigue** for the decades of devoted service to the Chester Branch. **Maj Jonathon Baldwin TD**, Branch President, commented on the strength and enthusiasm of Members in the historic garrison city of Chester. The Toastmaster and Master of Ceremonies for dancing was **Jim Indermaur**.



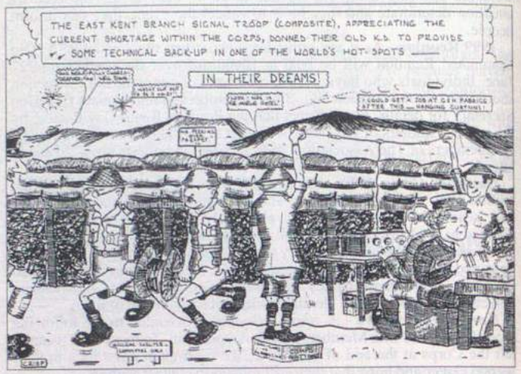
Brig Cook and Ken Hadfield

EAST KENT BRANCH

Sunday 13 December - the Chairman, **Trevor Allison**, wished everyone present at a most enjoyable Xmas Lunch a very Happy Christmas and New Year to follow. There was plenty of good food and excellent company and the Raffle Table was in danger of collapse such was the weight of the generous presents given by so many members who came, then also bought tickets. The result was a profit of over £89. Also the three paintings of Officers of the Corps in their varied formal uniforms, kindly donated by **Col John Gibson**, were auctioned and fetched £40. **John** who is a great supporter of SSAFA will be pleased to know that that is where the money will go. Whilst on the Raffle, **Eadie Thomas** has sadly decided that the time has come for her to pass on the mantel of running it and **Marion de Rose** has very kindly offered to take it on ably assisted by **Bernadette Cooper** whenever she can.

Donations - the Committee has sent cheques for £150 to the Royal Signals Benevolent Fund, £100 to SSAFA (Kent Branch) and £50 to Kent Air Ambulance Trust a total of £300 being most of the money raised through the gencrosity of members during the course of the year, from Donations & Raffles.

AGM - at the AGM on 10 January the Chairman, **Trevor Allison**, on behalf of your Committee wished all members present a successful New Year. At this time of year with the vagaries of the weather (it snowed heavily in Canterbury and to the East that morning-but hardly elsewhere) and the dreaded flu it is always difficult to reconcile numbers who wish to come but are prevented. Despite the lower numbers (56!) it was deemed by many to have been one of the best. Sadly **Brig Johnny Clinch** the guest speaker was one of the flu victims, but **Doug Dickason** rose magnificently to the occasion and gave a most entertaining talk on his time at Harrogate and his progress in forming the Association of Harrogate Apprentices of which he is founder and Hon Sec. At one table of seven, there was an amazing coincidence-three members were born on the 10 November and three others were born on 5,6,7 May! Members warmly applauded the outgoing members of the Committee, namely our Chairman for the past two years, **Trevor Allison, Keith Chambers** who has been our Standard Bearer and of course the redoubtable **Eadie Thomas**.



News of Members - Change of address for **Capt Vic & Josephine Kelly** they have moved to Verwood and so are sadly out of range and therefore had to resign from our Branch. We wish them every happiness in their new house. We are also sad that **Jack & Claudia Caplan** have decided to resign, but we hope that his continuing campaign for compensation for Japanese POW will be successful. We welcome **Gareth Hopkins**, son of **John Hopkins** and now living with his parents.

Vale - It is with great sadness that we report the death of **Mrs Doreen Mitchell. Doreen** died suddenly on 17 December. Our condolences go to **Bob** and his daughter. **Doreen** was an accountant by profession but at the beginning of the War she had joined the SOE recruiting for the Secret Service. It was not commonly known that she devoted much of her life to helping the sick and particularly those Servicemen such as ex-Japanese POWs who were sick and in later years anyone who suffered disadvantages. Members of the Branch will miss her cheerfulness at so many functions.

GLASGOW BRANCH

In November 1998 there was an excellent turnout of 32 members to the Armistice Sunday Parade in George Square Glasgow. **Alf Shevill** laid the wreath on behalf of the Branch members, and **Bill MacNamara** paraded the standard. On returning to barracks the members were given the privilege of leading the Regiment into barracks. Lunch, which was served by **WO2 John Wren** and his chefs, comprised of a choice of curries and a cold buffet. On the Saturday **Bill Taylor,** the Branch Chairman, had placed a cross in the garden of remembrance in George Square. East Dunbartonshire council for the first time had councillors attending war memorials in their districts on the eleventh of November. The provost attended and laid a wreath at Bishopbriggs. Several veterans of different regiments, including this scribe who placed a cross, were among the crowd. The police stopped the traffic for the two minutes silence, as in days gone bye. The council will carry on the custom, and it is to be hoped others will follow in future.

Branch members with family and friends attended a social evening in the JRs' mess on 15 December. It was an enjoyable night, with a raffle for various donated prizes. Our thanks go to the ladies of the Branch who provided the buffet and our thanks also, to the JR members allowing us the use of their mess, and for opening and manning the bar.

The first Burns Supper was held by the Branch on 23 January 1999. Members and guests, numbering 42 in all, were welcomed by the Branch Chairman, **Bill Taylor**, who also said the Selkirk Grace. The Branch Piper, **Brian Warren**, piped in the haggis. The address to the haggis, was given with great gusto and gestures by **Capt John Lynch**, who waved a very large officer's dirk, that he had 'acquired' - (it was more like a miniature sword) and sitting next to him, I ducked before I was beheaded. The company then set about the scotch broth soup, the haggis, neeps and mashed potato, followed by bannocks and kebbuck, and coffee, with whisky, wine, and soft drinks available on the table.

If responding to any advertisements in The Wire please mention that you saw it in your Corps magazine



(L-R): Jim Flockhart & guest, Mrs Betty Taylor, Bill Taylor

The immortal memory was in the capable hands of **Jim Flockhart** who then asked the company to raise their glasses in a toast to the immortal memory of **Robbie Burns**. **Bill MacNamara** following with a word or two. **Jim Prentice** rendered his version of the toast to the lassies. This seemed to satisfy the Scots as **Jim** is English, but a domiciled Scot for over 50 years. The reply was then in the hands of the Branch Secretary, **Ivana**, who did, with a humourous touch have the company laughing, with the ladies present, giving her lots of encouragement. See these lassies when they are let loose! **Brian** entertained with tunes on the pipes and **Ann Warren** sang some songs with professional skill. **Bill MacNamara** then performed, with the recitation of Tam O'Shanter, all in a broad Scottish accent, with gestures to match. He got a great ovation for his effort. **Bill Taylor** thanked all those who were present, those who performed and also **Betty, Isobel, Ivana** and **Annice** for providing the victuals, he also thanked the lassies of the Regiment, who all wore their uniform kilts, and had volunteered to act as waitresses for the meal. He said being an Englishman he had approached the idea of a Burns Supper with a great deal of trepidation, but after the nights' successful venture, he was sure that it will be repeated in the future. The company then sang auld lang syne before retiring to the WOs' and Sergeants' Mess to continue the convivial evening. To one and all in this New Year 'lang ma ye lum reek.'

We are sorry to say farewell to **WO1 (RSM) Jim MacLachlan**, as he leaves the army for civilian life. He was of great help to the Branch whilst with the Regiment, but we welcome him into the Branch as a new member and wish him every success for the future. He was invited to the Burns Supper but was being dined out on that night by the Regiment's Sergeants' Mess. The Regiment now has a new RSM, **WOI (RSM) A. B. Hilborn.** We welcome **Angie**, and wish her every success in her posting. Most of the members met her at the last meeting held in the WOs' and Sgts' Mess when she was introduced by the Branch Chairman, **Bill Taylor**, to the members.

HULL BRANCH

As another year rolled by 1998 started with the AGM in February being our first meeting of the year and the members enjoyed a lively meeting. Only silence fell at the election of Officers and refreshment time. As in the past three good and true members of the committee were once again voted in for another term of office. Thanks go to **Roy Drewery** (Chairman), **Jim Brown** (Hon-Secretary) and **Ernie Glover** (Treasurer) for serving another year.

April saw a party attend the 'Royal Armouries' at Leeds and a very interesting and enjoyable day was had by all. Any Branches thinking of a day out would find the trip worthwhile.

June arrived and we left these shores for a visit to the battlefields of Normandy. Even our Old Soldier, **Bob** '50 Year Badge' **Stephens**on ran out of stories to tell when we met an old soldier from the 'Durham Light 'Infantry' who had landed on 'D' Day.

In July we attended the Open Day at 30 Signal Regiment Bramcote. Thanks to Cyril Foster, Hon Secretary of the Coventry Branch for the information and sorry not to have met up. It was also a very enjoyable day out. Thanks also go to **Margaret** and **Colin Dadson** of the Middlesborough Branch for their invitation to attend and meet members from other Branches.

November saw a good turn out of members for the Hull Remembrance Day Parade. The Hon Secretary laid a wreath on behalf of the branch at the Cenotaph and lunch afterwards with our TA Colleagues at the Halifax Barracks. The Branch held their Annual Regimental Dinner in November and thirty members and guests had a very enjoyable evening. Thanks go to **Maj David Sixsmith,** OC 49 (WR) Signal Squadron (V) for attending as our guest of honour, also to **Gerry Gribben** and **Bob Stephenson** for the organisation and **WO2 Alan James** for his usual hard work and support of the Branch. Our thanks also go to **Andy Anderson** and Troop Members for manning the bar and waiting on. Finally to an ex member of' the Troop **Debbie Openshaw** who with less than 24 hours notice stepped in to cook the meal after **Sgt Stuart Keys** was rushed into hospital.

As another year draws to a close, thanks go to all members who have supported our ventures during 1998. We are now planning our journeys for 1999. If you live in or around the Hull Area and are retired or serving members of the Corps, we welcome you to come and join us at our meetings which are held on the first Thursday of each month at the Halifax Barracks, Hull at 2000hrs. For more information contact the Hon. Secretary **Mr Jim Brown** (01482 655963).

LEEDS & DISTRICT BRANCH

Due to the sterling work of the Branch Committee, and the loyal support of our membership, we continue to hold quite frequent social functions, mainly on Sunday lunch times, which help to keep Branch funds at a very satisfactory level. It is our intention to mark the forthcoming Millennium in a manner suitable to the event. It is probably not widely known, that running in parallel to our Branch, is a Branch of the Retired Sergeants' Association, which is also very active. Some people enjoy dual membership, with the quite obvious blessing of their respective spouse, it must be the art of perfect communication. It is worth noting that both organisations have subscribed to the proposed memorial to the Commonwealth Womens' Services, no doubt we will be sending a strong contingent to its unveiling ceremony in due course.

Last October we held the Annual Dinner, which was another rewarding occasion for our dedicated committee. The principal guest, as a small reward for his help to us, **Lt Col Guy Hony MBE** RGBW, CO of the LUOTC, the landlord unit.

After the success of the previous two mid-year church services in the barracks, the Branch President is negotiating, with **Padre John Blackburn** QHC for another visit. They are truly noteworthy events.

The recent Remembrance Day parade was somewhat down numerically, although some of us also attended the service at the Leeds War memorial on the fifth, and it was pleasing to note that almost all the public honour the 'Silence'.

Our recent AGM, held on a Sunday lunch time, was very well attended. During his annual address, the Branch President harangued the meeting about the very real need for new members; not an easy task; as a follow up to a letter in the same vein to all our active, and not so active members. We await the results with optimism. Our copy of the Corps 1939-45 Roll of Honour is now safely stored in the barracks armoury, having been removed from the former AAC at Harrogate. We are considering possible future locations, Leeds Parish Church springs to mind, but this is still in the initial stages of negotiation. Our penultimate Branch Dinner, prior to the year 2000 programme, is on Saturday 23 October, if you are in the Leeds area at the time you will be very welcome as (paying) guests! The Branch Secretary, **Trevor Smith**, has his address in a recent issue of '*The Wire*'.

Finally, we are supporting, when the circumstances allow, some Inter-Branch visits in the North, but at present, due to being in a building up funds period, we are proceeding at a cautious pace.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH

On the 11 December last year the Branch had their annual festive season buffet evening. It was held at the Warrant Officers and Sergeants Mess, Deysbrook Barracks, Liverpool with the kind permission of the Mess President, **WO1 Keith Hallett**, and ably supported by the Mess Manager, **Mrs Maureen Bennett** and the catering staff.

Some fifty-eight members and their partners attended together with our invited guest, **Maj Chris Heaton**, Squadron Commander, 59 Signal Squadron (V). It was unfortunate that **Chris's** wife, **Janet** could not attend, the reason being that she is expecting an addition to their family very shortly. The evening was a complete success, enjoyed by all.



Branch Chairman presents Chris with a bouquet of flowers for Janet, with our Branch's best wishes to her

NORTHERN IRELAND BRANCH

It is with regret that I start this report by recording the death of our oldest Member - **R. N.** 'Bob' **Mehrtens**.

At our January meeting we had not one but two retirement presentations to make. It is not often that the CO and RSM of 40 (U) Signal Regiment (V) leave the Regiment at the same time, so it was an unusual occasion. Branch President, **Maj (Retd) Bill Douglas**, after thanking him for his valued help during his term as CO, presented **Lt Col N.C. Beacon TD** with a Tyrone crystal paper weight. The Branch President then presented **WO1 (RSM) John Black** with a Tyrone crystal pen and desk set and thanked him not only for his help and support over his term of office but also for his joining as a Branch Member and his regular attendance at meetings. Both suitably replied, **John Black** saying that as he intended to make Northern Ireland his home in retirement he hoped to continue to play an active part in Branch affairs. Branch Vice President, **Maj (Retd) Noel Johnston** then used his new digital camera for the first time. He said he had not yet had time to read all the instructions but if there is a photo printed with this report then you will know it has worked and he will not really need a course. The evening was completed with a very nice buffet supper arranged by **Debbie Wolfe** assisted by **Kim Greer.**



We are delighted that **Norman** (Sometimes known as Tommy) **Atkins** one of our long serving Members and a long time Member of The Royal Signals Amateur Radio Society is the recipient of two awards from the Society. First he received a plaque for his success in making 50 confirmed contacts on RTTY. Secondly he has been awarded a trophy (well he will get it after the Society AGM) for the Member who made the most progress in RTTY over the year. Well done **Norman**. As a Member of 3rd. AA. Brigade Signals, Supplementary Reserve, Norman was called up in May 1939. His wartime service included Dunkirk and the Normandy landings before being demobbed in May 1946. Rather unusually he then joined the Royal Naval Auxiliary Service, becoming Chief Communications Supervisor from 1964 - 89 for which he was awarded the BEM. By the way, Norman tells me there are 16 members of The RS Amateur Radio Society in Northern Ireland but only **Norman** is a Member of this Branch. Perhaps we should now try to enlist the others.

We have a vibrant Branch and are lucky to have good Branch Officers. I am sure 1999 will continue in this vein. It is time once again to start planning for the Blandford Reunion particularly with regards to that little stretch of water, which causes us so many problems. It is hoped the AGM will produce someone willing to take on the organisation of this once again. Our next function will be our annual Formal Dinner on 2 April, the details of which **Ian Wolfe** is in the process of putting in place. Finally, as usual, all readers of this Journal whether residing in or visiting the Province are invited to join us any third Wednesday of each Month.

PETERBOROUGH BRANCH



Members of the Peterborough and Norfolk Branches meet in Whitehall

A delightful group of members of the Royal Signals Association spent a most enjoyable day in the Capital City. Members of the Peterborough Branch and members of the Norfolk Branch meet up in Whitehall. They were all in London for the day to attend the rehearsal of Trooping the Colour. I apologise to the Norfolk Branch. They did give me their names on a piece of paper but somehow this got lost. The weather was most kind to us bright and sunny.

READING BRANCH

Yet again we filled a pub for our increasingly popular Branch meeting/pub lunch. Some of us thought that we were more than a little 'hard of hearing' when Chairman started talking of 'Sick parade' and 'small kit'. It turned out that he was reflecting that we would have had an even larger turnout if it weren't for those who had 'reported sick'. Some of us thought that we were getting a 'Rocket' for not supporting enough of the RSA/Military events that our Hon Sec advertises in our Newsletter. He went on to explain in detail about the Corps Carol Service that only two of our Branch members attended. Now we know - we'll try and attend. Yes in January our members were deciding on a car-share scheme for December 1999.

I promised some photos of the 'Watercress Line' Christmas dinner. I haven't got them in my hand at this moment so I'll steal little more space to comment on the overheard conversation of some of the 26 who travelled up and down twice from Alton to Arlesford in Hampshire while enjoying a Christmas meal. 'Old steam train chugged along .... A bit of class.... And all for twenty pound .....'. We learned that the Summer trip will be on 1 August, at 21 pounds (blinking inflation) for a 3-course lunch and of course the 'chugging up and down the line'. 110 passengers can be seated, and I'm told it is always fully booked. Just for the record, the train runs throughout the summer.

For more details about Reading Branch (and the Watercress Line) contact **Alan Foot** on 0118 926 1952 - Tel or Fax, and if you're into the 21st Century, by email at alanfoot@globalnet.co.uk

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH

Greetings for the New Year from the fledgling South London Branch. We are almost up to the anniversary of our inaugural meeting and AGM for this year. Time flies when you're enjoying yourself! The Branch is slowly growing and now has 30 plus members.

Our Chairman, **Dougie Anderson,** is a member of the Croydon Bowling Club and they allow us to meet on their premises for a very reasonable cost. We do our best to boost their Bar revenue in return. We meet monthly every second Thursday at 7.30pm. Our activities through the year have been; two evening Dinners, also at the Bowling Club and catered for by them. Both were well attended and thoroughly enjoyed. We are very lucky in this regard in finding a venue for our meetings and social functions. We held a Quiz Night that was also great fun and showed once again that the older you get the more daft answers you know to daft questions on unbelievably obscure subjects.

Roughly half the Branch went to the Imperial War Museum and the staff treated us royaly and provided an excellent guide from their people. We asked for Communications to be our special interest and indeed the tour was fascinating. We almost missed lunch. Our Guide, in slacks and a Museum T-shirt looked like an ordinary Lab Technician. He was in fact a degree man with a PhD, and his commentary was first class. He was happy to pick the brains of some of the older guys on topics they could help with and that the Museum staff was still researching. In many cases their only source of data is from our individual memories. We are going to the Tower of London, for the 'Ceremony of the Keys', in mid February 1999, when the Yeoman Warders Club will be our hosts. This should also be very interesting and we are to be supplied with light refreshments.

The Branch has been asked from time to time to provide 'family' to attend the funerals of old soldiers from the Royal Hospital Chelsea. I attended one of these with some apprehension but found the experience very moving. The old soldier had a very dignified and sincere send off from very caring people.

Our proposed trips for the coming year are a visit to HMS *Belfast* in the Pool of London, and a party is to go to the last ever Royal Tournament. Bletchley Park is under threat and so we hope to go there before it closes. One of our guys, **Derek Wilson** is a keen Radio Ham and ex-'Y' station bod and he is negotiating this visit for us. We would hope Bletchley, or some of it, survives for posterity.

SWINDON BRANCH

The Third Annual Dinner was held at the TA Centre in Swindon and was a great success. The President, **Lt Col (Retd) D. W. Gent** and his wife led the Thirty members and guests into Dinner. A candlelit room and an excellent meal produced a marvellous atmosphere. There was plenty of chatter in between the serious business of eating and drinking. After the meal a Quiz organised and conducted by **John Smart** caused much head scratching and discussion. **Margaret Howells** and **Carol Davies** ran the raffles very successfully and showed a profit for Branch Funds. The President thanked everyone for their attendance and for making it a very enjoyable evening. The Catering Staff received a well deserved Vote of Thanks for their work in contributing to the success of the evening.

12/15/18 AIR FORMATION SIGNAL REGIMENTS OCA



Our photograph shows (L-R) **Dennis Egan** (Hon Sec), **Pam** and **Colin Morgan**. On behalf of **Gerald Evans**, the Branch Chairman, **Dennis** presented **Pam** with her RSA Associate Life Membership certificate and badge. **Colin** is seen clutching his newly presented Life Membership card, after realising that for years he did not have one.

31 SIGNAL REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

A quiet period for the Association and the Committee, which suits our Chairman, **Col Donald Crawford**. It gives him the opportunity to polish his Sam Browne and catch up on his paper work. Although some members of the Committee thought that 'paperwork' meant air tickets? **Maj John Robson** off golfing in Portugal, **Maj Bob Simpson** holidaying in Hong Kong, Australia and Fiji, **Chrissy Mills** is holidaying in India, with **Steve Bland** in Cyprus, so it really made my day out at Legoland, in Windsor, look a little on the cheap side.

It appears on first rumours that 31st Signal Regiment, will survive the Territorial Reorganisation and will probably move a Squadron from the Duke of York's HQ to The White City. It's a sad period for a number of dedicated Territorials, with Regiments that are affected by the disbandments. Our thoughts are with them and we wish them well for the future.

Our trip to the Somme and the V2 Rocket sites on 28/29/30 May is progressing well. Further details may be obtained from **Ron** 'Dusty' **Miller** on 01784 250756. Our Annual Dinner on the 17 April is well in hand and by the time you read this you may just smell the sausages burning. Further details from our Secretary, **Henry Holman**: on 01882848 4597. Last but not least, our Membership Secretary, **Chrissy Mills** reminds everyone that she is only a phone call away 0181 578 2715

MIDDLESEX YEOMANRY ASSOCIATION

Since our last *Wire* notes we have said farewell to **Capt Sidney Underwood**, who died on 18 January. A correction to our last notes, **Col Ted Scarlett** was not our Guest of Honour, that honour went to **Brig Ann Whitehead OBE**. **Ted** was acting on behalf of our Chairman, **George Key**, who was attending the Memorial Unveiling Ceremony for 7th Armoured Division, in Thetford Forest.

The Band have now relocated to the TA Centre, Hayes Bridge, Southall, Middlesex. Only a stones' throw from the serving Squadron at Uxbridge. The Bandmaster, **Michael Robinson** (ex-RAF Central Band), is always on the lookout for good musicians and hopes that the new location may find some new talent. The Band QM and Admin Officer is **Bob Lowe** on 0181 904 6188.

A reminder that the AGM is on 4 May at Uxbridge TA Centre. Our next parade is on 9 May in Hyde Park, followed by lunch at the Duke of York's HQ. An occasion not to be missed, especially if you like Military Bands. Try to be there, further details can be obtained from the Secretary, **Andrew Bridges**, on 01276 33345.

Good News Travels Fast!

Publish it in The Wire

REUNIONS

260 SIGNAL SQUADRON REUNION

AFTER 25 YEARS WE MEET AGAIN

Reported by Steve Freeman - Pannett

In June 97 at the Royal Signal Reunion in Blandford Camp three or four ex members of 260 Signal Squadron met for the first time in over two decades. After a lot of reminiscing the idea to try and see if the old Squadron Members would like to meet up and form an Association of their own was suggested. **Roy Andrews** took on the task and armed with several names went home to see if he could put some addresses to the names and advertise to rally some more support. The hotel was booked and names came rolling in as a result of the publicity and a list was drawn up of those who were interested to come for the meeting. I will admit that there were some very colourful greeting terms, some I had not heard for a decade or two. As more people arrived during the Saturday and settled into their rooms readying themselves for the evening meal when all would be sitting together after such a long time. A good attempt at trying to get everybody to stand in one place as one or two who had cameras tried to take photos, from a personal view, I got some good shots thanks all. After wining and dining, yes there was plenty of both, **Roy** asked the OC, **Maj (Rtd) Bill Cunningham** to say a few words and he thanked everybody who came for making it such a good day thus far. **Roy** then asked the gathered few if an Association should be formed and all agreed. To this end one or two people were asked to take on the job of committee members and of course were duly seconded into the job. With the formalities out of the way we all got down to the most important tasks of trying to talk ourselves hoarse remembering the things that we got up to. The wine and spirits flowed quite well into the small hours of Sunday morning.

I was quite surprised to see so many, all be it some with thick head, at breakfast the next morning. From about 9.30am folks were starting to depart and make their way home to the four corners of the land, very poetic don't you think. The one thing to emerge was the fact that most people would like to have the Reunion in the year 2000 in our old stomping ground in Dortmund, Germany. However, since then there has been a suggestion that we have the 2000 Reunion at or around Shoeburyness the place where 260 started its new life. This has been put forward as a more accessible and less expensive place to hold the event. Anyway the proformas that were sent out have had a shallow response up to now but if you have made the decision to go then please let **Roy Andrews** know where you would like to go. Also, please make sure that he will know what mode of transport you have chosen be it private car or a group in a bus. We, the members of the committee would like to see as many as possible in Dortmund or Shoeburyness. We have also said that the Reunion to be held in April 1999 would have to be the cut off date as it seems the Country has gone daft about doing things in the millennium year and we don't want to be out done. We will make provisions for any body who turns up out of the blue and is determined to be there, that's the type of guy we would all like to be, sorry gals I mean you too.

As you have all most probably been told that there will be some more faces here this year that's why the venue had to be moved as the hotel last year would have been too small. However, all of the world and his dog in our communicating world should know where Loughborough is. So for those of you who will be there at this years Reunion all the members of the committee would like to WELCOME you to Loughborough. If anyone would like to have further details please contact **Roy Andrews**, 7 The Heath, Tankerton, Whitstable, Kent. CT5 3HJ or telephone: 01227 264551 or of course myself at 7 Racecourse Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich, NR7 9HX Tel: 01603 300027.

THE THIRTEENTH ANNUAL BLACKPOOL BURMA STAR

REUNION

25/26/27 June 1999

All holders of the 'Burma Star' whether members of the Burma Star Association or not and their families and friends are invited to attend. All the events will be held in the Empress Ballroom, Winter Gardens. The cost per person for the full weekend of events is £5.00 (excluding accommodation).

For further information and tickets please contact:

Mr J. F. Nield MBE
188 Whitegate Drive, BLACKPOOL FY3 9HJ
Tel: 01253 763134

We look forward to welcoming any Royal Signals personnel who served in Burma or Southeast Asia Command.

4 DIVISION HQ & SIGNAL REGIMENT REUNION

Calling anyone who served in 4 Div HQ & Sig Regt between 1962/65 as a JNCO.

During a casual conversation between myself and 'Geordie' **Gainsford** one night, reminiscing about the Junior NCO's mess in 4 Div Herford, the best grounding any junior NCO could have for his future career, and the amazing array of characters. During the time we were there - **Jim Downie**, 'Brummie' **Mal Smart, Harry Creedy** etc. Well, during the conversation it transpired that we were in contact with a few ex-JNCO's of 4 Div who served during the years 1962 -1965. In a flash of inspiration, we decide to arrange a mini reunion in Morecambe, Lancashire - which proved to be central for the people we knew. Various devious excuses were used to coerce individuals and their ladies to attend. So covert was the operation that no individual knew who else was attending apart of course from me and the inscrutable 'Geordie'. Therefore, it was on the evening of the 28 November that a small and select band of ex-'quadrants' descended on the Headway Hotel in Morecambe.



(L-R): Les Downie, Johnny Hobson, Mal Smart, 'Geordie' Gainsford, Mick Landreau, Don King

The look of surprise and pleasure on the faces of those attending - some of whom had not been in contact for over 33 years was a joy to behold. The evening was a resounding success with lamps swinging, excellent Christmas fare music and dancing - with many a glass emptied long into the early hours of the following morning. The civilians in the Hotel were treated to a full repertoire of military and rugby songs, sung with much gusto by all attending led of course by Director of Music 'Geordie' **Gainsford**. 'Haven't heard any of the songs before' one lady said, 'Well not with those words anyway!'



(L-R): Mrs Jean Hobson, Mrs Chris King, Mrs Brenda Gainsford, Mrs Jan Downie

It is hoped to repeat the movement around the same time this year with a much larger contingent. Hence this letter. Here are the rules - You must have been a serving JNCO 1962/65 in 4 Div HQ and Sig Regt. If you were and want to relive the experience of the Cafe Shmit, the Halfway House, the George and Heidi Camp, then let's be hearing from you. The sooner we know the numbers the sooner we can arrange it. Please contact **ex-Cpl Les Downie**, 4 Winchester Close, Heaton With Oxcliffe, Morecambe, or telephone 01524 417758 or fax 01524 412859.

Attendees in 1998 - **Cpl** and **Mrs** 'Geordie' **Gainsford, Cpl Mal Smart, Cpl Mick Landreau, Cpl** and **Mrs John Hobson, Cpl** and **Mrs Les Downie, Bdr** and **Mrs Don King**. Absent but firm for 1999, **Cpl** and **Mrs Tom Friend, Cpl** and **Mrs Barry Doughety**.

BEVERLEY EX-BOYS ASSOCIATION

An article in the August 1998 issue of the Royal Signals Association News Letter called for former members of 6 (Boys) Training Regiment, to contact **Mick Teague**, with a view to forming a reunion club. From those ex-boys who replied to this initial request an organising committee was formed and we are pleased to report that the Beverley Ex-Boys Association is now up and running. The Association is affiliated to the Royal Signals Association to whom we are grateful for a grant and assistance given, also our thanks to **Peter Cuckow** whose help and advice was invaluable. Membership of the Association is open to all Ex-Beverley Boys and associate membership is open to former permanent staff and cadre. The Association will be setting out its stall at the next Old Comrades Reunion at Blandford 26/27 June 1999, you will find us in the reception area. We will have a table and possibly a room set aside in which the Beverley Ex-Boys Association can meet. To date we have 85 members.

The first Committee Meeting was held in November at the home of the Secretary, **Tony Hull**, in Bournemouth.



(L-R): Mick Teague - Vice-Chairman, John Beasley - President John Edison - Chairman, Arthur Cotillard - Treasurer and Tony Hull - Secretary

Tony was assisted by his wife, **Beryl**, who took the minutes whilst cooking a lunch for the participants plus two of their wives. The Reunion was discussed and it was decided to hold it as a lunch on Saturday, 25 September 1999 at the Victory Services Club in London where the Scarisbrooke Hall has been reserved. Details of the Association and future social functions can be obtained from the secretary of the Association **Tony Hull,** 8 Ferncroft Gardens, Northbourne, Bournemouth, DORSET BH10 6BZ. Tel: 01202 770261.

LANGELEBEN REUNION

The Langeleben Reunion Branch of the Royal Signals Association, is holding it's 1999 reunion from 14 May until 17 May in Konigslutter, Germany. More details from:

Langeleben Reunion Branch RSA
6 Derwent House
Timber Street
Elland
HALIFAX HX5 0DH
Tel/Fax: 01422 376915
E-mail: Mitch.F@btinternet.com
Web Site: http//www.btinernet.com/~langeleben

G TROOP
264 (SAS) SIGNAL SQUADRON
REUNION DINNER
7 August 1999

A formal Dinner night will take place in the Sergeant's Mess of Stirling Lines Hereford Garrison for all ranks serving or who have served at any time with G Troop from its formation to the present day.

If you were a serving member and have not yet received any information through the post, please write to the address below for an invitation and further details.

RSVP	**RSVP (phone)**
YofS G Troop	*YofS G Troop*
264 Sig Sqn	*Mil 747 2302 (Vis Sqn Office)*
HQ HEREFORD GARRISON	*Civ 01432 357311 ext 2302*
HR2 6HF	

THE 5TH (LONDON) CORPS SIGNALS OLD COMRADES ASSOCIATION

51st REUNION MORCIANO

I stood in the cool of the evening
And gazed at the glowing sky
But t'was not the stars or moonlight
That lit the heavens high
T'was the flashes from multitudinous guns
On the hillside nearby
And the glow of bursting bomb and shell
The light from many a flare
That transformed this heaven into Hell
As I stood gazing there.

E. A. Lampard
52 L/M Section
(Written during the war)

FOR THOSE WHO DIED

AVE ATQUE VALE - (Hail & Farewell)

In Lichfield's peaceful garden
now stands our stately tree
beside the splendid wooden seat
placed there, in memory
of all the fallen comrades
of 5th (London) Royal Corps
who gave their lives for others;
no man could ask for more.
We remember them with gratitude
And love that knows no ends . . .
'AVE ATQUE VALE'
We salute you . . . Absent Friends.

E. A. Lampard
52 L/M Section

DEAR OLD ENGLAND

From Algiers to Tricesimo, we fought and won the war,
Yet those hard days seem long ago . . . Now all we're longing for
Is England . . . Dear Old England, True Land of the free
Where our Mums and Dads who understand are waiting patiently:
We've had our share of 'Rules and Regs' and 'Chinese Wedding Cake'
We'd much prefer Mum's ham and eggs . . . if just for old time's sake;
So bear us swiftly o'er the foam, now we've fulfilled our duty,
Take us to our English home . . . Our home of love and beauty;
Let us listen once again, to the song of England's birds,
Let us tread the grassy plain, where strays the lowing herds;
Let us see the chestnut trees that hide majestic towers'
Let us hear the busy bees . . . buzzing round spring flowers;
Show us once more the babbling stream, that trickles by at leisure,
The healthy ploughboy and his team, making work a pleasure;
The children running on the lawn, the sheep and lambs at play,
The splendour of an early dawn heralding forth the day;
Show us all this . . . our hearts cry out . . . **NOT** in a picture frame . . .
And we shall know beyond all doubt . . .
That we're HOME . . . from whence we came.

E. A. Lampard
52 L/M Section

LOST COMMUNICATIONS

John Stockford would like to hear from anyone who served with him during the 1947-49 period, either at the School of Signals, Catterick, or with the 4th Independent Air Formation Signal Squadron at Ismailia, Egypt. **John** can be reached at Tel: USA 650-368-7537. E-Mail: Oxonianrwc@aol.com or through Association HQ.

Heather White (nee Clayton) is seeking to contact **Helga Sanderson (nee Stiles). Heather** was a bridesmaid at **Helga's** wedding when she married **Keith Sanderson** who was serving in the Royal Signals at the time. The wedding took place at the Bearwood Church, Sindlesham near Wokingham, Berkshire in August 1970. **Keith** was pictured wearing No.1 Dress during the service. **Heather** has now returned to live in her parents' house that was opposite **Helga's** home on the Reading Road, Wokingham and would dearly like to contact her old friend. If anyone has any information please contact **Heather White** on 01189 –183113.

CAN YOU HELP? Does anyone remember the name of the Signals unit based in a Camp near Chalfont Common in South Buckinghamshire? **Mr A. J. Denham** served in the unit based there in 1973/74 and is seeking not only this detail, but anyone who remembers him from that time. Anyone who can help is asked to contact **Mr Denham** at: 30 Yew Lane, Ashley, New Milton, HANTS BH25 5BA.

Mrs A. Roper is trying to trace **Sgt Malcolm Robert Malcolms**. He served in the Royal Signals in Cardiff 1969/71. He was stationed at the Park Street TA Unit, Mainly Barracks and at Blandford during this time. His son **Kevin** is trying to find him. We've not heard from him for 25 years. **Sgt Malcolms** left the army in 1971 and went to work for IBM. It was about then that we lost contact with him. Some years ago we heard that he had been looking for his son but by then we had moved to Suffolk and as I'd remarried I had changed my name. The friends we shared had all moved on.

If there is anyone who remembers him, or has a photograph of him that they could give to our son we would be grateful. **Sgt Malcolms** was known to his friends as 'Mal'. Please contact **Mrs Roper** or her son **Kevin** at 23 Corwen Crescent, Llandaff North, CARDIFF, CF4 2LQ.

Ray 'Scouse' **McCarthy** served, with the Royal Signals, in Korea in the early fifties. He was part of a football team picked from different Regiments to tour part of Japan (Kure). Their last game was at the British Military Hospital in Kure. **Ray** has often tried to get in touch with some of these lads, but has never been successful. The Officer who organised this trip was a Royal Signals Lieutenant, who was stationed at Pusan, unfortunately he has forgotten his name. However, should he or any of the others read this would they please contact **Ray.**

36 Bebington Road
Great Sutton
S. Wirral
CHESHIRE
L66 4RX
Tel: 0151 339 9527

Arthur Holman (former Sgt) died in Australia in December 1998. His daughter, **Mrs Else**, would like to make contact with **Arthur's** old pals: **Bob Quale, Douglas Harris, Dennis Lloyd** and **Bert Sanders**. They all served together with 1 Army Signals during WW2. **Mrs Else** would also be pleased to hear from anyone who remembers her father from that era - she can be contacted on 01795-842601.

Mr E. H. 'Ted' **Hughes** is seeking his former pal **Jim Wolf(e). Jim** and **Ted** were on courses together in Catterick from October 1948 to July 1949. Both spent a lot of their service with the Royal Marine Signals. Anyone who can help is asked to contact **Ted** on: 01242 - 862437.

AIRBORNE SIGNALS OFFICERS
ANNUAL DINNER
FRIDAY 27 AUGUST 1999

216 Parachute Signal Squadron are hosting the annual Royal Signals Airborne Officers Dinner in Aldershot on Friday 27 August 1999. The reason for this earlier date is that the Squadron will cease to exist in its present form in Aldershot on 1 September 1999.

If you are a serving or retired Royal Signals Officer who has served with Airborne Forces, not necessarily in Aldershot you are more than welcome to come along.

Invitations and details of dress and costs have already been sent out, should you not have received your invitation or would like further information, please contact:

The Admin Officer
216 (Para) Sig Sqn
Arnhem Barracks
Aldershot
HAMPSHIRE
GU11 2AU
Tel: Civil: (01252) 349547
Mil: 722 4547

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CORRESPONDENCE

From: **Mr K. Bunston**
31 St Davids Road
Miskin
Pontyclun
MID GLAMORGAN CF72 8PW
Tel: 01443 224036

Dear Sir,

Since May 1998 I have been trying to arrange the reunion of members of 18 Troop, 1 Independent Selection Squadron, who undertook basic training at Gallowgate Camp Richmond, commencing in February 1950. I have, through every means possible advertised the details both country and world-wide. To date the response has been small and only eight have been traced. Sadly one of these has died since making contact last October, and a number of others have passed away over the years before contact could be made. We have, however, also taken on board members of 17 Troop and 19 Troop plus one from 31 Troop of early 1955. Both 17 and 19 Troop shared our experiences and our instructors, who were renowned for their treatment of young regular recruits in those days. Looking back on those days and comparing them to modern times, I wonder what political correctness really is!!

I would like to thank the secretaries of all Branches who have responded to my request for assistance in tracing those being searched for and also to **Peter Cuckow** for his advice and assistance. Because of the small numbers traced, we have decided to form the Gallowgate Club. This will be for those lucky enough to have carried out their basic training at that wonderful hilltop holiday camp. There are no fees involved, all that is required is the ability to write the odd letter, and to keep in touch with your comrades of long ago.

I cannot emphasise too much the reality of keeping in touch with your old friends. It is, sadly, sometimes too late by the time you reach our age to try and regain contact with friends from long ago. My monthly advert in Service Pals on Teletext has also unearthed a few old friends with whom I served with in the past, long may this continue. My next major task is to write to every local newspaper around the country to widen the circle of the Gallowgate Club. Should any reader know of anyone who may fit the description of those being looked for, would you kindly contact me at the above number.

Yours Sincerely…

From: **Col D. P. Herring**
5 Fishers Close
Blandford
DORSET

Dear Sir,

Thank you for printing my article on the Boy entrants to R. Signals in the Journal part of *The Wire*. Now that I see it in print I note that I have made an error in the date of the closing of the AAC Harrogate. It was not 1987, as I wrote. I now learn, from **Pat Soward**, that the AAC Harrogate closed on 2 August 1996, followed by the formation of 263 Sqn at Arbourfield in December 1996. No doubt you will receive many comments on this fact, or none at all depending on the number of persons who read the article.

I apologise for the error and accept full responsibility. It goes to show how one cannot be too careful when going into print.

Yours Sincerely…

From: **Maj (Rtd) A. Burns**
7 Broad Gap
Bodicote
Banbury
OXON OX15 4DE

Dear Sir,

Reference the February *WIRE* notes from 9 Signal Regiment (Radio) may I be permitted a wry smile?

The Regiment was not 'raised' in the period 1958/60 whilst under the command of Col D. T. W. Gibson MBE but was, along with all other Regiments and Squadrons in the Corps, renumbered and retitled.

As a very old hand from 4 Mile Point, and indeed from the original Operators' tented accommodation at 3 Mile Point (2 Camp), I served with countless other 'Spec Ops' in many 'Y' Units. These included 2 Wireless Regiment and 1 Wireless Regiment, which became 9 Signal Regiment and 13 Signal Regiment respectively during full Corps reorganisation at the time. The Regiment as such was actually raised on the present site in 1947 when the original unit came to Famagusta from Sarafand. Having seen the present Operational Block started and the first married quarters being built, I can assure you that we did exist long before 1958. It may seem pedantic but it does matter.

Yours Sincerely…

From: **D. R. Stanforth**
93 Sefton Street
Southport
MERSEYSIDE PR8 5DD

Dear Editor,

I refer to *The Wire* of February 1999, page 85, the Middlesex Yeomanry Association.

You may be interested to know that I attended the 7th Armoured Division Memorial unveiling ceremony an the 23 October, suitably dressed in Royal Signals blazer & beret. I was at the time representing the Normandy Veterans Association, Southport & West Lancashire Branch No. 25, for which I am the Secretary. The Branch had made a donation to the building of the Memorial. After the ceremonials I was a guest at the VIP reception at the West Tofts Camp. Needless to say I was sought out by Officers of the Yeomanry and we had interesting chats regarding the RSA and the 'old days'. This particular Memorial dedication also had many memories for me as my father was a 'tankie' in WW2 and was posted to Brandon for a time to help train the tank gunners. Thus, as you my imagine, for me it was emotional.

In conclusion, I would like to put on record my appreciation to the Yeomanry Officers for their comradeship and kindness on that day.

Yours sincerely,

(Editor's Note: Thank you for your letter ***Mr Stanforth****. The Middlesex Yeomanry Association and your letter indicate that we were in error in referring to the Memorial as the Middlesex Yeomanry, 7 Armoured Division Memorial. It is, of course, a memorial to all who served with 7 Armoured Division during World War 2 and not exclusively to the Middlesex Yeomanry. We are happy to put the record straight..)*

From: **Brig Graeme Jackson**

Dear Editor,

I believe that the last paragraph of **Lt Col D. P. Herring's** article on 'Boy Entrants to Royal Signals' in the February Edition deserves more space for the many thousands who joined the adult Corps other than through 'apprentice' channels.

As I remember in post 1950 there was still a GD Boys Squadron in Catterick which was moved to Beverley and became 6 Boys Training Regiment, then to Denbury near Newton Abbot in 1954 to be renamed The Junior Leaders Regiment Royal Signals. This existed at least until the late sixties. From this a cadre of Officers and SNCO's were detached in 1960 to near Towyn, West Wales, to help in the formation of the All Arms Junior Leaders Regiment of which there was a Signal Squadron. A Squadron was formed in 11 Signal Regiment in the late sixties which was moved to Ouston and I believe was extended to Regimental strength. There were also Junior Trades Regiments, one of which was located in Troon in Scotland. In total these must have provided a significant intake to the Corps.

Others may wish to fill in the gaps but a full and comprehensive history of this valuable source of intake to the Corps is well justified,

Yours sincerely,

DONATIONS

Terry Wickens	£13.10
Mr E. H. Hughes	£5.00
Mr Bill Meehan	£20.00
Mr Len Shanley	£25.00
R. Burbridge	£11.00
Mr R. V. Baughan	£30.00
1998 Blandford Tower Run	£400.00
E. L. Nation	£10.00
Middlesex Yeomanry Association	£29.56
Glossop & District RSA	£25.00
Hull RSA	£20.00
Hudersfield RSA	£50.00
West London RSA	£100.00
Tayside & Fife RSA	£30.00
Certa Cito Lodge	£10.00
Mr G. W. Cook in memory of Majs W. Ellis, J. Roake, A. Eeckelaers	£100.00
Donations in lieu of flowers in memory of Brig P. H. F. Webb	£354.70
Maj Gen P A C Baldwin CBE in memory of Maj K. Francis	£40.00
3 Div Sigs Reunion Club in memoryof Capt P. E. S. Coombes	£10.00
Ian J. Davidson in memory of Rudi Petschi	£50.00
Maj (Retd) J. Radford in memory of Cpl L. Vula	£20.00
Reading RSA in memory of Roy Harlow	£10.00
The Last Will & Testament Maj K. W. Jordan	£200.00
The Last Will & Testament Marjorie Reed Holdsworth	£5,000.00

Mr G. W. Cook sent his donation in memory of three men, who were all good Signalman friends during their days together on the North West Frontier.

DON'T BE DISAPPOINTED

Copy must be received six weeks before the publication date

LAST POST

Archibald – Sgt A. Archibald	Served 1963/85	Died 04/02/99
Bayfield – Lt Col C. J. Bayfield	Served 1945/80	Died Oct '98
Blakeway - Sgt P. L. Blakeway	Served 1975/79	Died Jun '98
Blaney - LCpl D. Blaney	Served 19??/99	Died 10/02/99
Burley - Capt A. L. Burley	Served 1941/46	Died 17/02/99
Chitty - Maj G. J. Chitty	Served 1952/73	Died 13/02/99
Coltman – Sig J. R. Coltman	Served 1940/46	Died Jan '99
Cox - Brig A. C. Cox	Served 1940/68	Died 10/01/99
Entwistle – WO2 T. B. Entwistle	Served 1939/46	Died 31/10/98
Evans - Cpl A. S. Evans	Served 1943/46	Died 17/02/99
Harlow – Cpl R. G. Harlow	Served 1942/47	Died Dec '98
Harrison - Cpl R. Harrison	Served 1952/69	Died 1997
Hill – Col L. R. Hill	Served 1939/46	Died 09/11/98
Holman – Sgt A. Holman	Served 1940/46	Died Dec '98
Honeybourne - Brig C. T. Honeybourne OBE	Served 1933/68	Died 12/01/99
Johnson – Sgt M. S. Johnson	Served 1942/54	Died 28/01/99
Leighton – Capt D. F. Leighton	Served 1947/69	Died 16/02/99
Mehrtens – Sgt R. N. Mehrtens	Served 1939/45	Died 10/01/99
Millar – Sgt R. K. Millar	Served 1949/71	Died 20/05/98
Milton – Col D. J. Milton	Served 1952/85	Died 13/12/98
Olivey - Sgt I. M. Olivey	Served 1953/62	Died 22/09/98
Rayment – Maj J. D. Rayment	Served 1959/92	Died 08/11/98
Singleton – Sig W. Singleton	Served	Died 10/01/99
Slaughter – Sig A. Slaughter	Served 1944/47	Died 16/01/99
Wardrop - Col C. G. Wardrop	Served	Died 15/01/99
Williams – Lt Col H. R. Williams	Served 1951/84	Died 14/12/98
Williamson - WO2 D. C. Williamson	Served 1959/65	Died Jan '99

Archibald - Sergeant Alan Archibald died peacefully at home on Thursday 4 February 1999 aged 57, his family were at his bedside. **Alan** served in the Corps for 22 years from 1963 to 1985. He was not a member of the Glasgow Branch of the RSA due to illness, but was a life member of the Royal Signals Association. He served in a number of units in the UK, BAOR and Denmark. During his service in Germany he received the GOC's commendation for his action during an outbreak of fire.

On leaving the Corps **Alan** held positions as Officers' Mess Manager at Craigiehall and Edinburgh Castle. Latterly before becoming ill he was a warden at Strathmore Court. The funeral service at Broomhill Church of Scotland was attended by the Chairman of Glasgow RSA and four members were also present along with **Pipe Major Bill Clezy** of 32 (Scottish) Sig Regt (V). The Service was conducted by the **Rev William B. Ferguson BA Bd,** who gave a very moving eulogy, knowing the family well and as a friend. He also held a service at the Dalnottar Crematorium, Clydebank. The coffin, draped with the Union flag was carried into the church to the tune of Amazing Grace and left the church to the tune of the Battle's O'er played on the pipes by the Pipe Major. Two hymns were sung, the 23rd psalm 'The Lord's My Shepherd' and **Alan**'s favourite, 'The Old Rugged Cross', especially requested by the family. During the service his daughter **Karen** read out a very emotional poem entitled 'Coming home'. On the front of the hymn sheet was printed 'A Service of Thanksgiving for the Life of Alan Archibald 1941 – 1999'. The RSA, Glasgow Branch Members formed a guard of honour at the crematorium for the family and the coffin party, while the Pipe Major played, with the family's permission, a lament he had composed as a tribute to Dunkirk. There was a last word and prayer of farewell from the **Rev William Ferguson**. The Glasgow Branch RSA Chairman and members, offer their sincere condolences to **Alan's** wife **Sheena**, son **Colin**, and daughters **Irene**, **Lorna**, **Karen**, and Claire.

Barnes - Colonel Basil Hilary Purcell Barnes OBE died on 17 November 1998 at the age of 83. He was educated at Imperial Service College and RMA Woolwich, and was commissioned into Royal Signals in January 1935. He may be remembered best as a distinguished Commanding Officer of 1 Corps Signal Regiment in the period 1958 - 60. He took over this large Regiment, later split into 7th and 22nd Regiments, when circumstances had caused it to be at a low ebb. He saw its performance, morale and reputation all prosper during his time. He was awarded the OBE at the end of this tour.

Before the war and his 'Q' course, he spent two years with 3 Divisional Signals at Bulford, where they practised with a six-horse cable train. He was then posted to India where he remained until 1941. He had happy memories of his period in India particularly of his activities when riding in racing silks. He spent the next two years in the Middle East, mainly in Iraq, but including staff qualification at Haifa later converted to psc. He returned to UK in 1943 for a year in the Military Department of the India Office. It was at this time that he met and married his wife **Naomi** whose charm and concern for others have been appreciated by all who have known her.

He finished the War Years in India and Burma and returned to UK in 1947 to join the Degree Course at RMCS Shrivenham from which he graduated with a London University BSc in Natural Sciences. After Shrivenham he was posted to 1 Divisional Signals in Tripoli and then as GSO2 in Egypt, returning to UK in 1952 as the senior Royal Signals Officer at the School of Artillery, Larkhill. On promotion to Lieutenant Colonel in 1955 he served first as GSO1 at HQ BAOR followed by his period as OC 1 Corps Signal Regiment. Next he went as Colonel to the British Joint Military Staff Washington, then to Whitehall as Colonel



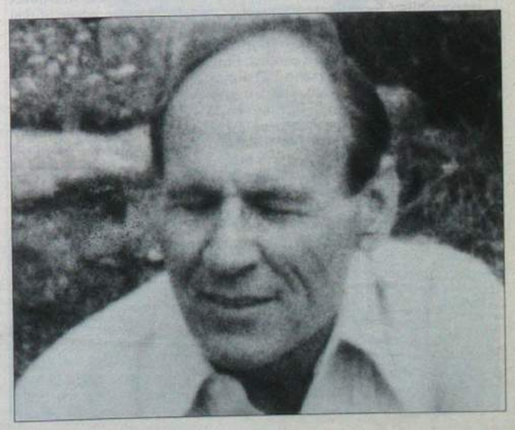
GS Military Intelligence, and finally as Chief Signal Officer Western Command. He retired in 1966 to Hartley Wintney where he was born and spent many years as an RO with Aldershot District, administering married quarters and locally he became an effective Church Warden. Of his four children his eldest son **Christopher** was commissioned into Royal Signals from Sandhurst and served 1966-78.

Basil Barnes had a very good brain, in 1949 he managed to win the prestigious Bertrand Stewart Essay Prize at the same time as taking the finals for his degree. He liked to get to the bottom of things, and his solutions to difficult problems were always practical and ingenious. His stories always had a special 'twist' at the end. He had time for everyone irrespective of rank, and will be much missed by his many friends.

Beddingfield - SSgt William John Beddingfield known throughout the Corps as **Taff**, died on 23 November 1998. **Taff** served for 22 years in the Corps, during which time he served in Vienna Signal Squadron as a Cypher NCO. In 1954 he moved to Nairobi where he served for two years. Then it was on to Fontainbleu where he served from 1957 – 1959. Many ex-apprentices will remember him as a drill pig (Corporal) in Harrogate, where he served from 1959 –1962. It was not long after that **Taff** got his well earned third stripe. **Sgt Beddingfield** went on to serve 14, 15 and 4 Signal Regiments and finally ended up in Blandford as a Staff Sergeant in 1967, where he served until the end of his military career in 1972. **Taff** continued his civilian career in Blandford serving many Quartermasters as IC the Clothing Store.

His funeral took place at the Poole Crematorium on 1 December 1998. The funeral was attended by many of his friends both from the Dorset Branch of the Royal Signals Association, where he was a regular attendee, and the members of the Poole Branch of the Association were represented by the Chairman, **Maj Gen Alan Yeoman CBE.**

Taff served the Corps well and was known throughout the Corps for his love of the Corps and his loyalty to those he served with. **Taff** lives on in the memory of his loving wife **Rose**, his son **Tony**, daughter **Caroline**, daughter in law **Maria** and his grandchildren. He was a loving Grandad and will be sadly missed by his family and his many friends.



Coltman - Sadly we have to report the death of **John Coltman**, since 1982 a Life Member of the Association and a valued member of our Branch. **John** enlisted in 1940 and served in 84 Teleop Section of 1st Special Wireless Group until his demobilization at the end of the war. He became a civil servant until his retirement. **John** was a Freemason, being initiated into the Middlesex Imperial Yeomanry Lodge. He was a founder member of the Royal Signals Certo Cito Lodge and attained London Grand Rank. **John** was active until the last, parading on our annual church parade at the Royal Hospital Chelsea in September and attending the Christmas party. The funeral was attended by many members of the West London Branch and the Standard was carried by **Harry Ruff**. We shall miss you **John**.

Cox - Brigadier A. C. Cox OBE, late Royal Signals. **Brig** 'George' **Cox** died at his home in Natal, South Africa, on 10 January 1999, shortly after his 85th Birthday. He will be remembered in the Corps as a distinguished, charismatic officer with an outstanding war record. A leader of strong and robust character who saw what needed to be done and always did it to good effect. 'George' **Cox** began his career in Royal Signals as a 'F Company' Boy Soldier in the early 30's, and with the outbreak of war, was to be found attached to a small group of Signallers sent to Poland to provide wireless communications to the United Kingdom for **Gen Carton de Wiart VC**, Head of the British Military Mission to the government in Poland. Unfortunately the 'fall' of Poland left the group the hazardous task of extricating themselves from Warsaw via Rumania, Yugoslavia, Greece and Egypt!

In June 1940 'George' was commissioned into 2 Armd Div & Sig Regt and was drafted with that unit to the Middle East. By July 1941 he was Adjutant of 7 Armd Div & Sig Regt in the same theatre. He had an adventurous time in the fluid conditions prevailing in the Western Desert, Cyrenaica throughout 1940/41. When his Main Division HQ was over run near Mechili, he evaded capture and drove off in an 8cwt truck whipping-in a number of Division HQ and other vehicles and stragglers along the way and leading them to safety. This exercise earned him one of several 'Mention in Dispatches' throughout his career.

In January 1942 his armoured formation was posted to Singapore, equipped with Honey tanks, but en-route was diverted to Burma - where after unloading at Rangoon they were eventually forced to immobilise and abandon their tanks and fight their way on foot to the Chindwin River and across into India. During this Burma campaign 'George' was awarded an operational MBE. After his men recovered in various hospitals, they regrouped and returned to the Desert until 1943 when **A/Lt Col Cox** was sent first to a staff appointment in Cairo and then to the Staff College in Haifa, Palestine. Here he met **Leading WRN Maureen Ryan**, and after a whirlwind courtship they were married in November 1944 in Jerusalem Cathedral by special Bishop's Licence. He was then almost immediately posted back to the UK in January 1945 as GSO 1 HQ Royal Signals Catterick, where **Maureen** was finally allowed to join him six months later.

After the war, **Maj Cox** was posted to FARELF, Malaya, where in October 1948, whilst serving with the Malaya District Signal Regiment, he was told to 'get on with all speed' with the business of raising and training the first instalment of Gurkhas towards the formation of the Gurkha Division Signal Regiment. The first Signals Tradesmen completed training by 1 August 1950 and were formed into the Gurkha Independent Brigade Signal Squadron, the first ever formed unit of Gurkha Signals and progenitor of The Queen's Gurkha Signals of today. For this tour he was awarded the OBE.

From the Far East he went next to BAOR first as 2IC 7 Armd Div & Sig Regt in Verden, and then as a Lieutenant Colonel, he raised and commanded 14 Army Signal Regiment in Lemgo only, disappointingly, to have to disband the same Regiment two years later when Army 'cutbacks' set in!

By February 1958 he was back in the UK at the War Office with MI7 and for the next few years was away from the Corps as Col GS HQ NAG BAOR, and then as Col GS (Int) HQ MELF in Cyprus with direct responsibility for military intelligence operations in the whole of that sphere of the Middle and Near East including the delicate negotiations involved in the 'hand-over' of Cyprus to President Makarios, and the highly volatile Arab/Israeli conflict. From Cyprus he returned to the UK as a Brigadier to Command HQ Royal Signals Training Brigade in Catterick in August 1962. His last appointment in the Army was as Assistant Chief of Staff Intelligence to **Gen Shan Hackett** at HQ NORTHAG from which he retired in 1968, of this last posting the story he did not recount in any detail was that of the Russian FOXBAT which crashed into West Berlin and was the subject of much press interest at the time and with which he was closely involved.

After he retired from the Army, 'George' joined Tarmac Construction Company Ltd. He enjoyed ten successful and rewarding years with Tarmac where his well-honed skills as a communicator and negotiator were used to good effect helping raise the profile of this Birmingham-based company in London and the South East.

On retiring a second time in 1988, an extended holiday, visiting his son in South Africa, pre-empted a permanent move out there, and in October 1989 he and **Maureen** emigrated to Uvongo on the South Coast of Natal, about a one hour drive South of Durban, overlooking the Indian ocean. There they enjoyed two full and active years before an unfortunate fall on the golf course triggered off a whole series of health problems with his back and hip, and asthma, further complicated by a near-fatal shooting incident at their home in Uvongo in August 1993, which left him with two 9mm bullets in his leg from then until the day he died. It was a measure of the man (and **Maureen!**) that this incident in no way deflected him from the decision to remain in the African sunshine!



He is survived by his wife **Maureen**, son **Patrick** and daughter **Joanna**, and four grandchildren. The Corps has lost a rugged individualist whose career and exploits well matched the time in which he lived.

Honeybourne - Brigadier Travers Honeybourne who died in Spain on 12 January 1999 aged 85 was one of the most distinguished and able officers of his generation. His career with the Corps lasted over 35 years spanning the Second World War. He took part in campaigns on the North West Frontier of India, North Africa and Italy.

Cecil Travers Honeybourne was born on 18 April 1913. He was educated at Blundells School before entering the RMA Woolwich in 1931 where he represented the Academy at both Rugby and Athletics, was a Cadet Adjutant and won the French Prize. He was commissioned into Royal Signals in 1933. Following his Young Officer's Course he joined 4th Divisional Signals in Canterbury. During this period he played rugby for the Corps for three seasons.

In 1936 he joined the Indian Signal Corps and was posted to 3 Indian Divisional Signals in Meerat He first saw active service as Razmak Brigade Signal Officer during the Waziristan Operations of 1936-37. He went to Egypt in August 1939 with 4th Indian Divisional Signals and took part in the early operations in the Western Desert. In October 1940 he was recalled to Cairo to form a Middle East Signal Officers Cadet Training Unit which by the time he left was training some 50 Officers from Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Rhodesia and South Africa. After attending No 6 War Course at the Middle East Staff College in Haifa, he spent six months as GSO2 at the Middle East Training Centre at Gaza before joining 7th Armoured Divisional Signals (the Desert Rats). As a Squadron Commander and later 2IC he took part in the advance to Tunis and the invasion of Italy at Salerno where he landed with the 'Tac Div HQ' and had to form ad hoc communications arrangements as the main HQ failed to arrive. For this he was mentioned in Dispatches.

From October 1943 to the end of the war he was Commander Royal Signals of 5th Divisional Signals in the advance through Italy including the Anzio battle, for this he received the OBE for 'Gallant and Distinguished Service'.

In June 1944 he joined the Directorate of Tactical Investigation at the War Office from where he was sent on missions in Holland and Belgium to investigate the failure of communications during the Battle of Arnhem, to Burma to co-ordinate the return of units to the UK and worked with a team planning counter measures to the V2 rocket. In 1945 he returned to India to be the last British Commandant of the Army Signal School before Independence. He returned to the UK in early 1948 to take up an appointment as DAQMG Home Counties District followed by a tour as Chief Instructor at the School of Signals in Catterick. After graduating from the Joint Services Staff College he went to Washington to join the Standing Group NATO as GSO1 (Plans). During his time in the USA he worked on the Standards of Readiness for Allied Forces and the terms of reference for SACEUR. He drafted a brief for **Winston Churchill** for his visit to Washington in 1952. In 1954 he returned to his former Regiment, 7th Armoured Divisional Signal Regiment, as Commanding Officer in Verden.

On promotion to Colonel in 1957 he returned to NATO for his next two appointments as Chief of Training Branch LANDCENT, Fontainbleau and then as a member of the Directing Staff of the NATO Defence College in Paris. His final appointment with the Corps as a Brigadier was as Chief Signal Officer, Near East Land Forces where he remained until the command closed in February 1963. He was responsible for organising the presentation of the silver 'Ludigian Lions' to HQ Officer's Mess to commemorate Middle/Near East Command. He then returned to England to head the Recruiting and Liaison Staff, Northern Command in York where he and his team were able to increase recruits by 25%. In February 1965 he started his last posting, Director of Studies and Deputy Commander of the NATO Defence College. In 1967, when France left NATO and the Italian Commandant of the College was ordered out of the country by President de Gaulle, it fell to him, as the senior remaining military officer, to move the College out of France to Rome and set up the courses at a new site. **Travers Honeybourne** retired from the Army in June 1968 having held the appointment of ADC to the Queen since 1964.

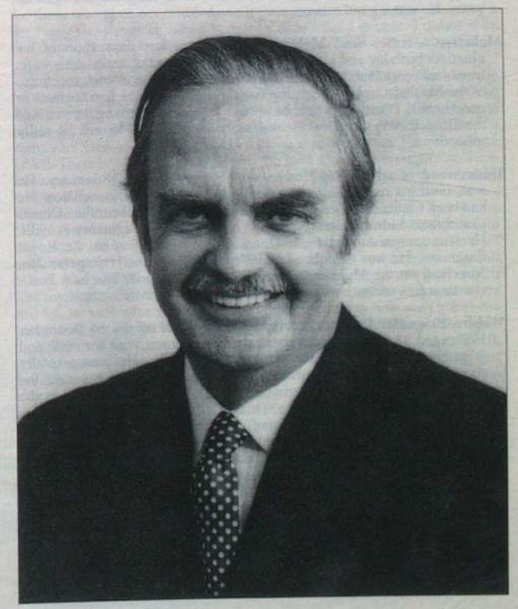
In civilian life he worked for five years on the staff of the Printing and Publishing Training Board and was Managing Director of The



Curwen Press for two years. Finally, he was for two years the Administrator of The European Commission project 'Europe + 30' which examined the long term future of the European Community. The final report of this project was a contributory factor in the setting of the 1992 goal of a 'barrier free' Community. He was an active churchman where his activities included Treasurer of St Peters Church, Hammersmith, Lay Chairman of the Hammersmith Deanery Synod, a member of The Bishop of London's Council and Lay Selector for candidates for the Ministry. He married in Cairo in 1940 and he and **Elizabeth** had four children.

Johnson – Sgt M. S. Johnson. Died on 28 January 1999. **Mal** joined Boys Company, Royal Signals as an A/T in October 1942 where he won the coveted 'Blue Cap' on initial training. He served in Catterick, War Office Signals, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Middle East and was recalled from the Reserves for the Suez Operation. **Mal** will be greatly missed by his wife **Jeanne**, his children, grandchildren and his many old friends in the '254 Old Boys Association'.

Jordan – Maj Ken Jordan died suddenly on 18 October 1998 after a short illness whilst on holiday in Southern Spain, a few weeks before his 85th birthday. He was truly an officer and a gentleman of the old school who served in the Corps for some 36 years. After a boyhood in Plymouth and Gibraltar, he joined the Corps with 'F' (Boys) Coy at the Signal Training Centre (STC) Catterick in 1928 before graduating to 'Man' service with 3rd Division at Bulford in 1932. Not only his soldierly skills but his abilities as a painter and artist were quickly appreciated and some of his cartoons depicting life at STC appeared in *The Wire*. He then started the first of many tours in India with 'B' Corps Signals. He was commissioned in 1939 and throughout the war he saw continued service in India with Northern Force Signals and 8th Indian Division and thence to Persia with 159 Fd Regt RA Signal Section. As a fine and natural raconteur he could happily tell real stories of the Khyber Pass and of his adventures with fellow boy soldier, **Norman Harding**! Throughout his career he was always a master of the communications systems that he employed. However, nothing could persuade him there was a better communications system than the one he used in India called 'Marjorie' - his horse - who gave him many years of valiant service. After the war, having met and married **Jean** en route, he spent some time in Catterick and then, with their daughter **Deborah,** went further into the Orient with 19 Air Formation Sig Regt to Singapore during which time **Nicholas** was born. He returned again to Catterick as a trainer with 4 Trg Regt and then had two years on the staff of CAFSO HQ 2TAF. He was renowned for his plain talking and did not shirk unpopular decisions which stood him in good stead professionally during the Eoka campaign in Cyprus although on a number of occasions did not do him any good personally. The remainder of his service was spent in his familiar Catterick as OC Instructional Wing in 11 Sig Regt under **Col Stan Brackenbury.** During this time many SNCOs on their 'Staffies course' remembered his stentorian tones, his ruthlessly efficient management of the Cary Theatre bar and his meticulous scrutiny of the Sgts Mess account. They may not have liked his decisions but he was certainly respected for making them. He retired from active soldiering in 1964 and he and **Jean** returned to their native Portsmouth. He continued his long and lasting friendship with the Corps and the Association when he became the PSO with the Portsmouth TA Squadron and developed a lasting friendship with **David** and **Barbara Johnson.** Subsequently various military reorganisations led to the demise of this appointment but he maintained his contact with his many friends whilst working with Plessey in Havant. He finally hung up his line stick and belt in 1970 but continued to live an active life. Initially in local politics but later as an avid collector around the antique showrooms, developing his love for painting and pursuing his children around the world for his annual inspection of their gardens. **Ken** became very active with the Royal British Legion and became Chairman of his local Branch in Portsmouth. He also pursued his love of travelling and at the age of 72 was still happily clambering around the wadis and deserts of Oman and enjoyed many forays into Italy, Malta and Spain. A parody of one of his favourite poems, Rudyard Kipling's Gunga Din, was written for his eightieth birthday. He was always chuckling over this as he felt it was an amusing reflection of him. It is repeated as it is perhaps a suitable epitaph to one of the Corps' characters as many in the Corps will remember him in that vein.



GUNGA KEN

You may talk of gin and beer
When you're sittin' quietly 'ere
An' livin-in an 'ouse in Pompey city,
But when it comes to laughter
You'll remember ever after
A celebrated sodjer called Gunga Ken.
Now in Inja's sunny clime
Where 'e used to spend his time
A servin' of 'is Majesty the King,
Of all the signallin' crew
The one they always knew
Was the regimental joker, Gunga Ken.
It was 'Ken! Ken! Ken!'
'You grinnin' lump of suet Gunga Ken.'
'Go forth an' make the tea
Water, milk and sugaree
You squidgy-nosed choc-biccy eater, Gunga Ken.'
The uniform 'e wore
Was jodpurs, puttees an' all,
An' a pagri neatly tied upon 'is 'ead.
'Is belt; light, dark blue and green,
Shorts: wide, khaki, starched and seamed.
'An with marchin' troops up front 'e always led.
But not always from there
Did 'e lay 'Is wires bare
But 'oft was seen in Catterick.
Of teachin' soldiers young
His fame was often sung
But 'e was still known to take the Mick.
It was Ken! Ken! Ken!'
'You serious lookin' awficer, Gunga Ken.'
But they all loved 'im dearly
As 'e dealt with 'em quite fairly.
'You're a smashin' kinda bloke, Gunga Ken.'
'E would dot an' dash as one
Till the longest day was done,
An didn't seem to tire like other men.
But if you 'ad a thirst
The man that spied you first
Was our good old beer drinkin' Gunga Ken.
'E 'as now 'ung up 'is spurs
To grow flowers, apples an' pears
An' plague the local church, shops and sales-men.
But long will we remember
'Is berfday in December,
Cos 'es a true and loyal friend is our Ken.
'So Ken, Ken of Blighty,
You wise old comrade and matey.
The time has come at last
To revel in your past,
Whilst we all raise our glass to you that's Eighty!'

Leighton – Capt D. F. Leighton served in the Royal Signals for twenty-two years. He died on 16 Febuary 1999, from lung cancer, aged 68 years. He was a good man.

Mehrtens - R.N. 'Bob' **Mehrtens** died just a few days short of his ninetieth birthday and sadly just three weeks after the death of his wife. In earlier years Bob had been a good attendee at the Branch meetings, of the Northern Ireland RSA, but for the last 23 years he had not been in good health. During this time he always appreciated the regular visits of the Branch. We were represented at both funerals. He will be sadly missed.

Underwood - Capt Sidney Underwood. Sidney died on 18 January. He was, until his recent illness, an active member of the Association. He had been Chairman, Vice Chairman and an active member of the Dinner Committee. **Sidney** joined Second WNE Middlesex Yeomanry in 1939. He was commissioned in 1941 and served mainly with the Royal Engineers. He was demobbed in 1946. At his funeral **Trumpeter Jim Norris,** from the Middlesex Yeomanry Band, played 'The Last Post'. Our thoughts are with his wife **Anthea** during this difficult time.

Webb - Brigadier Patrick Webb MBE, who died on the 14 December 1998 aged 73 after a relatively short illness borne with fortitude and great dignity, served in the Army for 34 years. He was a totally committed and proud member of his Corps. His hallmarks were the quiet charm, courteousness, modesty and unassuming manner in the way he went about his business. This he combined with determination, wit, humour and attention to detail, no matter what the challenge. He possessed the ability to get on well with people at all levels. He was a man of the utmost integrity who always stood steadfastly by his Christian principles, in which he rigorously believed. He was in every way a fine officer and a model for others to follow.

Patrick Henry Fane Webb was born in Louth, Lincolnshire on 12 February 1925. He was educated at Lincoln School and Lincoln Technical College before joining the Royal Signals in May 1945. He was commissioned at the Royal Signals OCTU, Mhow, Central India September 1946. He continued to serve in the Far East before joining the staff of the Army Apprentice School, Harrogate in 1949. Later that year he took over command of the Motor Cycle Display Team. He often recounted an error of judgement during this tour that resulted in his being unmistakably singed while attempting the 'fire jump'. Following a year as adjutant of 1st Training Regiment he was posted to Korea initially as Brigade Signal Officer, 28th Commonwealth Brigade and then as Adjutant of the 1st Commonwealth Divisional Signal Regiment where he was a great exponent of 'grinding in' young officers. He ended his time in Korea as Staff Captain AQ of the Divisional HQ. He was made MBE for his service in Korea.



On returning to the UK in late 1953 he spent two years as SO3 HQ Western Command before attending the Staff College, Camberley, from where he was posted first as DAAG(Plans) HQ BAOR and then as GSO2 (Signals) at the Joint Services Amphibious Warfare College. In 1961 he commenced what was to prove one of his most satisfying appointments, command of 249 Signal Squadron. In December 1962, following an insurrection, he took the majority of his Squadron to Brunei. He became the first Force Signal Officer to the Commander British Forces Borneo, **General Sir Walter Walker**. It was typical of **Patrick** that he could have returned to his family in Singapore for Christmas 1962 but it was his view that, as his soldiers where unable to do so he would remain with them. He wrote several articles on his Borneo experiences. His views on this stage of his career can not be better summarised than in his own words.. 'What are my lasting memories of Brunei? Firstly the wonderful experience of having trained 249 Signal Squadron in Singapore and Malaya for nearly two years and then having the opportunity of taking it to Brunei and working under operational conditions. Secondly the morale of the Squadron and throughout my thirty years with the Corps, I have never come across such a wonderful bunch of soldiers. They worked hard, played hard and gave me one hundred per cent loyalty. I could not have asked for a happier time.' He was Mentioned in Despatches for his service. In 1963 he attended the Joint Services Staff College before being posted as DAA&QMG Joint Allied Planning Staff Commanders in Chief (West). He commanded 3rd Division Headquarters and Signal Regiment in Bulford from January 1967 to March 1969 and then spent just over a year as a member of the Directing Staff of the Royal Naval Staff College. As a Colonel he held appointments in the SOinC's Directorate and as Assistant Director of Defence Policy (Army). In February 1975 he spent a year as BGS Signals, an appointment which he returned to following two years commanding 2 Signal Brigade. He was appointed ADC to Her Majesty the Queen in 1978. He retired from the Army in July 1979.

On retirement from the Corps he joined the Security Department of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Outside his profession he had many interests. He was a keen sailor throughout his career in the Army and was Commodore of the Royal Signals Yacht Club from 1976 to 1979. On giving up this appointment he was made Honorary Rear Commodore for life. He was instrumental in obtaining finance for and commissioning of a new Corps yacht in 1976. On one occasion, at the start of one of the Royal Signals Yacht Club rallies he was inadvertently left behind on the jetty. It was not until the rest of the crew were well out of Portsmouth harbour that they discovered he was not on board. Even in these circumstances he was calm, standing on the pontoon waiting to be picked up - and what is more he saw the humorous side of it. He was a keen fisherman, fishing the local rivers around his home during his latter years at Ansty, near Shaftesbury. He ran his local Club and put many hours of hard and energetic work into maintaining the banks and improving the water flow. **Patrick** was married to **Anthea** in 1956, they had two children, **Caroline** and **Nicholas**. The whole Corps would like to extend the deepest sympathy on the loss of an outstanding husband and father.

Williamson – WO2 Dorothy 'Dot' **Caroline Williamson** died aged 84 years on 30 January 1999. I first met **Dot** in 1963 when I joined 46 Signal Regiment TA at the Kingsway TA Centre, Derby. She was an awe inspiring senior member of the WRAC element of 1 Sqn; I was the newest ex-National Service Subaltern. Over 35 years later and right up to the time of her death, **Dot** was still serving at the Kingsway TA Centre (and still awe inspiring) as the Chairwoman of the Derby Branch of the RSA.

Dot was a Derbyshire girl. Born in Sudbury, she lived most of her life in Allestree, where her funeral took place at Saint Edmund's church on 5 February. Before joining the TA she served in the Air Training Corps and when her TA service ended in 1965 she continued as a very active member of the Royal Signals Association and became a case-worker for SSAFA. In recent years she also ran the Sergeant's Mess bar at the Kingsway TA Centre.

Dot became Chairwoman of the Derby Branch in 1967 and was the driving force over the next 32 years. Her energy and dedication were amazing and the success of the Branch under her leadership is apparent in the size of its membership and the range of its activities. More important, however, was the conscientious approach she adopted and insisted upon in all cases of illness and hardship among local members and ex-members of the Corps. **Dot**'s outstanding contribution was recognised by the award of Honour Membership of the Association in 1987. Even from her hospital bed in her last few days she kept her hand on the reins of Branch business, planning this year's Annual Dinner, which will take place, as she would have wished, on 27 March.

At **Dot**'s funeral her husband, to whom in recent years of ill-health she had given such dedicated care, and her family were supported by large numbers of friends and colleagues. The Royal Signals Association was well represented, the Derby Branch Standard was paraded and the Corps Collect was read. She will be sorely missed.

Manning – Randal Bernard Manning served with the Corps first at 6BTR (Junior Leaders Regt) at Denbury from 1956/58. He then went to Munchen-Gladbach. **Randal Manning** passed away on 19 March 1998 in South Attleboro (Boston) USA.

Nimmo – The recent death of **Mr Derek Nimmo**, the comic actor, revived the memories of **Lt Col (Rtd) H. M. A. Bonaker**, of events that place in March 1973. **Mr Nimmo** did his National Service (1948/50) with the Corps in Cyprus, where he was promoted to Corporal. His obituary, in the 'Daily Telegraph stated, '. . . [there] he began to develop his interest in food and drink.' – clearly another success story for our Corps!

Lt Col (Rtd) Bonaker's meeting with **Mr Nimmo** took place during the time that the Corps had Public Duties in London, in 1973. Here he joined them on Buckingham Palace Forecourt for the Changing of the Guard. The following day, after dismounting, they spent the day together, and in the evening he joined them in the Soldiers' Mess. There he met most, if not all, of the Corps' contingent during two hours of intense relaxation! He made a great impression on all those who met him, and he had clearly enjoyed his brief time as a Signaller. Those who knew him and also his many friends in the Corps will be saddened by his passing.

LATE NEWS . . .

MEMORIES

Mr B. Spencer

There will have been many exciting stories both told and untold, by many army Operators involved in various battles over the years. Perhaps not pictorially in the same category as the Radio Ops sending out distress call signs from a sinking liner at sea. I was not a hero, like some, but I did see action a few times, doing my job under difficult circumstances. With this in mind, my experiences might give the newcomers an idea of what it was like 'in the olden days'!

Our group, 33 Brick (Beach) Sigs, was a part of the 8th Army and we boarded *The Sobietski* in 1942 and sailed along the Suez Canal to Port Said. From here, having joined a convoy, we set out for an unknown destination somewhere in the Mediterranean. We were allocated Mess Decks and the organisation was good up to that point, but out of the hundreds on that merchant ship, who do you suppose was without a hammock – myself. Protesting and suggesting various ways of overcoming this dilemma was to come to nothing. As there was rough seas for the next three nights and four days, I got very little proper sleep. The ship arrived at Sicily a short while before dawn, by which time I had fastened two navy life belts round my waist, a No. 18 Radio on my back along with my harness loaded with all my other gear. My mate and I clambered up onto the open deck, in the blackout to find the Polish cooks with a stall set up. A small light shone beneath a canopy showing some delicious smelling brown sausages – but nobody was helping themselves to them and they seemed a bit puzzled. With a bit of body language I pretended to eat one whilst at the same time making a sea motion with my hands and pretending to be violently sick – they soon understood.

There was a queue for the Landing Crafts, which were held by pulley ropes on davits, and the men climbed in. A voice called out, 'Room for two more', and our Lance Corporal pushed us forward and we got the last two bench seats in the stern, plus two cardboard containers to be sick in. There was a terrific bang as a wave hit us under the keel whilst the craft was being lowered. The two hooks were released and the freed craft tossed around like a cork, up and down, round and round. The engine started and joining the others we proceeded to go ashore. A glider's fuselage and some drowned airborne soldiers were passed on the way, then suddenly the craft scraped to a halt. The ramp flopped down and the men in front with rifles disappeared into 'the valley of death'. My feeling at this point in time was just to get my feet on solid ground and I didn't care what happened afterwards.

We helped each other up and stumbled to the ramp. We were just about to step off when a sailor's voice said, 'You'd better sit on the edge.' This we did and I realised at once that my legs were dangling in the water, when I was expecting to step onto a dry beach. The Sailor then wished us good luck and gave us both a gentle shove off the end. We both landed upright and my mate said that the water was up to his waist, he wasn't as tall as me. The Landing Craft's engines started up. It went into reverse and was soon gone. All we heard now was the crackling of rifles on the distant ashore and there was the sound and feel of the wind on our backs, so like two zombies supporting each other we stumbled forward. Every step we thought would bring us up higher out of the water but the reverse happened and the water was now up to our chests. I suggested that we undid the belt buckle on our harness and let everything slide off, however, the next few steps brought us up on the slope of the beach itself. It had become evident that we must have come over a sand hump or bar under the surface of the sea and running parallel to the shore.

The find sand wasn't solid earth, but Praise the Lord, it was good enough for me. There was a faint light in the sky and we could make out shapes around us and see the flashes of exploding ammunition. A big man came towards us, he seemed to be the size of a barn door. 'Who are you?' he said in a strong voice. 'Beach Signals,' we replied. 'Beach Signals!' he exploded, 'What the !!xxo? are you doing here, we haven't got all the !!xxo? infantry ashore yet! Dig yourselves a hole somewhere out of the way. Keep your head down! Can't you hear the !!xxo? bullets going past?' Funnily enough that was the first time I had heard a live bullet go past – for those who have never heard one it goes zzzzz . . .ip! Come to think of it the Navy Beachmaster, when he left us didn't bend double. I doubt if he could have, I think he must have had a suit of armour over chain mail on underneath his uniform.

With a load like ours it was difficult to bend low. However, like a couple of Notre Dame Hunchbacks we made our way across the foreshore to where a small path led inland. A soldier suddenly appeared. It was too late to get our revolvers out of their holsters. 'I wouldn't go down there if I were you. One of our men put his foot on a anti-personnel mine and got killed. There might be more of them,' he said. Daylight brought into view a coastal road with a bridge so we made for this. A good road ran from the beach to the village of Bassible, about ten miles from Syracuse and we were on the extreme end of the landings. As we got under the arch of the bridge, I noticed a parapet, about 4' 6" high, running down one side. I told my mate I was going to have a well deserved nap, took my equipment off climbed up, got my gear lifted up to me laid down and immediately fell asleep. The next thing I knew someone was shaking my arm vigorously. It was my Lance Corporal, who told me to get down, get my equipment on and follow him, which I did. I noticed that the sun was now well above the horizon as I followed the Corporal back to the beach. 'This is your spot, dig a hole and set your radio up for transmitting,' he told me and then left. As I prepared to do this the sound of a plane was heard coming fast towards us. I looked at the two men on the Bofors gun, not more than twenty yards away and they were trying to target on it. All of a sudden it came out of the sun and with its cannons blazing away it started down the beach. The Bofors gun opened up, I put my head behind the set and tilted my 'tin hat' towards the enemy fighter bomber; feeling at that particular moment as though I were the size of an elephant and that he couldn't possibly miss me. I prayed to God to make me the size of the ant I could see as I looked down at the sand. Everyone was dashing for cover, the noise was getting louder and then there was the terrible scream of a descending bomb going past me followed by a tremendous thud and a split second later the explosion. Silence ensued and very reluctantly I opened my eyes. To my astonishment it looked as though I was travelling very rapidly heavenwards. 'This is it,' I thought. 'This is the end and you are on your way.' My hands decided to feel around for any damage I might have

sustained, but no. Then they extended out and I could feel fine sand coming down, that had been blown skyward, what a relief! A voice shouted, 'Help! My mates are underneath.' I quickly got up and went to the edge of the crater, a few yards away, looked down and saw a soldier pulling away at the fine sand with his hands. He looked like a dog looking for a bone. The gun was underneath as well. I'd gone half way down when an officer appeared and called out, 'Where's the operator for this set?' I said 'I'm here Sir,' and climbed back up again. 'You know you haven't to leave your post under any circumstances,' he rebuked me. 'Sorry Sir, it was done instinctively.'

By now my body and mind were forcing me to resist any more pressure of any kind and I just laid back on the sand and looked at him with a bemused expression. He used the RT on the set and asked for another operator to replace me. No sooner was the message sent than the Lance Corporal appeared with another replacement. I was told to follow the Corporal back along the beach to our Group. There they were on the side of a hillock and what's this? A chair placed amongst them! The Corporal said that that was for me. As I sat on it and looked down towards the beach my Sergeant and two officers were sat at a table. It then dawned on me that I was being Court Martialled! The 'Legal' Officer asked me my name and then read out a lot of jargon, too fast for my tired brain to comprehend. 'What have you got to say?' he asked at the end. Not knowing what the charge was, but guessing that it was for not being at my post but asleep I said that I'd no hammock for the sea-crossing and in consequence no sleep. He turned to the Sergeant and asked if he knew about this. The reply was, 'Yes.' Then the same question was put to the Officer, who concurred. 'Case dismissed,' said the Legal officer, picked up his papers and left.

One of the lads gave me a lit cigarette, which I was grateful for and the Sergeant came up and asked if I wanted anything to eat, I told him all that I wanted was a cup of tea and some sleep. With that we walked to the edge of a field where beneath the hedgerow were some neat slit trenches. I lowered myself into one with two blankets and a mug of tea. They put a gate over the top to prevent any artillery bits dropping onto me. As I sipped my tea, that tasted wonderful, I pondered, had there been another serviceman, anywhere, who had gone to have a sleep in the middle of a battle, had a Court Martial and got his case dismissed. I then slept continuously for the next 24 hours.

ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE OF SCIENCE SHRIVENHAM EXERCISE SHRIVENHAM GHUMNE '98 A TREKKING EXPEDITION TO NEPAL

By Lt Colin Kell R. Signals

On 7 August 1998 three personnel from the Royal Military College of Science (RMCS) Shrivenham; **Lts Colin Kell** Royal Signals (leader), **Hawthorn Lockwood** AGC (SPS) and **Nick Stanford** RLC departed for Nepal. During the second year summer vacation military undergraduates at RMCS are required to organise and participate in an overseas adventure training expedition. However, between them the members of the group had already taken full advantage of the many opportunities at RMCS and had participated in four other expeditions in the previous two years. So rather than break track we decided to bite our lips and spend some more of the unit's funds. The flight from Heathrow took us via Dohar (Qatar) and on to Kathmandu where we were met by **LCpl Milan Rai** Queens Ghurka Signals (2 Sig Regt) who took a break from his leave to explore the Annapurnas.

A few days were initially spent in Kathmandu carrying out pre-trek administration and acclimatising to the heat, high humidity and rain of the Monsoon season. This took a little longer than expected due to a number of festivals over the weekend of our arrival, which closed most of the government buildings. From Kathmandu we travelled by bus to the start point of the trek. Buses in Nepal fall into three categories: Tourist, Swiss and Local: Tourist buses are the most comfortable and therefore the most expensive; Swiss buses are really Indian buses and are 'middle of the road', and local buses are the cheapest and roughest. On tourist buses you are guaranteed a seat (only one person per seat!) and the bus will only stop for rest breaks and not to let on any of the locals. Local buses can be very uncomfortable and are always full of passengers with everything from goats to sacks of rice inside and as experienced in one case around thirty people on the roof.

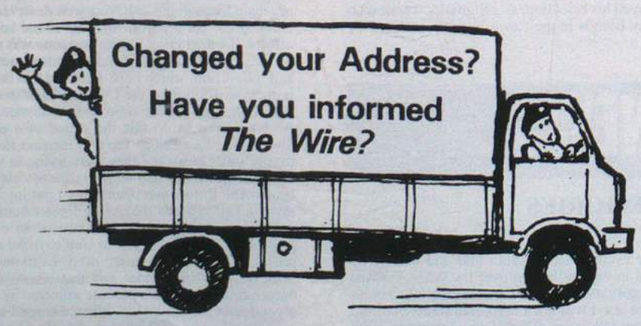
Over the next 15 days of our trek took us on a very popular route known as the Annapurna Circuit, which is some 130 miles long and climbs from its start point at 823m up to 5416m and back down to 700m at the finish. The trail runs from the eastern side of the Annapurnas from Besisahar along the raging Marsyangdi River, over the Thorung La Pass (5416m) and back along the western side of the Annapurnas following the Koli Gandaki River to Baglung. We soon got into a routine, which began with reveille around 0700hrs and on the trail for 0800hrs. NAAFI break Nepalese style was around 1030hrs with vegetable noodle soup and lunch was between 1230-1400hrs. The day would end around 1600hrs with a cold shower and an attempt to dry out clothing for the next day. Lunch and evening meals were the standard trekking meal of Dal Bhaat Tarkari and meat (when available). On one occasion our evening meal of Dal Bhaat was enhanced with the luxury of freshly prepared goat meat - it was an interesting sight to see the "butcher" at work with his kukhuri. Evenings were usually spent playing cards or reading and listening to the torrential downpour of the monsoon rains.

The lodges or hotels along the Annapurna Circuit vary both in size and standard from very small wooden affairs to large stone buildings. They are all quite basic and carry the promise of '24 hour hot running shower'! Many lodges promise this facility but few provide it - at least not during the 'off season'. The main dangers encountered during the trek were from illness (Delhi Belly or Acute Mountain Sickness) swollen rivers and landslides. There was no room for mistakes with the latter as there was usually only one way down - straight into a very swollen river. Although not a danger leeches are certainly not pleasant and are in abundance during the monsoon season.

During the remainder of our time in Nepal we took in some general sightseeing, a jungle safari in the Chitwan National Park and also managed to fit in a weeklong trek in the Helambu Region (Langtang National Park). The latter offered some spectacular early morning views and a closer look at Nepali culture away from the beaten tourist track. During the expedition we experienced a great variety of scenery, wildlife and dangers, which made the trekking all the more challenging. Our only regret is that we had to make the expedition during the monsoon season when many of the spectacular Himalayan views were restricted by low cloud cover.



On the trail
(L-R): Lt Lockwood, Krishna the Guide, Lt Kell and LCpl Milan



THE ROYAL SIGNALS CHENEVIX-TRENCH PRIZE ESSAY COMPETITION 1999

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Available to the Retired Corps, civilians or officers and soldiers of other arms and services.

None of the last three awards will be awarded to the winner of the first prize.

The objective of the competition is:
"To encourage the study of all aspects of relevance to The Royal Corps of Signals and, in so doing, enhance the reputation of the Corps and its Institution and provide a fitting memorial to its benefactor".

RULES:

1. The Competition will be known as **"The Royal Signals Chenevix-Trench Prize Essay Competition".**
2. Entries will be welcomed from anyone.
3. Essays may be on any topic of relevance to the Corps. In addition the SOinC (A) will nominate one subject of current interest for those who wish to use it. Topic: *"In the US, the military swallow new technology hook, line and sinker; in the UK we only nibble. We see it happening again with IT"*. Comment.
4. All essays must be submitted complete with duplicate. They may be of any length, and preferably should be typewritten in double line spacing, but manuscript entries will be accepted and will not incur a penalty provided they are legible. Essays will be judged on quality, not quantity, of reading matter.
5. Classified matter must **NOT** be included.
6. When a reference is made to any work, its title and author must be quoted. Quotations and extracts must be acknowledged as such to the title and author concerned.
7. Every author must write under a nom de plume and must submit with the essay a sealed envelope with the nom de plume on the outside and name and address inside.
8. Essays should reach the Secretary of the Royal Signals Institution,
   Regimental Headquarters,
   Blandford Camp,
   Blandford Forum,
   DORSET DT11 8RH
   NOT LATER THAN 30TH SEPTEMBER 1999.
9. Adjudication will be arranged by the Council of the Institution.
10. The Council of the Institution reserves the right to publish any essay submitted, in the Journal, whether it wins a prize or not.

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THE Wire

and the Journal

June 1999



The Royal Corps of Signals

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The Royal Signals Magazine

June 1999 Vol. 53 No: 3

The Wire

(Incorporating the Journal of the Royal Signals Institution)

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Editor Lt Col (Retd) P. Valder
Assistant Editor Mrs J. A. Herring

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FRONT COVER

The Antarctic viewed from the Research Station at Rothera Base, when visited by **Cpl McMullen** whilst on six month attachment with the British Antarctic Survey Team. (See 30 Sig Regt Notes page 231).

BACK COVER

1 Squadron Royal Signals - ATR Bassingbourn
4 January - 26 March 1999

WHAT IS THE ORIGIN OF THE CORPS CAP BADGE 'JIMMY'? FIND OUT AT
www.royalsignals.army.org.uk/museum

LOST MEDALS FOUND

From: **Mr S. Crowley**
137 Clareville Road
Orpington
KENT BR5 1RY
Tel: 01689 858990

Dear Sir,

I recently found three medals that belong to a member, past or present, of the Royal Corps of Signals. They were found in the bowels of my car which I bought from Sittingbourne in Kent some three or four years ago, and I would very much like to return them to their rightful owner. The full details are as follows:

Cpl G. K. Galyer - R. SIGNALS
1 x GSM – Northern Ireland
1 x UN
1 x Long Service

Should any of your readers know **Cpl Galyer** or his family please let them know that I have the medals and then they can be returned.

Authors alone are responsible for the content of their articles. The opinions expressed in the articles of this publication are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy and views, official or otherwise, of the Royal Signals or the Ministry of Defence. This publication should be treated with discretion by the recipient.

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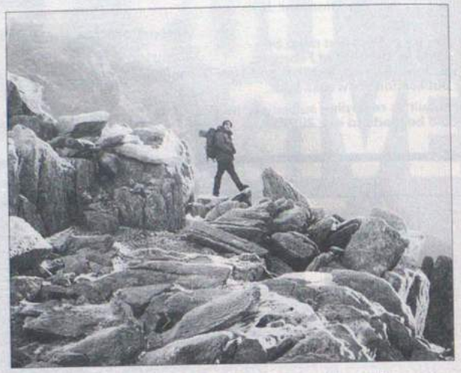
YEOMAN OF SIGNALS COURSE GAINS HND RECOGNITION

Lengthy background work and successful negotiation between the Royal School of Signals and Edexcel recently has led to the Yeoman of Signals course being accredited for the award of Higher National Diploma (HND) in Communications System Management. This is a significant development towards improving civilian qualifications gained by attendance on military career courses and helps raise the profile and quality of output from the Royal School of Signals. HNDs will be awarded to students from Yeoman of Signals Course No. 49 onwards.



The Commander of the School, Col K. J. Hadfield with Representatives from Courses 49 and 50
(L-R): SSgt (YofS) Ireland, SSgt (YofS) Buckley and SSgt (YofS) Hawkins

WANTED
ADVENTURE TRAINING INSTRUCTORS



Whitespear Troop 11 Signal Regiment conducts Adventurous Training activities for Trainees. It is in desperate need for Sergeants and Corporals to be full time instructors for the following pursuits: Rock-Climbing, Canoeing, Caving and Trekking. For further information contact the 2IC 11 Signal Regiment or **WO1 Waters** on Blandford Military 2789 or 2903.

THE SIGN OF THE DOUBLE 'T'

Sentinel Press

THE 50TH NORTHUMBRIAN DIVISION JULY 1943 TO DECEMBER 1944

Written by B. S. Barnes

To be published in August by Sentinel Press as an A5 Paperback – 31 contemporary photographs, twelve portraits, maps of the Sicily Campaign, The Battle of Primosole Bridge, the assault on Gold Beach 1944, the European Campaign, Rolls of Honour, Lists of Honours and Awards. Many Corps members are recorded in the Honours and Awards Appendix and the Lists of the Fallen.

Based on first hand accounts by the men at the sharp end and upon exhaustive research using a wide range of previously unseen sources. This story of the famous '50 Div' is of interest to a much wider audience than the men who fought in it and their families and friends. The men who served in it's ranks were drawn from the length and breadth of this country though, originally, it's base was firmly planted in the Tyne-Tees area, hence the double 'T'. This is a tale of death and sacrifice. Comradeship is a mirror image of all the Divisions who fought in the second European 'Great War' and stands as a grim reminder of the debt which we all owe that generation.

Projected retail price :
£11.99 direct from the publishers or appointed booksellers

For further information and signed copies, only £10.00 to ex-servicemen and women, contact:
Mr B. S. Barnes, 3 Mansfield Court, Newland Park, Kingston upon Hull, East Yorkshire, HU5 2DF
Telephone: 01482 346704

THE JORDAN SERVICE MEDAL

The Jordan Service Medal approved for British Ex Servicemen by the late King Hussein of Jordan, for service in his kingdom during 1948/57 and again in the crisis of 1958 has been given gracious permission to continue by the new King, His Majesty King Abdullah II. This Medal has gained entry into the next Medal Year Book because of its uniqueness and the personal involvement of the late King Hussein. For further information write or phone: **Mr G. E. Harris**, 124 Haven Park Crescent, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire SA61 1DS. Tel (01437) 768668.

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MOVEMENTS

OFFICERS

APRIL

Name and Rank	*Unit to which posted*
Lt Col J. K. McKee MBE	32 Signal Regiment (Volunteers)
Maj K. J. Graham	SANGCOM
Maj S. R. Mannings	DCIS (A)
Maj R. G. Nicholson	21 Signal Regiment (Air Support)
Maj C. E. Rankin	3 (UK) Div & Signal Regiment
Maj A. Robertson	SHAPE ACE COMMSEC
Maj A. S. Williams	HQ AMF(L) (BAE)
A/Maj C. N. Cooper	Exchange Officers Australia
Capt D. Alexander	JSSU, Digby
Capt J. R. Anderson	7 Signal Regiment (Corps Main HQ)
Capt R. J. Anderton-Brown	2 Signal Regiment
Capt N. J. Bain	30 Signal Regiment
Capt G. W. Barber	The Royal School of Signals
Capt L. D. Burrell BSc (Hons)	37 Signal Regiment (Volunteers)
Capt S. A. Clarke GM QGM	24 AirMob Bde & Sig Sqn (210)
Capt E. F. Clee	JSSU, RAF Digby
Capt P. Gower	HS HQ 1 (UK) Armd Div & Sig Regt
Capt P. H. Grainger	38 Signal Regiment (Volunteers)
Capt A. G. R. Hoensch	40 Signal Regiment (Volunteers)
Capt J. A. Honeyman	5 Comms Coy (Volunteers)
Capt G. R. Johnson	HQ 220 Signal Squadron
Capt R. D. W. Rumsey	JCU (NI)
Capt M. A. Schofield	HS HQ 1 (UK) Armd Div & Sig Regt
Capt N. Turnbull	14 Signal Regiment (EW)
Capt R. J. Webb	14 Signal Regiment (EW)

MAY

Name and Rank	*Unit to which posted*
Col M. J. Dent MBE	OCE HQ LAND
Lt Col R. B. Davis	DIPT
Lt Col D. P. Meyer	14 Signal Regiment (EW)
Lt Col P. Parfitt	The Royal School of Signals
Lt col P. Richards	HQ Royal Signals
Maj P. W. Glibbery	HQ DCSA
Maj A. A. S. Harwell	R Sigs/Intelligence Division
Maj S. A. Leigh	3 (UK) Div HQ & Signal Regiment
Maj R. Morley	243 Signal Squadron
Maj D. A. Sullivan	ES 31 CIS/SP DGES (A)
Maj G. Thomas	HQ DCSA
Maj D. Weir MBE	Special Signals Support Unit
Maj J. P. Wilson	AD OR (TC&M)
A/Maj C. N. Cooper	Exchange Officers Australia
Capt R. M. Brown	HQ 143 (WM) Bde/9 Regt
Capt A. G. Carroll	238 Signal Squadron
Capt S. L. Copley	HQ DCSA
Capt R. C. Cory	7 Signal Regiment
Capt P. J. Cooper	Army CIS Eng Gp
Capt I. R. Hargreaves	225 Signal Squadron
Capt S. Palfreyman	9 Signal Regiment (Radio)
Capt R. J. Webb	2 Signal Regiment
Capt D. T. H. Wilson	7 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (207)
Lt R. J. Lloyd BA (Hons)	HQ LAND

WOs and SNCOs

APRIL

Rank and Name	*Unit to which Posted*
SSgt M. A. Kirkham	31 Signal Regiment (Volunteers)
A/SSgt K. P. Innes	1 (UK) Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt
A/SSgt S. L. Cain	9 Signal Regiment (Radio)
A/SSgt R. S. Dyer	5 AB Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (216 Para)
Sgt YofS K. M. Book	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt YofS S. R. Hillier	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt YofS S. J. Ridout	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt YofS A. Brown	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt YofS M. A. Jones	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt YofS H. M. Skidmore	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt YofS M. E. Jones	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt YofS M. Hill	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt YofS D. J. Thomas	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt YofS J. Nixon	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt A. J. Sparling	ATACCS
Sgt P. R. Webster	HQ DCSA
Sgt J. W. Lester	SSSU
Sgt C. G. Loughlin	RMAS Sandhurst
Sgt M. A. Baxter	94 Signal Squadron
Sgt A. M. Combe	5 AB Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (216 Para)
Sgt T. C. Hopkins	7 Signal Regiment
A/Sgt A. G. Doe	1 (UK) Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt
A/Sgt K. N. Tweddle	7 Signal Regiment
A/Sgt P. D. R. Heron	The Royal School of Signals
A/Sgt J. M. Simpson	The Royal School of Signals
A/Sgt A. G. Barker	30 Signal Regiment
A/Sgt P. S. Parkes	39 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (213)
A/Sgt S. L. Arundel	1 (UK) Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt

MAY

Rank and Name	*Unit to which Posted*
SSgt G. J. Chapman	The Royal School of Signals
SSgt J. Ramsdale	HQ NI & 15 Signal Regiment
SSgt K. F. McHugh	CIS Support Division
A/SSgt C. A. M. Cooper	1 (UK) Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt
A/SSgt C. Symonds	2 Signal Regiment
A/SSgt J. Barsley	71 Signal Regiment (Volunteers)
Sgt G. McGachy	1 (UK) Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt
Sgt B. A. Clark	ATR Bassingbourn
Sgt M. A. Hamlet	35 Signal Regiment (Volunteers)
Sgt J. M. Batts	3 (UK) Div HQ & Signal Regiment
Sgt J. R. Thomas	HQ NI & 15 Signal Regiment
Sgt S. J. Parke	ATR Bassingbourn
Sgt J. E. Lyons	4 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (204)
Sgt N. J. Watt	16 Royal Artillery
A/Sgt G. L. Christie	Belfast Battalion
A/Sgt R. D. McCorkell	3 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (203)
A/Sgt D. E. Leask	24 CTT

NEWS FROM HEADQUARTERS

HEADQUARTERS 2ND (NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS) SIGNAL BRIGADE & COTSWOLD GARRISON

'I have a wheelbarrow, the wheel it goes round' and gains an awful lot of momentum in the process. There has been rather a lot of planning activity by the Brigade staff for the millennium, and we're not talking about parties. Such is the importance, the promotion of the SOI, **Lt Col Roger Davenport** is likely to be delayed so that he will be here over the critical period - talk about accountability! The Y2K working group have got something rather substantial to busy themselves with over the coming months. No doubt, more detail will follow but you'll just have to wait for the next edition. Just what are we up to? Wait and see! It's a good job that the Exercise name to follow in the Sword, Shield and (next) Spear series was not prefixed by Asparagus. Not quite the right sort of image, however, nutritious. New into the team is **Capt Anna Tait** who 'marks' the rise in our female representation by 50%.

The officers' mess is being redecorated in a daring new colour. It's as if Lawrence from *Changing Rooms* has been involved, it's Purple. Well at least in spirit, as Corsham Station is to come under joint service management. This is all part of the assimilations by DCSA, also known as the Borg, (to watchers of *Star Trek*), that has brought about massive building programmes including the creation of Pockeridge Park from a number of Omar Homes to provide accommodation for the overstretched mess. **Maj Mervyn Johnston**, has been at the forefront of these matters.

After many years in the army (almost serving in a third decade), the awracnaphobie (fear of WRAC with hairy legs), **Capt Ian Ellis** has decided to call it a day and move off to pastures new, to cut out a life as a civilian. He was one once, although he never really had the chance to do it properly. Since then he has apparently dabbled with some of the aspects

involved, to hone the skills necessary for his new life. He wants to travel the world, meet interesting people and work with children - something he almost achieved in the army. He wants to buy the slightly faster motorbike with his resettlement grant. Amongst other things he is looking forward to unpacking his kit. His replacement is **Capt John Russell**, who, like so many of this Brigade, is to join us under the Full-Time Reserve Service scheme. Could this be the future of the army? If not, it certainly seems to be part of the present. As the debonair **Capt Dave Drinkall** is off on his ski instructors course (own leave entitlement), it has fallen to the outgoing **Capt Ian Ellis** to organise his own dining out. Stand by for a bachanal evening.

In keeping with the quality nurturing of the Brigade, four members happened across the Army Golf Skills course. General reports were of aching muscles, early nights and weather beaten, but smiling faces. The Comd kept his talents under wraps until the last day to soundly beat the other members of his group in a situation reminiscent of The Sting. Best dressed golfer must go to the Comd's driver **LCpl Mark Collins,** who from a sartorial perspective, played off scratch. Another sliced more balls than Delia Smith has cakes, and the last hooked more balls than John Wilson has fish. They are to remain anonymous to preserve their honour, of which they had little (golfing pun).

ACISG NEWS

The ACISG management cell is expanding with the arrival of **Capt Andy Fletcher,** a former regular for the old timers, on, wait for it - FTRS from 37 Sig Regt (V). He was 21C HQ Sqn based in Redditch. He is to focus on performance monitoring and measurement as well as being involved in ACISG management planning in the broader sense. Planning for the transfer of OPCOM 81 Sig Sqn (V) from 21 Sig Regt (AS) to ACISG is underway with an effective date of 1 September 1999. Much work is still required to ensure a seamless transition. A steady flow of visitors to the Brigade has kept all staff foolish enough to disclose their prowess on powerpoint very busy. GOC 3 (UK) Div, **Maj Gen F. R. Dannant CBE MC** and ACOS G6 (CIS) HQ LAND, **Brig J. M. Shaw MBE** were amongst them. Meanwhile the athletic **Capt Tim Bamber** (FTRS) has been busy representing the Corps Officers rugby team against RMCS. No doubt his natural welsh rugby talent helped secure the victory.

BRIGADE WO'S DINNER 17 MARCH 1999

by the YofS (Yeoman of Brigade)

On Wednesday 17 March 1999, many of the Brigades finest (the Warrant Officers!) converged on Corsham. for a 'Mafioso' Dinner. Invited to the dinner were the 'godfathers of the Brigade, the Bde Comd (**Brig Gordon Hughes**), Controller ACISG **(Lt Col Malcolm Sinton)** and the COS **(Maj Paul Kelly**).

The dinner took place on St Patrick's Day which seemed to go down well with **WO2 (Paddy) Morrow** and the Bde Comd alike, the rest of us were just as happy as any excuse will do. The Bde Comd used this auspicious occasion to tell a few choice Irish jokes which were very well received and matched by **WO1 (GSM) Charlie Dubique**'s favourite 'From Us Coloured Kids joke'. The Corps Band provided a quintet for the evening that was very pleasing to the ears in between the scoff and the speeches. The only dodgy part was when one of their number went slightly mad during a boisterous piece yelling 'Yee ha!' at the top of his voice, (amazing how all free beer and self brought 'tinneys' loosens the larynx!)

After extremely good food and drink, the boys (and 1 girl **(WO1 RSM Angie Hillborn))** retired to the bar for a night cap (or 10). Much drinking, talking and laughing ensued into the wee small hours of the morning, however nothing untoward was to happen with all personnel being totally professional to the end. In fact, RSM 31 Sig Regt (V) **WO1 (RSM) John Gibson** was so keen that at 4 o'clock in the morning he decided it was time to carry out a CFT. This consisted of a zig zag walk to his accommodation which was only 5/6kms away in another part of Wiltshire complete with George boots and Mess kit! Good effort RSM!

The evening was deemed to be an outstanding success enjoyed by all that attended. It provided Warrant Officers from throughout the Brigade the opportunity to speak to their counterparts in other units and network ideas, thoughts and comments on all aspects of Brigade life. It has now set a precedent for future 'gatherings' which it is hoped will be able to take place at least once a year. Looking forward to the next one already!



HEADQUARTERS 11 SIGNAL BRIGADE

EXERCISE HERCULES FORUM – A REPORT FROM THE OPS ROOM

or Flt Lt Farid 'Top Gun' Khan's Adventures in Gibraltar

'The HQ has nominated you to attend Ex Hercules Forum as an Exercise augmentee.' My reluctance to spend one week out of the HQ on Exercise in Gibraltar, was evident to everyone in the office. The five minutes it took me to pack, after the briefest of glances at my diary, was evidence enough it would seem.

The outward journey was via Gatwick where, in the departures lounge, I played that well known tourist game of 'spot the military person in civvies'. I gauged my success by those, who on arrival in Gibraltar, boarded the military bus to our accommodation. Continuing in tourist mode, on the morning of my first day, I was met by the sight that many have seen before, on one side, the Rock dominating all, while on the other, the sea front stretched out towards Algeiras in Spain. The aims of the Exercise were to test the communications links between the Joint Task Force Headquarters (JTFHQ) and the Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ) and to test the Command and Control procedures of the Gibralter Joint Operations Cell (JOC). I quickly made the acquaintance of **WO2 (YofS) Jim Knight** and other members of 258 Sig Sqn (30 Sig Regt), and spent the day assisting with the unloading and testing of some of the communications and IS systems deployed by the Squadron. The next day saw the arrival of the Main Body, minus their equipment which, due to the RAF, had been delayed. Quickly realising that this temporary set back, along with a four hour Hercules flight, meant the RAF were not flavour of the month in the eyes of the Squadron, and that a change of beret and rank slides was insufficient camouflage, I decided to make a quick exit to see the Gibraltar JOC!

Once the equipment arrived, the Squadron quickly set into a routine. Extensive work was required to turn what had been a few derelict rooms into a comfortable and fully functioning HQ. Power, telephone and computer network cabling were laid to all cells within the JTFHQ. Telephone points were installed. The new IS system and the vast array of tails were run up and tested. At a separate site, ageing and temperamental HF equipment was set up to provide a strategic HF link. All such trips demand some R and R, I decided to go to Morocco. I crossed by ferry to Ceuta located on the tip of Africa. After an overnight stay in a B&B, I set off to explore the shopping delights of Morocco, only to find the majority of shops closed. I tried to query the situation with locals but was hampered somewhat by my lack of fluency in the Spanish language. The only words that I know, 'Vamoos Muchacho,' did not elicit the reasons why much of the town was closed. Fortunately, by conversing in French, I was able to discover that I was not in Morocco but was in fact still in Spain. Ceuta, being an enclave of Spain in Africa, had Friday off as a holiday! With some haste I went to a taxi stand to find transport to the border with Morocco. An international incident almost ensued, as taxi drivers argued over who should convey (and fleece!) this foreigner, to TaiToin, some 37km away. On arrival, I was quickly deluged by 'would be guides'. One individual, realising that I spoke English, thought that he would befriend me by speaking the lingo - in his best English, he greeted me with: 'Hello, you Eeenglish? Ah good, Luvely Jubly, me ole cocker. Good here innit. I support Newcastle Liverpool Albion Football Club!' Eight hours and much shopping later, I returned to Gibraltar. The next day I returned to the UK, eagerly looking forward to a week long course at Blandford. Overall it was an interesting and taxing Exercise that I would not need much encouragement to repeat.

(PS: There is only partial truth in the rumour that **Flt Lt Khan** left his hire car unlocked at Blandford all week only to have it removed by the hire company after he had loaded it for the return journey home.)

BUILD UP TO ANNUAL CAMP

The planning for this years FTX, Ex Able Condor (UK) continues at a pace. In March, Ex Spring Eagle saw the Brigade Staff, and an assorted contingent drawn from all Regiments in the Brigade, assemble at Donnington for the MEL writing weekend. This weekend was primarily a planning weekend for Ex Summer Eagle, which itself forms a staff proving Exercise for Ex Able Condor (UK) and allows the evaluation of Brigade Standing Instructions. The weekend was led by the COS **Maj Paul Hudson** ably assisted by **Maj Steve Bellerby**, the HICON and LOCON being driven respectively by our SO2 Ops/CIS **Maj Graham Addley** and DCOS **Maj Mike Wise**. This was an 'interesting' weekend and not one to be missed but even the more robust were feeling brain dead by the evening of the first day. However, in terms of Exercise event planning it was a great success. If anyone falls victim to any of the planned events during the forthcoming Exercise - they can be supplied with the name of the brain behind it .....at a price! The procedures behind the planning of the Exercise and its orchestration were impressive and, seriously, taking part in this Planning Exercise should be classed as compulsory training for any potential staff officer or trainer. Volunteers for next year will always be welcome.

ADVENTURE TRAINING

The week the 21-27 February saw the majority of the Headquarters away on adventure training. An Advance Party consisting of **Flt Lt Farid Khan, WO2 (RQMS) Steve Sadler** and **Sgt Nigel Jones** departed Donnington for Aviemore. Much to their relief they were greeted by a heavy fall of snow with more predicted for the weekend. Due to our hut accommodation not being available until the following day, and the anticipated excellent conditions, the only free accommodation in Aviemore was the Youth Hostel. It is as well that they all like children and believe in being in bed early! That night the Advance party met **Sgt Jim Lyons,** of the Corps and 24 Cdt Trg Team, who was to be one of our

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instructors. On Sunday morning, they took over the Feshiebridge Lodge (an RAF adventurous pursuits centre) and waited the late arrival of the Main Party. The first day of skiing started well with lots and lots of snow. Our joy was short lived, however, as we received the news that the slopes were closed due to high winds and poor visibility. Several hours later we set off for the slope, having spent the intervening time reminiscing about skiing in Austria, France and Switzerland where the snow was always deep, the sky blue and the slopes windless (not like Scotland!). The party was split into Advanced and Beginner Groups, the former under the instruction of **Capt Mark Brookes,** 34 Sig Regt, and the latter under **Sgt Lyons**.



Keep smiling lads and
they might not notice our skis are locked together.
Beginners Class: WO1(YofS) Pardew, WO2 (RQMS) Saddler, Flt Lt Khan

Despite a generous helping of snow, strong winds made skiing difficult. At the end of the first day a bruised and battered party returned to the Lodge, and, having devoured a super dinner cooked by **Sgt** 'Egon Ronay' **Jones**, went in search of physiotherapy and medicine; a walk to the local pub. Our enjoyment of the week increased as the weather and the skiing conditions continued to improve. Early to rise and early to bed (honest) worked for most but those 'Three Amigos' **Capts Mark Brookes**, **Nick Range** (33 Sig Regt) and **Jason Kennedy** (35 Sig Regt) found their body clocks out of synchronisation with everyone else's. Where did they get to until that time of the morning and why were they the only ones who got breakfast in bed!

As the week progressed the effort took its toll. The Advanced Group had by Day 4 managed to break **Maj Steve** 'But I always have morning-tea in bed' **Bellerby** and **Major Peter** 'I had an Army Youth Team in this area and Adam was my Sergeant' **Williams** and they swapped ski boots for walking boots. The Beginner Group quickly mastered the 'backside plough', and the need for a Banzai yell as one careers down the slope totally out of control. **Yeoman Pardew** was the only one of the this group who managed to break anything - the T Bar. An unofficial grading system soon emerged within the Beginner Group for the ski runs; a Blue Four meant a graded blue run on which one could expect to take four tumbles before getting to the bottom! The Advanced Group continued to try and break people and all had been impressed with **Capt Kennedy**'s stoicism until he too cracked, when, in the Landrover returning to the Lodge at night, he was heard to remark sleepily, 'They've got enormous rabbits in Scotland!' - *(The rabbits were deer).*

By the fifth day, and even better skiing conditions, the Beginner Group had advanced to longer runs, more falls, jumps, James Bond impressions and unintentional cartwheels. That evening saw the arrival of the Commander, **Brig Jonathan Cook**, and his driver **Cpl Simon Emmett**. Despite the fact that the Commander had had a long drive and an even longer day, he was quickly and easily prised from his bed for a quick half at the local Pub. The sense of competitiveness and the cheap price of the beer, encouraged the group to enter a quiz. Some hours and just a few pints later they came away winners. The comment of the day came as the COS, **Maj Paul Hudson**, pointed out to the Commander that the poster for the quiz was advertising 'promotions'. The Commander replied that any chance of promotion was like the quiz itself – pure trivia! On the last day of skiing the Commander, COS, and the three Amigos set off for the slopes where unfortunately, a sudden change in conditions had resulted in a major thaw.



The Commander skis with his Close Protection Team;
Capt Nick Range (left) and Captain Mark Brookes (right)

The injured went for a hike in Glenmore Forest while **Cpl Emmett** and **Sgt Jones**, the latter who seems to like unusually shaped saddles, went mountain biking. On return from the various activities, the Commander attempted to encourage the Captains out for a run, in vain! Clearly not career soldiers. That night, the group dined at a local hotel. It soon became obvious that the waitress, a lady of sensual and statuesque proportions, had probably served time as an instructor in a Military Corrective Training Centre (with an apology to close friends). As she served the food, she rebuked members of the group for the time that they spent over their choice of food: the COS for complaining that his was smaller than everyone else's (portion of soup that is) and the Commander for using a fish knife for his fish course. Only after serving the meal in Fawlty Towers fashion did she reveal that she had previously served in the South African Defence Force before deciding that being a waitress was her true forte!

The final day saw the departure of half the group, including the Commander. It was noted that the enthusiasm shown by two members of the group for an early morning bike ride vanished as soon as the Commander had left! The remainder of the party departed to Inverness, via a Battlefield Tour of Culloden, (the English won that one) and Fort George (built to make sure they never lost again). The COS's Combat Estimate and **Maj Bellerby**'s Logistic surmise of the battle were particularly well received. All agreed that although Fort George was very picturesque, the bitter weather and exposed location would place it very low in the 'posting preference' list. It stands to reason therefore that someone will get it as their next posting! After an early night and a farewell visit to the local pub, the remaining members of HQ 11 Sig Bde set off early Saturday morning on the journey home, eagerly looking forward to returning to work……NOT!

HAIL AND FAREWELL

The period has seen us say farewell to a few members of the Brigade Staff. Most notably, over Ex Spring Eagle, we said farewell to **Lt Col Roger Buston** whose time in the Brigade and regrettably the Corps has finished. Many TA officers throughout the Corps will remember him from his days as the SO1(V) at Blandford with responsibility for the success of the annual Lieutenant/Captain and Captain/Major promotion course/ examinations; and therefore the mark he has made on many TA officers of the Corps. He will be missed in the Brigade for both his contribution and his humour. We all wish him the very best for the future, hope that the time given by the new found freedom does not hang too heavily and look forward to seeing him at Corps functions in the future. We welcome his replacement **Lt Col Steve Potter** and wish him a challenging and enjoyable tour. (There are now two officers in the Headquarters who have been the near cause of my Courts Martials!) The Exercise also saw the last day in the Brigade of one of our logisticians **Maj David Atkinson** REME - we wish him all the best in his new role. We welcome his replacement **Maj David Ward** REME who has not yet convinced us that it is a REME tradition that Brigadiers are called Colonel!

The beginning of April saw the departure of **Cpl Jackie Simpson** who leaves the Headquarters after three years for Blandford and promotion. Although sad to see her departure it is a relief for some of the male geriatrics here as they will no longer be subject to harassment - watch out Blandford! Her replacement **Cpl Nigel** 'Yes really' **Weir** is welcomed and we hope he has an enjoyable and successful tour - yet another golfer.

Copy for August edition must be received by 15 June – latest!

In this Issue we launch a partnership with **Just Wills plc**, the largest independent Will writing company in the United Kingdom. The work done by **The Royal Signals Benevolent Fund** is helped enormously by the generosity of individual legacies left to the Fund. The arrangement with Just Wills allows members and ex-members of the Corps to benefit from a discount for using the service and at the same time the Fund also benefits by donations from Just Wills. It is always sensible advice to put your affairs in order and in doing so we ask you to remember the work of The Royal Signals Benevolent Fund.

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MAKING A WILL is the only way to ensure that your wishes are carried out after your death. If you have not made a valid Will, your property will pass according to the laws of intestacy. This may not be what you would have wished and in any event is likely to take longer to finalise than if you had made a Will, during which time your beneficiaries may not be able to draw any money from your estate. It can mean arguments and distress for relatives. Making a Will lets your loved ones know that you cared enough to 'sort things out' in advance.

IF YOU ARE SINGLE you will want your estate divided among friends, relatives and charities of your choosing and in the proportions you want.

IF YOU ARE MARRIED do not assume 'my other half will get everything'. Children, siblings or parents may have a claim. If you are living as a couple but not legally married, you will be treated as a single person and a surviving partner may get nothing at all. One thing you can be certain of – there will be argument and dispute at a time when the family have to cope with the loss of a loved one.

IF YOU ARE A PARENT you should consider who will look after your children in the event of your death. This is particularly important in the case of 'one-parent' families or unmarried parents living together and a valid Will nominating Guardians is imperative – if no one knows what you would have wanted, the Court will decide on the future of your children and it may not be what you would have wished.

IF YOU ARE RETIRED maybe you made a Will a long time ago. It probably needs updating to include additional grandchildren or even deletion of persons to whom you no longer wish to leave anything to.

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TRAINING

The White Helmets

OC	**Lt Col Jack Amberton**
Tm Capt	**Capt Gordon Newell**
Tm Sgt	**Sgt Don Brebner**

TRAINING CAMP RAF SEALAND 1999
by LCpl 'Scotty' Eccott

The majority of March was spent at RAF Sealand on the White Helmets annual Training Camp, the first two weeks were spent teaching the new intake of riders the basic tricks, **Cpl Strachan, LCpl Hildreth, Sig Fiddes, Sig Macdonald, Sig Hodgson, Sig O'Neill**. First Aid skills are much needed during this time, although this year we have been very fortunate (touch wood) surviving with **Cpl Bob Sizeland** needing a bit of sewing on a nice knee injury and **Sig Jenny Sarsfield** getting quite familiar with the A&E Department at Chester hospital for various knocks and scrapes. Considering we usually have at least one broken bone during the training camp we did quite well. Being on the border of England and Wales, I think we got both countries weather extremes, ranging from sunny, cold, windy but mostly rain, knowing what clothes to wear became a fine art.



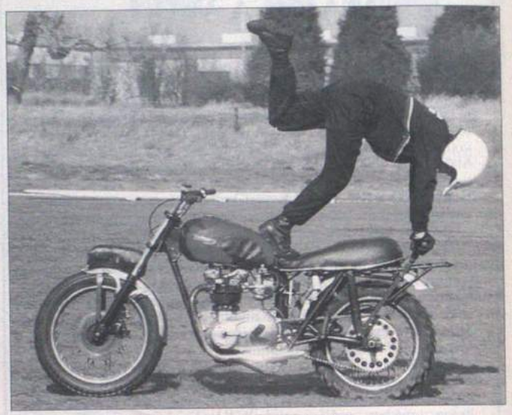
LCpl 'Mossy' Keatly controlling the 'Pillow Handstand'

Weeks three and four were spent putting together the show which happened quite naturally. This is always a good sign that we are going to have a good season. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank 'Benny's Mobile Eatery' and the landlords of Chester for their hospitality; I'm sure they could take early retirement after our four weeks visit !

The training was finished off with a show for RAF Sealand personnel, about 200 people turned out in the rain to watch us do our first show of 1999. The show was done as a way to thank the camp and personnel for going out of their way to make us feel welcome and supporting ourselves during our stay.

TEAM UPDATE
by Capt Gordon Newell

The Team completed training at RAF Sealand and began the season with a successful Opening Show. This took place at Blandford on 23 April in front of the SOinC (A), official military and civilian guests, team sponsors, team-members' families, friends and a few hundred other



Sig 'Fishy' Fish doing the Reverse Jimmy



A demonstration by Cpl 'Charlie' Chester and LCpl 'Fozzie' Forster of Precision Dressing at speed, on one wheel and jumping the human ramps

onlookers. It was a spectacular performance well celebrated afterwards in a true White Helmets style! The team then took off to Leeds, Germany and Belgium before returning to the UK for the rest of a busy season.

At the end of last year the selection course brought forth a number of new riders who have all been well integrated into the set-up and all now wear their new white hats, gladly leaving their red helmets (hence the name 'pinkies') behind for good. All are looking forward to the Royal Tournament in July which sees the team chosen well ahead of other competition in performing at the last ever Tournament in history.

Two promotions took place within the team as **Sigs** 'Mossy' **Keatley** and 'Scotty' **Eccott** both picked up their LCpls - testament to prove the critics wrong again; in the last few months three riders have received promotion - people do get promoted in the White Helmets. We are all looking forward to the end of the year when the Team will take delivery of a new fleet of Triumphs to replace the well-worn workhorses we currently ride on. Further changes have included the Team now being sponsored by Outdoor Essentials rather than Cotswold for team dress - hence 'here come the men in black'. All the riders now have a comfortable and well-tailored set of riding blues - another welcome addition - so we expect to impress to excess this season.

As always, if Corps members are interested in taking two or three years out of routine barrack life in exchange for an exciting and unique role then a call to the Team in Blandford is always welcomed. At the end of the season a number of places will be available for new riders as we will lose people on posting and upgrading courses. The White Helmets at Blandford on mil (737) 2365 or civ 01258 482365.

SHOW SEASON 1999

JUNE	5	Mildenhall Carnival, Suffolk
	10	Corps Cocktail Party, Blandford
	12	Skipton Gala
	14	Harlow Handicapped Sports Foundation
	19	HMS *Collingwood*
	20	London - Wandsworth
	26	RSA Weekend, Blandford
	27	Catterick Garrison Open Day
	29-1	Catterick Army Schools' Exhibition
JULY	1	Catterick Army Schools' Exhibition
	3	Truck Festival - Bath
	4	30 Signal Regiment - Bramcote
	11	Cheshire Steam Festival
	17-2	**ROYAL TOURNAMENT**, London
AUGUST	7- 8	Sunderland Show
	11	Bovington Tank Museum Open Day
	12	Arborfield Apprentice College
	14-15	East Yorkshire Motor Show, Hull
	20-22	Northampton Show
	28-30	Stoneleigh Town and County Festival
SEPTEMBER	2	Bucks County Show
	4-5	Minley Show, Camberley
	11	Henley Show
	12	Blandford Motorcycle
	25-26	Cotswold County Fair
OCTOBER	6	RAF Digby
NOVEMBER	8-20	Potential new riders selection course (or l-12)
	27-28	Birmingham International Tattoo

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11 SIGNAL REGIMENT

It has been a very sporting start to 1999 for 11 Sig Regt. The Harrogate Cup has started with both the basketball and netball events being completed. Also the Regiment has been successful at Divisional level in just about every sport it competes in. At Army level, the Regimental Men's Hockey team were victorious over 16 Sig Regt to become Army Champions whilst the Ladies' Volleyball team outplayed the School of P & RTC also to become Army Champions. Reports of these events appear elsewhere in this edition.

BLANDFORD SUPPORT SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj Mick Pawlak**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Neil Fisher**

Blandford Support Squadron, (HQ Sqn by another name) provides the infrastructure to support the Royal School of Signals and all the 'lodger' units that have, over a period of time, infiltrated, oozed and slithered (at times unnoticed) into Blandford Camp. All those aspiring sleepwalkers who arrive into the Squadron from BA(G) expecting to slumber through their tour find that, not only are they considerably poorer in UK, but they are also kept very busy! Apart from servicing the 5000 plus personnel and their families, the Squadron has been heavily involved in preparations for Public Private Partnership (PPP); a complex process to select a Private sector consortium to help take the RSS into the next century. As the year unfolds the Royal Signals Association weekend and the UK Morrison Cup competition approaches, we wonder if Kosovo, Bosnia, NI and FI commitments mean that we will be the only ones here to take part!

Other news from within the Squadron is centred on farewells and arrivals; firstly the out going SSM, **WO2 Bob Snow** who has left to start a new job with the Royal Signals Recruiting Team. **Bob** and his wife **Ann** were dined out by the Squadron Officers, WOs and SNCOs in February; the OC's words of farewell will long be remembered, especially those describing the SSM's appearance in the recent Officers v SNCOs rugby match,... 'an Easter egg on legs'..., cruel but fair. Best wishes to you both!

More recently **SSgt** 'Taff' **Rideout** has also made his way through the door to Civvy Street on completion of 22 years service; we wish him well in his new job with 'Mr Vodaphone' (not another one). The Squadron would like to welcome the following new arrivals, **WO2 (SSM) Fisher** and his wife **Sabine** who arrived from Germany in early January, and **SSgt Dougie Piper** who replaces **SSgt Rideout** as Depot Tp SSgt, welcome!

QUARTERMASTERS DEPARTMENT

Quartermaster **Lt Col** (Mick) **Ledwards**
RQMS (Tech) **WO2** (Steve) **Barnes**
RQMS (Gen) **WO2** (John) **Fradley**

The rationalisation of service support to the Garrison has led to an amalgamation of the General and Technical departments. The function now under one Quartermaster, is developing fast and the early indications are that it will work well. The new office build has brought all accounting staff into a central area, which is already proving a success.

OPERATION PALENTINE

The de-kit of Op Palentine took place shortly after the Christmas break, and was just what was needed to get us all back into the swing of things after the festive season. With the primary objective being to get all the TA soldiers de-kitted, medical and documentation checked and onto waiting transport as soon as possible, we consider that a complete turnaround of 6 hours more than achieved the aim.

Congratulations go to **SSgt Terry Parle MBE** on his inclusion in the New Years Honours List and to **WO2 John** 'Fradders' **Fradley** on being selected for promotion and his appointment as RSM of 16 Sig Regt.

It is with sadness that the department said farewell recently to the Quartermaster, **Maj Dave Longhurst**. His presence will be missed by everyone both in the department and the Garrison where he made a considerable contribution to the project management team during the heady days of implementation, and more recently as the Quartermaster who amalgamated two departments. He moves into retirement with a definite plan for the future - to do nothing!! Good luck and happy sailing. The department welcomes **Lt Col Mick Ledwards** and his wife **Sue** and hope that you both enjoy your tour of Blandford.

1 SQUADRON

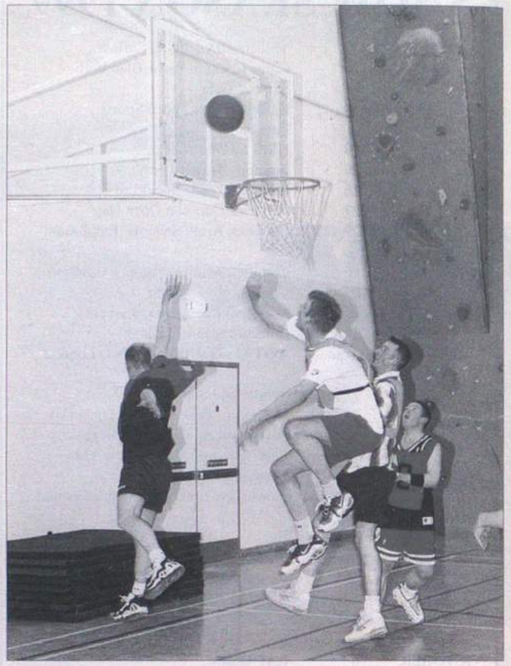
Sqn Comd **Maj J. D. J. Drummond CD**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Sartorius**

RHINO TROOP

Tp Comd **WO1 Pete Griffiths**

This year's Inter-Troop Basketball Competition was held in February over three separate dates 11, 18 and 25th. It had already been decided that the first competition in the Harrogate Cup would be organised by Rhino Troop. After a brief liaison between **Capt Bryan** 2IC 1 Sqn and **WO1 Pete Griffiths** (event supervisor), the rules were set in concrete and the battle commenced.

The 11 February 1999 was to see the first round contested between two leagues of three teams with the winners and runners up in each league competing in the semi-finals to be held on the 18 February 1999. After some very competitive, skilful and sometimes not so skilful basketball the semi-finals were set with Rhino Tp (1 Sqn) verses Beaufighter Tp (2 Sqn) and Lightning Tp (3 Sqn) verses Ulster Tp also (3 Sqn). Both semi-finals were well contested with Beaufighter Tp and Lightning Tp running out winners for a place in the final.



Lightning Strikes

The final was held on Thursday 25 February 1999 and both teams had brought their supporters with them which made for some colourful and interesting comments from the sidelines, most of which was not humanely possible with a basketball, as far as I am aware. Beaufighter Tp got off to the better start taking a thirteen-point lead. By the end of the second quarter, however, after a stern pep talk from their team manager **Cpl** 'Dusty' **Miller,** Lightning Tp produced some inspiring team work and quickly overtook Beaufighter Tp, whom gallantly and sportingly battled on but unfortunately ran out the losers. This was an outstanding and fitting final for what had been an excellent competition and our thanks go to all who took part including **Cpl Piper** for organising the officials and to the 2IC Regt, **Maj Phil Brown** for presenting the trophy.



Presentation of Shield
Sig Binnie, Sig Scarcliff, Sig Mallison, Sig Barton
Sig Beattie, Cpl Miller (Team Coach), Sig Grant

WHITESPEAR TROOP

Tp Comd **WO1 Garry Waters**

The first quarter of 1999 has been a busy time for Whitespear Tp with all three departments working hard to provide and confirm military and adventure training for the ever increasing amount of Phase 2 trainees in Blandford Garrison.

The Royal Signals Training Objective 1G Team, under the supervision of **SSgt Bill Butler** has been working hard to deal with the increasing number of soldiers awaiting Common Military Syllabus confirmation as well as forming a formidable volleyball partnership with **Cpl** 'Shiny head' **Compton.** The Military training team of **SSgt Dave Giles** and **Cpl Matt Thomas** have been side-tracked from their normal activities of FIBUA training, APWT and bayonet fighting to provide guard force training to soldiers that are assisting units that have personnel deploying on operations to Kosovo. The adventure training team under **Sgt Chris Gleadow** has remained busy by providing two caving expeditions to the Yorkshire Dales. Finally the Hello's and Goodbyes. The Troop welcomes to the fold **Cpl Laurie Askins** and **Sgt** 'Twiggy' **Twigg** to Military training and RSTO 1G respectively and says farewell to **Cpl Matt Thomas** who departs to the Army Apprentice College Arborfield.

EXERCISE DARK IRON – LAKE DISTRICT

by Signaller Candler

There was mixed feelings in the air about the week that lay ahead. Hopes of conquering fears of claustrophobia, defying nerves of being so far underground and just generally being scared of the dark. On the Sunday that we arrived at Ambleside we saw the scene which portrayed what we had let ourselves in for. All around us, hills, grass, fresh air and the odd houses dotted about. We discovered the shack, which was to be called 'home' for the next week and made ourselves familiar with the local area.

The nightmares all started when we made struggling attempts to get into our 'Teletubbie' suits. Eventually after painful battles with the suits we ventured out to the first cave. Arriving at what we were told was the cave we saw what seemed like a rabbit hole. Now the fears were rising. Some members of the group weren't too happy about entering a hole of such small proportions, but we were assured that the cave was much larger inside. We'd only been with the instructors for one day. Could we trust them at this stage? Only the brave entered the first cave. The untrusting members of the group soon joined in on the next cave, which had a larger opening. Fears were building up as they entered the cave but they were soon forgotten. After spending what seemed like hours in the freezing running water of the cave we were all starting to get a bit frustrated, especially **Sig** 'Chappy' **Chapman** and **Sig Keith** 'BFG' **Candler** who found the journey rather slow due to the slow people in front which had nothing to do with their size, eh **Cpl Dave Allen.**

This day was rather typical for the Lake District. Cold, wet and windy, getting us in the mood for more caves. After completing our first two caves under the careful instruction by **Cpl Matt Thomas** and **Cpl Dave Allen** we were left to explore the last cave. There was only one way out of this cave. Our aim was to find the exit un-aided. A lot of hope lingered in the air. The roof lowered and the water seemed to get deeper, which caused us to get very wet and cold. Great news for seals.

After a good nights sleep, we set off again to the famous Cheese Press. Some people were not looking forward to it at all. This was due to the height of the passage, which measured only 21cm at its lowest point. Too small if you ask me. It didn't seem natural to crawl through small gaps like this for fun. Everyone attempted it but not all succeeded. Space and build didn't help.

The final cave was just around the corner, which was rather strangely nicknamed 'The Washing Machine'. Why 'The Washing Machine'? We were soon to find out. No one knew what to expect from this cave, but we were all going to find out. We arrived at the much-awaited cave, which met our dreaded expectations. Just a hole in the ground. That's what it seemed like when we entered it. There was only one way out of this cave after we started and that was down. After abseiling about 25 metres the instructors pointed out a small hole which we were about to venture through. **Sig** 'Spots' **Spotswood** and **Sig** 'Geordie' **Rutter** were quite reluctant to go down the narrow hole but after a lot of persuasion they followed. They were happy that this fear had been conquered. Their happiness was not long lived, as they weren't aware of the large waterfall, which they would have to face. They had to abseil down it with freezing gushing water hitting them from every direction. The sooner it was over the better. Why do people do this for fun? I think that was the general thought of the day. All the members of the group had a great sense of achievement from the weeks caving. A special thanks to **Cpl Thomas, Cpl Allen** and all the team.

2 SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj Louise Tomkins**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Phil Christie**

2 Sqn would like to say farewell to **WO1 Dave Clark** who leaves the squadron and the Army to start a new career in the Norfolk/Suffolk area. We wish him and his family all the best for the future. **Cpl** 'Elvis' **Hemstead** has been posted to 220 Sig Sqn to be reunited with his wife. The Squadron misses the daily 'Elvis' v **Cpl** 'Trigger' **Smith** banter and teamwork. We welcome, in their place **WO1 Mark Elliott** who takes over the reins of Beaufighter Tp and **Cpl Myerscough** who has arrived to assist the industrious **Cpl Riley** in Iron Tp.

HARROGATE CUP – NETBALL COMPETITION

The Netball competition was the second event of the Harrogate Cup competition, which was held over a three-day period. The early stages were run on a mini league basis with the winners and runners up of the two leagues going into the Semi-finals. In the first Semi-final Iron Tp played Ulster Tp. This was an extremely tense and exciting match which was level at full time, 11 goals each. In sudden death extra time Iron Tp managed to score the vital goal to earn a place in the final. The other semi-final was an all 1 Sqn affair between Kohima and Rhino Tp. This was a less close affair with Kohima Tp romping to victory 31 goals to 3. This was due to some excellent shooting by **Sig Lawton** and **Sig Jackson.** The biggest cheer of the night was for Rhino Tp's first goal; the fact that they showed great character and kept trying right up to the final whistle is a credit to the whole team.

The final between Iron Tp and Kohima Tp was held in front of a large and noisy crowd of supporters. The match started at great pace and Iron Tp rocked Kohima Tp by scoring three early goals. Iron Tp managed to maintain this advantage thanks to some excellent defence by **Sig Creith, Sig Yardley** and **Sig Lawton,** Kohima Tp, having had a bad day in front of goal. Iron Tp eventual winners 20 goals to 11. The Regimental 2IC **Maj Phil Brown** and his daughter **Jessica** presented the prizes and a big thank you to the officials: **SSgt Lindsey Manktelow, Cpl Jane Simmons, Sig Sam Yardley** and **Sig Liza Parsons.**

3 SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj Andy Duncan**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Eric Udell**

On Wednesday 31 March 1999, 3 Sqn held their last smoker of the millennium, combining it well with the first. It was organised by the Squadron 2IC, **Capt** 'Ten Bellies' **Kenyon.** Thinking he was a fashion conscious king in his pink shirt strutting about the stage, he soon got proceedings underway.

This was now the soldiers' chance to legally get away with a good Mickey take of Squadron and Regimental personalities. First to come under fire was OC 3 Squadron himself, **Maj** 'Pretty Boring' **Duncan** with his hands glued to his armpits. A very close second was **SSM** 'Ginga' **Udell** receiving stick like all SSMs do just for being the Sergeant Major and having ginger hair. Then it was time for the up-graders to do their stuff and they did not disappoint. They soon lowered the tone with their winging and gripes, (just like being at work really).

Later in the evening it was noted by **WO1** 'Not Impressed' **Bob Banner** how sensible the soldiers were being with their consumption of alcohol, so much so that he closed the bar. Finally our thanks must go to the judges the Regimental 2IC **Maj Brown** and **RSM, WO1 Stonier** for their time and endurance in judging the event. By the way, who did win?

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1 TRAINING SQUADRON
ROYAL SIGNALS ARMY TRAINING REGIMENT
BASSINGBOURN

OC **Maj J. M. Norris**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) S. Slaney**

Now that Easter has passed, the continuation of Phase One training of recruits at ATR Bassingbourn goes on. Life for both the recruits and the permanent staff is very hectic, but as always very enjoyable and rewarding. All members of the permanent staff have been making full use of the sporting facilities available to them both within the Corps and at the ATR.

First and foremost, **Lt Kate** 'Lord Lucan' **Simmonds** achieved great results during the winter sports season with her skiing prowess. Although we didn't see her for approximately six months of the year, she achieved a win with the Army Ski Team and skied at the Inter-Services. As her reward, she has just organised a climbing expedition to Spain. 'More bleeding time off' say's **Sgt Roy Carter,** her Troop Sergeant. We also await the return of **Cpl Percival** from what is believed to be an outstanding Diving Expedition in Belize.

Good luck goes to both **Capt Mick Boyle** and **Sgt Carter** who will be running the London Marathon in aid of The Leukaemia Research Fund. We are all witness to the vast amount of training which they have both been doing, **Capt Boyle** taking part in Iron Man, Orienteering, Du-athlon and Tri-athlon competitions, and **Sgt Carter** ...?

The Regimental Inter Company/Squadron competitions have been in full flow recently, with Rugby, Football and Squash to name but a few. We fielded a very admirable team for the Rugby 7's, although much bickering occurred as to who was allowed to play by being 'posted into, or out of, the Squadron'. However, after a very successful and enjoyable day we left with only one trophy. Player of the tournament went to **Lt Jamie** 'What an outstanding run' **Balfour,** but alas no Oscar award for his Gwyneth Paltrow injury! The first place prize for the Football competition was narrowly lost to HQ Sqn. It must be emphasised for the record, however, it was only on points because we did beat them! A huge well done to the Squash team, whose valiant efforts recorded an outstanding dark horse second place due to the strong leadership of the Team Captain, **Lt Ivan** 'What? Please tell me more ...' **Bates.** He has also recently represented the Army versus the HAC and was again victorious, so congratulations and well done.

There is always time during the busy training package for career courses, whether you are an Officer or an NCO. Most of the staff have enjoyed the week long jollies in Wales on the Mountain Leader Training course, or adversely, the six weeks duration of the Other Arms Skill At Arms course. However, **Sgt Roy** 'No job too tough' **Turner** has just returned after successfully completing his Sergeants' Course at Blandford, finishing in a commendable eighth place. Also well done to **Lt Charlie** 'Monday morning off' **Roberts** who has finally passed his JOTES 1 exam.

Welcomes into the Squadron and Regiment are ever increasing, Thank You MCM Div, and are as follows:

Maj Licence arrives to command Wray Company.
Lt Liz Allen and **Pepsi**, along with **Cpl Knowler** and **Cpl** 'Tessa' **Blakeley** arrive into Charlie Troop.
Cpl Al Nuttall, Cpl Ambury and **Cpl Dawson** (briefly), are welcomed into Alpha Troop.
Cpl Mason comes to Echo Troop.

Congratulations to both **Cpl Frew** and his wife for their new baby, and also **Lt Ivan Bates** and **Jayne** on their recent marriage, notably a wonderful feat of administration. Get Well Soon **SSgt (SQMS) Andy** 'No Honestly' **Harriett**, who is currently recovering from his new sport of Tarmac Surfing after a motorbike accident. Return to work ASAP to sort out this backlog of 1033's!

ALPHA TROOP

Once again the 'Mighty Alpha' triumph with another 11 weeks of CMS(R) training with course 550 (04/01/99 – 26/04/99). The recruits successfully endured all aspects of military training during quite an inclement time of year. The training team consisted of **Lt Jamie** 'Jail them all' **Balfour, Sgt Roy** 'Young Man' **Turner, Cpl Al** 'Bottom Drawer' **Nuttall, Cpl Barney** 'Get orf the maaaa'tress' **Revell, Cpl Geordie** 'Gripper' **McBean, Cpl Smudge** 'Dave Tucker' **Smith** and our PTI **Cpl Jase** 'more Bryl-Cream please' **Holt.** Not forgetting the 45 recruits too numerous to mention but they know who they are.

During the arduous adventure training week the troop raised over £1362 for the Army Benevolent Fund and presented the cheque to **Capt (Retd) A. C. Armstrong,** of the Cambridge branch, during the recruits parents evening. This vast sum was about a quarter of the total sum raised annually by the local charity office. Part way through the course the troop volunteered its services to Bassingbourn primary school and assisted in building a quiet play area for the children who are aged between 5 to 11 years. This consisted of many hours of the recruits' own time, digging, levelling, sweating and all round enjoying themselves. The digging involved moving 2.5 tonnes of earth out and 2.5 tonnes of hardcore back in all by means of shovel and wheelbarrow. There was also the replanting of the shrubbery, which meant more digging. This was strong credit to the recruits after just returning from the mid course exercise where they gained much experience digging in and back filling.

The training team would like to extend a fond filled farewell to all recruits moving onto Phase Two in Blandford. 'For All Those That Have Done Well, ... Well Done!'



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L-R Cpl Smith, Sigs Lester, Elliot, Coakley, Walker, Newell, and Andrews

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263 (HARROGATE) SIGNAL SQUADRON
ARMY APPRENTICES COLLEGE, ARBORFIELD

Sqn Comd **Maj Steven France**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Mick Senior**

By the time this edition of *The Wire* is published, our Apprentice Tradesmen (ATs) from Intake 98C will already be in Blandford engrossed in their respective trade courses. The Spring Term finishes on 16 April, with the Passing Out Parade for 98C being held on 15 April. This term we say goodbye and congratulations to **Cpl Rob McCorkell**, who leaves us on promotion to 3 Inf Bde. We shall also bid farewell to **Cpls Paul Lowe** KINGS and **Lawrie Askin**, who are off to 1 KINGS and 11 Sig Regt respectively. In their places, we heartily welcome **Cpl Andy Staff** from 14 Sig Regt, **Cpl Smith** from 1 GH in Osnabruck and **Cpl Thomas** from 11 Sig Regt, to all of whom we wish a most successful tour here in sunny Arborfield, and by the time this article is read, we will have said goodbye to **Capt Kyra McAnulty** too, who is also posted to 11 Sig Regt in Blandford. Our sincere best wishes go to all of them and their families.

This edition of *The Wire* features the activities of Scott Tp, one of the two Senior Term Troops, commanded by **Capt Tom Jeffries**, with **Sgt** 'Waggy' **Wagstaff** as Tp Sgt and **Cpls Paul Millington** and **Colin Brotherston** as Tp Cpls.

SCOTT TROOP LIFE!

by AT Starkie and AT LCpls Thornton and Chivers

We remember the first day, although looking back it seems years ago, but it's only been six months. Everyone was worried about what we were letting ourselves in for. After the first couple of weeks we think we all realised that Scott Tp was not made up just of people, it was now our family, and would be until the end of our time in the College. We've learnt a lot and had both hard and good times along the way. When things get hard in Scott Tp, we work through it and try not to let the bad points overrule the good ones.

From a Troop of untidy, out of step would-be soldiers, we have been worked and trained into a Troop and a team that we are all proud of. Overall, life in Scott Tp has been great, and we have learnt to work as a team even at the worst of times. Our greatest achievement has to be the College-wide Inter Troop March and Shoot Competition in which we proved our team work and came out overall winners. We wear our Troop sweatshirts with pride. It will be a shame when we all split up for Phase 2 training, and we wish everyone the best of luck for the future!

All our thanks go out to all our staff who have made us what we are today. Thank you and well done Scott Troop!

EXTERNAL LEADERSHIP 2

by AT LCpl Elkin

Scott Tp were happy to board the coach for the drive up to Sennybridge in Wales. It was two weeks out of the monotony of education training for some excellent Adventurous and Leadership training. Everyone's morale was high as we looked forward to the time ahead.

The first week was Adventurous training. The first activity we did was mountaineering. As the snow came down we were going up and over the famous Pen-y-Fan. After a night out in the tents we made our way back each taking turns to lead the group with the maps. We all watched with amazement as we saw soldiers on SAS selection tabbing past with their huge bergens and SA80s, thinking, maybe it will be us one day! The next few days were spent on rock climbing both indoors and outdoors. We were joined by our Sqn OC, **Maj France** and SSM, **WO2 Senior** who gave us plenty of encouragement.

The second week was Leadership training. At first we worked on a project called KAPE (Keeping the Army in the Public Eye). The first day was spent clearing a quarry full of rubbish with our OC Troop, **Capt Jeffries** getting amongst us whilst we were doing our part for the community. The second day was restoring a public park damaged by floods. To end the week we all had the chance to prove ourselves with command tasks. To finish off the Leadership package we executed a river crossing. With **Cpl Millington** yelling at us, we jumped into a freezing, fast flowing river to be caught safely downstream by **Sgt Wagstaff**. Great Stuff!

READING HALF MARATHON 14 MARCH 1999

by ATs Henshaw and Braund

Scott Tp's chosen charity event to raise money for the Cancer Relief Macmillan Fund was the Reading Half Marathon. The whole Troop raised sponsorship money for the chosen 'nutters' who were running as a squad in boots and combats on what turned out to be a blistering hot Sunday. As we set off to Reading on the bus everybody was unsure of what to expect; but **Cpl Millington, Cpl Murray** (from Penney Tp) and **Capt Jeffries** gave us the confidence boost that we needed to keep us going.

We had been training solid for at least a month including on External Leadership and had also been given a strict training programme by **Cpl Millington** to carry out in our own time on leave. As we entered Reading town centre we could see what a big event this actually was from the number of people who were there to run and spectate. As soon as we started walking to the start, the response that we got from the crowd was incredible. This raised our morale even higher and boosted our confidence within the squad of ten men.

As we were running the full 13 miles in boots, by the 10 mile point, people's morale started to drop a bit because of the unseasonal heat of about 20 - 22 degrees Celsius. All the spectators, however, cheered us on as they knew we had put 100% into the run because of the determination on our faces. After a lot of hard work and sheer effort within the squad we finally crossed the finish line in 2hrs 1min and 45secs. This was such a great sense of pride for us ourselves and also for our Royal Corps. Our staff, **Cpl Millington, Cpl Murray** and **Capt Jeffries** were also pleased and proud of us. What a great day! The final amount which we raised for the Cancer Relief Macmillan Fund was £617.14.



The roving ramblers of Scott Troop, posing with their cheque for charity

EXERCISE JANNER'S JOY 25 - 28 MARCH 1999

by AT French

We deployed on Thursday 25 March at approximately 18.30. We were briefed the evening before regarding the tactical scenario and our roles and appointments. After arriving at the Drop Off Point (DOP) we 'tabbed' with full Complete Equipment Marching Order (CEMO) into a hasty harbour, where we stayed overnight. The next morning we set out on a 24km circuit consisting of four stands, NBC, first aid, section attack and observation. ATs were put in charge of sections for each stand. The emphasis was on leadership and the ability to work under battle pressure conditions. The night was again spent in a hasty harbour. The following morning we moved into an already dug-in harbour area close to the one we had just left. On the final day we practised our section attacks during numerous patrols to prepare for the dawn attack which we launched in the early hours of the following morning. All in all, it was a tiring but nevertheless satisfying experience.

Changed your Address?
Write and let us know!

NEWS FROM THE BALKANS

7 SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO **Lt Col D. A. H. Jones**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) S. Smoothey**

Half of the Regiment is now in the Balkans but of course our heart is in Krefeld as the Regiment prepares for its 40th anniversary.

229 (BERLIN) SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj Chris Robinson**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Stevie Bovan**

CHARLIE TROOP
Tp Comd **2Lt Caroline Evans**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Gary Davies**

Well, having made more journeys over the last weeks than Virgin Atlantic, Trunk Node 011 has settled into a permanent location. We are also honoured by the presence of OSC 137. Things went smoothly on arrival, with the only notable story of **LCpl** 'Hoppy' **Hopkinson** falling down a large hole and spending the next couple of days walking like Herr Flick from the Gestapo. **Sig** 'Taff' **Phillips** has started his reptile collection with three lizards and a snake now on show. **LCpl** 'Can't cook , won't cook , but I'll give it a try' **Fisher** is considering serving them up as part of a stir fry. Easter was celebrated with a Communion Service at our location with it's glorious view over much of Northern Macedonia. There was also an issue of Creme Eggs to add to numerous parcels coming through the post. To everyone out there keep writing. The last few days have seen elements of the location travel to refugee sites to set up tents, serve food and dig some holes. **LCpl** 'Battlesmock' **Chapman** removed his T- shirt for the hard days work ahead of him and was promptly put into tent 42 and served with hot soup and a potato to speed his recovery. All those that went came away with a real sense of achievement and a wish that we could do more to help.

232 SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj Alan G Stringer**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Hughes**

DELTA TROOP - *by LCpl Gauchi*
Tp Comd **Lt** 'Pierre' **Farrimond**
Tp SSgt **SSgt** 'Stef' **Newton**

Firstly, welcome to **Sigs Anderson** and **Barker** who arrived in the Troop just as we deployed. We will get you out soon. A grateful goodbye goes to **Sgt Brian Clark** who left to go to ATR Bassingbourn just prior to the deployment after five years dedicated service to Delta Tp. Best Wishes to you and **Lynn** from all the Troop.

'So to the mobilisation. It was 0230hrs on Sunday 7 March that Delta Tp's Italian SAN had finally had enough of war dodging and decided to deploy on Op Agricola to Skopje, Macedonia. The rest of the Troop are with the French SAN, Tac Tp, 229 or in Camp waiting to deploy or in **Sig Kirkbright**'s case giving birth. The journey ended at the 'Hotel Babylon' otherwise known as the Shoe Factory. The next few days were occupied with testing our kit and thanks to **LCpl** 'Flat Stan' **Rose** and **LCpl** 'Doh!' **Gauchi** all our equipment works, now.

At 'Hotel Babylon' there were a few incidents of note. The author had to have two stitches in his head after a bump into a generator. **LCpl McFarland** lost his wedding ring down a drain and hours of fishing could not retrieve it. The main culprit of our comedy was **Lt** 'Has anyone seen my beret?' **Farrimond**, who after nearly being eaten by wild savage dogs while running, also rendered himself unable to continue in a game of football. He was put through on goal, but unfortunately he didn't see the manhole playing sweeper in the opposing defence. Thankfully he is okay now.

Soon it was time to provide comms for the Italian Bde HQ. This was meant to be a permanent deployment but in fact became 24 hours due to a more important task arising. This task came in as we were on parade being welcomed by the Italians. We cried 'we'll be back' as we drove out of camp.

Our new task was to provide comms for a CSSG TAC HQ for Ex Arrcade Guardian 2. This was at a site which is now a Refugee Handling Centre. The Exercise went well until the last night. It was getting late and the CP, feeling a bit peckish decided to make themselves some egg banjos. They dug out some 1950's cookers and attempted to light them, little realising more fuel had poured out than necessary. The ball of flames was ably controlled by **SSgt** 'Waste is Waste' **Newton** and **Sig** 'Xmas' **Carroll** using his fire extinguisher which meant a disaster was avoided. At the time of writing we are back with the Italians and all is going well. We are happy here in our mountain-side Chalet. We are just waiting to get into Kosovo so we can complete our tour and get back to our loved one's, especially mine, 'Archies Bar'. Don't worry wives, girlfriends and **Cpl Clegg** we'll be home before you know it.

STOP PRESS! The SAN has suffered its first casualty. During the Man Utd v Juventus game, shown in the bar on Italian Sky TV, **SSgt Newton** injured his hand. During a rather exciting part of the match he jumped up and punched the air forgetting the low ceiling and the rotating fan. OUCH! No serious injury to report but the fan doesn't work anymore.

PAPA TROOP - NOW FRENCH BRIGADE SAN
Tp Comd **2Lt Noakes**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Ironside**

Hello from the newly formed French Bde SAN. Born of various Troops, personnel and vehicles. As OC Papa Tp there are even elements of my own Troop in the form of my trailer. We have swapped SSgts with Hotel Tp. Welcome to **SSgt Ironside**. Hence, Papa Tp ceases to exist until the end of this tour. The Troop has solved its identity crisis through an epidemic of bad haircuts. **SSgt** 'Butch' **Ironside** has even succumbed to the clippers.

After a brief stay in the Shoe Factory an invitation came one by one to move 30km up the road to Kumanovo as the space became available. The fact that all the female soldiers had a proper bed and a roof over their heads first had nothing to do with the fact that the OC is female. The final arrival of **Sig Evans** brought forth such an intense smile it was clear that things were worsening at the cramped Shoe Factory. The most challenging task to date has been convincing the French that Ptarmigan is not just a heavy, green box occupying too much space on their desks. The biggest liaison problem was persuading the French to understand the Lance Corporals really do know what they are doing and that it's probably not wise to expect the officer to be the most competent in the Troop at installing a Ptarmigan subset.

There has been considerable energy expended in the name of Entente Cordiale. Regular football friendlies against fellow French transmetteurs to the OC beasting the Brigadier. Initiation of Anglo-French relations has not been one sided. Gone are the days when we could remember how many times French soldiers have asked where **LCpl Cooper** and **Sig Barrett** are. The French are definitely not used to female soldiers. **2Lt** 'S'il vous plait' **Noakes** still wonders what COMARRC must have thought when the call came over the radio that the French had secured objective 'Tanya'. The England v France rugby match is of course a sore point. The next few months should see plenty more stories so watch this space.

TAC TROOP
Tp Comd **2Lt Lowther**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Angove**

It all started on a Sunday 21 February when Tac Troop and various attachments paraded in the Troop lines. There followed an intense period of air prep checks, doc checks followed by air prep and docs checks. Finally all was ready and Packet 1 rolled out of the gates on its way to Bruggen. It was when **Cpl Mark Gibbs** had to stop to ask the way to the airhead that it dawned on us that it was indeed going to be a long tour.

...And so the tour began

Three days later Tac had finally arrived at the now infamous Shoe Factory (with the exception of course of **Sig Kerry Johnston** and **LCpl Jo Cooper** who had their first flight aborted in mid flight, the second diverted to Thesaloniki and a six hour cabby in order to join us). After great amounts of de-gunging, shoe box moving, machinery shifting and general grafting our first of many homes was created. Congratulations were then due to **Cpl Mark Gibbs** who managed to get home to register the birth of his daughter. The rest of us were left to enjoy the hastily prepared quiz night hosted by **WO2 (SSM) Rick Hughes** and **SSgt Patrick Hurge-Mogg**. **Sgt** 'Happy' **Easter** has also been busy with his singularly sarcastic literary publication 'The Kosovo Times'.

After several more moves, we were then invited to join the Italian Brigade in Katlanovo. Now life with the Italians has its drawbacks, the food for instance. Pasta with everything. The spirit of international co-operation has been greatly aided by the musical talents of **Sgt Rob Atherton** and **Cpl Dave Burke** who joined in the Italians evening jam sessions with great vigour!

FYROM UPDATE AS AT 10 APRIL 1999

In following the political and military situation with regard to the Former Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), Kosovo, and the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), we can certainly all be forgiven for being confused by the rather mixed messages that are coming across in the media. The position as far we are able to see it from here is not actually that much clearer, although in Skopje and on the hills around the capital area we are following matters as closely as we can. The enormous swing of recent events - from the intitial NATO bombing, through the mass expulsion of refugees from Kosovo by President Milosevic, to the aid campaign that has swung into action to support those same refugees in FYROM and in Albania - inevitably prevents a better picture of the way ahead coming through as yet.

The accompanying diary gives an idea of what has been happening on the wider stage over the last week, and where possible the work of the men and women of 16 Signal Regiment has been noted within each day's activity. As you will read, the dominant event has been the humanitarian aid mission undertaken by KFOR within the camps in FYROM. Without the immediate assistance of the NATO units here, there really would have been the possibility of disaster: with it, and this was based on the unstinting efforts a large number of volunteers from all units, that disaster has been averted and the UNHCR will shortly be able to take over. We are now able to return to focus again on our sole reason for being here, ie: as part of a force that will make it possible to achieve a settlement in Kosovo once a peace agreement has been signed. Whilst the political processes that will lead up to such an agreement perhaps seem to be as far from reaching a successful conclusion as ever, we are genuinely trying to keep our minds on the job in hand and to prepare for what is to come. Until the situation clears and plans are reviewed and confirmed, we are therefore steadily improving on what we are currently providing in FYROM, and are preparing ourselves and our vehicles and installations for future operations.

On a lighter note, we are also now far enough into the tour to begin the R&R plot for all ranks. The R&R flights begin next week and will follow an agreed schedule of leave over the next three months. Most, if not all personnel seem reasonably happy with their allocated dates and will each receive 15 days including travelling time. Further details on individual R&R dates are available from RHQ or from the Families Office.

SKOPJE DIARY: 3 APRIL - 10 APRIL 1999

Saturday 3 April: The surge of refugees into the border areas of Kosovo is now on a far greater scale than had ever been anticipated. Yugoslavian Army and police action against the ethnic Albanian peoples of Kosovo is causing a humanitarian crisis which the bordering countries are simply unable to cope with. At this stage, it seems clear that if NATO troops on the ground in Skopje and the surrounding areas do not immediately cut through the 'red tape' that slows down so much of the work with local Government agencies here, the emergency situation will lead to catastrophe for many of the ethnic Albanian refugees, especially those with young families. All NATO troops in FYROM are now placed under the Force HQ for the coordination of humanitarian relief. The FYROM Government needs all the assistance it can receive, and it will clearly take some time for any international relief affort to swing into action. All units are asked to provide working parties to set up emergency refugee camps near the border. 16 Signal Regiment is able to help with drivers to move tentage and basic essentials forward out of NATO stocks in theatre; men and women (who worked 24 hours a day at this stage) to erect tents and shelters, dig toilet pits, and dish out food and water; and with additional communications cover for the camps themselves. Everyone caught up in this work will agree that it was not only an eye opener for those who had not seen such large numbers of destitute people before, but it brought home the essential nature of why we are here in FYROM as part of a peace effort for Kosovo itself. The experience made for an over-riding sombre mood among all ranks involved. We were mainly involved at the Brazda Camp, which by the end of the week was sheltering over 30,000 people, though in pretty basic conditions.

Sunday 4 April: It is assessed that there are already about 100,000 'displaced persons' on the move and who need assistance. Some nations, especially in Europe and in the USA are looking at flying a number out as refugees. The niceties of whether you are a 'displaced person' or a 'refugee' are of course quite lost on the people affected, who are just trying to get out of Kosovo and over the FRY/FYROM border or into Albania. It is at this time that the FYROM Government decides it cannot cope and closes its border with the FRY: world reaction is one of shock and disbelief. The FYROM Government also faces the problem that it is itself none too secure politically or economically, and with a large percentage of its population being of Serbian origin we must remember that popular feeling within FYROM is not totally in favour of NATO. The population of FYROM is not large, and an inflow of over 100,000 refugees approximates to about the same as having over seven million surge into the UK over a period of less than a week. At the same time, NATO air strikes continue against FRY forces in Kosovo and in the FRY itself. Movement within the Skopje capital area is made more difficult by a more obvious anti-NATO showing by some of the locals. Spitting on soldiers and their vehicles is common, and pelting with stones, rotting fruit and so on (one inventive soul managed to pelt **Cpl Biddle**'s landrover with a considerable amount of cow dung as she escorted the Brigadier on one of his sorties around the outlying detachments!) The stoning can be particularly violent, however, with blocks of concrete and bricks being dropped off bridges onto oncoming vehicles: no-one from 16 Signal Regiment has been hurt so far, but being 'bricked' by groups of youths is commonplace and we have to be careful. All our vehicles are only allowed out in pairs at this stage, and there is no movement after dark.

Monday 5 April: The main effort continues to be the coordination of, and support to, the humanitarian effort. Border restrictions are at last lifted by the FYROM Government, and the trickle of refugees turns to a flood. We are giving regular assistance to the refugee camps, as are all UK units. The weather is very warm, and temperatures are climbing daily. This makes the camps less than pleasant at times, but the general mood of the refugees is one of grateful thanks: they are happy to be safe, and their main concern is now to contact the rest of their families.

Tuesday 6 April: The FYROM Government is under more severe pressure from within and tries to make additional security deals with NATO. It also wants promises of economic aid from the West. The NATO Secretary General refuses to make any compromise on the mission of the NATO troops in FYROM, and again states that they (ie: we) are only present to enable any future peace agreement for Kosovo. Plans are being made to move refugees out of the assembly areas at up to 4,000 a day: the UK is expecting to take 6,000 or so. Families will only be moved, however, once everyone has been identified, as there is already confusion with individuals being separated from one another. President Milosevic declares a 'unilateral cease-fire' at 2000hrs, and this is equally unilaterally rejected by NATO. Serbian forces appear to be scaling down their operations in Kosovo considerably. If one wanted to sum up President Milosevic's position one might analyse it as being:

> *'Military and demographic aims complete, with the ethnic Albanian military and political organisations in Kosovo smashed, and the make-up of the population in the province changed to eliminate or drive out all non-Serbian communities.'*

One might be justified in thinking that now would be the time for the FRY to try cynically to come back to the negotiating table and try to make a deal with NATO.

Here in FYROM, some adjustment is being made to the Force mission with regard to supporting the humanitarian assistance to refugees being given by the UNHCR and by FYROM itself. This last point is important: NATO is simply not here to carry out the aid mission but it clearly must help as far as it is within its means and capabilities so to do. The Force Commander's main priority, however, remains self-protection of the Force and all its elements.

Back at the Brazda Camp, 27,000 people are now under canvas; mainly women and children and the old. Sanitation and refuse disposal is a real problem. Although some of the refugees have serious health problems we are assured by our medics that there is no danger to our people working in their midst. We could be forgiven, however, for being grateful for all the jabs we had before coming out here! Work parties from the Regiment continue to volunteer to work in the camps, and for most this means going there when not on shift or tasked to something else: for many this equals work all day on their communications vehicle etc and then work in the refugee camp for half the night. The make-up of the families is wide-ranging, with lots of blue collar and white collar (middle class to you and me) workers among them. These are not simply eastern European peasants thrown out of their farms and villages, but relatively prosperous people whose world has been shattered and whose men-folk, in the main, have disappeared. They quite rightly fear the worst.

Wednesday 7 April: The only addition to the Milosevic peace proposal is that now he says he will withdraw his troops if NATO pull out of FYROM. This is rejected by NATO. The UK and the US reiterate that they will not commit ground troops into Kosovo until invited to do so under the provisions of an internationally agreed peace plan. Political pressure is maintained on the FRY to withdraw all troops from Kosovo and allow the refugees to return peacefully to their homes. NATO is still firm on requiring a peace settlement. Although another NATO force (the AMF(L)) is to be put into Albania to assist with the relief effort, NATO is keen to cut away from this work in FYROM and allow the Force to concentrate again on its original mission with regard to Kosovo. As far as the outside world is concerned, the media are in general increasingly sceptical about the political and military aims of the NATO Governments, with the notable exception of articles about the NATO troops already here (too much good work already done). With the Orthodox Church celebration of Easter imminent the alert state in FYROM remains high, however, and incidents against NATO troops here are expected to increase over the holiday period. The refugee camps are full to overflowing, with Brazda remaining the biggest in FYROM at over 30,000. There is some confusion as to how many refugees remain trapped at the border crossing point but the UNHCR reports that it is mainly clear and that the flow is reducing. The priorities remain food and medicine, with the good weather making the need for additional covered areas perhaps less critical. The Royal Engineers who have led the way throughout in building Brazda Camp are 'clearly exhausted by their efforts. They and every other soldier who came to help them deserve tremendous recognition for doing so much with so little in such a short space of time.

Friday 9 April: The Kosovo crisis is discussed at a summit in Washington, and a number of possible solutions are being voiced in the media. These include some form of UN protectorate, perhaps using the currently deployed NATO troops. Russia is increasingly vocal in siding against NATO in reaching a settlement in the region. There is now no significant movement of refugees

into FYROM from Kosovo. Bombing continues, though bad weather seems to be making completion of missions difficult.

Saturday 10 April: Media coverage of the continued air bombing campaign is extensive, and many more targets in both Kosovo and the FRY are being attacked. Belgrade has now stopped all domestic comment on the crisis and has banned BBC/CNN coverage and reporting of events. It is anticipated that Milosevic will try to push out some new form of peace deal over the weekend. The Head of the UNHCR asks for the air lift of refugees out of FYROM and Albania to stop. The UNHCR aim is to return all Kosovars to the province to rebuild their lives there and not abroad. After a week of intense activity, the total number of refugees moved through FYROM is 124,000: 60,000 have been housed with families in FYROM, 10,000 have moved on to Albania, 5,000 to Greece, 2,000 to Turkey, 2,000 into Europe and 44,000 remain in the border camps. It is expected that the UNHCR will take over the camps from NATO over the next week, and though KFOR will inevitably retain some sort of residual liability for providing emergency assistance, our part in this phase seems to be largely over.



4 ARMOURED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (204)

OC — **Maj A. H. Campbell-Black**
RSM — **WO1 (RSM) D. W. Craig**

A SHORT NOTE FROM MACEDONIA - *by LCpl Lee Slater*

The beginning of 1999 saw the first opportunity of a JRRF deployment to Kosovo following widespread media coverage and growing tension in the area. With just six days notice to move the Squadron went into overdrive to prepare for the possible deployment to the Balkans and then completed a two day training package. The ranges were particularly realistic as it was freezing and snowed all day and we could not see the 300m point for the APWT.

Once confirmation was received, the R Group left the following day with ten vehicles and crews and Bde Staff. They flew into theatre to set up a forward headquarters that was co-located with the National Support Element and the KORBR in the Panorama Hotel, Skopje. The locals seemed quite friendly with the odd few trying either to clean your vehicle windows or trying to sell you something as you stopped at the traffic lights. From the Panorama we were off South to the Macedonia Hotel just South of Veles. It proved to be a much better location with the exception of the accommodation.

The Squadron rebros (augmented by 3 DSR) have spread to the four winds and in some cases remote locations. Initially, when the weather was good this was not a problem, but then it snowed…**SSgt Norm Finnegan** was the first of a long list of people to get bogged in, leaving **Sig** 'Taff' **Roberts** to spend the night with a ferocious dog – or was it a wolf….**2Lt Dave Hill** followed suit and after seven hours of fun was recovered by **Cpl Sammy Parker** and **LCpl** 'Snoopy' **Swift** from the LAD. **2Lt Hill**'s second stab at the mud/wolf equation was more fruitful with only two hours of digging and self recovery. The OC and **Sig** 'Mal' **Pattinson** out did everyone with a low level Survival and Recovery Exercise overnight – they never actually found the Rebro.

With more of the Squadron flowing into theatre we were almost at full strength by mid-March, but the workload did not ease up at all. With much of the planning complete it was time to practice some of the scenarios we could face on crossing the border. A five day exercise on the Krivolak Training Area gave us that opportunity, with various configurations of the Headquarters and we did it twice for good measure! From Veles it was back North on the low-loaders (which were really reliable) to Petrovac, where we set up in a field location with cam nets, cookhouses and shellscrapes – next to the French who prefer to be a little more casual with BBQ every night!!

There have been a number of new arrivals to bolster and replace members of the Squadron. New to the Squadron to mention just a few, **Capt Paul Buck** and **Cpl Robertson** join us straight from Bosnia, **2Lt Paul McTurk** still hung over from his Troop Commanders' Course and **SSgt Johnson** from 3 Bn REME. Straight from the factory **Sig McIntyre, Sig Sheppard** and **Sig Cowan** (see you out here). We welcome assistance from 3 DSR, but can you stop sending **Sig Catney** so much post as there is no room for anything else on the resup runs!!

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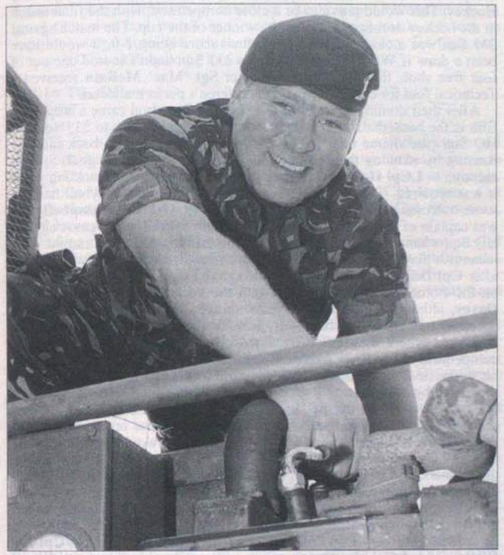
ABERDEEN SOLDIER COMMUNICATES ALONG THE KOSOVAN BORDER

Cpl Kenny Macpherson (27) from Aberdeen is helping NATO troops to communicate with each other in Macedonia, as the Kosovan crisis continues to hold the world's attention. **Kenny** is a member of 16 Sig Regt, normally based near Mönchengladbach in Germany, but currently providing the secure communications for HQ Allied Rapid Reaction Corps around Skopje. **Kenny** and his small team of soldiers deploy in their mobile communications vehicles to hill top sites where they stay for four or five weeks at a time. 'Although we are re-supplied with food and fuel every one or two days, we can only allow each soldier to be away from the vehicles for one day a week,' said **Kenny**. 'On that day, we can get away for a good shower, a decent meal and a chance to phone home.'



Kenny's crew is working even harder than usual at the moment because one of the Signallers is helping to put up extra tents in Brazda refugee camp. **Kenny** will be out in Macedonia for another six months but he is eagerly looking forward to his mid-tour leave in May.

Since he joined the Army after leaving Hazelhead Academy in 1988, **Kenny** has served in Bosnia, Germany and Cyprus as well as his UK tours. His parents, **Bill** and **Margaret** still live in Aberdeen but his wife, **Lisa**, is at their home in Germany.

MULTINATIONAL STAFF OF HEADQUARTERS ALLIED COMMAND EUROPE (ACE) RAPID REACTION CORPS (ARRC) TRAIN FOR DEPLOYMENT TO MACEDONIA

by Nigel Sargeant

When HQ ARRC deployed to the 'FYROM' (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) several weeks ago, under the command of **Lt Gen Sir Mike Jackson**, months of detailed staff planning was rapidly put into practice as HQ staff moved out to 'theatre'. Some 1,000 members of HQ ARRC and its supporting elements are currently deployed to the Balkans. However, with the situation in the area highly volatile and unpredictable, the planners' own military skills need to be just as efficient as their staff work, and military refresher training has therefore been high on the agenda for HQ personnel preparing to join their colleagues in the Balkans.

To facilitate this, Arsbeck Ranges, nestling in peaceful countryside near the HQ at Rheindahlen, has been a hive of activity as staff officers of various nationalities put pens to one side to update themselves rapidly on the kind of situations they might encounter. People taking part include British, Germans, Americans, Italians and Dutch. The one day package is purpose-designed for the Balkans, as **US Maj John Phelan**, Training Co-ordinator for HQ ARRC, explained,

'As we prepare for a possible peacekeeping mission in Kosovo, it's vital we know what to expect. This 'theatre-specific' training takes in key areas of knowledge, including first aid, mine awareness, weapon handling, battle tactics and armoured fighting vehicle recognition. While each of the 17 nations with ARRC-assigned units carries out its own training, I'm responsible for training the HQ staff themselves. The beauty of this training is its commonality - for example, with all countries using standard NATO 5.56 mm ammunition, people can train with their own weapons if required.'

The training is run by Support Battalion HQ ARRC with help from instructors of other nationalities, under the watchful eye of Chief Instructor **WO2 Kevin Bloodworth**. Each course starts with a short familiarisation session on military vehicle recognition, run by **Sgt Paul Williams**. **Paul** said, 'People are likely to see a whole range of East European military vehicles, so it's important they can correctly identify them.' Mine awareness is also vital knowledge, and **Sgt Mike Tarbox**, a US Army Engineer, was on hand to show staff the kind of mines likely to be around and the all important Standard Operational Procedures if they are encountered.

Equally important is Battlefield First Aid and a mock explosion resulting in some impressively made-up 'casualties', with all manner of injuries, put people's skills to the test. The 'victims' - first aid experts **Cpl Darryl Cook** and **Sapper Richard Barber**, both of Support Battalion HQ ARRC - made amazing recoveries between each Exercise! 'The various nationalities have very similar first aid techniques so we expect our treatment to be fairly consistent, and indeed it is,' said **Darryl**. 'Everyone speaks good English, so there's no problem on the instructional side.'

Lt Col Dieter Jaksik of the Bundeswehr, HQ ARRC Fire Co-ordination Branch Plans Officer, expressed himself well satisfied with the day's training: I've only just been posted to HQ ARRC but could go out to the Balkans at any time. This has been a superb chance to get to know my international colleagues - far quicker than in an office!'

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NEWS FROM NORTHERN IRELAND

XV HEADQUARTERS NORTHERN IRELAND & 15 SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO/Comd Comms — **Lt Col G. J. T. Rafferty**
RSM — **WO1 (RSM) A. Balsdon**

225 SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd — **Maj D. I. Whimpenny**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) D. Rook**

CO'S CUP - 10 MARCH 1999

On Wednesday 10 March 1999, the Squadron competed against HQ Sqn and 233 Sqn in the CO's Cup Potted Sports, with Basketball, Football, Volleyball and Tug of War being contested. It turned out to be a one-sided affair with the Squadron running out easy winners with HQ Sqn second and 233 Sqn in third place.

233 Sqn pushed 225 Sqn all the way in the football, with the result of the final game between 233 Sqn and HQ Sqn deciding overall winners. 233 Sqn had to beat HQ Sqn 10-0, in order to win on goal difference. The game was a bit of a thriller for 233 Sqn and the watching 225 Sqn team, as the score reached 9-0 with only seconds to go. Luckily for 225 Sqn a shot at the death was saved by the HQ Sqn goalkeeper and the first points of the day went to 225 Sqn. The basketball was hard fought, though with the height of **Capt Yardley** and the agility of **SSgt (FofS) Mick Swift,** 225 Sqn came out victorious once again. The volleyball team was very strong and although seeming to start slowly in every match, sharked their way to convincing wins in all four matches. The tug of war was scheduled to last all afternoon, but with a Regimental rugby match having to be played that afternoon, and a glaring Adjutant applying some subtle pressure, the event was decided in double quick time. Each Squadron won a match and the event was declared a draw between all three Squadrons. The CO had planned his day to make visits to each sport at some time during the day. Unfortunately for **Sgt Jimmy Fox** who organised the tug of war, the CO turned up not knowing the event had been completed. **Jimmy** is still in hiding!!!! Everyone retired to the Peake Inn for the presentation of the cup by the CO, **Lt Col Rafferty** to **SSgt (FofS) Swift** on behalf of the Squadron.



The 225 Sig Sqn Tug of War Team



FofS Mick Swift receives the CO's Cup

MERCURY CUP POTTED SPORTS - 18 MARCH 1999

The following Thursday, 18 March 1999, the Squadron turned out to compete for the Mercury Cup in Basketball, Football, Volleyball and Hockey. This would prove to be a close competition, with the final match in the hockey deciding who was the winner of the cup. The match against 233 Sqn was a close affair with the final score being 1-0. It would have been a draw if **WO2 (SSM) Day** from 233 Sqn hadn't scored one out of four free shots they were awarded after **Sgt** 'Mac' **McBain** received a Technical foul for commenting on the referee's performance.

After their dominance in the CO's Cup the Squadron came a surprising fifth in the basketball, after losing both their league games to 233 Sqn and HQ Sqn (the shame of it!). The football team brought us back into the running by winning their competition without conceding a goal. Special mention to **LCpl Helen Waites** for putting in some quality tackling when it was required. The afternoon events of hockey and volleyball had the same outcome as the mornings' positions. **Sgt Graeme Campbell** who was captain of the hockey team felt they were robbed in the game against HQ Sqn when scoring a goal that was then disallowed by the umpire. This meant we played against 8 Bde for fifth and sixth place which we won 1-0 after **Cpl Dean Lenton** sacrificed his skin by sliding along the astro-turf on his stomach to knock the ball into the back of the goal. **SSgt Paul Davey,** although getting on in years showed he's not lost his blinding speed to make some telling runs, over five yards. The volleyball team continued where they left off the week before, winning the volleyball competition easily. They made the Sqn Comd, **Maj Whimpenny,** sweat a bit in the final match though, by leaving it to the last few seconds to win the match by one point.

The Squadron had finished its participation in the Competition and had accrued 16pts. The final scoreboard indicated that the result of the final match in the hockey between HQ Sqn and 39 Bde would decide who the Mercury Cup winners would be. If HQ Sqn won the match they would be the winners, and if 39 Bde won then 225 Sqn would win. Needless to say half the Squadron made their way up to the astro-turf to cheer on 39 Bde. In a close match which could have gone either way it wasn't until the final minute or two that 39 Bde scored the goal that would mean 225 Sqn would be crowned Mercury Cup Potted Sports Champions for 1998/99. **Cpl Jay Waites** and **LCpl Jo Quinn** were presented with the football and volleyball cups respectively. **LCpl Jo Quinn,** on behalf of 225 Sqn was presented the Mercury Cup Potted Sports trophy by Comd Comms Northern Ireland, **Lt Col Rafferty.**

SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS 233 SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd — **Maj R. P. Giles**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) Day**

The pace of Squadron life has not slowed down during this current cease-fire. The role out of new equipment, the Y2K problem, and the endless round of reports and interviews for the Investing in People have made the last few months long ones. Another rain forest has been destroyed in the Squadron's preparation for Environmental Health Inspections and IIP inspections all which have gone, too many to mention, but the OC wishes to thank all those that have moved on for all their hard work, welcomes all those new arrivals and hopes that the challenges of life in the Province are all that they expected.

BT SWIMATHON 1999 - 20 MARCH

The Squadron put forward five teams in this year's BT Swimathon, held at Palace Barracks Holywood, to raise money for the Charities NSPCC and The Royal Scottish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Each team swam 5,000 metres and raised approximately £600 for both these worthwhile charities. The swim was held in a cold pool at varying times beginning at 0800hrs. The task was made all the more difficult as the Warrant Officer's and SNCO's of HQNI and 15 Sig Regt had dined out the RSM the previous night. Thanks goes to all those willing volunteers who took time out to raise money for those not as well off as others.

ROMEO TROOP - *by Cpl Richardson*

Life has been as hectic as ever for the most overworked Troop in Province since our return from Christmas/New Year leave, which has seen several arrivals and departures within the Troop. Firstly we would like to welcome **Cpl Dean Rudd** from Sunny Bulford, **Cpl Craig Richardson** all the way from over the road from arch enemies 39 Bde, **LCpl John Connolly** and **LCpl Russell Hamilton** who both arrived into the Troop straight from the factory. On the farewell side it is with best wishes and a few tears that we say goodbye and good luck **to Cpl Ian Galloway** off to Kosovo with 604 Sig Tp where he will no doubt give the Chief of Staff handy tips on how to win the battle. We would also like to wish **Sgt** 'Mac' **McKenna** and **Cpl Andy Webb** all the very best to them and to their families on their return to civvy street and wish them every success in their new chosen careers. The Surv Section are still cleaning up the evidence from their leaving bash as this goes to press.

EXERCISE GALLOWAY CREAM 1999 - *by Sgt Sorley*

Ex Galloway Cream is the GOC's annual Scientific Research Exercise which is used to gather scientific data under realistic operational conditions. The Exercise took place over a ten day period in Kirkcudbright Training Area. Two members of the Ops Sect specially nominated by the YofS for their expertise, experience and adaptability to overcome the most difficult of situations deployed to take the role of ECM observers monitoring movement of the troops on the ground.

Among many scientists from DERA/SCIAD **Sgt Sorley** and **Cpl Sutherland** excelled in both the working and social aspects of the Exercise. Deploying as honorary civilians, both members of the Troop, played the role of monitoring/advising the troops on the ground and mothering the civilians, ensuring that they were able to survive the overnight stay in the adverse weather conditions which was intended to be a tactical phase. However, it ended up like Blackpool illuminations. A good time was had by all and many a friend was made, as was an extremely large hotel bill which was paid for by Excon. Ex Galloway Cream 2000 is already being looked forward to.

INDIA TROOP
Tp Comd — **Capt Oliver**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt Marlowe**

India Tp would like to let all readers of *The Wire* know that we do still exist, but, due to being extremely busy (as always!) we've been unable to submit any articles for a while. There have been quite a few new arrivals, the Troop would like to welcome; **SSgt Marlowe, Cpl Briggs, Cpl Cumberland, Cpl Johnston, Cpl Martin-Woodgate, Cpl Stoneman, LCpl Evans, LCpl Meeds** and **Sig Waring.**

Now to the new arrivals of a different kind. Congratulations **to Cpl Paddy Briggs** and his family on the birth of their son **Philip**, also congratulations to **LCpl Evans** and his family on the birth of their daughter **Megan** and last but not least congratulations to **Sig Whitehead** and his family on the birth of their daughter **Jenny**.

The Troop would like to thank **SSgt (FofS) Paton, SSgt Marlowe, Sgt Strugnell, Cpl Gaber** and **Cpl Martin-Woodgate** for taking part in the BT Swimming Challenge on Saturday 20 March 1999 and helping to raise money for the RSPCC. The Troop also helped to raise money for Comic Relief. Personnel paid £2 in order to wear civilian clothes to work.

The Troop sends fond farewell to **Cpl Bryan, Cpl Fisher** and **Cpl Anderson**. Good luck in your new units. Also, to **SSgt Corrigan** not only leaving the unit but leaving the Army, all the best in Civ-Div **Frank**.

COMMCEN TROOP
Tp Comd — **Capt Walster**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt Jackson**

THE DYING TRADE

Well it is time for *The Wire* notes once again from COMMCEN Northern Ireland. Apologies to those of you waiting for the concluding part of the Contact, Mouse Wait out! story but not sure of how much passed the censors, so once I have this information I will continue with this gripping tale. Not a lot has happened in the COMMCEN, except to say we are losing more and more Handbags to Class 3 Tele Op (TG)s now there is an improvement I hear some of you cry! This on one hand is a God send and on the other a nightmare, as some of our Supervisors have never worked so hard in getting it wrong. Most of the time has been spent teaching the new soldiers how things are done in a working unit. Big slap on the backs all round for the hard work put in by everyone. COMMCEN, with a little help from SHQ, won the Games Night organised by TM Troop. Some outstanding work done by **Sigs Nigel Green, Martin Hannam** and **Andy Pennock**, saw them see off the rest of the Squadron with ease. An excellent start to a new unit. All their confidentials have now gone from Grade E to a low D. Good work lads. So lets say hello to our new members, all from School:

Sig Joe Gorman	**Sig Nigel Green**
Sig Pippa Henderson	**Sig Jenny Read**
Sig Rodders Rodwell	**Sig Lynda Shield**
Sig S and M Staples-Miles	**Sig Tracey Walker**

We have to say a sad farewell to a few who no doubt have spent many a night crying on leaving such a friendly Troop; **Cpl Caroline McMahon, Sig Nat Gooch** and **Sig Jo Leyland** have moved on to the AGC and we wish them all the best. **LCpl Martin Campion** has been let loose in the world of 30 Sig Regt, this may come back to haunt APC Glasgow one day. Sadly we have to say goodbye to **LCpl** 'Thommo' **Thomson** to civvy street where we hope he will make his mark. On that note it is goodbye from the busiest COMMCEN in the Province (bet that gets a few letters to the Ed).

TRANSPORT MAINTENANCE TROOP
Tp Comd — **SSgt (FofS)** 'Taff' **Maul**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt Shaun Cook**

A busy period for the Troop and it has seen a fair amount of changes. Firstly we would like to congratulate several personnel on promotion; well done to **SSgt (FofS)** 'Taff' **Maul** on promotion to WO2. Also congratulations go to **Dave Hansen** and **Ian Selkirk** both on promotion to Sgt and finally to **Glynn Clarke, Omar Walshe** and **Ian Nichols** on passing their Class 2 examinations and promotion to Corporal. Well done to all. On the new arrivals front we welcome to our fold **Cpl's** 'Spike' **Milligan, Sunnaie Hardy, Steve Whipp, Ash Wood, Joe Smith** and also to **LCpl's Kesher Bryan, Paul Harris, Ade Field** and **Dave Knox.** Welcome to one and all. Obviously with manning almost at 100% this has to be countered by posting personnel out so that we don't become too used to working with a full complement of manpower!! To that end we are saying farewell to **Sgt's Paul Hughes** off to RSIT (boo hiss) and **Lee Robinson** off to civvy street also **Cpl's Frank Henderson** off on his class 1 and **Steve Cator** off to civvy street.

Coming to the end of the Training year has seen the Troop SSgt and the Squadron busy getting personnel through their annual ATD's culminating in several A Scale parades (yep that's right parades in NI) for BFT's and CFT's. It was quite refreshing for the Troop to actually take part in physical training with other individuals prised from India, Romeo and COMMCEN Troop - obviously it took several hours for these Troops' eyes to become accustomed to daylight but once they did a fine sight was beheld of the Squadron in full combats bashing out the miles around camp.

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON
Sqn Comd — **Maj John Mullender**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) Steve Russell**

The Squadron bids a fond farewell to the outgoing 2IC/MTO/Fams Offr/OIC PRI, **Capt Jeff Williams** off to be a 'woolly hat' (his words) at 30 CTT in deepest darkest Wales, thanks for all your hard work. A warm welcome to **Capt John Howell-Walmsley** newly arrived to take on the post of many hats, we hope you have an enjoyable tour.

MERCURY CUP - POTTED SPORTS

For a Squadron of the size of ours, the task of putting so many sportsmen and women on the various pitches for this event, whilst continuing to provide those elements of Comd Support required by Comd Comms, is not an easy one. It is to the credit of the various team skippers (**Cpl Andy Howe** - football, **Cpl** (now Sgt) **Kelly Tickner** - volleyball, **LCpl Lee Forrest** - basketball and **Sig** 'Mac' **McFarlane** - hockey) that the Squadron performed so well. Particular mention should go to the basketball team in winning their competition outright. After a tense hockey semi-final win on penalty flicks against 8 Bde, a win in the final against 39 Bde would have resulted in the Squadron winning the competition outright. A close, hard fought match ending in a 1 - 0 defeat meant a final position of third, a commendable effort.

REGIMENTAL MOTOR TRANSPORT – *by Cpl Ash Ingham*

Early January saw a very busy period for the MT with a re-location to our new home whilst still dealing with the never ending transport requests from both the Regiment and Lisburn Stn. Thanks go out to all the MT lads for the extra effort required during an already busy period. Congratulations to **Sig Huggett** on successfully completing his Royal Signals Leadership Course and who now feels he should be commanding his own Regiment. Not just yet eh? Farewell to the outgoing MTO, **Capt Jeff Williams** who leaves us for the less stressful life to OC 30 CTT (or maybe not....). Welcome to the new MTO (amongst other things) **Capt John Howell-Walmsley**. Good Luck to both.

QUARTERMASTER'S DEPARTMENT

It has been a busy period within the QM's Dept with the Regt undergoing it's Logistic Support Inspection whilst continuing to provide support to both the HQ and the Regiment in fulfilling their Operational roles. However, all work and no play makes for a sad and boring life. The 'Stacker', the dept bowling team is meeting with varying degrees of success in the Garrison bowling league. **Sig** 'Kingpin' **McFarlane** showed the way, unfortunately it was in the direction of the gutter, keep trying 'Kingpin'!!! It is one of the strongest teams in the league (because it is holding all the other teams up). On the sporting front congratulations go to **Cpl Danny Steele**, who, after failing the eyesight test on his pulheems review decided to become a football referee. After dedicating his service fully this season he has been selected as Army referee of the year, a very prestigious award.

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40 (ULSTER) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO — **Lt Col A. P. R. Roberts MBE**
RSM — **WO1 (RSM) C. G. McGinley**

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Welcome to the new CO, **Lt Col Roberts** and his wife **Angela**, and **Capt Al Hoensch** who has just taken over as QM. Farewell to **Lt Col Nigel Beacom** and **Isobel**, good luck in the future and we all hope to see them again soon. Also goodbye to **Capt Dave Chrystal** and **Suzi**, and good luck to **Maj Ron Chisholm** and **Marion** as he leaves the Army after 39 years (and three tours at 40 Sig Regt). We have also said farewell to **Capt Neil Turnbull** as he heads off to 14 Sig Regt (EW), good luck in the future.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations go to **WO1 (FofS) Phil Cooper** who was selected for commissioning in March and will leave us in May this year.

SUPPORT SQUADRON

Sqn Comd — **Maj V. Beggs REME (V)**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) Cook**

EXERCISE SCOTTIE FINN 24 JANUARY – 7 FEBRUARY 1999

Once again the Squadron took to the hills in the Scottish Highlands for what has become an annual event on the Squadron calendar. We were based at the Stopover Hostel in Grantown on Spey, some eight miles NE of Aviemore.

Day One saw the QM(V) **Capt Maurice Stanley**, **WO2 (SSM) George Cook**, **SSgt (SQMS) Ed Hedley** set off as the advance party to set up camp and recce the slopes for the arrival of the main body in the early hours of Thursday morning.



Before going up the mountain
L-R: Sigs Whiteside R, Robb, Dougan J, Dougan LA, Whiteside M.

Day Two saw the first tentative steps made by some of our beginners on the ski slopes around the Cairngorm. Our instructor was baffled by the sheer enthusiasm, particularly as most had only had four hours sleep. The senior instructor, **WO2 Mark Henderson**, who is the Master Chef in Ballykelly was tested to the limits of his instructional ability by the **Dougan** girls, **Lesley Anne** and **Janine**, who were more worried about the way they looked than whether or not they would get down the mountain in one piece!

However, his patience was rewarded when **Lesley Anne** was awarded the best student by all instructors, well done. It must be said that **Sgt Pete Youll** tried hard to hold onto his title, but unlucky.

Day Three saw yet another snow storm bringing even better conditions, even **Cpl** 'Windy' **Millar** was beginning to get the hang of things. He has even promised to put his name down for next years trip. With the ski tests out of the way it was back to the Hostel for the 'Squadron Dinner Night' and the presentation of the certificates. It was rumoured that the TA RQMS, **WO2 Steve Delaney** even managed to stay awake long enough to receive his award and the OC, **Maj Victor Beggs**, is hoping to attend an instructor's course in the near future.

A special mention must also go to our admin team of **Sgt Bobby Balance** and 'Spud' **Murphy** for a job well done.



Sig Janine Dougan practising her reverse 'Snow Plough'

66 (CITY OF BELFAST) SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd — **Maj R. G. Butler R SIGNALS (V)**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) Irvine**

RSIT

1999 began for 66 Sqn with the usual preparation for the annual RSIT inspection which took place this year during 6-8 February. After a lot of hard work and after a satisfactory inspection was achieved we were looking forward to going on our annual ski trip to Aviemore. Rumour has it that there is good and bad news for next year's RSIT. The bad news is that RSIT is cancelled (just kidding), the good news is that we could be skiing in the Balkans!

EXERCISE FOURTH FALL FINN

Ex Fourth Fall Finn saw the Squadron go off on their annual skiing exercise to ski the Cairngorms near Aviemore, and found for the first time in four years of trying an abundance of snow covering the mountains (hurrah!). Organised by **WO2 (SSM) Derek** 'Scarface' **Irvine** who for the second year in a row was injured by **SSgt Mark** 'GBH' **Barrass**. Thanks **Mark**. The Squadron benefited from the excellent instruction that was provided by **WO2 Mick Kemp**, the master driver from 39 Inf Bde and **WO2 Mark Henderson**, who is the master chef at Ballykelly. Some advice given out was that **Cpl Chris** 'Kamikazi' **Collins** should go slower, **Sig Robert** 'Slowcoach' **Whiteside** should go faster, **Sgt Janet** 'poser' **Coates** should practice her ups and downs, **SSgt (SQMS) Geoff** 'Bambi on ice' **McClean** should stick to canoeing, and **Sig Ian** 'ribs' **McKeown** should put on some weight. **SSgt Tommy** 'McLate' **Johnston** managed to get his finger out for once and achieved the most improved student award. Although it must be said that the instructors themselves managed to benefit from the Exercise as they were given a few lessons in the art of partying. As usual good PR was achieved once the language barrier was overcome by mixing with the locals, something that may come in handy on our future travels. Fingers crossed we'll be back soon.

PROMOTIONS

Congratulations to **LCpl Stephen Hanna**, **Cpl Anne Collins**, **Cpl Suzanne Small** and **Sgt Tommy McCardle** on their recent promotions.

CORPSAAM 1999

The Regiment was represented by 66 Sqn sending a team to Bisley for the Corp SAAM competition which took place over 9-11 April. The team continued the success of recent years in this competition by coming third overall out of a field of 17. **Sig Ian McKeown** won the top young soldiers award. Taking part were **Cpl Colin Gordon**, **Cpl Alec Jones**, **LCpl Johnny Booth**, **LCpl Stephen Whiteside**, and **Sig Ian McKown** with **SSgt 'BJ' Finister** and **LCpl Holterman** firing as individuals. The competition is getting harder each year as more teams are entering, so well done everyone. Thanks must go to **SSgt 'BJ' Finister** for organising the administration for the team.

69 (NORTH IRISH HORSE) SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd — **Maj W. B. Houston**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) McKnight**

Over January to March the Squadron has sent six recruits on their recruits courses, five R Signals and one REME. All passed. 13 March was TA National Open Door Day, a PR event to let locals know that we are still alive and kicking after SDR. The TA Centre was open and we also laid on two stands in local towns. **Pipe Maj John Taylor** took six members of the Regimental Pipes and Drums to Benbecula to join the rest of the Royal Signals Pipes and Drums taking part in the closing down ceremony of the Royal Signals detachment on the island.

EXERCISE SPRING EAGLE

At the end of March the Regiment played an active part in the 11 Sig Bde Ex Spring Eagle. 69 Sqn provided the HF RATT links to the mainland, working to 94 (Barking Yeomanry) Sig Sqn in Windsor. Five FFRs deployed with the Regiment providing a command net in and around the Belfast area.

CONGRATULATIONS

Go to **Cpl Ian** and **LCpl Joanne Palmer** on the birth of their baby son and to **LCpl Louise Kitson** on the birth of her baby.

FAREWELLS

In February we said farewell to **LCpl Anne Marie Cleminson** who has gone off to join the RAF, and at the end of March we also said farewell to **Capt Neil Turnbull**, the Squadron 2IC who has been posted to 14 Sig Regt (EW). (We hope the running will be as good there!)

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3 INFANTRY BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (203)

OC — **Maj S. K. MacRostie MBE**
RSM — **WO1 (RSM) S. Cheslett**

SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS

The Admin Office in Armagh continues to be as busy as ever, with quite a few comings and goings within the office. A warm welcome goes out to **LCpl Caroline Johnstone** and **Pte Jenny** 'Have I told you about my Citroen Saxo' **Tipper**, both posted in from the Brigade HQ. Gone, but not forgotten, we say goodbye to **Cpl Scott Maynard** to 1 QLR and **LCpl** 'Bushy' **Bushell** to the 'Y List'. Thanks very much for all your help. **LCpl Johnstone** has just departed for a month on her Class 1 course, and going the other way, **Pte Jenny Tipper** has just returned from her Class 1 course having obtained second place in the class - well done you.

The Admin Office is still working against a constant mountain of paperwork with the Chief Clerk, **SSgt Rob** 'Because my mum told me so' **Evans** being continually pursued by **Capt Paul** 'Would you like fries with that' **Connors** wanting to know why there is sugar in his coffee. I am sure that we'll get it right one day sir! **Pte Mandy Clerk** is continually wrestling with her never ending medal and posting lists and **Cpl Andy Sneddon** is busily preparing himself for civilian life with various courses and briefings. With all that, plus house and job hunting, he hardly has time to work!

COMMUNICATIONS TROOP

Tp Comd — **2Lt F. D. Guthrie**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt R. Wallace**

Comms Section: 'The Senders'

The operators of Comms Tp have thankfully been quiet for the last few months. We welcome to the Troop **LCpl Kerry** 'Sporty Spice' **Davis** from sunny Bulford, **LCpl Andy Taylor** from 30 Sig Regt and **Sig Dicko** 'Silver Fox' **Dickenson** from 7 Sig Regt, Germany. Unfortunately **Sig Krissy Strain** has left us for pastures new at 7 Bde - all the best. **LCpl Karen** 'Ginkstef' **Glenister** and **Sig Emma** 'all Emmas are evil' **Jones** are soon to begin their conversion courses for the AGC as military clerks and will leave us in May. Once again, Comms Tp was well represented in the Northern Ireland Mercury Cup Potted Sports Competition. Special mention has to go out to **Cpl Charlie Henson** who, clad in brand new sports kit, was overlooked in every event. **SSgt Bob Wallace** should not be forgotten, he managed three minutes on the football pitch and failed to gain a touch. Better luck next time chaps!

Technical Maintenance Section: 'The Menders'

TM Sect have recently been the proud recipients of a special award from the Advanced School of Motoring. Congratulations go out to **Cpl Gary** 'Gaz' **Hobson**, **Cpl Cecilia** 'Cec' **Mason**, **Cpl Dean** 'Deano' **Morgan** and **LCpl Craig** 'Jiz' **Stainer** for their continued efforts. We welcome **Sig Jim Wright** who joins us from 220 Sig Sqn and goodbye to our chief air-ground surveillance engineer, **Cpl Tony Raby** who has left us for 19 Mech Bde. Finally our congratulations go out to **Cpl Paul** 'Sally' **Webster** on being re-selected for the Army Karate Team.

SUPPORT TROOP

QM — **Capt F. S. Payet**
RQMS — **WO2 (RQMS) A. Strudwick**

Four months ago, Support Tp saw everyone looking forward to a well-deserved Christmas break. There was a couple of small matters to take care of first, i.e. Christmas functions. The Troop function was first on the list and it took the form of an American Night with most of the Troop members arriving in fancy dress. A special mention must go to **Cpl Pat Paterson** who turned up as Captain America, the only thing he did not bother with was the chest. Another vital component missing from the evening was a plethora of girls. However, this was not going to perturb **Cpl Craig Turner** and **Pte Taff James** from 'smooching' on the smoked



Cpl Turner briefs the Deputy Comd and Sqn OC on his future Brigade Policy

filled dance floor. The next couple of days were spent recovering so that everyone would be in a fit state for the next function. **SSgt Frank Crowhurst** helped organise the Squadron party which everybody enjoyed thoroughly. The only thing which did not go to plan was the raffle - none of us winning anything and all the prizes seemingly going to Comms Tp.

With Christmas and New Year well and truly passed, things are back to normal: the drivers driving, the cooks cooking and the stores storing. Most of the Troop has been away on one course or another, ranging from Team Medics to Driving Instructors courses. **Cpl Paul Gaddas** has surprised us all by the way he managed to squeeze them in around his busy leave schedule.

There have been a few hellos and goodbyes in the last couple of months. We said goodbye and then hello again to **Sig** 'Alberto' **Finney** after his three month detachment on 'special ops'! **Pte Paul Lawler** has been posted to 8 Inf Bde HQ and Sig Sqn and **LCpl** 'Taff' **Rees** went to Support Battalion, HQ ARRC. **LCpl** 'Coops' **Cooper** and **Sig Mark Raynes** have now been officially 'taken on strength' at 'Civ Div' and finally, not goodbye but au revoir to **LCpl Ian Pearce** after he defected to Comms Troop. We would like to welcome the following to the Troop: **LCpl Ashton, LCpl Deano Kirk, Sig Andy Hall** and **Pte Mac Mcoll.** Congratulations go out to **Rfn Mick Cambridge** and his wife **Martine** on the birth of their daughter **Emily.**

8 INFANTRY BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNALS SQUADRON (218)

OC **Maj Thackray**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) Fleming**

MERCURY CUP COMPETITION

On 18 March the Squadron Potted Sports team headed off to Lisburn for the first event in the Mercury Cup competition. The event consisted of basketball, football, hockey and volleyball.

BASKETBALL - *by Cpl Mark Benson*

The Squadron's basketball team, who practice most Sundays, turned up with high hopes of winning. Our first game was against 39 Bde. They proved too strong for us so, unfortunately, we headed off to our next game with slightly dampened spirits. We played a much better game in our second match against 3 Bde. Our third game was against HQ Sqn, 15 Sig Regt we managed to give them a run for their money, but eventually lost a hard fought contest. Fortunately we had played well enough to reach the play-off for third/fourth position. In this our final game, we managed to overcome 225 Sig Sqn to secure third place. We now return to remedial basketball training and hopes of greater success next year. The following people made up the team: **Capt Dave Seymour, SSgt Jim Coupland, Sgt Kev Cooney, Sgt Lee Johns, Cpl Mark Benson** (Team Captain), **Cpl Al McDonald** and **Pte Charlie Hayes**.

FOOTBALL - *by Sig King*



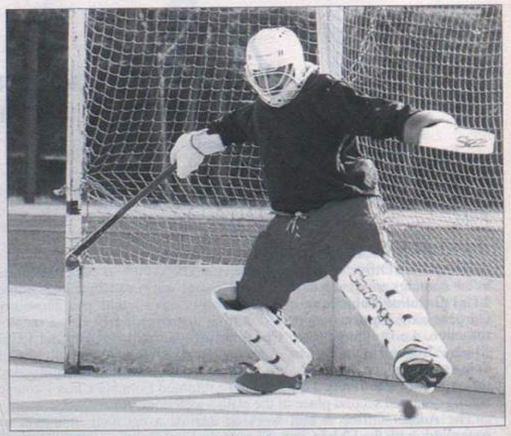
Football Team
Front Row (L-R): Pte Collins, Sig King, LCpl Bond, LCpl Stojanovic
Back Row (L-R): LCpl Page, Cpl Moore, Cpl Rabbage, Sig Harrison, Sgt Snowdin

Our first game was against 39 Bde and we got off to a very promising start with two early goals. This allowed us to sit back in the second half and we ended up 2-0 winners. In contrast our second game against 3 Bde was a complete nightmare, we finished 0-3 losers and we did not even manage a decent shot on target. Due to our earlier success we managed to scrape into the semi-finals where we played HQ Sqn, 15 Sig Regt. It was a very closely fought game but we were eventually edged out by a late goal.

Our final game was the third/fourth place play-off against 225 Sig Sqn. This was an excellent game and at the end of normal time it was tied at 2-all which meant that we had to play extra-time to decide a winner. In extra-time we scored two goals to win 4-2 and take a well deserved third place.

HOCKEY - *by LCpl James Bond*

It took several stressful days to get a full thirteen player squad and at our first training session we were informed that only nine were required! So due to the late change the less willing members of the squad withdrew and we were left with a stalwart squad of nine. A starting line-up was picked for our first game against 39 Bde, however, the game seemed to be heading for a 0-0 draw due to some outstanding goal keeping from **LCpl** 'The Cat' **Ratray**. But then disaster struck and we conceded a goal and lost 1-0.



LCpl Ratray

Our second game was vital as we needed a win to make the semi-finals. This game against 3 Bde went a bit more to plan with some good play in the middle from **Cpl Ian** 'I've played this before' **Taylor** resulting in a free hit from the outside the 'D'. A good ball was drilled in and with the slightest touch from **LCpl James** 'TJ' **Bond** we scored the long awaited goal to go through.

In the semi-final we played against 233 Sig Sqn in a very gruelling match. The scored stayed at 0-0 until late in the second half when we once again conceded a goal. However we refused to give up and battled back to score a very late equaliser. This took us onto a penalty flick competition which we unfortunately lost and thus finished fourth. Watch out for next year as astroturf is coming to 8 Bde. The following people made up the team: **SSgt Jim Coupland, Sgt Kev Cooney, Sgt Lee Johns, Cpl Mark Benson, Cpl Ian Taylor** (Team Captain), **LCpl James Bond, LCpl Holly Glen, LCpl Kev Ratray** and **Sig Rob Passey.**



Hockey Team
Front Row (L-R): Sgt Cooney, Cpl Bond, Cpl Taylor
Back Row (L-R): LCpl Ratray, Cpl Benson, Sgt Johns, Sig Passey, Cpl Glen, SSgt Coupland

VOLLEYBALL - *by Cpl 'Gaz' Moore*

After several minutes of training, those who were not picked for any other sport made the volleyball team. While our opponents were shouting words like 'set' and 'service' we were rolling around either with laughter or because we had just fallen over (again). We were saved from total humiliation by a rare win in the fifth/sixth place play-off. It was all good fun and with a bit more practice we might actually be able to return the ball over the net and possibly our better players might even manage one of those overhand serves! The following people made up the team: **Sgt Andy Snowdin, Cpl Dave Rabbage, Cpl Gaz Moore** (Team Captain), **Cpl Al Macdonald, LCpl Andy Green, Pte Steve Collins** and **Pte Charlie Hayes**.

COMMUNICATIONS TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt Jo Stewart**

ENGINEERING SECTION - *by Cpl Paul Hounsell*

Like the first greyhound out of the trap, **Lt Jo Stewart** guides her merry clan of Eng Sect men to all corners of the province we proudly call home. Slightly behind the boss in the race is **SSgt** 'EM' **Evans** who likes to lead with speed. Evidence of this was shown one sunny morning when the Squadron was being issued their daily morale boosting PT. The PTI said, 'OK when I say go, everybody sprint. One, two, three GO!' **SSgt** 'EM' **Evans** shot of like a gazelle on red bull, but after five paces he collapsed with a bad leg (nobody laughed). Congratulations on your promotion to WO2.

In the last couple of months the technicians and riggers in Eng Sect have been busier than ever. This is due to an extremely productive site manager's and Technician Sergeants' office. Hence, with a standing ovation we give you **Sgt Dave** 'show us you care' **Blair, Sgt Timothy** 'Mouse' **Lever** and **Sgt Dan** 'the man with no holiday tan' **Coles** who are the nerve centre of taskings and jobs. Congratulations from us all to **Sgt Pete** 'Olly' **Mills** who has just picked up his Staff Sergeant, it is good to see a Liney break through the net. Congratulations also to **LCpl Nick** 'NooNoo' **Mier** who has just been accepted into university. He is off later this year to study for a degree in pot plants and green house maintenance alias Spanish and education.

OPERATOR SECTION - *by Sig Gibson*

I never thought that it would ever happen but it did, I was posted! When I arrived the lads greeted me with grinning faces and showed me to my palace, the Bronx end of Carter Block. I was then introduced to my new family but because we all work shift systems unfortunately I was unable to meet everyone. The weeks have flown past and I now know most people and the on the job training is now paying off. Our yearly ITD package Ex Richmond Challenge has crept upon us again, however the normal sick chits are not appearing. Is it anything to do with a shorter CFT? Now on to the hellos and goodbyes. Welcome to **SSgt Tony Taylor, Cpl** Gaz **Moore, LCpl Mark Milne** and **Sig** 'Sid' **Sidorowicz**. Fare ye well to: **LCpl Lee Benson, LCpl Tracy Pearson, Sig Matt Law** and **Sig Greg Wood**. All will be missed.

MOTOR TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT

Tp Comd **WO2 (MTWO) Hair RLC**
Tp Sgt **Sgt Stanley RLC**

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

The Troop would like to welcome **Pte Pete Lawler** who has made the colossal journey over the Sperrins from Portadown to Londonderry and **Sig Buckingham** who has come straight from the School of Signals, his head is literally in the clouds (6ft 5ins)

Farewell to **LCpl Rob Cruickshank, Pte Mark** 'Moff' **Moffat** and **Pte Paul** 'Eddie' **Wareham** who are all off to civ div, the best of luck to you all. Good luck to **Pte Dale** 'Pompey' **Pearson** who has been posted to Cyprus for a couple of years in the sun. Nothing much else has happened apart from **Cpl Mark Guest** has been away for what seems like a life time on his Drops Instructors course and then leave. Hasn't it been quiet.

FROM THE BEGINNING - *by Sig Craig Buckingham*

It was extremely daunting coming to an operational unit in Northern Ireland as a first tour. I was in Blandford for eleven months and I heard some fantastic tales of what I could expect on my arrival. Rumours included, initiation ceremonies, others said that you do not pay income tax in the Province, some even said that there was no work for tele-mechs (my trade) here so I would be doing Infantry work instead. All of this speculation came from lads like myself who had never been to a working unit before. Thankfully I chose not to listen and as luck would have it, I was posted here with two others from training. Well see you soon Ma and I was off, with all those stories niggling away at the back of my mind causing me to suspect everyone of being an active terrorist!

We were intercepted at arrivals by the MT boys and driven across the Province whilst being briefed on life in NI. It sounded spot on, extra cash, extra leave, extra warrants and loads of sport and training. For the next six months I will be working for the best MT in Province, a highly experienced and professional body of RLC and Royal Signals personnel. After that I will move to Comms Tp and become a rigger.

I have been here for seven weeks now and I am trying to get involved in as much as possible. I think the hardest thing about joining a unit is getting to know everyone and having them get to know me. Having said that I do tend to get noticed at six foot five! This is **Sig Craig Buckingham** reporting from MT Tp, 8 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn.

SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS

During this period we again have had comings and goings in the SHQ. We say farewell to **WO1(RSM) Higgins** and family who depart for the sunny climes of 30 Sig Regt in Bramcote. Your departure has been a relief to our movements clerk who you have kept busy with your weekly Corps/Army/Service football flight bookings. We welcome **WO1 (RSM) Fleming** and his family to Londonderry and hope they have a successful tour with us. Congratulations go to **WO2 (YofS) Donohue** on his selection for promotion to WO1 and posting to the BOWMAN team in Blandford. Congratulations also go to **LCpl Karen Page** after her recent promotion from Pte and a move up the ladder into the UAO. We expect an 'A' Grade pass on your upcoming Class One clerks course. Well done also to **LCpl Banyard** on successful completion of his RAO finance course. He is now fully integrated into the world of finance and we can only hope he doesn't follow the recent trend on completion of the course and get posted out.

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NEWS FROM THE REGIMENTS

1 (UNITED KINGDOM) ARMOURED DIVISION HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO Rear **Maj J. A. Harris**
RSM **WO2 (SSM) Kemp**

By the 27 April 1999, 1 (UK) Armd Div HQ and Sig Regt will be back together and in Herford. 208 Sig Sqn will be back from their tour in the Falklands Islands and personnel who took part in the Op Palatine tour will be back from Bosnia having had their well deserved post-tour leave. By the end of March 208 Sig Sqn goes into suspended animation and the manpower will be transferred to 201 Sig Sqn to bring the Squadron up to full strength with four Trunk Nodes.

OSC CORSHAM HUB
OC **Capt M. Purves**
FofS **SSgt (FofS) J. Ross**

The month of December proved to be a hectic one for members of the UK Satellite Hub, with changes in the equipment and its maintenance to keep the night shifts occupied. When C Shift departed for two weeks hard earned R&R, A and B shift had to cope with a 24hr on, 24hr off shift cycle. By the time B Shift had suffered four weeks in a row, **Cpl Greg** 'in the war....' **Cropper** had started to issue straight jackets.



Light Relief for those working at the Corsham Satellite Hub

Welcome relief was provided in the form of the Christmas function, which was a seventies fancy dress gig at a local restaurant. Somehow we doubt we'll be invited back; it must have been **Sgt Tim** 'Crash Bandicoot' **Mayners** remarks on how 'tasty' the food was. Many thanks to **Sig Mark** 'Markey Mark' **Hayden** and **LCpl Dave** 'Ripped' **Sinclair** for arranging the night. For those on shift on Christmas Day the occasion was brightened by the visit of **Maj Gen Tony Raper CBE**, Chief Executive of the DCSA. We express our thanks to him in what we realise was a day full of commitments.

The New Year was seen in with several bangs, in the form of a visit to a firepower demo at Warminster, kindly arranged for the Hub by the OC, **Capt Mark Purves**. The display started in awesome fashion with Harriers and Tornadoes engaging targets with rockets and 30mm Aden gunfire. The rest of the display demonstrated the arms and the capabilities of the British Army as a fighting force, including the Challenger 2 and the 155mm AS 90, right down to the 51mm mortar, Milan and the humble Rifle 5.56. A good day was had by all and everyone left with a feeling that the British Army had the world's premier kit (as well as the soldiers) with which to enter any potential conflict.

A fond farewell must go to **Sgt Kev** 'Shiny boots' **Young**, **Cpl Matt** 'Soap' **Evans** and **Sgt Tim** 'Crash bandicoot' **Mayner** - the latter has defected to RSIT. In their place we say a big hello to **Cpl Sean** 'Can I borrow some beer?' **Tunca** (again), **Sgt Kev** 'I'm off fishing' **East** and **Sgt Charlie Rigg**. Best wishes go to **SSgt (FofS) Jim** 'Neil Diamond' **Ross** and fiancée **Jacqueline** for their mid January wedding (have a great day!) and also to **LCpl Dave** 'Ripped' **Sinclair** for getting a banana at last. Congratulations also to **Sigs Jackson** and **Hayden** for obtaining their Class 2, **LCpl** 'Oggy' **Ogg** on passing his two to one crammer, and **Sig Nicky** 'Bilboa' **Park** (for getting a mention this month).

HAREWOOD GROUP
OC **Capt Jo Evans**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Hughes**

Harewood Group will only exist for another month before the Regiment re-constitute on 3 May and 211 Sig Sqn and 212 Sig Sqn come back into being. The Rear Party Armoured Squadron is now rather large at over 100 strong with more people back from post Falklands leave. Several key personalities are about to change including **Capt Evans** who is moving to become 2IC of the mammoth 201 Sig Sqn and **WO2 (SSM) Hughes** to the Families Centre. Welcome to **Maj Bunce** who will be 'Boss HOG' for a month before taking over 211 Sig Sqn and **WO2 (SSM) Kemp** who doesn't seem to be able to keep away from the Armoured Squadrons.

LCP 212 TROOP
Tp Comd **2Lt Louise Burlinson**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Breheney**

The past month has seen an increase in work rate for the glorious 212 LCP with the imminent return of our deployed comrades. However, we've still had time to hone in on the more important soldiering skills, with range days aplenty. A mention should be made here of **Sig** 'Sniper' **Evans**, who managed 15 on his first APWT, but after some expert coaching managed to almost treble his score with a respectable 40+. It also became apparent that some people had hidden talents with several Marksman Scores. I feel it also necessary to mention our last Troop outing. Again, by popular request, a Chinese was asked for. A good time was had by all (especially our Troop OC!!!) this could be due to the promotion drinks bought by **Cpl Fowler** which was a cross between diesel and cod liver oil. Promotions were also celebrated later on in the month with **LCpl Gunn** and **Cpl Fowler** (again!!!!) providing a reason, however, some of the newer members of the Troop also took it upon themselves to provide some liquid refreshment which meant that the evening had to be continued at **Sgt** ' My wife won't mind you all coming round' **Balmforth**'s house. The local pizza parlour didn't know what had hit it, neither did **Mrs Balmforth**. Again the Troop OC seemed to have a good night!!

Finally, good luck to **LCpl Royston**, **Sig Robinson** and **Sig Brydon** who have deployed to Bosnia and welcome to **Sig Turpie** and **Sig Ashcroft** fresh from Blandford. One last mention is to the advanced drivers of LCP 212 who managed only three slight mishaps this month.

BA (G) WOMEN'S INTER-UNIT SEVEN-A-SIDE HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIPS 1999

Having called upon the girls of the Regiment we managed to enter a team into the Championships, as well as supplementing the 20 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn team with a couple of our players. After a slight sightseeing tour of Bochum we arrived at JHQ at the same time as the rain! Due to the change of date there were only three teams entered so after the four hour journey it was a bit of an anticlimax to only get two matches.

The first match against 20 Armd Bde saw people who hadn't played hockey since school get a few surprises and it didn't take long before the strains of the fast 7-a-side match were beginning to show. Loud sighs of relief were heard as the whistle for time was blown. 1 (UK) ADSR - 1, 20 Armd Bde - 0 and an injury to our star player! **LCpl Doe**'s thumb had seen better days and she was dispatched to the Med Centre. At one point we did consider sending **Sig Holyland** as well and seeing if they could section her, however she was a good goalkeeper even if she was barking mad.

The next match was between 20 Armd Bde and the RASU team. We watched in horror as the skilled and well-practised RASU team scored goal after goal. 20 Armd Bde put up a noble defence but to no avail, time could not come soon enough for a defeated 20 Armd Bde. We were on again and not looking forward to it! The team defended well and the ball was down their end of the pitch more than was expected. **Sig Stables** and **Sig Thwaite** demonstrated their aggressive nature and scared some of our own players! The final score was predictable but it was a good match and we were the runners-up so everyone got a medal. It also meant that we had qualified for the Championships back in Aldershot. Time to get practising! It was now mid-afternoon and there was still no sign of **LCpl Doe**. She had been sent to the local hospital and we were assured it wasn't far away- if you didn't get lost. We found a forlorn looking **LCpl Doe** at the entrance of the hospital, she thought we'd forgotten her! We began planning practices on the way home. Since then **Sgt Holden** has been spending Wednesday and Friday afternoons trying to teach us some skills. Unfortunately we can't have him on our team although he'd look lovely in a sports kilt!

201 SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj Lawrence**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Simmons**

The last few months have been a fairly quiet period for the Squadron with the remainder of the Regiment being deployed to Bosnia and the Falklands. However, that is all about to change as the Regiment is now back in Herford albeit on post tour leave. The Squadron is about to add to its numbers when on April 1st 208 Sig Sqn and 201 Sig Sqn merge to be collectively known as 201 Sig Sqn with the new Squadron being fully manned by 3 May. We say farewell to Cheetah and Panther Troops and welcome to Eagle, Hawk, Falcon and Kestrel Troops and to **2Lt Foote** and **2Lt Aylward** who have arrived this week from their Troop Commanders' Course to command two of them. Farewell is also said to **WO2 (SSM) Kemp** who is posted to 212 Sig Sqn in the Regiment until August when he will be descending upon London UOTC as the Royal Signals PSI - Harry you'll love it !! In his place we welcome **WO2 (SSM) Simmons**.

EXERCISE WINTER TRAINING (EWT)

A number of the Squadron have been involved in the various Winter Training exercises in Bavaria over the last couple of months, amongst them **Sig Brixey** and **Pte Russell** (who incidentally has recently become a father - **CONGRATULATIONS**). Similar Exercises in the past have been perceived to be a bit of jolly but **Pte Russell** would have you think otherwise. He certainly didn't relish the prospect of sleeping in a snow hole overnight in freezing temperatures. But relish it or not he did it.

EXERCISE HORN

Ex Horn was a short Squadron Level Trunk Exercise that saw the two Trunk Nodes deploy to the local areas of Lemgo, Herford, Werther and Augusdorf. Fortunately the emphasis was not on comms which were rarely achieved throughout the two-day Exercise, but more of a Procedural Exercise. For some it was the first deployment since being in the squadron but they can rest assured that it won't be the last once the Exercise season begins later this year.

208 SQUADRON
Tp Comd **Lt Harden**
Tp SSgt **SSgt German**

This will be the final entry from 208 Sqn for some time as the Squadron is being disbanded and all personnel are moving to the now massive 201 Squadron. Many thanks go to all the members of 208 Rear Troop for all their hard work over the last six months. Welcome back to all of those who have been penguin spotting for the last six months at JCUF1 and to those who have been away on Op Palatine. Congratulations to **Cpl** 'Nige' **Howard** and his wife **Michelle** on the birth of their daughter **Abigail** and also to **LCpl Lomas** and his wife **Jane** on the birth of their daughter **Neeve**. Finally congratulations and goodbye to **SSM Balsdon** who is being posted to 15 Sig Regt as RSM. Goodbyes also to **Sgt Symonds** (posted to 2 Sig Regt), **LCpl Nessling** (posted to 30 Sig Regt) and **Cpl McKillop** who is off to 16 Sig Regt.

EXERCISE BENGAL DIAMOND
208 SQUADRON ADVENTUROUS TRAINING
by Sig Brown and Sig Skene

With most of the Regiment on operations in Bosnia and the Falklands, 208 rear troop left the normal day to day duties and travelled to the Harz Mountains, For the entire week we were under the almost excellent coaching of **SSgt** 'I never crash' **Bruce, SSgt** 'No, I'm not the oldest man here' **Clarke** and several members of the ski team which included **Sig** 'The eagle' **Bird**, 'Haka, Haka' **Raw**, and **Sig** 'Chef' **Sullivan**, who were also on hand to demonstrate some of their abilities .....?



LCpl 'Where've my skis gone' Nessling

Special thanks is to be given to **Sgt** 'Menu ski' **Holden**, and **LCpl** 'Stevie Wonder' **Lewis** of 20 Armd Bde Paderborn who were dragged kicking and screaming (not) from their normal duties to help with the coaching, and last but not least, **Lt** 'I'm on the ski team so don't argue' **Hanlon** for organising the event. With no shortage of snow the week went very well, **LCpl Lewis'** 'Powder Dogs' took full advantage of the fresh snow that fell each day to do a bit of skiing through the woods. I think most of them will agree they are now masters in the art of tree hugging so no bypasses look set to be built in that area. **Sig** 'Cave man' **Dickinson** spent most of his time inventing the new sport of tree slalom which unfortunately will not be seen at the next winter Olympics, as he soon found out, you can't knock over a 40ft Christmas tree with your ski pole, fist or any other part of your body.

The week finished without a 'skiing' casualty in sight, however, it can prove to be more dangerous getting out of bed in the garrison lodge in Sonnenburg than on the slopes, as **Sig** 'I ain't no pussy Pete' **Abbot** discovered after one of his 'Quiet nights out'. The highlight of the week was the slalom competition won by **Sig** 'I blow-dry my hair' **Skene,** with **LCpl** 'Sleepy' **Doe** and **Sgt Simms** taking second and third places. Prizes were also awarded to the top students of each of the groups **Sig** 'I'm not a fish egg' **Brown** won the best beginner award with **Sig Burnip** and **LCpl Doe** picking up the awards for the intermediate and advanced groups. The award for donkey of the course went to **Sig** 'The tree will move first' **Marsh** whose valiant efforts to ski failed miserably almost every time his feet hit the snow. Still a good time was had by all and hopefully Ex Bengal Diamond will become a permanent feature on the training programme.

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2 SIGNAL REGIMENT
YORK

CO — **Lt Col C. Wakerley MBE**
RSM — **WO1 (RSM) D. A. Whitaker**

214 SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd — **Maj D. W. Somerville**
Sqn SSM — **WO2 (SSM) Forshaw**

VIKING TROOP
Tp Comd — **Lt Peter Hale**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt Terry Shiels**

The past few months have been a strained time for Viking Tp. As we all avidly watched the international press, the Balkans once again descended into conflict. Still on 72hr Notice To Move, the Troop held its breath for the call that was always only a few days away. February and then March drifted past in a series of anti climaxes as the Squadron was given orders to move, which were duly cancelled. With all our preparations complete and bags packed the waiting has been a difficult time for all concerned, especially the families.

The Troop has, however, used this extra time to good advantage for both military and adventurous training. As the Troop concentrated on the requirements for our future deployment, basic skills were honed and live firing polished with days out on the ranges. On the adventurous training side of life the Troop has been walking and climbing in the Lakes and the North Yorkshire Moors, with **LCpl Martin Hinchliffe** nearly becoming an extra in Emmerdale. All were impressed with **SSgt** 'Faldo' **Shiels** who showed his true forte in organising a very successful Golfing day, it was just a shame about the jumper. **Sgt Andy Lloyd** used all his experience as a Recce Sergeant and 'Race the Sun' organiser to take half the Troop fell running, which also included the added bonus of a 'get you home' command task at the end.

Due to the impending deployment the Troop strength swelled as members normally attached from other Squadrons were formally placed under Troop command. We would also like to welcome **Cpl Hodgkinson** who has joined the Troop from Catterick. On the good-byes, as part of the deployment re-organisation we have had to say farewell to **LCpl McNally** and **Sig Bailey** who have moved to HQ Sqn and also **Sig Fowkes** who has left the Army for a job in civilian life, we all wish him luck. As a last note to **Sig McLiesh** and **Sig Telford** who are currently working at the Corsham Hub, we have not forgotten about you and keep up the good work.

At the time of writing with events in Kosovo unfolding in an unforeseen and dramatic way Viking Tp is still ready to move, if and when the call comes.

TORNADO TROOP
Tp Comd — **2Lt Graham Wills**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt Neil Cooper**

This has been a very busy and frustrating time for the Troop. We have been on standby with the rest of the Squadron to deploy on Op Agricola. The rush for extra equipment and admin checks was met with great expectation and excitement. This was soon stifled as the political situation dictated that we were to stay in York for a while longer. The vehicles are ready and packed and everybody is raring to go but the when and where is still to be decided.

The Troop has lost a few of its long term lodgers and our best wishes go to; **LCpl Graham Rennie** who is off to 16 Sig Regt, **Sig Kenny Waring** who is off to 15 Sig Regt and **Sig** 'Alvin' **Carlyon** who is off to make his millions.

The only new arrival to the Troop is **LCpl Lee Rickard** who has joined us from 200 Sig Sqn. Finally we wish **Sig Donna Holmes** a speedy recovery after her horrendous accident.

EXERCISE CHIMERA CHARGE

Ex Chimera Charge was a one day hill-walking package that took twelve people to the Lake District with the intention of climbing up 'Striding Edge' on route to Hellvelyn. The three supposed grown ups were **Capt Colin Russell, 2Lt Graham Wills** and **YofS John Wright**. It was a clear cool day and snow had fallen on the high ground making the scenery spectacular. Striding edge can be viewed from a distance and as it came into view there was some concern in the group. This concern was not only genuine but understandable as the snow made the route quite treacherous. Once finally at the summit the group stopped for lunch and then proceeded on the race down to the nearest pub.



Striding Edge



Hellvelyn Summit
(L-R): Sig Pember, Sig Stockdale, 2Lt Wills, Sig Welburn, Sig Elliot

ROMAN TROOP
Tp Comd — **Lt Adam Honor**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt David Morrison**

As with the rest of the Corps the Troop was warned off for a deployment to Kosovo on Op Agricola but as of yet no notice to move time has materialised. The Troop worked furiously to meet the deadline to be ready for the deployment and as a result the vehicles were ready to rock on time. Since that date the Troop has been on the boat off the boat as with the rest of the Squadron (excuse the pun!). The time has been filled in with Golf competitions, Inter-Troop Football competitions (in which Roman Tp destroyed all competition), vigorous outdoor pursuits and many a good social. The time has also been filled with invaluable training for the fourth coming deployment to Kosovo, concentrating on mine clearance, shooting skills and also first aid.

The Troop has swelled in numbers with the pending deployment, this includes **Sgt Walsh, Cpl Leggot, LCpl Nixon, Cpl Foster, LCpl Dunnachie, Cpl Parr, Cpl Galletly** and many more who have been warmly welcomed. Postings into the Troop have been **Sig Munnings** and **Sig Davis**, both straight from the sausage factory and also **LCpl** 'Flash' **Hanson**. Congratulations go to **LCpl** 'Hammy' **Hampson** whose wife gave birth to the first born, a little girl called **Charlie**. The Troop now eagerly awaits the 'green for go' for deployment and relishes the idea of performing an invaluable and worthwhile role within theatre.

PRICE WATERHOUSE COOPERS TRAINING DAY

Sgt Foulds assisted by **LCpl Scott** and **LCpl Kosh** ran and organised a NBC stand as part of the Price Waterhouse Coopers training day held on 23 February 1999. The stand involved a walk through and talk through of the NBC equipment used by the British Army, **Sgt Faulds** then gave a short history lesson on NBC warfare. This was followed by a striptease by the seductive and shapely **LCpl Scott** to wake them all up again.



Price Waterhouse Coopers Training Day
LCpl Scott doing the striptease

They were then shown how to correctly dress themselves in NBC suits. At this point **Sgt Faulds** didn't waste his opportunity to beast a few civvies, he quickly made them don respirators and gave them a bit of degradation training to give them a taste of what it's like to work in full IPE. They were then shown drinking drills since they were all in need of some water. **LCpl Kosh** then demonstrated suit changing drills in an NBC environment, by the end of the day he was an expert at this as there were six different groups to be shown that day. However, **Sgt Faulds** can not have beasted the civvies enough as they all seemed to enjoy it, and learned a few things about military NBC training.

3 (UNITED KINGDOM) DIVISION
HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL REGIMENT

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS
CO — **Lt Col N. D. Couch**
RSM — **WO1 (RSM) G. J. Stoker MBE**

Life in the 3rd Division continues apace with expeditions recently back from climbing and walking in New Zealand and diving in the Red Sea - full reports in the next issue. The Ladies' Team were victorious in the Army Cup Hockey competition and the Men's Team were beaten in the semi-finals. In the Army Cup Football Competition the Team had a heartbreaking repeat of last year, again being knocked out in the semi-finals after drawing at extra time and being forced into a penalty shoot out. Now the build up starts for next year's Army Cup Football and Hockey Competitions so if you are a skilled player and want the opportunity to play at the highest level this is the Regiment to come to, ring the Regimental 2IC and get your postings preferences in now. Op Agricola has occupied the minds of the Ops Team, 63 personnel have already deployed and the remainder are in Bulford poised for deployment.

202 SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd — **Maj R. J. Quinlan**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) S. G. Jackson**

As the training season for the Divisional Headquarters hits its peak, the Armoured Headquarters of 202 Sig Sqn is probably at its busiest time of the year. Ex Lion Sword is the culmination of several deployments for the Squadron, the last being the Div Ex Spring Foray which saw a Regimental deployment based on the headquarters of Overloon Tp to the now familiar surroundings of Old Carter Barracks on Salisbury Plain. The members of Waterloo Tp continue to form the Squadron's commitment to Operations in the Balkans under **Lt Jackson** and **SSgt Wringe**, and further members of the Squadron remain with 206 Sig Sqn ready to deploy when required. From Squadron Headquarters, congratulations are sent to **YofS Anderson, FofS Ramsdale, SSgt Crawford** and **Sgt Cheesman** on the recent award of their Long Service and Good Conduct Medals and to **SSgt Davies** on the award of his Accumulated Service Medal. Well done to the 'Old and Bold'!



SOinC(A) presents Lt Jackson
with his Royal Humane Society Award
for his part in saving the life of a drowning woman in Croatia

OVERLOON TROOP
Tp Comd — **Capt L. Hendricks**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt A. Crawford**

The Troop sends its best wishes to **Cpls** 'Guido' **Giddens** and 'Jackanory' **Adams, LCpls** 'Phil Collins' **Joyce** and 'Bomber' **Lancaster** who have recently deployed to the Balkans with Waterloo Troop. Hello to **Sigs Allen, Greenhalgh** and **Thompson** who are all new arrivals and welcome back from their Class One course to **LCpl** 'Professor' **Higgins** and a new look **LCpl** 'A-K' **Akkulugadu** who seems to be out to prove that blondes really do have more fun! Ex Spring Foray was particularly notable for being cold, windy, and thoroughly exhausting. In a break from the normal Exercise routine though we went for a night navigation exercise across Salisbury Plain. The odds were in favour of **Bdr** 'Commando' **Fayers** to be first back, but against all expectation he managed to get himself and his Squad lost within five minutes of starting! Goodbye to **LCpl** 'Gwar' **Wright** who will be much missed. **Cpl** 'Alfie' **Alford** and **Sigs** 'Rocky Dennis' **Galliford,** 'Curly' **Watts** and 'Ginge' **Watt** were also much missed, but only because they have been away serving Queen and Country on the Football field. Finally welcome back to **Sig** 'STD' **Brakewell** after his short stay at a rather exclusive hotel in Colchester.

BUSSACO TROOP
Tp Comd — **2Lt P. Simpson**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt A. Dick**

The past months have been busy for Bussaco Tp who have been deployed in support of all the Exercises. We have lost several members to support Waterloo Tp and this has only increased the workload for those that remain. The end of February saw us on Ex Spring Foray with every spare body being used to erect tents and assist the SQMS. After a quick turnaround and Easter leave we are now straight into the preparations for the next Exercise. Welcome to our new OC, **2Lt Simpson** and to **Sig Gill, Sig Thompson** and **LCpl Lyon** who all join us from the Factory. A tearful goodbye to **SSgt Dick** who is leaving for the easy life at Liverpool UOTC and **LCpl Hogan** who is leaving for the even easier life at 11 Sig Regt.



WO2 FofS Ramsdale receives his LS and GC from the SOinC

206 SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd — **Maj Paul Glibbery**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) Stu Archer**



CinC congratulates WO2 (SSM) Archer on keeping
Maj Paul 'reformed subaltern' Glibbery
out of trouble but the CO knows it can't be for long

The past few months have been a busy and turbulent time for the Squadron with a number of departures either on posting or on Operations to Bosnia and more recently Macedonia on Op Agricola. Farewell to **Lt Liz Allen** who was OC Cambrai Tp and is posted to ATR Bassingborn. Also farewell to **LCpl Kev Reeves** who is posted to Blandford and thanks for his larger than life contribution to the Squadron over the years. He will be missed by everyone except the Chefs on Exercise. New arrivals include **2Lt Ollie Gardner** from the Tp Comds Course and **Cpl Adam Izzard** from 259 Sig Sqn. Recent developments in the Balkans have resulted in over 30 Squadron personnel deploying to the Macedonian border and many more being put on 72hrs NTM. The occasional 'bluey' from theatre suggests that morale is high and the Squadron is putting up a good show while having to integrate with 7 Sig Regt and 4 Armd Bde Sig Sqn. We are all waiting out for more news. The sudden depletion of man power has resulted in a scaling down of the exercise season after what was a busy build up period. However, Ex Lion Sword is about to descend upon us and there is Ex Lion Sun for a lucky few and a Summer Camp to look forward to.



CinC presents Lt Fennell
with a special set of velcro backed captains slides

222 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj M. Billingham**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) F. Roberts**

MASIRAH TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt E. J. Fawcett**
SSgt	**SSgt M. W. Emmerson**

The Troop has had a busy time as they engulf yet more changes, adapting the Troop ready for deployment on Op Agricola. The Troop's new role brought with it new faces whom were welcomed with true Masirah Tp style. **Sgt** 'did we really go to the Kiwi?' **Howes** was in usual memorable form. Congratulations go out to **Cpl** 'silverback' **Hawkins** for finally taking the plunge and tying the knot. Also, a well done to **Sig** 'fish - but I can't drink like one' **Salmon** for achieving Regimental Sportsman of the Year for his Hockey prowess. We say a fond farewell to **Sig** 'Eh Lah' **Walters** as she joins another Troop and wish her all the best. The Troop finally reached a well earned Easter Leave with no casualties. With a busy, yet unpredictable, time ahead the 'Premier Troop' are eager to make use of all their preparations and finally find them a job to do. We couldn't end these notes without a mention of **Sgt** 'small but incredibly noisy' **Emmerson**, we would like to congratulate him on his recent selection for promotion to SSgt.

OMAN TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt Hemy**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Baker**

Just when we thought we knew what was what - Op Coca-Cola! The associated hellos and goodbyes were head spinning as the Troop swelled to record size, then trimmed down to its current slim-line numbers. Less is more, although if you were **Cpl** 'Sign for the whole lot' **Hoggart**, then you probably thought otherwise. Important to note that despite all reorganisations, a small cadre of personnel never left, joined or rejoined Oman Tp (and we do mean small!) - these included **Lt** 'another ATFA' **Hemy** (having too much fun here), **SSgt** 'Bru' **Baker** (having to play too much hockey here) and **Cpl** '1033' **Hoggart** (having too much to sign for here). **LCpl** 'possible' **Swailes** remains here after all, and despite a spirited attempt by **Sig** 'Geordie' **Lewis** and **Sig** 'Ironman' **Jackson** to escape, they are now in possession of their fair share of Oman Tp's notable and extensive new assets. Thank you Aden Tp. Various farewells to those who have moved across to be deafened in Masirah Tp or to terminal exercise with Sharjah Tp, or even foreign parts! (including the Bosnia contingent - enjoying that Winter?) Welcome to the latest Oman Tp members from all respective sources, and it looks like you're here for the duration. Thanks to all those who are were in the Troop (including the SATs) at any time for all the work that you put in throughout a very hectic time, and staying cheerful.

SHARJAH TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt A. S. Johnson**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt R. Lang**

The initial return to work was uneventful and the Troop got stuck straight into preparing for the forthcoming busy exercise season which was upon us almost immediately. Everything was to change. With the explosion of the Kosovo crisis the Squadron was warned off to deploy two Trunk Nodes with an SHQ and put on 30 days NTM. This effectively doubled the size of Sharjah Tp overnight. The Troop hierarchy were promptly buried in a mountain of paperwork and a great deal of hard work was done by all members of the Troop (apart from **Cpl** 'War Weary' **Ward** who was stateside playing hockey for the Corps). Within a very short space of time the Troop was ready to go and be the cutting edge of the sword of peace. Well done to everyone for all the time, effort and focus applied. A week on leave and it was all change again. Sharjah Stood down (Milosovic breathed a sigh of relief) and Sharjah shrunk back to a relatively normal size. A look forward to Ex Lion Sword for the remainder of April where we will provide a reduced Ptarmigan capability to support the Div.

There are too many farewells to mention this time although they haven't gone far yet. Finally a warm Welcome to **Sgt Pickering, Paula** and family fresh from 35 Sig Regt (V) we hope you enjoy your stay here in sunny Bulford. Welcome to all gained from other Troops during this time of change.

14 SIGNAL REGIMENT (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)

226 SIGNAL SQUADRON (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)
ROMEO TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt H. J. Scott**
OPSWO	**SSgt (Supvr R) Jacklin**

The Troop has had a rather hectic time, due to the number of people deployed away on detachments, courses and other commitments. Unfortunately, we are losing more people than we are gaining due to the recent batch of postings. Firstly, goodbye to **Sgt Paul Rowlands** who is off to Bosnia, **Cpl Paul Browne, Sigs Crutchley** and **Greg Hardman** who are off to Kosovo. **Sgt** 'Funky' **Gibbins** and **LCpl Drummond** are on detachment and posted to NI respectively. Welcomed new arrivals to the Troop are **SSgt Mark Wilson,** from the AWC Waddington and **Sig** 'Jonah' **Jones,** from training. **Lt Scott** and **Sgt Paul Rowlands** have just returned from an expedition to Ascension Island during which they qualified as BSAC Club Instructors. Upon their return the remnants of the Troop deployed to Sennybridge for the Squadrons' Annual Battle Camp. Finally, congratulations to **LCpl Drummond** on passing his first BFT for some time, just prior to being posted.

640 TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt Ben White**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Frank Flaherty**

Welcome to **Sig** 'Carpet' **Matzke** and **Sig** 'Nath' **Higgins** who arrived in the Troop in February. Goodbyes go to **Capt** 'Gin' **Brown, Cpl** 'Greg' **Mulley, LCpl** 'Chuck' **Norris** and a final farewell and good luck to **LCpl** 'Jez' **Holdridge** who is leaving us for Civvy Street. Also congratulations to **Cpl** 'Simmo' **Simpson** and **Jane** for the birth of twins **Aden** and **Keyliegh, Sig** 'Drew' **Connor** and **Becky** for the birth of their son **Rhys,** and yet more congratulations to **LCpl** 'Al' **Ryall** for his marriage to **Vicky** on 6 February.

Yet again the Troop have been industrious with their time over the past few months with a 24hr BFT that raised over £400 for the 'Y' Services Memorial Fund organised by **Cpl** 'Chas' **Caley.** An arduous task in itself made harder by the infamous biting winds of Brawdy taking its toll on the runners. However, heads raised, brimming smiles they successfully completed all they were asked to do.

The Troop developed its 'Airmobile' capabilities further by undergoing intensive helicopter under-slinging training, qualifying many members of the Troop as Landing Point Commanders and/or Rigger Marshals in preparation for our attachment to 16 Air Assault. Many thanks for the training conducted by our resident Para Guru **Sgt** 'JX' **Walker,** and 18 Sqn for providing a 20 tonne piece of flying metal for us to play with over two days.

Yet more physical demands were made of the Troop when the Colonel's Cup came around on 1 March. The Troop impressively fielding the majority of the 'volunteers' for the Squadron teams with **SSgt** 'Many Hats' **Flaherty** taking charge and providing a challenging and sometimes damaging fitness programme, so bad that the 'C' team was formed only hours before the start. However the Rag Tag team of old men and women consisting of two of the more mature members of the Troop **Cpl** 'Bus Pass' **Beaton** and **Cpl** 'Rear Marker' **Caley** pushed, pulled and verbally encouraged the rest of the Squadron team to the rostrum position of first for their course. Our Squadron 'A' and 'B' teams again consisting of a majority of 640 Troop contingency also did very well. The 'A' team coming in third, led by our own **Lt** 'Ben' **White** and a notable performance by the old school boys **SSgt** 'Franko' **Flaherty** and **Sgt** 'JJ' **Walker** in the 'B' team. **Cpl** 'Denny' **Denton** was left holding the fort while the rest of the Troop enjoyed a two-week Battle Camp on Sennybridge. The first week was spent doing ITUs and revising on tactics, ending with a jaunt around a back breaking, tear inducing assault course. We deployed 'Full Tac' on Monday afternoon praying for dry weather, which was granted in the form of a heat wave, only fading once we had completed the insertion tab. A good scenario was set by **Lt** 'Stingray' **White, SSgt** 'Sergeant Major' **Flaherty,** and **Sgt** 'The General' **Walker.** Many notable events happened and new 'Actions on' added to our SOP's by **Cpl** 'Richie' **Bretherick** who has signed back on 'For this'. The Troop looks forward to a few out of area exercises including the Ascension Island and Belize, though with our limited fleet at the moment we'll probably end up walking.

COMMUNICATIONS TROOP

Tp Comd	**2Lt Fi Stewart**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Geoff Murray**

Firstly a big hello from the Troop to **Sig** 'Barry' **McGeachy,** and a sad farewell to **Sgt** 'Titus' **Reene** who has moved to the dizzy heights of SQMS. Also goodbye to **Sig** 'Jonah' **Jones,** the longest serving member of the Troop, and to **Sig** 'Gibbo' **Gibson** - best of luck in the future.

It has been a busy month for Comms Tp with a Troop Exercise in Eastbourne. As predicted there were several hiccups, unfortunately for **LCpl Eddie Edwards** they started before the Comms Step up had even been set up! Having recovered the rover, which he skilfully had bogged in, they managed to get down to some serious comms problem solving. Meanwhile in Comms Main all was quiet and running smoothly until 56 Sig Sqn (V) decided they were bored of their drill night, and would come and amuse themselves at Pippingford Park (cheers Staff). With much determination, and plenty of firepower from **Cpl** 'Frankie' **Vaughan, LCpl** 'Stu' **Kelly, Sig** 'Chris' **John** and **Sig** 'Jonah' **Jones,** they managed to keep **2Lt** 'Monty' **Stewart** out of harms way. After an eventful week, the Troop enjoyed a 'quiet' pint in the local pubs and clubs of Eastbourne.

March lifted off in style, with the Colonel's Cup and several members of the Troop involved in one of the three teams. **2Lt** 'Monty' **Stewart** led the C Team to victory, whilst **SSgt** 'giraffe legs' **Murray** - stormed to the finish in the 'A' Team.

Squadron Battle Camp, at the beginning of March, proved as entertaining as predicted. The ITDs passed uneventfully but the dreaded APWT proved once again that a few individuals couldn't hit a barn door at fifty paces. Those who passed went on to greater things with **Sgt** 'The General' **Walker**, and his big bag of toys. The TACEX phase proved more demanding, as **LCpl** 'Stevo' **Stevenson** discovered when he couldn't get into a building on the first attack. After the battle was over the rest of the fine warriors took turns in showing him how to operate a door latch. The ambush which followed went smoothly, fronted up by **2Lt** 'guys please stop snoring' **Stewart.** The final attack was a success, once it got going. **Cpl** 'Frankie' **Vaughan** had a quick dip in the river on the way to the FUP, and **Cpl** 'Cal' **Black**'s section did a near perfect assault on an empty building. However, once on the main position, and certainly in the fog of war **(Cpl** 'I thought you said throw 6 smoke grenades' **Brown)** the enemy and **FofS** 'Deano' **Briers** were finally defeated.

245 SIGNAL SQUADRON (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)

Sqn Comd	**Maj Owen**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Fisher**

245 Sig Sqn has been through a major upheaval recently. The Squadron has reorganised from three Troops down to two, with Y Troop joining X Troop as a 'paper-tiger', and J Troop merging with Z Troop. The Squadron hierarchy has also changed. **Maj Guy Owen** assumes command vice **Maj Mark Davis** (via a spell under **Capt Andy Lucas**). **Capt Lucas** has departed for XSC, and **Lt** 'Rich' **Bailey** has moved into the 2IC slot. **Lt Al Crapper** is off to holiday in the Balkans for a while. Congratulations to **SSM Fisher** on his selection for promotion to WO. Young Officers beware! **SSgt (FofS) Groves** is posted to SHAPE, leaving on promotion. **SSgt (SQMS) Bousefield** also leaves, posted to RSS.

Additionally 245 Sig Sqn (EW), despite it's heavy commitment managed to win the Inter-Squadron Russ Cup. Well done to all who worked so hard to achieve this over the year. Special mention must be made to the winning team in the COs Cup Competition. **Capt Lucas** and **Sgt Rob Tubbs** moulded together an exceptionally good team that pulled out all the stops on the day and did the 13-mile route, including obstacles and stands, in under three hours!

WHISKEY TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt Crapper**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt (Supvr R) Wallace**

The month of March has seen the Squadron go through quite a significant change, and as this change was taking place the Squadron also took control of the long awaited Odette equipment. This was then immediately tested during Ex Moufflon Spring, when the Squadron was deployed and set out to test this new equipment's capabilities. The kit was thoroughly tested over a four-day period, producing mixed results. The Squadron has also deployed on Op Agricola where a chosen few from a cast of thousands have moved out to Macedonia ready to help their fellow countrymen and women during the Kosovo conflict. Closer to home 245 Sig Sqn have been busy winning the majority of major competitions in the Regiment. The CO's Cup saw the Squadron 'A' Team victorious in their quest to 'tab' the quickest from Haverfordwest back to the Regiment, with the 'C' Team managing a close second coming in the opposite direction from Saint Davids. A very impressed Mayor of Saint David's witnessed the closing stages.

HELLOS, GOODBYES AND CONGRATULATIONS

Greetings to **Sgt** 'Pete' **Farrell** and **Sgt** 'Mick' **Beckett** newly arrived from Chicksands, **Cpl** 'Heath' **Stringer** and **Cpl** 'Jez' **Callander** from 15 Sig Regt. **LCpl** 'Stu' **McGowan** from 7 Sig Regt and **Sig** 'Emma' **Watson** fresh from Blandford. A sad farewell to **SSgt** 'JJ' **McNally** who's off to America, **Sgt** 'Daz' **Middleton, Cpl** 'Taff **Carter** and **Cpl** 'Rob' **Forward** who are all off swanning to university for 12 months, **Cpl** 'Heike' **Claxton** goes to 15 Sig Regt and a special farewell to **Cpl** 'Ryanne' **Bennett** who's taken the jump to civvy street and now holds the highest rank of Miss.

Congratulations to **SSgt Mike Davies** who has just reached the Army Squash Championship Finals but will have to compete from his next unit as he's off to Digby. Finally, congratulations go to **SSgt** 'Wally' **Wallace** who after many years as a singly has decided to settle down and get married. All the best to **Wally** and **Sade** for the future. Our best wishes go to them all.

HOTEL TROOP – *by Sig Woodrow*

We have seen quite a lot of people go from the Troop, which is a shame. **LCpl** 'Gaz' **Leadbitter, LCpl** 'Icky' **Hickenbothem** and of course the infamous **Cpl** 'Minger' **Bell**. We all hope that they will do well and get on all right in their new jobs and their new places of work. Soon also to be leaving us will be **Cpl** 'Potzy' **Potton** who is going on to better things in Ireland. A few arrivals back into the Troop including **Sgt** 'Andy' **Ball** and **LCpl** 'Webby' **Webster.**

We unfortunately received the news that the Troop will disband some time at the end of April which we were all quite disappointed about. However, it was something that we all expected. Quite a lot of things have been happening within the Troop including **LCpl** 'Naomi' **Wilson** away swimming for the Corps at Arborfield. Congratulations to **Cpl John Pankhurst** and his wife **Joyce** on the arrival of a healthy and eating well baby boy. Congratulations also go to **Sgt** 'Chris' **Dunn** for promotion to Sgt and **Q Jones** for also coming off his board.

As Kosovo sheds a dim light on the Regiment some of the Squadron personnel have had to go. Also recently the Squadron had the pleasure of the company of Sennybridge Training Area, to do our ITD battle-camp.

The last few days were spent on the tacex phase which mainly incorporated all we had been taught by **Sgt** 'JJ' **Walker** throughout the previous week plus some more skills that we were yet to learn. The Exercise consisted of activities such as: FIBUA and Close Target Recce most of these skills people had never done so this was interesting to learn and then put into practice. The Exercise was quite demanding, however, most people learnt something but of course we were all happy to come home.

ZULU TROOP

Tp Comd	**SSgt** 'No Brews' **Donnelly**
Tp SSgt	**Sgt** 'Brews' **Turner**

Zulu Tp has had a busy period over the last three months. The Troop has just returned from supporting the Squadron on Ex Mouflons Spring the first deployment of the year, deploying as far a field as sunny Templeton. The Squadron has had a big reorganisation and the Troop has enlarged considerably and we now seem have more vehicles and more tasking orders. However, no more man power to work with!

The Troop took Comic Relief Day very seriously indeed and 16 members of the Troop were tasked by **SSgt** 'Good Idea' **Donnelly** to row a total of 700km in 24hrs, this was a very ambitious task and after much hard work and effort we just missed our total by 1. 675km. Thanks to all who helped and supported us in our efforts to raise money for Charity.



Zulu Troop Rowing Team for Comic Relief 1999

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

As ever there are more departures than arrivals We say a sad farewell to **Sig** 'Monobrow' **James** and **Sig** 'Hot shot' **Hanks** who we wish all the best for the future and we would like to welcome **Sig** 'Won't sweat' **Grimes** and all the other Troop members that have joined us on the Troop amalgamation.

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON
TRANSPORT MAINTENANCE TROOP

Tp Comd — **Capt Steve Johnson**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt Huw Evans**

A busy time, as usual, with the usual Bosnia detachments, Regimental Exercises and the deployment of Kosovo Tp. Yet we still managed to get people away on adventure training and sport. **SSgt Huw Evans** had a 'hard' two months in Kenya with 1 Cheshire, **FofS** 'Ski' **Sharp, Sgt Alfie Davidson, Sigs Rex Bell** and **Al Paisley** managed to get on an expedition to Jordan and **Sgt Steve Miles** managed to get yet another 'holiday' in Banja Luka!

Arrivals - Sgt 'Taff' **O'Connor** and **Sigs Rob Barn, Craig Johnstone** and **Daz** 'Crash' **Read**.

Departures - SSgt 'Shuggy' **Hughes** to one of the field Squadrons, **Cpl Mick Turner** on his TI and **LCpl Scott Chinnery** to 'civvy street'.

HEADQUARTERS MOTOR TRANSPORT TROOP

MTWO — **WO2 Shepherd**
Tp SNCO — **SSgt Rock**

The Troop would like to welcome the following people: **LCpl Wayne Musson**, his wife **Linda** and family from 7 Sig Regt, **Sigs** 'Recall' **Foster**, 'Question time' **Brennan**, 'Tiger' **Iles**, 'Smudge' **Smith**, 'Gilps' **Gilpin** who have all arrived straight from the factory. The Troop would like to say farewell to **Cpl Stan Knight** and **Sig Kate Knight** on their posting to 7 Sig Regt (Kosovo/Bosnia), **Sig** 'Geordie' **Hall** to Northern Ireland and **Sig** 'Scouse' **Caddick** who has gone on detachment to HQ Land.

It's been a busy period since Christmas, the Troop has finally sobered up after the Christmas function organised by **Cpl** 'Taff' **Jones** with the singlies performing as usual. Congratulations to **Cpl Ian Phillips** and his new wife **Joanne** on their recent wedding. The Troop wishes them all the best for the future. Welcome back to **Cpl** 'Skilly' **Hunt** on his return from Bosnia, the women of Haverfordwest have locked themselves away even though he can't make it past eleven o'clock on a lads night out. Also back from a few months away is **Cpl** 'Who is he?' **Dawson** who has been Alpine Skiing and congratulations for coming 48th in the Army Championships. Since **SSgt** 'my clubs are too short' **Rock** has arrived in the Troop the golf afternoons have increased with valuable tips passed on by **Cpl Billy Blackmore** (not that he's any good either!) There has been a few valuable Tp training days, and well done to those who passed their Class 2 upgrading and have finally been presented their line belts by **Cpl Andy Dawson** watched by **Sgt** 'They're not real linies anyway' **Rogers**. Good luck to **Sig** 'Ernie' **Wise** who has left us to become a 'gym queen' after running the sports store for six months. Finally has anyone seen **Sgt** 'I'm on leave' **McNabb** anywhere??

VOLUNTEERS WANTED FOR A 10 DAY HOLIDAY IN CYPRUS

When the QM (T), **Maj Dean** asked for five volunteers to accompany him on a free ten-day 'holiday' in Cyprus, how could one refuse? In time honoured fashion five individuals were volunteered and signed up on the dotted line for this not to be missed 'holiday' in the sun. It was only then that the QM (T) pointed out the following three minor points in the small print at the bottom of the contract:

Firstly, in order to qualify for the free 'holiday' a three man team from the Regiment must finish inside the first five teams taking part in the UK Military Trial, '.....but don't worry lads it's only a short gentle stroll through the Shropshire countryside'.

Secondly, whilst on 'holiday' the Three-Man Team is cordially invited to take part in the Cyprus Walkabout Competition. Again, 'don't worry lads, it's only a two day flat scenic walk across the Cypriot countryside and you'll get a good sun tan whilst you're out training every day for it'.

Thirdly, always read the small print first before volunteering for anything!

Thus in early September, with spirits only slightly dampened by the pouring rain, two teams from 14 Sig Regt (EW) could be found in the middle of the night sitting in the cookhouse at Nesscliffe Training Camp waiting for the transport to the start of the UK Military Trail race. The UK Mil Trail is a 3-man team race over an undisclosed orienteering course of about 52km, in the Shropshire hillside and is the only method for an 'off-island' Army unit team to qualify for a place in the Cyprus Walkabout competition. Therefore, the competition was tough, with more than 30 teams from UK, NI and Germany competing for the first five 'holiday' tickets.

After a 1½ coach journey to the start location, the first team was off at 0630hrs, followed some nine teams later by the 14 Sig Regt's 'A' Team, consisting of **SSgt (MS)** 'Ski' **Sharp** (Team Captain), **Capt Paul Newson** and a last minute encouraged volunteer, **Cpl Ryan Lang.** On reaching the first checkpoint after covering approx. 16km, the 'A' team found that their cunning navigation had paid off, overtaking eight other teams, to be only the 2nd team through the checkpoint, a position they were to hold onto for the rest of the race. After enduring monsoon rain storms, horizontally driving sleet and bright sunshine the 'A' Team staggered across the finish line in a time of approx. 7½hrs, securing them a position in the sun. An even more impressive accomplishment at the end of the long hard race was to leave **Cpl Ryan Lang** without a word to say (unheard off !) This was due to the fact that he was completely exhausted and unable to walk or talk by the end of the race. The 'B' Team led by the QM (T) was slightly slower but still managed to finish a very creditable tenth.

Selecting the team which met some three weeks later, again at an unearthly hour, in Brize Nortons very own Holiday Inn, armed with the latest high tech equipment was not without its fair share of grief with **Cpl Lang** being saved from a fate almost worse than death by his Sergeants Course, **Sgt Paul Haughton** from the 'B' Team was volunteered for the third member of 14 Sig Regt's Cyprus Walkabout Team (how unlucky can you get). With a little bit of last minute PR **SSgt (FofS)** 'Ski' **Sharp** managed to equip the Team with some excellent Dry-Flo T-shirts and Camelback drinking systems, from Cotswold Outdoors Ltd, in order to cope with the +30˚C temperature in Cyprus. For those who haven't heard of the Cyprus Walkabout Competition it's a two-day cross-country orienteering race for teams of three over a route of approximately 90km. The route on the first day is from Episkopi Garrison to Mt Troodos, where the teams are accommodated overnight before returning to Episkopi by a different route on Day Two. During each day teams have to pass through five checkpoints over a course of at least 40km and if that's not difficult enough the map used for the race is 30 years out of date.

Within 12 hours of arriving in Cyprus for our so called holiday and with only one week to acclimatise before the competition, the Team Captain, **SSgt (FofS)** 'Ski' **Sharp** soon got the new team and equipment tested, with a 22km training run in the heat of the day. However, it soon became evident that the only way to recce the 40km between Episkopi, which is just above sea level, and Mt Troodos, which is at an altitude of approx. 6000ft was by a combination vehicle and foot. Hence, much to the relief of the other two team members, the team found themselves trundling around the Cypriot bondu in a 16 seat transit van, a slight overkill but it was the cheapest vehicle to hire. The rest of the week was then spent in trying to re-map all the new tracks and roads that didn't appear on the out of date map including a major motorway that has to be crossed on both race days.

With the training going well disaster struck, **Capt Paul Newson**'s ankle decided that it had enough of being pounded around the bondu and in protest swelled to the size of a small balloon. Things were not looking good with no third team member two days before the race. At the eleventh hour the team was saved by a replacement from the Regiment in the guise of **LCpl** 'Spick' **Lane,** who arrived in Episkopi with less than 12 hours to go before the start of the race.

Finally the big day arrived and yet again in the middle of the night, three individuals from 14 Sig Regt, 'Ski' **Sharp, Paul Haughton** and 'Spick' **Lane** stood on the start line ready for the off. With over 40 teams drawn in random order, starting at one-minute intervals we had not long to wait before crossing the start line and collecting the control description sheet. It is only at this point that the teams discover where the checkpoints are and thus leads to some rapid route planning. It was decided that the optimum route to the first checkpoint was a 14km road run, 4km longer than going direct but safer navigation and quicker underfoot which paid off by overtaking some sixteen other teams who opted to go across country.

For those who haven't been to Cyprus there's two things you should know about the Cypriot countryside, firstly that it's very hilly with most of the valleys lined with impassable cliffs (which are not shown on the map). Secondly, unless you are wearing full kevlar body armour every piece of vegetation either bites, stings or just scratches the living daylights out of you. Bearing the above two points in mind the team made good progress through the checkpoints, not being the quickest moving team due to un-acclimatised 'Spick' **Lane** suffering in the heat but employing plenty of cunning route choices to move up through the field. Between checkpoints 4 and 5, as the team started to climb into the cooler slopes of the Troodos mountains 'Spick' **Lane** started to make a recovery and it was then the turn for **Paul Haughton** to start feeling rough, with a 3000ft climb before crossing the finish line. As the team crossed day's one finish line in Troodos Camp it became evident that all the hard work had paid off, being the second team to finish in a time of 7hrs and 20mins.

Later that evening after a well deserved mountain of food, the team found out that they were lying overall in third position, just 13 minutes behind 3 Armoured Field Ambulance in second position. With the fastest team starting last on Day Two, we started just two minutes in front of the winning team (QMG) and only 1 minute in front of 3 AFA, who knew that their 13 minute time difference was not a safe margin. Over the duration of a long race 13 minutes can be easily lost or gained though a single route choice. The team started well with a good route choice that took them quickly off the mountain and by checkpoint 2 they were leading the race, but this was to be short lived. The leg between checkpoints 2 and 3 consisted of a gruelling 9km road/dirt track run in the searing heat which took its toll on 'Spick' **Lane** and by the third checkpoint the team had slipped into tenth place. Shortly after leaving checkpoint 3 'Spick' started to feel weak and the team stopped in the shade for a twenty minute rest to try and cool him down, however, it soon became evident that 'Spick' was exhausted and suffering badly in the heat. For safety reasons the team decided to head towards the nearest main road in order to get 'Spick' to one of the safety vehicles that constantly patrolled the general route. With 'Spick' safely retired the last two checkpoints were quickly passed, with the now two-man non-competitive team being the seventh team to cross the finish line in Episkopi Garrison after regaining several positions. All that was left to do after finishing the Cyprus Walkabout in a time of approximately 14hrs was to quickly get washed, feed and down to the departures lounge at RAF Akrotiri in order to catch the first flight back home for a well earned rest. In summary, after yet another gruelling challenge, only 21 teams finished the race with QMG holding on to their overnight lead to finish in a superb overall time of 11hrs and 52mins.

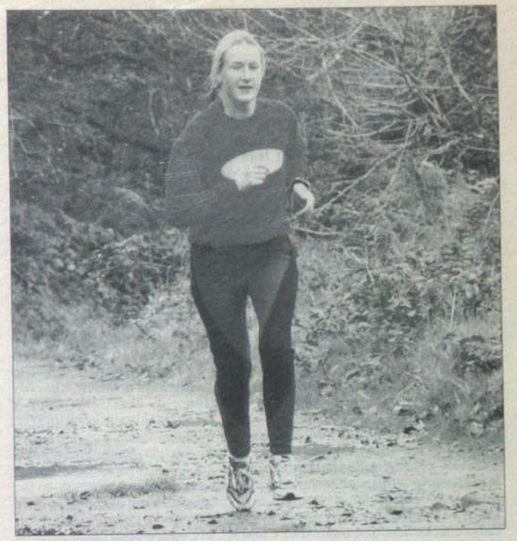
Finally it just leaves the team to thank all those that helped to make the 'holiday' possible, to **LCpl** 'Spick' **Lane** for his outstanding effort, without whom the team would never have got over the start line on day one, **QM (T) Maj Dean** for doing all the initial organisation and getting the Regt involved in the Cyprus Walkabout Competition, Cotswold Outdoors Ltd who supplied the team with some superb equipment and finally to 14 Sig Regt (EW) itself for all its support and financial assistance. On that note all applications for a free 10-day 'holiday' in the sun next year, should contact **SSgt (FofS)** 'Ski' **Sharp** ASAP, as places are limited.

COMMANDING OFFICER'S CROSS COUNTRY EVENT

It was in wet and windy conditions that the Regimental Cross Country event took place on Thursday 12 November 1998 at Llysfran Country Park. The course was approximately 5.5 miles long (honest!!) and far from flat. The route itself wound its way around the Reservoir at the Park giving some spectacular views although the runners may not agree. At one point **Capt Brown** from 226 Sig Sqn was found contemplating whether it would be quicker to run around part of the lake or swim across it! The running won! Maybe it was the lovely Welsh cold wind we get here that persuaded him! There was approximately 200 people from the Regiment taking part in the event.



Sgt Bradley, who came in in First Place



Cpl Brown, who was the first lady in

The winning male was **Sgt Bradley** from Regimental Ops with an outstanding time or 31mins 46secs and he still didn't even look out of breath.

The winning female was **Cpl Brown** from 245 Sig Sqn with a time of 46mins 19secs closely followed by **LCpl Dolan** from TM Troop. **WO2 Jenkins** from 226 Sig Sqn collected two medals, one for the first male over 35 catergory and the other for coming sixth in the overall competition with a time of 36mins 12secs. The Veteran event was won by **Maj Dean** from QM(T) in a time of 43mins 23secs. The event was also a competition between the four Squadrons with points going to Russ Cup which is a competition made up of various sports which take place over the year. This year's winners was 237 Sig Sqn. The day finished off with a medal presentation by the Commanding Officer. Overall the day was a huge success, thanks to all those concerned for all the hard work put into the organising and setting up of the day. Finally well done to all those who braved the weather and took part even though it was compulsory!

16 SIGNAL REGIMENT

RAISING OF THE REGIMENTAL FLAG IN NEW LOCATION

Throughout 16 Sig Regt's occupation of Bradbury Barracks, Krefeld, the Regimental wall and a large willow tree became synonymous with the Regiment and were adopted as unofficial symbols, indeed, the Regimental Club is named 'The Wall and Willow'. When 16 Sig Regt moved to Rheindahlen Military Complex, in 1994, a replica wall was built outside Regimental Headquarters. In August last year, the Regimental Headquarters had to move yet again, within the RMC. This move brought the Regiment closer together, geographically, and helped to develop a unit focus with a 'camp within a camp' ambience. A new wall together with a flagpole was built at the entrance to 16 Sig Regt's new lines in order to keep its heritage alive. The 'Wall' forms an impressive centrepiece at the gates to the Regiment. To mark the completion of the move of the Regiment, the Regimental flag was raised up the newly located flagpole, behind the 'Wall'. The flag was raised by **Sig Edwards**, the youngest soldier in the Regiment.



Signaller Stuart Edwards preparing to raise the Regimental flag

NEWS FROM OPERATION AGRICOLA
255 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd — **Maj A. Ross**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) A. Aimer**

HQ KFOR

The Squadron originally deployed to provide HQ KFOR REAR, but due to some minor problems over the border to the north we ended up doing the whole shebang. The planned move forward of 7 Sig Regt still has not occurred so the ARRC Staff are still in the Shoe Factory site, intended for less than half of the number it now houses. There was a temporary crisis recently with the refugees flooding down from the north and several members of the unit spent time establishing the camps. What started with tent erection carried on into digging latrines and litter picking, it was after this point that it was decided enough had been done. Now routine has nearly been established so here are some thoughts from the unlucky few to be around when writing was required.

On a lighter note the Salon of **Cpl Tony Seville** is proving a popular vending place. If it's not for hair cuts, it's for the likes of **SSM Aimer** and his attaches **(Sgt Fensom, Cpl Windsor)** to have their coffee breaks. Congratulations on your selection for promotion **Sgt Fensom**, soon to be **SSgt Fensom. Sgt Parr** has also been practising his civilian role - making a toilet from solder! He did this so well the appearance of a portaloo at the back of his wagon has been put down to him as well, nice one. Well, it's time for me to close now and Au Revoir. See you all in September.

THE SYSCON BIT – *Name withheld*

Syscon is now being expertly manned by a variety of people, particularly **YofS** 'Weeble' **Warburton, SSgt** 'Catalogue Man' **Roberts** and a whole gaggle of YofSs and FofSs! The RSSST(G) team are now in theatre as a whole and continue to 'mend' (or so they claim) our switches - funny how none of the switches have worked since their arrival. **FofS Steven** continues to do his dare-devil trips down town just to keep us supplied with Coffee and Tea - thanks FofS! We also have a new arrival namely **WO1 (YofS) Fowler** who came to us kicking and screaming from 7 Sig Regt, we'll look after him - honest! 16 Sig Regt is now on the 'Net' and the RSM seems rather obsessed with a lady by the name of 'Lola' - he is soon to be sent back as the Internet bill grows staggeringly high through his constant contact with the above named cyberchick! Syscon has settled in nicely and we look forward to another five months (or so they tell us) of 'finger on the pulse' comms.

Last point - what do you call a collection of YofSs - answers on a postcard please!

LIFE IN THE VEHICLE PARK – *by Cpl Angus*

Well, after eight weeks of being here in sunny Skopje, I was nominated to write a few notes on our adventures. Car Park Coy has calmed down a little now and daily routine has almost begun, but there is still the odd occasion when Syscon or the OSC change something.

We would like to say Hello to our new OC, **2Lt Dinnis** who has just arrived from a tour at Blandford; also **Cpl Findlay** from 7 Sig Regt, who will be looking after our Gene's. Since the arrival of the Royal Signals Systems Support Team (**WO2 Edge, SSgt Holloway** and **Sgt Lloyd**) no switch has been the same! Switches beware..... RSSST(G) are out there! The local trade merchants appear every day with their stocks of 'Nikee' or 'Addeedas' gear for sale. Our local 'Del Boy' or 'Marvin the Haggler' aka **FofS Geere** has snapped up several bargains so the traders are wary of him now.

LCpl Cowie is keeping on top of the switch crews with his moaning and groaning, doing a good job of training up the sprogs, such a pity he's a 230 man. **Sig** 'Studley' **Parker** has been receiving plenty of mail from women all over the country and is refusing to share. **Sig** 'Penfold' **Williams** and **Sig** 'Old Git' **Barret** have now settled in after the initial shock of going on operations during their six month engagement from the TA. **LCpl** 'Fergie' **Ferguson** has not been the same after the accident - the accident of **Sig** 'Blonde' **Evis** that is! Poor lad, it almost got him down after getting his promotion. I could never forgive myself if I forgot to mention possibly the best Radio Tech from 16 Sig Regt in theatre (the only one!). That's a crate then **Cpl** 'Scotty' **Johnson**.

THE COMMCEN BIT – *by Sig K Simms*

During the time we have been in the Gazela Shoe Factory the COMMCEN/Radio Room/Hairdressing Salon has moved to two separate locations. Now that we are settled we decided to move our antennas on the roof - six times in ten days to be exact! Luckily none of the TGs have fallen yet, unlike **Sig Evis** of the Sys Ops. The Radio side is quiet, a few radio checks here and there. The COMMCEN on the other hand is really busy during the day and night. **Sig** 'Huggy' **Huggett** on permanent days and **Cpl** 'Robbo' **Roberts** on permanent nights. After eight weeks with little sun 'Robbo' is looking even more like a vampire. It has definitely been an experience for all of us, being out here, adapting and overcoming a LOT of problems! We all look forward to the R&R!!

SAN 872 - THE GERMAN SAN – *by Lt Bruce*

Having deployed to Tetvo at the foot of the highest mountains in the area the SAN established itself with some of the best supplied troops in the region, the German Brigade. The food was fine as long as you didn't mind bread, ham, or cheese - all the time. The German speakers among us have come to the fore, and the 'pointing and shouting' fraternity are also beginning to learn the language. We are being treated really well by our German hosts and are enjoying the experience.

ROYAL VISIT – HRH THE DUKE OF KENT

Friday 9 April 1999: Ring, ring.....ring, ring.... 'Hello. Could we host a royal visit within the Regiment? Yes, I think so, when will it be? What do you mean, ***this*** **Monday**!!???'

That is roughly how one half of the telephone conversation went, prior to the Duke's visit. The visit itself was fairly low key, the Duke primarily wanted to meet the families of those deployed on Operation Agricola. He was met by **Maj Jonathan Turner**, **Capt Andy Percival** and **WO2 (SSM) Al Churchward**. Following a short operational brief by **Maj Turner**, the Duke was escorted to the Ptarmigan garages, where various members of 230 Sig Sqn were presented to him. Among those presented were: **Capt Glynn** 'Oh no! Not another crate' **Buxton, SSgt Neil Perham, Sig Mark Cunliffe, Sig Angela Graham, LCpl** 'Welshie' **Welsh** and **Sig** 'Day and' **Knight**.

The Duke then presented Royal Warrants to **WO2 (SSM) Al Churchward** and **WO2 (RQMS) Jim Alger**, before leaving to meet the families of those members of 1 Signal Brigade deployed in FYROM.

21 SIGNAL REGIMENT (AIR SUPPORT)



CO **Lt Col John Terrington**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) John Williams**

This year sees the 40th Anniversary of the formation of the Regiment and this will be celebrated during our annual Regimental Open Day on 10 July 1999. The Open Day will take place at Azimghur Barracks, Colerne, near Chippenham and is open to families, serving and ex-members of the Regiment and also to the general public. This year, we have expanded the programme and the Open Day will feature a display by The White Helmets, as well as from the military display, recruiting and youth teams from:

Royal Armoured Corps,
Royal Artillery, Royal Signals, Light Infantry
Prince of Wales' Division
Royal Gloucester, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment,
Royal Logistic Corps,
Adjutant Generals Corps
Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

WARRIOR, DROPS and other military equipment will be on show, alongside Paintball, Quad Bikes and, subject to operational commitments, Chinook or Puma aircraft from the RAF Support Helicopter Force. The Regiment would welcome a visit from any member of the Corps, past and present, and especially previous members of the Unit. Details may be obtained from **WO2 (RCWO) Mead-Male** on Colerne Mil 5116 or 01225 745116.



PLAF Band

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj Chas Dale**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Nick Organ**

Hectic as ever, HQ Sqn continues to provide sterling service to all of its customers. An excellent deployment and turn-out during Ex Red Beaufighter 1 allowed comprehensive assessment of the recent changes to SOPs. Most changes were well founded and were a positive step forward, whilst, inevitably, some proved the adage '.... Try, try and try again!'

HQ SQN (V) (Trowbridge)
PSAO **Capt Billy Miles**

The excellent news just in, is that the 'powers that be' in the TA restructuring process have finally agreed that HQ Sqn (V) should not relocate to Colerne, but directly into the 6 LI TAC Bath. The move will take place at the end of July this year, after the L1 draws down and moves out.

REGIMENTAL MOTOR TRANSPORT
MTO **Capt Guy Richards**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Mark Sala**

Yet another busy month was upon us and to start with everyone's favourite team had caught up with us, yes it was yours truly the Pre Inspection Team. Preparations the previous month had been very hectic and very busy. **Cpl Doyle** had the pleasant job of sorting out the AB88 Register and was asked the question was all up to date and okay. His immediate reply was, to everyone's surprise, was what is a AB88? After receiving a vast amount of assistance from the TIFFY everything began to smell of roses and was running quite smoothly for a short time. **Cpl Eskdale** had cause to worry when the team came to inspect lets say the Steptoe vehicle (SQMS) has seen better days. New blood arrived in the Troop just as PRE was going on **Sig Chilvers** was given a warm welcome into the Troop and was presented with a paint brush to start work straight away. **Sgt** 'Mac' **MacDonald,** whilst all this was going on, was up to his neck in drill, PT and yomping on his Sgt's course congratulations on successful completion of the course 'Mac'.

After completion of the annual Pre-inspection it was time to spring-clean the MT hangar, but **Cpl Howie** was not paying much attention as he was too busy concentrating on his new posting to sunny-Catterick. We are all sure it will not be as sunny as it was in Florida, where he has just spent his honeymoon with his new bride **Lisa**. The MT boss has returned from an EFP 2 course which he found quite mind numbing but it could have not been all that bad as he has started to read the Times newspaper, A well done goes to all MT personnel for their hard efforts in the past two months.

43 (WESSEX) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V) (BRIDGWATER)
Sqn Comd **Maj Craig Treeby**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Ward**

PP6E.004

The Squadron is now celebrating the decision not to relocate to Bath this year, but to delay in Bridgwater until the Regiment decadreises. This momentous decision, taken by Ministers after a great deal of staff work and a rear guard action which **Field Marshal Slim** would have been proud of, was finally taken in early April. The Squadron can now forge ahead and start to train the ex-Light Infanteers who intend to re-trade as signallers when the Squadron finally joins the HQ Sqn (V) element, in Bath, in the new Millennium. Next edition will include photos and tales from the recent Initiative Training weekend

81 SIGNAL SQUADRON (V) (COLERNE AND NATIONWIDE)
Sqn Comd **Maj Craig Tillotson**
PSAO **Capt John Harris**

Farewell and Bon Voyage to outgoing OC, **Maj Bob Manifold** who has now handed the reins of command to **Maj Craig Tillotson** - welcome to the hot seat! **Bob** will be sorely missed as OC, both from the professional and the social perspectives, and he led the Squadron extremely effectively during a significant period in the Squadron's history.

The Squadron continues to support the Regular Army, world-wide, on a variety of static communications projects, with deployments to the Falklands, Ascension and Germany, as well as in UK. 857 Signal Troop deployed on Ex Falkland Sound during January and February, in support of JCUM. The Exercise was part of an ongoing task to improve and replace the ageing communications infrastructure at the Mount Pleasant airfield. Led by **Capt Tim Jones**, a total of 45 men and women from the Squadron deployed to install and upgrade the Main Distribution Frame in the Tactical Operations Centre. Other tasks were also achieved, including the obligatory 'meet the penguins' and battlefield tour.

Planning for the transfer of command from 21 Sig Regt (AS) to 2 (NC) Sig Bde as part of the Army C18 Group is moving apace. Currently scheduled for 1 Sep 99, SHQ will move to Corsham and, it is intended, will retain a degree of autonomy within ACISG allowing the Squadron to continue to provide an excellent and very cost effective service to its customers, world-wide.

220 SIGNAL SQUADRON (AS)
Sqn Comd **Maj A. S. Williams**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) G. D. Robinson**

220 Sig Sqn is as busy as ever despite the impending closure of RAF Laarbruch and the move of SHQ back to Colerne later in the year. Our operational commitments have increased significantly with the current activities in the Balkans, and as word spreads about the Telemechs' skillset job offers continue to fly in thick and fast to ACPO. Additionally we are about to embark on a major exchange and cabling project in Ascension Island which will take another large bite out of the Squadrons manpower over the next three months.

In February this year a team of soldiers from 220 Sig Sqn joined forces with 280 Sig Sqn to collect sweets and chocolate from the Cologne International Sweets and Confectionery fair. This was destined for distribution among hospitals and orphanages in Bosnia under the supervision of the charity Scottish European Aid. An excellent day out was had by all and the Squadron remains awash with chocolate that wouldn't fit on SEAs lorries. Many thanks are extended to **Nigel Sergeant** at the BFG Press and Information Office and the British Trade Minister, **Brian Wilson**, (not formerly of the Beach Boys!) for supporting this very worthwhile event.



The Cologne International Sweets and Confectionery Fair
(L-R): SSgt Weavers (280 Sig Sqn),
Sgt Darron Twigg (220 Sig Sqn) Hon. Simon Scott (SEA),
Brian Wilson MP, Lt Emma Rae (280 Sig Sqn)
and WO2 (SSM) Ged Robinson (220 Sig Sqn)

On the sporting front the Squadron has continued to do well in the Rhine Army Football league under the fanatical direction of **WO2 (SSM) Ged Robinson**, and we also won the UKSC (G) Minor Units Cross Country championships, much to the surprise of the Foreman and 2IC who were both recovering from a dining in for most of the course!

In March, following a highly successful battle-camp at Haltern Ranges, the Squadron bids it's fond farewells to the OC, **Maj Andy Williams** who goes to HQ AMFL as SO2 PINFO. Not content with one leaving 'do', **Maj Williams** celebrated his departure with three, leaving in a slightly more dishevelled state than when he arrived at the Squadron. Sorry about that Heidelberg, we're confident he'll recover in a couple of weeks though! **Maj Williams** has been replaced by **Capt (TOT)** 'Noddy' **Baugh MBE**, who has leapt enthusiastically into the chair from ACPO, for what will undoubtedly be a busy few months. The Squadron has also said a fond farewell to **Lt Toby Heath** who is off to pursue a career in Civvy Street and to **Sgt Darren Twigg,** posted to the School in Blandford. For the meantime the remainder of SHQ wait with baited breath to see if the incumbent 2IC, **Lt Jim Lambeth** will manage to finish building his car before he's posted back to the UK.

220 SIGNAL SQUADRON (LAARBRUCH AND BRUGGEN)
Sqn Comd/ACPO **Capt** 'Noddy' **Baugh**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Ged Robinson**

H TROOP

The current operational sorties frorn Bruggen have added an edge to the work being undertaken by H Tp. Upgrade to the ASM involves work on 14 Squadron sites and the Flight Line Bunker, with deployment of 81 Sig Sqn (V) assets in support planned for later in the year. Other work continues on LDCN (Phase 1 and 2) and RAF Squadron site LANs.

L TROOP

Whilst the RAF continue to disperse from the airfield at Laarbruch, L Troop have a clear focus in their work towards the draw-down and eventual hand-over of the site to, erm, well, whoever! Much work is underway to clear the sites of cabling and installations as the RAF move out. From the management perspective, detailed inspection of the RAF's closedown plans has been essential to avoid the closure of facilities which the Troop, and SHQ, will continue to need until their transfer to Bruggen in August and September.

ACPO – JHQ RHEINDAHLEN

Lt Col J. A. Terrington, Commanding Officer of 21 Sig Regt (AS) recently presented **Mrs Lyn Fadzilah** with her twelve year certificate of service at a ceremony in JHQ. **Lyn**, the Airfield Communications Planning Office (ACPO) Office Manager previously worked for British Forces (Germany) at Griffon School, RAF Wildrenrath but relocated to their ACPO position on the withdrawal of 21 Sig Regt from that site in 1992.

Project work and planning continues apace in Macedonia and elsewhere in Fry, and teams have already deployed on a number of additional tasks over and above the standard roulement. World-wide tasking also continues, with comprehensive projects being undertaken on Ascension and in the Falklands. These will provide a unique opportunity to develop the trade skills of the significant number of young Signallers in the Squadron, as well as providing a rare break from FRY and routine airfield tasks.



Lynne being presented with her certificate.
Also pictured left to right are Capt Noddy Baugh MBE,
Mrs Michelle Matthews, SSgt Jones, Maj Andy Williams,
Lt Col Terrington and WO1 (RSM) J. Williams

ARMY BOBSLEIGH CHAMPIONSHIPS

by LCpl Dave Heath, H Tp RAF Bruggen

Last year I managed to get myself into a two man bobsleigh team. Here I found myself hurtling towards the bottom of a narrow icy track at speeds of around seventy miles an hour - really quite frightening on the first go, but nevertheless one hell of an adrenaline rush.

At the Army Novice Championships in Igls, Austria, my brakeman and I managed to fit in three laufs a day for a week to get used to the track and to perfect our timing. A race can be won or lost in the pushstart, the idea being that you both 'hit' the bobsleigh at the same time in order to get the fastest possible acceleration. Easy? ... No not really, in fact it takes a lot of practice. Once you're moving you jump in and the brakeman gets a lift to the bottom, where as you would expect, he stops the sled. The drivers' job on the other hand is only just beginning once you're both in the bob. He has the unnerving task of getting 390kg worth of sled and passengers to the bottom as quickly yet safely as possible. This is much more difficult than it might sound, however my brakeman, **LCpl Adam Grant**, and I managed to do it well enough to earn ourselves a Bronze medal and a bottle of champagne!

Our next stop was Lillehammer for the main Army Championships. We were competing against Olympic Class athletes in the form of the GB number one pair, so an outright win was never really on the cards. Also competing was one of our coaches with his brakeman **Cpl** 'Barney' **Barnet** from 280 Sig Sqn. The competition was tough and the racing very fast, but it was a great experience for us relative newcomers to compete alongside such high class athletes. I learnt a great deal from them, however, come competition day we proved no match for the pros, despite turning in our best ever time. We did manage to beat our main rivals from the army novices, **Sigs Steve** 'Wilderbeast' **Wildridge** and **Steve** 'Lloydy' **Lloyd**. Cheers lads, nearly but not quite!

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have helped and supported me in pursuing this most unusual sport, particularly the Corps Games Committee and the PED Staff at RAF Bruggen who have very generously helped me out with sponsorship. **Sean Olsson** this year, **Dave Heath** the next.... well, maybe!



LCpl Dave 'Twinkle toes' Heath and LCpl Adam Grant setting off on a practice lauf at Innsbruck

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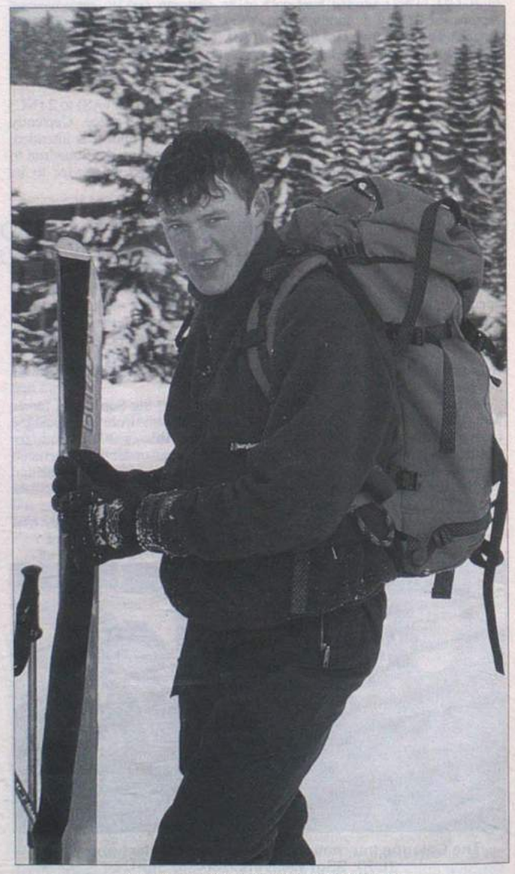
L TROOP RAF LAARBRUCH – *by Cpl Dave Cascarino*

Life continues at its usual frantic pace here at sunny RAF Laarbruch, apart from the usual dets to Split, Banja Luka, the Falklands Ascension Island, we've also got people in Macedonia (**Cpl Steve** 'Stag On' **Mesmer**) and sent a large contingent to Margate over the Easter grant. The Troop is still managing to maintain presence here at the sharp end in Germany.

There have been a lot of comings and goings in the past two months or so, notably **Sigs Chris** 'Reesty' **Evans** to Civ Div, **Sgt Jason** 'Harry' **Harris** to H Tp along with **LCpl Donny Stewart** and **LCpl Matt** 'Party Animal' **White. Cpl Dave Cascarino** has returned, from the big FI looking all the better for another tour, **Sgt Alvin** 'Billy' **Lilburn** has been making flying visits back and forth to Macedonia, (he and **LCpl Chris Bain** even managed to get a lift on the Royal Flight for one such trip, it's hell on Ops!) more often than not leaving a few bods behind along the way.

We welcome **Sig Love** and **LCpl Emmison** fresh from the factory, have a good tour, and will soon welcome back into the fold **LCpl Daz Dales** who is at the Blandford Centre of Excellence undergoing re-moulding from Telemech to CIT - not in for much stick when he gets back... TECHY! We have recently welcomed our resident Airfield Techs into the Troop, **SSgt Chris** 'BA' **Holmes** and **Sgt Lee** 'The boy Wonder' **Coffill**, on an Inter-Troop posting from the now defunct Support Troop. **LCpls Bamforth** and **Welsh** recently represented the Squadron at the station closure ceremony, looking extremely smart and military in their 'twos' in what would otherwise have been a complete sea of blue.



Sig Ronnie 'Admin Vortex' Warwick is somewhat confused by all this white cold stuff on EWT

If responding to any advertisements in The Wire please mention that you saw it in your Corps magazine

The Troop continues to pursue its interest in all things non military - most of us have attended EMT and **Sigs Mitchell** and **Richardson** have managed to scrounge a couple of cargo parachutes so they can go para-gliding for a couple of weeks in Bavaria - it's a hard life being a Telemech!

244 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj Ian Walton**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Steve Dickson**

The last few months since the New Year have seen a dramatic increase in the level of tasking on the Squadron and there are few people left who are not on Ops, warned for Ops or literally just returned from Ops (and some of them fall into the first two categories too!) In amongst all the hectic jumping on and off the operational bus, normal life has continued in a fashion. The A Tp Holiday Club has recently returned from an arduous winter deployment to sunny Italy (and were warned for Ops in Albania on return). The rest of the Squadron got Otterburn on Ex Gryphons Flight instead. The Squadron is also witnessing a major turnover in Squadron personalities. The SSM has been picked up for promotion and leaves us soon for 35 Sig Regt - good luck to **WO2 (SSM) Steve Dickson, Shirley** and the kids. Other promotions are **SSgt** 'Geordie' **Walton** and **SSgt (FofS)** 'Side Burns' **Moore**, both going back to their SF roots as WO2s. Well done to you both. On top of this we have also received two new Tp Comds to replace the two deployed on ops in Croatia and Macedonia, **Capt Bill Holbrook** and **2Lt Sara Richards** join us from the delights of the TCs course.

CHARLIE TROOP

The Troop has deployed dets on both Exercises and operations in support of the Support Helicopter Force. The increase in tempo in the Balkans region has committed the Squadron, operationally, like never before. At present each member of the Troop is on, just come off or about to depart on operations and so leading a normal life in Colerne is at present very difficult! To that end when we had the rare chance to get ourselves away for a Troop Day-Out we all jumped at it. Alton Towers didn't know what hit it.

We deployed from Colerne at 0800hrs in what promised to be good weather but, as always, the other side of Birmingham was cold and wet. On arrival at the park everybody split down into groups and set off for a day of wet fun. Our group headed straight to the log flume and rapids first while **Cpl** 'Denzel' **James** and company, not able to 'weather' the rides headed for the nearest dry place (the Alton Towers Tavern). The only downside to the day was **LCpl** 'Mail' **Donaghy's** and **Sig Steff Gibbs'** point blank refusal to go on anything more scary than the tea-cups. We got the chance to get warm when the cable car stopped mid-air for an hour, although there were rumours it wasn't an accident and done by the park management to give the civvies a chance on the ride. Everyone had a good day but missed having our colleagues who were on operations there - yeah right.

Recent departures from the Troop were **Sig** 'Dickie' **Dyer** and **Sig** 'Sandra' **Evans. Sig Dyer** has left the Army after six years to work for a haulage company, and **Sig Evans** has been posted to JCUNI. Good luck to them both. Arrivals include the new Troop Comd, **Capt Bill Holbrook** from 20 Armd Bde via Blandford, **Cpl** 'Chuck' **Berry** from 16 Sig Regt and **Cpl** 'Rab' **Grice** from 14 Sig Regt, **LCpl** 'Ollie' **Olver** and **LCpl** 'Jack' **Horner** from 7 Sig Regt. (The Corps Waterpolo Team has landed!) Also newly arrived **Sig Young, Sig** 'Sad Sac' **Sutherland, Sig** 'Buster' **Gentles, Sig** 'EVIL' **Darwood, Sig** 'PI' **Barton** and **Sig Emma Preece** all fresh from the Royal School of Signals.

The Troop would like to say hello to all the guys at present on Ops, keep your head down and see you soon. In the next month along with operational commitments we have an ATD camp in Plymouth, a JNCO Cadre course in Sennybridge and an Exercise in Germany to keep us ticking over, so while the future's bright its not orange!

DELTA TROOP

Delta Tp has been recently reduced in size because of overseas commitments but there has also been lots to do back at the camp. The Troop even found time to visit the Quasar in Bath and much fun was had by all especially the new boss **2Lt** 'wet behind the ears' **Richards** who seemed to think she was on a FIBUA day with live rounds! A large majority of the Troop found a mixture of Quasar and a night out before too much to handle - mentioning no names! On a different note the Troop welcomes **Cpl** 'Rob' **Lewis** who is already enjoying the high pace of the MAOT desk **2Lt Sara Richards** as the new D Tp boss, and **Cpl** 'Jasper' **Marrit** who must love it here on his second tour. Forthcoming farewells to **Sig** 'Andy' **Trueman** after nine and a half years service - well done that man, **LCpl** 'Edgey' **Edge** - good luck in your Civilian employment and **LCpl** 'Lindsay' **Payton** - posted to 30 Sig Regt in Bramcote.

To the lads and lasses out in Split from the Troop keep up the good work in the glorious sunshine not that we are jealous - Colerne's glorious! Already **Sig** 'Tony' **Burton** is savouring the delights of the less than cheap Ale! It must be a little sunspot out there when comments like **Sig Emma** 'Ma'am, I've packed my Bikini and that's it' **McDonald,** come about.

VISIT BY THE MASTER OF SIGNALS

We were delighted to host a visit by the Master of Signals, **Maj Gen I. O. J. Sprackling OBE,** his first to the Regiment. As recompense for missing the England - France Four Nations match during the visit, the Master was treated to tea and biscuits during the briefing by the CO, **Lt Col John Terrington,** 21C **Maj Bruce Avison** and Ops Officer, **Capt Bob Nixon.** Following this, the Master was briefed on the newly arrived PRC 346 Tactical Ground to Air radio (TacGA) by members of 244 Sig Sqn. During the evening, the Officers hosted the **Master** and **Mrs Annie Sprackling** at a Regimental Ladies Night, a treat for all!



The Master being briefed on PRC 346 (TacGA) by Sig McAllister



The Master with WO2 (YofS) Firth, Maj Ian 'Smart Haircut just for the Visit' Walton and LCpl Bradbury in attendance

COLERNE DIVERS SUB AQUA CLUB

Chairman	**Capt Jeff Ashwell**
Diving Officer	**Sgt Paul Morse**
Secretary	**SSgt Julie Eldridge RLC**

Under the direction of **Capt Jeff Ashwell,** the Colerne diving club has now been founded (well we have got our own swimming pool) and has been up and running for the past four months. It is quite surprising that the Club has had no casualties yet, as **Paul Morse** insists on trying to drown certain members of the club by loading them with extra weight. The club at present has 25 members and is growing steadily. The Club has applied to both Army Sub Aqua Diving Association (ASADA) and BSAC (British Sub Aqua Club) for membership to permit expeditions to recognised diving sites around the world to be organised.

Colerne Divers have already held a weekend expedition to Fort Bovis and in Plymouth and members of the team were **Cpl Bobby Sands, Sig Claire** 'instructor potential' **Blades, Sig** Tammy 'I can float upside down in my dry suit' **Yates** and **Sig Wendy Torode.** In June this year the Club is holding a two week expedition at Fort Bovis in preparation for foreign climes next year. Typical, **SSgt Julie Eldridge** only volunteered to be secretary as **Capt Jeff Ashwell** dangled the Ascension Island carrot; knowing her luck she'll be posted next year and miss out again. The Club wishes to take this opportunity to thank the PRI for its donation - without it the Club would not have got off the ground.

EXERCISE CAPITAL CITY 1999

The Army Welfare Service (AWS) organised a trip to London for children from the communities of Colerne, Hullavington and Warminster. 21 Sig Regt (AS) provided one adult assistant, **Sgt Pete Jordan** AGC (SPS) and four children **Kirsty Jordan, Terry Flaberty, Den Rouston** and **Lee Dickson** to participate in this Exercise. We went to places like the London Dungeons, London Zoo, Trafalgar Square, Buckingham Palace, Horse Guards and the pictures. Everyone that went had a very enjoyable four days in our Capital City.

YOUR COPY OF THE WIRE ARE YOU GETTING IT?

30 SIGNAL REGIMENT

Comd Offr — **Lt Col Mike Lithgow MBE**
RSM — **WO1 (RSM) Gary Johnson**

SUPPORT SQUADRON
EXERCISE GRAND PRIX II – FEBRUARY - MARCH 1999
by LCpl Carl Kidner

After recently being posted in from 3 Div, Bulford and with only three weeks in the Regiment I was chosen from a cast of thousands to go to Kenya. Also from the MT were **Sigs Davis, Spencer** and **Worthington**, we were all attached to 1st Battalion the Prince of Wales Regiment to form the 'Staffords' Battle Group. This was quite an honour, as they had not been formed as the 'Staffords' Battle Group for some 20 years. We soon found ourselves on a week's training package brushing up on our military and communications skills. At the end of the training came the 'Jabs' in preparation for deployment. Some of the tablets we were instructed to take (Larium) caused problems such as nausea, vomiting and sleep disturbance which was 'to be expected' we were told. The flight from Brize Norton was on a VC10 and took eight hours. On landing we were welcomed with a 24-hour 'rat pack', some bottled water and a further six hour journey by coach to Nanyuki camp. The job we were doing was mainly driving. We were doing between 8-10 hours driving a day on dusty, bumpy C & D class roads with fully laden vehicles. The food during these details was 'rat packs' and bottled water but the food in camp was quite good. Our driving details consisted of picking up and dropping off troops at various locations and camps in Kenya and taking part in various training programmes on different terrain.

The normal 'Admin' details were also completed by the 30 Sig Regt drivers such as collecting rations, ammo and spare vehicle parts which all had to be collected at 'BATLSK'. Our LAD guys certainly had their work cut out as the majority of the fleet of vehicles were VOR awaiting spares when we arrived. Before we left all the vehicles were road worthy and ready for handing over having been inspected, serviced and repaired in every detail. R&R came around and we all took part in the 'Kenya Experience' consisting of riding horses and camels, visiting Zulu Warriors and seeing how they lived and climbing Mount Kenya which took three days. This mountain is 10,000ft high. The temperature rose to an unbelievable 120 degrees in the shade, I think that's what made me so tired all the time. The six weeks seemed longer and was very tiring but all in all it was a well worth trip if only to see the lions, elephants, rhinos, buffalo, hippos, giraffes, zebras, impala, baboons and chimps first hand in their natural habitat.



Conversing with the locals

250 GURKHA SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd — **Maj Richard Wilson**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) Chandra**

The year started well with the Squadron retaining first place in the yearly CO's challenge. The year will see the formation of a second Gurkha squadron up in York. The new squadron OC, **Maj Richard Wilson**, arrived and has set about shaping the Squadron to meet growing and rapidly changing commitments. The first Squadron competition of the year, the cross country, was won by 250 in convincing style, the OC coming third out of the Squadron. Long may it continue.

VICTOR TROOP

V Tp's year started in the usual busy way. While **Cpls Kaji** and **Tej** were sunning themselves in the freezing Lake District, the rest of the Troop prepared for the New Year. The year will bring a plethora of different Exercises and commitments in all parts of the world. The first of these is the month long Cobb Ring Exercise in Florida, an Exercise which for some reason requires 90% of the Regiment's techs. Who says they're stupid? However, to ensure that proceedings do not go too smoothly a Squadron re-org was thrown in while the Tp Comd, **2Lt Davis**, was away on his language course. After the re-org we admitted DE/DLs, and even a tech, into the Troop for the first time. We said a fond farewell to those who are leaving the Troop to move next door.

WHISKEY TROOP – *by Sig Akash Sunuwar*

Whiskey is not a drink; it is the well-known name of a Troop in 250 Gurkha Sig Sqn. The commander of the Troop is **Lt Krishna Bahadur Gurung** and the 2IC is **SSgt Lawrence.** The arrival of the new OC has led to significant changes in the QG SIGNALS and within the Squadron. Within this Squadron the MT Tp (X-ray) has become a comms Troop like Victor and Whiskey. All the DE and DL's have been divided between the three Troops. Most of the soldiers from MT Tp are also aiming to re-trade in the near future.

Gurkhas are historically known as brave and fierce fighters, but nowadays they are proving they are also adept with modern technology. All the soldiers are very busy at the moment because of Exercises and operations. Whiskey Tp is organising an Exercise in Catterick from the 1-5 February. The name of the Exercise is 'Khukuri Chaos'. The aim of the Exercise is to teach different trade skills to the soldiers. In the Exercise the soldiers will teach each other about their trades and discuss different communication equipment. Whiskey Tp presently holds the following comms equipment; VSC501, Radio Relay, Radio Relay, Euromux and CNR. Soldiers learn how to maintain them for long life through the Troop seniors and Exercises. Co-operation and brotherhood within the Troop are the main principles, which help to keep the Troop performance up to the required standards.

X-RAY TROOP – *by Sig Rudra Limbu*

1999 appeared like a sunrise, leaving behind the memories of 1998 and the long awaited Christmas leave. The members of X-ray Tp welcomed the new OC, **Maj Wilson**, along with the New Year. He came up with the idea of reorganising the Troops. The Troop reorganisation took place 18 – 22 January 1999. Prior to the reorganisation, 250 GSS was made up of two comms Troops, Victor and Whiskey, and a support Troop, X-ray. The comms Troops held all the comms assets, and X-ray provided power, line and transportation. Now X-ray is also a comms Troop and all the driver linemen and electricians are equally distributed among the Troops, as is the comms equipment. Now all the Troops have Euromux, Radio Relay, CNR, VSC501, line and power dets. Finally the OC inspected all the Troops, encouraged all the Troop personnel to work hard and thanked them for their efforts.

EXERCISE HIGHLAND FLIGHT – 16-27 DECEMBER 1998
by Sig's Ishwor and Ashok

During the Christmas stand-down 250 Gurkha Sig Sqn organised a winter adventure training exercise in the Lake District. The Exercise was co-ordinated and led by **Lt (QGO) Khrishna Gurung**. A total of 52 personnel took part including 25 new trainees who had recently joined Queens Gurkha Signals.



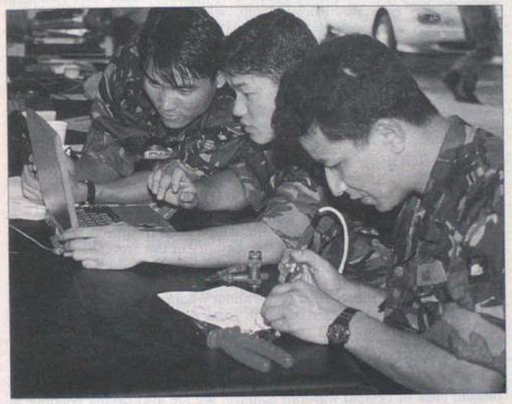
Exercise Highland Flight 1998'

Based at Halton Training Camp, Lancaster, we participated in various activities including hill walking, mountain biking, orienteering and our newest experience, water skiing. The weather was cold, sometimes dropping down to 1-Degree Celsius but that did not deter us. Most remarkable of all was the interview with the *Guardian* newspaper and even with BBC TV for their evening news coverage. For the first time we were in the Newspaper and on TV as well Finally we are grateful to **Lt (QGO) Krishna** who put the time in to organise the expedition.

EXERCISE COBB RING 1999 – *by LCpl Bharat Rai*

Ex Cobb Ring is an annual joint interoperability trial involving 30 Sig Regt and the US JCSE (Joint Communications Support Element). JCSE is a rapidly deployable, joint, tactical comms unit, which is controlled by the joint staff. The Unit deploys world-wide supporting all unified commands, government agencies, all four services and selected foreign governments on contingency operations and war. It provides communications to link deployed commanders to their component HQ, and to the national command authority. The aim of the Exercise is to test the interoperability of UK/US Satcom equipment, to practice the movement of 30 Sig Regt personnel and equipment by air, and last but not least to establish and maintain the liaison and personnel contacts between JCSE and our Regiment.

250 Gurkha Sig Sqn was the lead Squadron for the Exercise this year. One VSC501 and one TRC522 was deployed to MacDill Airforce Base, Tampa, Florida, where the exercise was to take place. A contingent of JCSE personnel were also deployed to Bramcote. A plug up Exercise was conducted 25-29 January, after which equipment was packed and manifested. **Capt Hill** (2IC 250 GSS) led a total of 35 personnel from the Regiment to RAF Lyneham on 5 February 1999. As usual on Hercules aircraft, we enjoyed the nice packed lunch and the quiet engines! After a long and tiring seven hour flight we landed in the Azores to spend the night. The following morning we took off again and had a short stopover in Bermuda to refuel the aircraft. We finally arrived at MacDill at around 6pm local. After unloading the kit we made our way to the Holiday Inn Express Hotel in downtown Tampa, where our accommodation was booked for the first seven days. On 7 of February we set up the Det and got ready for the Operation. The 501 was beaconed up using the US satellite and frequencies, and we didn't encounter any problems.



Gurkha Techs 'hard at it' in Florida

Despite the busy series of scheduled trials and testing programmes, **Lt Krishna**, the Admin Officer, managed to get hold of information about places that we could visit. The shift roster was worked out so that we all had the chance to visit Universal Studios, Disneyland, MGM, Kennedy Space Centre and Busch Gardens. Some sport competitions were also organised by JCSE, including a 9-mile march and shoot, football, and combined PT. No-one will forget the football, which we won 12-2.

On 24 February, **Lt Col Lithgow MBE** visited the Exercise, and briefed us all about the current situation back at the Regiment. On the same night JCSE organised a dinner night, which was very enjoyable. **Sigs Durga, Jas** and **Chau** presented a short Gurkha khukuri dance, and **Capt Hill** did his bit for US/UK relations by drinking the American 'Grog'. The Exercise was highly successful. We will never forget the help of the JCSE personnel who were very supportive at all times. Lastly we should not forget to mention the hard work of the 522 Det who provided the rear link for the Exercise.

Jai QG Signals!!

256 SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd — **Maj Jules Swindells**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) Steve Lockwood**

HELLO AND GOODBYE

The Squadron would like to say farewell, good luck and thanks to the following people: **Cpl** 'Jase' **Bridges, Cpl** 'Nick' **Blake, LCpl** 'Muss' **Murray, LCpl** 'Claire' **Allsop, Sig** 'Dikky' **Dickinson** all of whom have moved to civ div. **LCpl** 'Sonic' **Harding, Sig** 'Kelly' **Tweedy** and **Sig** 'Naith' **Eldridge** all have moved over the water to NI, we wish you all the best of luck. **Cpl Dave** 'I'm losing a tenner a day!' **Knowler** has moved to Bassingbourn, and finally **LCpl** 'Just' **Markey** posted to 264. To fill the gap left by those above we have had the following posted in: **Cpl** 'Windy' **Parry** from NI, he goes straight on his class one, good luck there! **LCpl** 'Lidds' **Liddle** completes the NI exchange programme. **LCpl** 'Dranny' **Dramsfield** comes in from Krefeld. Also almost a whole Troop from Blandford including **Sigs Marsh, Rigby, Lower, Bowyer, Riley** and **Shaw.**

REAR PARTY ACTIVITIES

Over the last few weeks almost the whole Squadron has deployed on Op Agricola. Those of us still here have the full quota of guards, car boot sales and litter to keep morale up. The highlight of the last few weeks was the arrival of **2Lt** 'It's good, but I can make it Better' **Dagless** from his Tp Comd's Cse at Blandford. It was a first day to remember. We saw our new Troop Commander practising his skills in counselling a distressed Cpl and Sgt, signing for non-existent vehicles and finally being measured for his coffin. After a few beers in the Mess **2Lt Dagless** joined the rest of the Rear Party Command Group on an action packed evening in the Crystal Maze at Coventry. Later in the evening he was quoted as saying, 'I thought it was a wind up all day!' but we saw his face and know different!

TROOPIES PITFALLS – *by 2Lt John Dagless*

In true fashion and style it is customary to welcome the 'subbie' with a prank or two in order to break the ice. It also helps to show them that their real education starts here and now, as those young officers that recently left Blandford were soon to find out.

Though I was wary of the custom, a phone call on the Friday before my arrival distracted me from this. **Capt Mike** 'Larry' **Grierson** stated that on my arrival I would be deploying on Operations sooner than I thought. With this in mind, my first day was to be packed with action and drama. On my arrival I was whisked away by the all too helpful **Cpl Lex Barker**. The first stop was to the Medical Centre for a 'pre-deployment medical'. This highlighted the fact that I had a 'serious stomach problem'. One hour and many 'tests' later I left carrying a number of twenty-four hour urine sample containers. Straight after this I was then asked to face the disgruntled OC LAD, **Capt Ian** 'The Kitten' **Cooper**. As I was the only Squadron Officer in work that day, and with a careful bit of weaving, dodging, and gentle persuasion by the OC LAD, I signed for four Landrovers and three trailers that did not even exist. This was then followed by a BFT in boots and lightweights. To avoid running behind schedule on my first day, and giving the lads a bad impression, I decided I wouldn't change so did the BFT in what I was wearing at the time, working dress.

Following lunch I found myself giving marriage guidance counselling to a pregnant Corporal and Sergeant who was married to someone else. These persons shall remain nameless, though I think I will call their love child Rupert. As if this was not enough, I was quite literally hit by the QM (A), **Maj Jim Coffey**. I was told to parade in the Mess for a full 'pre-deployment 1157 check'. Having had half my kit ceremonially removed in the most convincing manner my mood started to worsen. To end it all I was then told to lie on the table and be measured for a coffin! Only then when I was asked to collect something from the Bar was I confronted with the truth and the Regimental Officers who are still in Bramcote. I must admit that I was taken in by the days events, it was done in a military manner and not too polished I will however admit that I was let off lightly, my welcome did not involve a donkey, a rabbit, or a chicken outfit, unlike previous new officers.

258 SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd — **Maj G. H. A. Odling**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) M. A. Webb**

The Squadron took on the new role of providing life support and communications for the Joint Task Force Headquarters (JTFHQ) as of 1 April 1999. There have been many changes and many late nights over the last few months preparing for the big day.

SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS

Many thanks and good wishes go to the hard working **Cpl Carmel** 'mean Rugby machine' **Dunkley** who has moved out of the Squadron to spend her last few months in the Army in RHQ. A big welcome goes out to **LCpl Jason** 'leggy' **Harrington** the Squadron's new clerk.

EXERCISE CYGNET GOLD

Ex Cygnet Gold was a six-week Exercise out to beautiful Kenya between 7 January - 15 February 1999. As a 258 Sig Sqn lead, Delta Tp, **Lt Teri** 'marmalade' **Downes, SSgt Paul** 'Mr conscientious driver' **Boughey** and **Sgt Kenny** 'last swan' **Barker** took upon the task of organising and leading the Exercise. We travelled out to Kenya in civilian style - 'Corsair', only to arrive during a rain storm which displeased **Sig** 'Dan the man' **Cooksey**. Luckily, the rain died away to reveal a burning hot sun which brought a smile to everyone's face after enduring a miserable British winter. Our task was to support 32 Engr Sqn who were on Ex Oakapple, which we did by setting up a basic COMMCEN at their luxurious tented HQ (situated in the middle of a Conservancy park with elephants frequently visiting the camp!). The Engr's always provide the best! The COMMCEN was lovingly run by **Cpl Mick** 'kebab maker' **Gregoire, Cpl Ian** 'ginger tusker' **Waterworth** with 2IC **LCpl MJ** 'If there is a disease I'll catch it' **Holt** and Det Tech **Cpl Mark** 'professor logic' **Jones.**

From the COMMCEN we extended HF comms out to the Engr's deployed locations as follows:

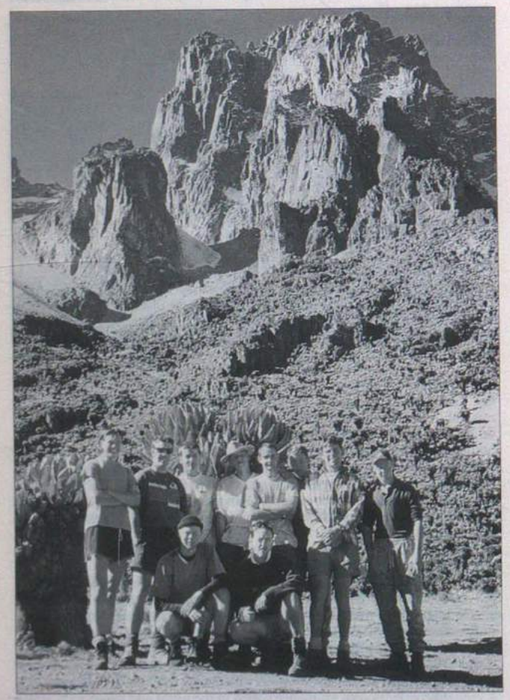
1. Percival's Bridge half way up the forested slopes of Mt Kenya operated by **Sig John** 'old man' **Burke, Sig James** 'the happy hippo' **Haywood** and **Sig Faye** 'look at my lingerie' **Wood;**
2. Back at BATLSK in Nairobi operated by **LCpl Paul** 'lovesick' **Howard, Sig Tony** 'I'm happy' **Moore, Sig Fred** 'the winge' **West;**
3. **Sig Dave** 'I've done it twice' **Kyle**, Sig **Andy** 'Army Fridge' **Armitage** the lucky souls travelled way up into the dodgy north where dangerous animals roamed in the night and make-shift water pipes made good showers.

We also carried out a JOCCOMEX with HMS *Brave* during which **Sig Jamie** 'real comms are sexy' **Roderick** managed to practice his rusty morse skills... except he had to slow down as the young lad on the ship had even rustier skills. All comms for the duration of the exercise were good and all operators benefited from the chance to learn new skills and enhance old ones. Every one had a chance to take part in some challenging Adventurous Training whilst out in Kenya. The package included trekking at high altitude in Mt Kenya National Park and white water rafting along Tana River. In addition, game safari drives were organised allowing everyone to see the wonders that Kenya can offer: big game included elephant, rhino, giraffe, buffalo, zebra, all sorts of deer and monkeys... oh and lots and lots of warthog 'Pumba's'.



LCpl Nichol making new friends

The highlight of the Adventurous Training package was the trek in Mt Kenya National Park followed by a white water rafting trip. **Lt Teri Downes** and **Sgt Kenny** 'navigator' **Barker** took two trips up into the park, each time taking a party of eight or nine. The first group had the unfortunate experience of additional altitude training on the very first day of the trek when **Sgt Kenny Barker's** frail mind temporarily failed to remember where the first hut was - just around the corner! Only a few teddies were thrown by the tired bunnies! **LCpl Mick** 'badger boy' **Nichol** found he was totally out of control of his legs and did a distinctive 'Bambi' impression all the way to the hut. Needless to say, the second group did not have to endure this traumatic experience.



Group two at Shiptons Camp at the base of Mt Kenya

The second day was long and drawn out, **Sig Stu** 'I've put weigh on over Xmas' **Gould** began to struggle a little but pushed on with determination. The 'its just around the corner' catchphrase was often heard, but top marks to **Sgt Kenny Barker** for his inspirational words: 'just imagine you're doing a BFT and your passing the LAD and you have another mile to go'. The evenings' entertainment in the mountain huts usually revolved around hearing all the stories from the Harrogate 94-96 'veterans' - very interesting! Or just sleeping. On the penultimate day **Sig** 'wait a mo' **Gould** was literally 500m away from the last hut when he could no longer wait 'to go'. Having waved his friends on and done 'the business', he attempted to put his rucksack back on and managed to dislocate his shoulder. After screaming, he tried to do as they do in the films and knock it back into place with a large rock. But real life isn't quite like the movies and after more screaming he was heli-lifted off the mountain - very dramatic! The white water rafting took place on the raging (not at that time of year) Tana River. **Sig Tony** 'sick' **Moore** kindly showed us his last meal during the Safety brief, then onto - and into - the water we went. Some people certainly experienced hair raising moments when either jumping into eddies as **Sig Kate** 'I don't need food' **Deal** demonstrated, falling out of surfing rafts backwards, jumping off a 40ft water fall or even rafting under a waterfall and being beaten harshly by the power of the water. Adrenaline rush for sure.

EXERCISE HERCULES FORUM

Ex Hercules Forum was the first JTFHQ Sig Sqn Exercise and took place in Gibraltar between 15 - 29 March. The Exercise was led by **Lt Teri** 'Gazelle' **Downes, Yeoman Jim** 'we did see him running on five consecutive days!' **Knight** and **Sgt Gaz** 'windscreen' **Middleton** with operators from Echo Tp, three pioneers from 23 Pioneer Regt, three chefs from the cookhouse and most of Delta Tp (again). There were two main sites on the Exercise: Rooke camp, which housed the JTFHQ and COMMCEN along with Staff Officers in the second week, and Buffadero, which sited the HF detachments for intra- and inter-theatre links.

The Exercise went well and good impressions were made all round. It was certainly a different experience for 30 Sig Regt personnel who had to provide a service to Staff Officers rather than working all on their own. Many of the Exercise personnel managed to experience the delights of down-town Gibraltar, with and without the Navy present!

DELTA TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt Teri Downes**
Tp Sgts	**Sgt Jill MacKay**
	Sgt Gaz Middleton

Delta Tp has been jet setting again, with a good handful deploying out to Kenya on Ex Cygnet Gold and the majority of the Troop deploying for the first time as ambassadors for the new JTFHQ Sig Sqn to sunny Gibraltar. It is with much sadness that we have to say our goodbyes to the one and only **Sgt** 'Kenny' **Barker**, without whom none of the Regiment's Adventurous Training would be worth going on. He has spent many years stationed with 30 Sig Regt and has perfected the reaction to 'fast balls' with his 'back of the fag packet' technique. The Troop, Squadron and Regiment will sorely miss his worldly experience and we all wish him every success in his second career, no doubt earning a mint in some distant, back of beyond war-torn country. We are also saying goodbye to **Sgt Mick** 'you'll never catch me' **Murphy**, who seems almost like a part timer as he has hardly been sighted between his many courses. He did a sterling job of managing the Troop and his work was much appreciated by all. We wish him every success on his Yeoman's course - good luck.

Due to a Regimental change around we are now losing our two Cpl Technicians, **Cpl Mark** 'VTC' **Jones** and **Cpl Martin** 'Scuba' **Parkinson**, both of whom are disappearing into the void of TM Tp. Cheers for all the hard work. **Cpl Mark** 'blue-eyed boy' **Wyllie** has just departed for a four month tour out in Bosnia after finally getting to grips with being the brew boy for the Yeoman in Sqn Ops. Look after yourself. **Cpl Tek** and **Sig Cole** have also deployed out to Bosnia on their first tours - good luck to both. **LCpl** ' whirl wind' **Kemp** is on 1 Sig Sqn probation, **LCpl Bob** 'don't mess with me' **Scott** on 22 SAS Selection and **Sig Maxwell** has been posted to 264 Sig Sqn - well done, all of you. Goodbyes also to **Sig** 'Butthead' **Bevis** who is off to civvy pastures new, **Sig Justin** 'Canadian' **Fortner,** who is posted to Blandford along with **Sig H** 'Lardy' **Haywood**.

ECHO TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt George Alexander**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Doc Halliday**

In March, we said goodbye to **Sgt Mark** 'Scouse' **Reeves** who leaves us for a greater calling in life - the outside! Also goodbye to **LCpl Andy Taylor** who is posted to 3 Inf Bde and **Sig** 'please don't put me in the SQMS' **Simmons** who has moved to the Sqn stores - lucky chap!

FOXTROT TROOP

Tp Comd	**2Lt Katy Taylor**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Paul Boughey**

A big hello is extended to **Sgt Stu Fidler**, his wife Sarah and his three beautiful children **Alex, Jack** and **Molly**, who have joined us from Blandford. Sorrowful, tear-stained goodbyes go to **Cpl Sammy** 'croffy' **Samuel** and his wife **Lisa** who leave us for 280 Sig Sqn. Goodbye also to **Cpl Sarah** 'guard bird' **Faulconbridge**, who is slinging her hook to 15 Sig Regt, but not before running for 30 Sig Regt once again in the Lanyard Trophy. **Sig** 'padoing' **Padam** is already packing for 1 RGR and **Sig** 'merciless, golden maggot man' **Min** who is off to sweaty, sunny Brunei. The best of luck from everyone in the Troop.

EXERCISE SPARTAN HIKE 1999
2 TO 21 JANUARY REGIMENTAL SKI TEAMS
From the Alpine side of life:

The programme for the first week consisted of getting our skiing legs back with one or two falls here and their but after the second day we were all ready to go. After the first few days we started training for the Army Divisional Ski Championships, this was the first time that most of us had ever been near a set of Gates. After a few days we were all really getting into it like ducks to water. Two teams were entered consisting of 1 male team **Capt Harvey Woods, Cpl Stu Foster, Sig Gra Fields** (PTI) and **Sig Mark Vinten.** The second team entered was the female team: **2Lt Katy Taylor, LCpl Lou Gregory, Sig Sarah Thorn** and **Pte Sarah Toms.**

The beginning of the second week, start of racing, came round fast and everybody was keen to go. For the next nine days we took part in five different events consisting of the Slalom, Giant Slalom, Super G, Downhill and the parallel Slalom. Each event was an individual and a team race, although the team and individual events where raced separately. 30 Sig Regt managed to come away with the First Female Alpine Team, **Sig Vinten** came away with Junior Alpine Combination Winner and the team was awarded Best Gate Judges. Well done to the teams and special congratulations to **Capt Woods** and **Cpl Foster** who managed to qualify for the Army Ski Championships.

The Nordic perspective: On 2 January we set off for Serre Chevalier in the French Alpes. The Nordic team comprised of **Lt George Alexander** (Team Captain), **LCpl Phil Constantinou, LCpl Caz Burrows, Sig Wayne Carr, Sig Andy Cole** and **Sig Tom Lowe** myself. Four of us were complete newcomers to the sport and we had one week to grasp the basics before the races began. The first was the 10km classic style race and due to choosing the wrong wax some of the team ran around the course rather than skied. Over the next week the team competed in the 4 by 10km relay, 15km classic style race, 10km biathlon and 4 by 7.5 biathlon relay. Considering the lack of experience individuals performed well and in the relays **LCpl Phil Constantinou** gained valuable places.

The championships culminated in the patrol race in which a team of four skied 20km with 40kg two ranges and two tasks awaiting the team at unknown points along the route. The tasks and ranges did not prove too difficult and we eventually finished in a time of four hours. The Exercise was a great success and everyone enjoyed themselves over the two weeks. Thanks must go to **Lt George Alexander** for all of the organisation and congratulations to **LCpl Phil Constantinou** for qualifying for the Army Championships.

BRITISH ANTARCTIC SURVEY
CPL MCMULLEN'S ATTACHMENT

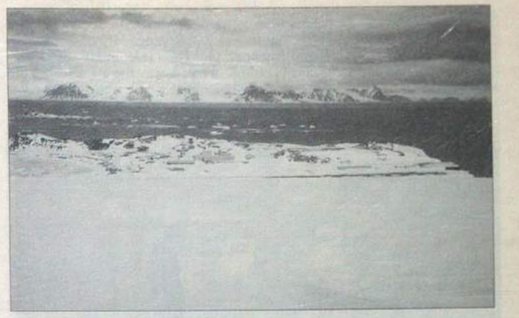
Brize Norton to Rothera - Cpl McMullen, whilst deployed in Kenya, volunteered for a six month detachment with the British Antarctic Survey to be employed as a communications specialist. On his return from Kenya he was whisked away for a selection interview and less than a week later he found himself on a flight bound for the Falkland Islands. His story follows.....

My journey started from Brize Norton, from where I flew to the Falkland Islands on a VC10 via Ascension Island landing at MPA. On arrival I proceeded down to Port Stanley staying the night and sampling the local hostelries i.e. the Globe and the Queen Vic. The next morning I was once again airborne flying to Rothera research station Antarctica a Dash 7 aircraft.



The Dash 7 bound for Rothera

The journey was quite remarkable, it took six hours and an excellent view of the Antarctic Peninsula. After a shady landing on the Rothera point runway, which is only about 200m long, I arrived at the station, my home for the next seven days.



Rothera Base

Rothera research station - Rothera research station is on a island just off Graham Land in the north west peninsula. It consisted of one large base building and several small buildings including a aircraft hangar for the Dash 7 and the four Twin Otters, and a runway.

My stay there only lasted seven days as I was still on route to Halley research station where I was to spend the next four months. My stay at Rothera was quite enjoyable as I had to do field training before my departure. My field training consisted of basic field craft, which showed me how to survive in the cold climate, and also abseiling down ice cliffs, and crevasse rescue and other rope and climbing techniques. I also got the opportunity to go out in one of the diving boats and experience the Antarctic waters around the point.

The next part of my journey was to take me to Halley research station by twin otter that should have taken us six hours to get there. Unfortunately for myself the weather deteriorated at Halley and we were forced to land on the Filchner Ice Shelf. The Filchner Ice Shelf used to be inhabited by the German Antarctic programme but the Shelf broke away and was currently moving off into the Weddel Sea. We decided to go and stay overnight at the abandoned German base which was on a 30km iceberg which we had to land on. The base looked like a ghost ship in which everything had been abandoned in position.



Cpl McMullen at the Filchner Base

The British Antarctic survey had been granted permission to land there to keep an eye on the base and report on how the berg was holding up as the Germans were due to send a salvage party in to dismantle the base, eventually. I was one of the few to visit there in its present condition. The next morning the weather conditions had improved slightly so we decided to have a go at landing at Halley which was two hours away.

Halley research station - Halley research station is located on the Brunt ice shelf that is 76 degrees south so about 700km from the South Pole.



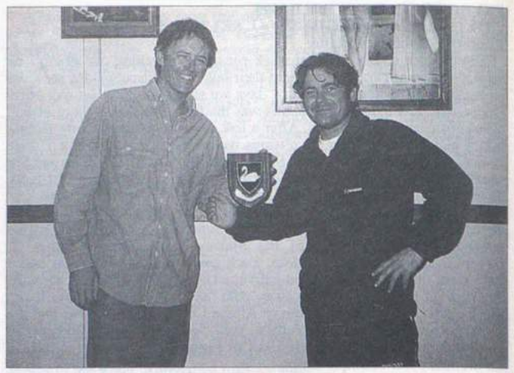
Halley Research Station

My job there was, as part of a team of three, to look after the communications for the base that included long range HF, Immarsat and maintenance of the masts and antennas. Our main role on HF was safety aircraft comms and field party comms. While I was there I also got the opportunity to visit the emperor penguin colony which was a spectacular sight.



Emperor penguin colony

One of the main jobs during the summer season is to lift everything on base as it gets buried by the snow in winter so the legs on the base have to be extended and the whole base jacked up. The ship RRS *Bransfield* has to bring in all the stores and equipment for the following winter and the current summer season.



Farewell – Swapping a Regimental Plaque for a haircut!

After all the work was complete it was time to travel back to the Falkland Islands on the RRS *Bransfield*. The journey lasted 3 weeks due to the formation of sea ice, during the journey to the Falklands we visited Signy base, St Olgas point, South Georgia where we saw the old whaling station and the seal colony.

It was a long journey to end a thoroughly enjoyable and unique detachment. The whole experience was enjoyable and a unique experience to visit one of the most uninhabited and harsh continents in the world I would recommend the opportunity to anyone.

31 (CITY OF LONDON) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS – SOUTHFIELDS

CO	**Lt Col Linda Harrison TD**
RSM	**WO1 (RSM) John Gibson**

HELLOS AND GOODBYES

A number of new faces are now seen wandering around RHQ in Southfields, most notably **Maj William Brown** the new Regimental 2IC who took over from **Maj Bob Davis** on 01 Apr 99. **Maj Brown** has arrived from HQ 11 Sig Bde and we welcome him and his wife to the Regt. We all hope that they enjoy their time here. Good luck to **Maj Davis** in his new appointment in Blandford. The second new arrival is **WO1 (RSM) John Gibson**, fresh from 19 Mech Bde HQ and Sig Sqn in Catterick who took over on 1 March 1999. Welcome to you, your wife **Kay** and children **Luke** and **Hannah**. Once again, we hope that you both enjoy your tour with the Regt. Good luck to **RSM** 'I'm a civvy now' **Duncan Hall** in your exploits on civvy street - we all hope that it is a painless transition.

NEWS FROM THE OPERATIONS TEAM



Trg Maj Alfie Brand and COS Maj Paul Kelly 'on business' in the States

It has been another busy period for the Regt with a wide range of activities taking place. The Training Major, **Maj Alfie Brand**, the Foreman, **WO2 (FofS) Bob Wymer**, and the Yeoman, **WO2 (YofS) Si Tyler**, somehow managed to orchestrate a 'swan' to the US to visit our sister Regiment in Washington. They were kept in line (or was that led astray?) by the COS from 2 (NC) Sig Bde **Maj Paul Kelly.** They all claim that it was a highly productive and informative trip, however rumour control has it that it was more holiday than business trip!

On a more business like note the Regiment has taken delivery of its new 'all singing all dancing' comms equipment - Project Lanward has finally turned into a reality! As with every new bit of kit, the procurement process never quite seems to run to schedule, Project Lanward was no different. Fortunately, seconds before the Foreman, **WO2 (FofS) Bob Wymer,** was going to pull out his last remaining strand of hair, the new equipment turned up. The TOT, **Capt Henry Taylor** and the Foreman gathered their small yet beautifully formed band of techs to get it all sorted out. With the Yeoman on side it is now full speed ahead to carry out all the conversion training that is required for the Regimental operators. The deadline is Annual Camp in July and thus far at least this project appears to be running to schedule!

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON – SOUTHFIELDS TAC

Sqn Comd	**Maj Julian Carmichael**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Chrissie Stanton**

HELLOS, GOODBYES AND CONGRATULATIONS

HQ Sqn has also got a number of new faces in its line up. Firstly welcome to **Maj Julian Carmichael** who has transferred across from the Royal Yeomanry as OC Sqn. Good luck to the ex-OC, **Maj Chris Mahony,** who after 31 years TA service (the last 10 years being commissioned service) will be retiring shortly and enjoying a well earned rest! Welcome also to **WO2 Chrissie Stanton,** a familiar face in the Regt, who returns as SSM HQ Sqn after a time out with the London District Specialist Training Team. Good luck in your new appointment. Farewell to **WO2 (SSM) Pete Lovett** who retires after 33 years TA service. HQ Sqn would like to extend a big thank you to the OC and SSM for all of their hard work over the years. Finally congratulations to newly promoted **Sgt Tanya Campbell**, a very well earned promotion and undoubtedly Delta Tp will continue to flourish under your guidance.

FLEET ARMY HALF MARATHON CHAMPIONSHIPS SUNDAY 21 MARCH 1999

What better activity could you be doing on a Sunday morning than running 13.1 miles! Somehow the Adjt, **Capt Mel Rayner**, managed to coerce a willing band of volunteers into joining her on the Fleet Half Marathon. It didn't seem such a bright idea as the heavens opened on the way down the M3 en route to Fleet - but in keeping with the old adage that the sun always shines on the righteous - conditions were clear as everyone lined up on the start line. Well done to **Capt Mel Rayner** (Adjt), **SSgt Craig Bruce BEM** (PSI HQ Sqn), **Sgt Matt Cahill, LCpl Mark Bell** and **LCpl Ian Byrne** (all 83 Sig Sqn) for completing the race in quite creditable times.



The Fleet Half Marathon Team
L to R standing: SSgt Craig Bruce, Capt Mel Rayner, Sgt Matt Cahill
L to R squatting: LCpl Ian Byrne and LCpl Mark Bell

EXERCISE COCKNEY CATERER – *Capt Fred Southey QM(V)*

The day was dawning when 31 Sig Regt (V) was committed to producing the three chef team, which would compete in Ex Cockney Caterer the London District TA Cookery Competition on Sat 20 Mar 99. After a lot of umm-ing and ahh-ing and debating the make-up of the team, it was decided we should go ahead and enter. However as with all TA activities, nothing is ever certain and the team selected began to waiver, with one unable to come, and then another, and then the whole team! However, in good TA tradition and with much resolve, Team Manager, **Capt Fred Southey**, having been warned that his reputation was on the line pulled a team together. So, with good luck, much co-operation, and a lot of support from NRPS, **SSgt John Mackins**, the team of **Sgt Nick Tuck,** 41 (PLK) Sig Sqn (but I'm a tech not a chef!)**, Cpl Lesley Wade,** 41 (PLK) Sig Sqn and **LCpl Barbara Cameron** (HQ Sqn) were on their way. Arriving at Chelsea Bks on a lovely, sunny morning, the team, full of apprehension, settled down to the initial briefing. The team had to prepare a menu from a given list of ingredients, including a starter, main course, and dessert. The judging was on! Now came the difficult part - erecting the 12 x 12 tent! Thanks to **Sgt Nick Tuck**, this went smoothly - sigh of relief! The tables were in position and the cookset switched on. The rations were then issued to the teams, with each team having a different menu and timings for starting and producing the main meal. Much scurrying was observed within the tents, as dishes were produced, sampled by **Cpl Lesley Wade** and immediately put in the bin. The pressure mounted as the food tasters, all in white coats, began their rounds - this was further intensified by the arrival of the CO and self appointed unofficial chief taster (!), **Lt Col Linda Harrison**. The tasters were busily tasting the dishes as presented and then withdrawing into a huddle to debate what they had sampled. Without a word they would then move on. This enabled us spectators to follow in the footsteps of the tasters and have a nibble ourselves. Being completely unbiased, I thought that the 31 Sig Regt (V) food was undoubtedly the best, but this was a personal opinion. One hour later, and the prize giving was about to take place. The judges were seen to be in deep conversation around a table. Speculation was rife that we had come last! The other teams were in much the same nervous state. Then, the results were given, in reverse order. To our amazement, we had achieved 2nd place, being beaten by only 4 points! The moral of the story is that more spices should have been added. The odds were stacked in our favour to some extent because both **Cpl Wade** and **LCpl Cameron** are mothers of young children who are probably far more critical of their Mum's culinary creations than any senior official taster!

To show off their achievements, their medals were re-presented to them in Southfields TAC by Col TA Independent Units, **Col Storie-Pugh** during his visit on Tuesday 23 March 1999. Very well done to all three chefs for an excellent performance.



L to R: The team driver, Sgt Nick Tuck, Cpl Lesley Wade, LCpl Barbara Cameron

REGIMENTAL CADRE COURSE 19-21 & 26-28 FEBRUARY 1999

The Regiment has recently ran the first Cadre Course of the year. The Squadrons nominated eleven students to attend, joining instructions were issued and the troops began to read up on all the various subjects that they would cover on the course. Most of the subjects would be very familiar, however the words 'Cadre Course' tend to panic most troops into some form of action! The course was run by **SSgt** 'I've now become a marathon runner' **Craig Bruce BEM** and **SSgt** 'Yim Yam Yom' **Des Eldridge.** They greatly appreciated assistance from **WO2 (SSM)** 'Silver Fox' **McMahon, Sgt** 'I don't want to be a marathon runner but my PSI has other plans' **Campbell, Sgt Sandra Burns, LCpls Si Roberts, John Ford, Laurel Allott** and **Mark Bell.** They all did a sterling job, well done.

The students turned up at Southfields TAC somewhat quiet and apprehensive, wondering what was going to be thrown their way. They were put through their paces on the initial fitness assessment by the HQ PTI's, **Sgt** 'Taz' **Campbell** and **LCpl 'Si' Roberts,** all students performed very well with special mentions to **LCpl** 'Mad Crazy Woman' **Reader** (56 Sig Sqn) and **Sigs Leyland** (83 Sig Sqn), **Sethna** (41 Sig Sqn) and **Hanlon** (HQ Sqn). The field phases on both weekends were excellently executed by the troops. They quickly dealt with any command task or job that was thrown their way with minimum of fuss. Morale was kept high as a kite by the likes of **Sigs** 'I should be on the stage' **Hornibrook** (41 Sig Sqn) and 'Clint' **Eastwood** (83 Sig Sqn). **Sig Eastwood** will smile and giggle in any situation and also told of a certain 'skinny dipping' story whilst working in the States a number of years ago much to the dismay of her fiancee who happened to be on the DS Staff, nice one **Clint**!!?

The course finale was the much loved 'Tab' on the Sunday morning. The event was obviously widely publicised due to the fact even the CO's driver, **LCpl Mick Taylor** turned out to voice words of encouragement to the students (or was it the PSI's ?). All course personnel gave the 'tab' their best shot. **Sig** 'My Dad used to be a Regular Officer in the Corps' **Cox** (HQ Sqn) deserves a special mention for his effort and was heard to have shouted 'Come on you lot, I'm a 'large, rounded type person' (or words to that effect) and I'm doing this so come on my friends! A good time was had by DS and students alike. A massive well done to all those who attended and an extra pat on the back to **Sig Chris Cox** (HQ Sqn) for being awarded Top Student. The course personnel were :

HQ Sqn	**41 (PLK) Sig Sqn**	**56 Sig Sqn**	**83 Sig Sqn**
Sig Cox	Sig O'Driscoll	LCpl Child	Sig Eastwood
Sig Hanlon	Sig Sethna	LCpl Reader	Sig Donor
		Sig Hornibrook	Sig Leyland
			Sig Snell

DINING OUT OF WO1 (RSM) D. HALL – SATURDAY 13 FEBRUARY 1999

It was with great regret that the WOs' and Sgts' Mess dined out the RSM, **WO1 (RSM) Duncan Hall** after 22 years colour service in our Corps. The venue for this prestigious event was the Victory Services Club situated at Marble Arch. **RSM Hall,** to this day, was the youngest Warrant Officer to become a 'Tara' and was the fount of all knowledge. He had and still has more contacts around the world than President Clinton and any scenario that came up the RSM had done it or knew someone who would either do it or could supply the kit. It was also felt by the PSI's that he may have spent some time in the AAC due to the amount of chopper flights he had at his disposal in and around the London area. The evening went very well and a big thank you goes to **WO2 (RQMS)** 'George' **Coffin** for all his hard work in organising the dinner. **RSM Hall** will be missed by all members of the Regiment, especially by the PSI's in whom he always took a special interest - thanks Sir for all your words of wisdom and guidance. All ranks would like to wish the RSM, his wonderful wife **Brigitte** and their daughter **Stacey** all the very best for the future and say 'Civvy street hold on to your hat the Tara is incoming'.

41 (PLK) SIGNAL SQUADRON – COULSDON

Sqn Comd — **Maj Steve Baker**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) Watson**

NEWS FROM THE SQUADRON

These past couple of months have been very busy for the Squadron. Training has been the order of the day, with soldiers attending trade training weekends, Courage Trophy training and of course on-going recruits training. Congratulations to **Sig** 'Soldier of the Year' **O'Driscoll, Sig** 'Karate Kid' **Sethna** and **Sig** 'New Boy' **Hornbrook** who have all successfully passed their Cadre Course, and to **SSgt** 'Cup o' tea cocker?' **Clarke**, who has been accepted on to the RQMS course.

TROOP COMMANDERS COURSE

Four members of the Regiment attended the first new look TA Troop Commanders Course at the Royal Schools of Signals, Blandford in February. The new version course was attended by 19 young officers from across the TA. The 31 Sig Regt (V) contingent included **Lt Beth Pollard** and **2Lt Debbie Speakman** from 41 (PLK) Sig Sqn, **2Lt Paul Ukpai** from HQ Sqn and **2Lt Keiron Francis** from 56 Sig Sqn. Under the guidance of **Lt Col Geoff Hornsby** and with the aid of **Maj Peter** (Mr Photocopier) **Bowles**, **Capt Barry Spiers** and **Capt Dave Worsted**, they undertook a very enjoyable but intense course. The course comprised six days of general officer training, including the role of the Corps and its various regiments and squadrons as well as the different equipment and kit that they use. Many aspects of military life and the responsibilities of a Troop Commander were covered, including Military Law, TA regulations and the role of the TA post SDR. The week ended with a TEWT on the Saturday and a visit by Brig TA, **Brig Verey**. The course ended on a high note with a particularly enjoyable dinner night. That, along with the course 'Toga' photograph taken in the Corps museum, were two of the most memorable aspects of the course. To ensure that we couldn't forget the point of the week we had a mountain of handouts to take home with us.

In March three more officers from the Regt embarked upon the trek to Blandford. **Lt Jill Montgomery,** who has just transferred in after two years away from the Corps in Kenya, **Lt Paul Owen,** a recent transfer from 5LI and **Lt Susie Sidwell,** currently serving in Bosnia, all successfully completed the course. As with the first course, it ended with a formal dinner night. Only this one appeared to be a little more eventful than the first. Well certainly for **Lt Paul Owen,** as he arrived home with a shiner of a black eye. He claims it was a result of a particularly vicious game of Mess Rugby - that's his story and he's sticking to it! The course itself has been well received by the Troop Commanders who all feel that they have gained a tremendous benefit from it.

TERRITORIAL ARMY NATIONAL OPEN DAY - 13 MARCH 1999

The Squadron enjoyed a very successful Open Day on Saturday 13 March 1999. All the hard work in preparing for it was worthwhile as we were visited by the Under Secretary of State for Defence, **John Spellar**. Accompanied by the Mayor of Croydon and the Deputy Lieutenant, he was introduced to many of the soldiers and inspected our new Lanward communications equipment. The visitors were also shown live comms links to the other Squadrons and met soldiers carrying out everyday det maintenance. A number of the local population came in to see what we were all about. Therefore, the aim of the day, which was to publicise the TA and the Squadron, was well and truly achieved.



SSgt (FofS) Byrne meets The Mayor of Croydon

VISIT OF COMMANDER 2 (NC) SIG BDE BRIG S. G. HUGHES CBE

The Tuesday immediately after the Open Day we were visited by **Brig Hughes**, the Commander of 2 (NC) Signal Brigade. The OC Sqn **Maj Steve Baker** gave the Brigadier a presentation on the Sqn and all its main issues. **2Lt Debbie Speakman** then delivered a very comprehensive recruiting brief before the Brigadier went on to meet soldiers who were engineering a comms link with Dundee and firing on the range. By all accounts he left very impressed by the 'smart, able and committed' soldiers of the Squadron. Well done to all at 41!

PLK AND AER ASSOCIATION DINNER - 26 FEBRUARY 1999

The Annual Princess Louise's Kensington Regiment (PLK) and Army Emergency Reserve (AER) Officers' Dinner was held at the Mercury House, the Duke of York's Headquarters on Fri 26 Feb 99. The dinner was extremely well supported by both serving and retired officers from both Regiments. The President of the PLK, **Col Keith Bruce-Smith** (an ex CO of 31 Sig Regt (V)), presided with the Honorary Colonel, **Maj Gen W J P Robins CB OBE** as the principal guest. The CO, **Lt Col Linda Harrison TD**, gave a 'State of the Regt' speech that was well received. The OC of the only remaining part of the PLK (namely 41 (PLK) Sig Sqn) **Maj Steve Baker** attended along with **2Lt Debbie Speakman.** The Adjt also came along to help carry the bags! It was a very well organised evening and thoroughly enjoyed by all. It was also very encouraging to see that the Associations are still flourishing and so well supported.



The Hon Col, Maj Gen W. J. P. Robins CB OBE (right), OC Sqn Maj Steve Baker (centre rear) and 2Lt Debbie Speakman with members of the PLK Association

OUT AND ABOUT

Hats off to **Sig** 'Pedal Power' **West,** who has just returned from a cycle ride in India in aid of Mencap.

HELLOS AND GOODBYE

The Squadron welcomes a new 2IC, **Capt Alan Pepper**, and his better half **Lt Jill Montgomery**, who have been in Kenya for the last two years. They were both previously serving with 32 Sig Regt (V) in Edinburgh prior to their sabbatical. We wish them well for their forthcoming marriage in May. Welcome also to **Lt Paul Owen** who has transferred from 5LI and is the new 2IC of J Tp. We have also said goodbye to **Lt Scott** 'Dancing Queen' **MacSween**, who due to the location of his new job, has transferred to 83 Sig Sqn. We hope he will remain a frequent visitor to the Squadron.

56 SIGNAL SQUADRON – EASTBOURNE

Sqn Comd — **Maj Brian Howe**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) Kevin Godden**

Down here on the South Coast, Spring has most definitely arrived with a hectic round of PR events and visits in addition to our normal training programme. It goes without saying that these have been tackled with customary enthusiasm and that unique Eastbourne sense of humour.

MRS ANNE HEMSLEY

Unfortunately, this buzz of activity has been tinged with sadness following the death of our Civilian Admin Officer, **Anne Hemsley**. **Anne** joined the Squadron in 1976 and gave 23 years of sterling service. She had not enjoyed the best of health for some time but did not allow this to prevent her continuing her work at Eastbourne TAC. Throughout, she remained a focal point in the TA career of many a Squadron member, a genuine fount of knowledge. If you wanted to know anything at all about which form, how to fill it in, who to contact about this or where to look for that particular bit of information, your first port of call was sure to be **Anne**. Her long and dedicated service to the TA and particularly 56 Sig Sqn (V) will always be tremendously appreciated. She will be sadly missed but fondly remembered.

POST-SDR PRESENTATION – 9 FEBRUARY 1999

The Squadron is one of those in the fortunate position of having survived SDR relatively unscathed and of being able to recruit from other local units that are, sadly, being closed. To this end, we took the opportunity of inviting members of units in Hastings and Brighton to an open evening in early February and were pleasantly surprised by the large

turnout. (Though, given the temptation of sun, sea and a super-sexy role - or so they keep telling us! - it's not difficult to see why we're quickly filling up the books!) A presentation was given by 2IC, **Capt Jackie** 'I forgot to save the changes' **Blake**, and post-SDR liaison officer, **Capt Tony** 'I can't believe she did that' **Potter**, now surely world experts in the use of the dreaded Powerpoint, having tested the system to its limits with every error message imaginable! (Rumour has it that **Capt Blake** managed to lose three hours of hard slog at the click of a mouse button, prompting **Capt Potter** to retire outside to preserve his sanity by taking up smoking again- oops!). The talk was followed by a tour round the TAC, and a warming curry supper, served up with his usual panache by chef, **Cpl Steve Howell**.

VISIT OF MP FOR EASTBOURNE

We were very pleased to welcome the MP for Eastbourne, **Nigel Waterson,** on his first official visit to the TAC on Saturday 27 February 1999 during a Regimental training weekend. Though a guest at several Squadron social events in the past, **Mr Waterson** had not previously had the chance to view us in action and seemed suitably impressed by what he saw. A briefing by Sqn OC, **Maj Brian Howe**, was followed by a tour of the centre, including a visit to the Basic Signalling Skills course. **Mr Waterson** rounded off a very successful visit by chatting informally with course members in the Squadron club where he seemed particularly interested to hear **LCpl Mark Grieve**'s tales of Bosnia.



MP for Eastbourne Mr Nigel Waterson with members of 56 Sig Sqn

NATIONAL TERRITORIAL ARMY OPEN DAY

The Squadron threw itself whole-heartedly into the task of organising an open day on Saturday 13 March 1999, as part of the national awareness campaign of the role and presence of the TA. Thanks to hours of hard work, the Drill Hall was well and truly transformed with displays of radio equipment in its dismounted role, kit issue, and sports activities. The Indoor Range became a First Aid, NBC & Map Reading stand for the day. Outside, **Sgt Bob Shevels** manned the field kitchen, doing a roaring trade in hamburgers and hotdogs. The day was a huge success with over 300 people venturing through the gates. Just as successful was our evening event. Our CO, **Lt Col Linda Harrison**, and the RSM, **WO1 (RSM) Gibson**, joined us as we entertained local dignitaries, councillors and line managers at a private presentation. This was followed by a tour of the stands and a sit-down dinner, courtesy of Master Chef, **WO2 Fred Bramble**, and his team. Among the guests were Chief Executive of Eastbourne Council, **Mrs Sari Conway**, and long time friend of the Squadron, former Mayor, **Cllr Maurice Skilton.** All seemed extremely impressed and enthusiastic about what they saw and, most importantly, voiced strong support for the TA and what we do.

AND FINALLY…

No *Wire* Notes would be complete without a few pats on the back, so here are ours. Congratulations to **LCpl Jason Light** on his recent promotion, and to **WO2 Jim Paine** who put his leave from Bosnia to good use by marrying **Viv**. Best wishes to you both for a long and happy life together.

OFFICERS' DINING CLUB INAUGURAL DINNER 12 MARCH 1999

Evening wear was shaken out of moth balls, pressed and aired, and tried on for fit, in time for the first Annual Dinner of the newly founded 'Officers Dining Club'. Many old acquaintances were re-newed as both past and present members of the Regiment ate, drank and made merry. The primary guest of the evening was **Mr A. Lorkin,** Master of the Worshipful Company of Innholders, who kindly permitted the use of Innholders Hall, an absolutely magnificent building, for this prestigious occasion. Our Hon Col, **Maj Gen W. J. P. Robins CB OBE**, rounded off the evening with a few choice words and a rather red nose! (Not so much to do with the wine, but a little more with Red Nose Day - so I'm told!). The evening was a great success and everyone is greatly looking forward to the Club's second meeting.

COURAGE TROPHY SHIELD COMPETITION – LONGMOOR 28-29 MARCH 1999

The Courage Trophy and Shield Competitions are London District Military Skills Competitions run over 2 days at Longmoor. 83 Sig Sqn entered a mixed team into this years Courage Shield Competition. The Team was ably led by **Lt Linda Davis**, who is on attachment from the Royal Australian Signals.

The Team got off to a strong start, earning high marks in the First Aid, NBC and on the Assault Course. Some of the highlights of the competition were **Sig Dave McKenzie**'s ongoing battle to subdue his shock victim during the First Aid Stand, although he did redeem himself with an excellent drive over a very challenging Cross Country Course. **LCpl Laurel Allott** and **Sig Tia Snell** put in very strong performances on the March and Shoot and Assault Course, where they seemed to cope with the tunnels and mousholes a lot better than the rest of the team - could it be due to their slightly more portable size! **Sig Tia Snell** also had a good run on the Night Navigation along with Team 2IC, **Sgt Dave Alleyne. Sig Brian Jardine** helped the team to a very slick time on the Comms Stand. **Sigs Richard Leyland** and **Farquharson-Roberts** produced some consistently high standards of Shooting throughout the competition. Another strong performance in the final event, the Falling Plate Shooting Competition, despite being a man short, the Team narrowly missed going through to the third round of the competition. The Team were visited on Sunday by the CO, **Lt Col Linda Harrison** and the Adjt, **Capt Mel Rayner** who were accompanied by the Mayor of Kensington and Chelsea, **Cllr Dr Jonathan Mundy**. Although they didn't win, the team should be proud of their efforts as everyone acquitted themselves extremely well. Many congratulations to all who took part.

32 (SCOTTISH) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO — **Lt Col A. C. C. Lapsley**
RSM — **WO1 (RSM) A. B. Hilborn**

TRADE TRAINING CAMP

The Regiment held its annual Trade Training Camp at Edinburgh Training Centre (ETC) in March which heralded a great success. A total of 92 students took part, many of which achieved their next level in trade qualifications. The numbers were swelled this year by 21 members from the Scottish Yeomanry, 1 Highlander, 1 Lowlander and 1 RE who are transferring to the Regiment post SDR. Other units from within 2 (NC) Sig Bde also provided 22 students and two instructors which helped to make this the most attended camp to date. The Tele Op (Data) Class 3 course attracted the most students giving **SSgt Tim Abbott,** the course co-ordinator, the headache of how to fit 41 students into a lecture room equipped with only 30 desks! Splitting the Course into two groups was the solution. However, this meant each lesson had to be taught twice giving the instructors **Sgt Sean Betteridge, Cpl Alison Mckay** and **Cpl Clare Smith** the worst case of 'Deja vue' we have seen in a long time.

The camp this year marked the end of an era for the SSM **WO2 Donald Webster.** This was his last ever TA Camp as he is retiring from the TA after 37 years service, Good Luck **Donald.** On the final Saturday we were visited by the GOC Scotland, **Maj Gen M. J. Strudwick CBE** and the SOinC, **Brig J. H. Griffin**. Both had the opportunity to walk around the training facilities and meet and chat to students and instructors alike.



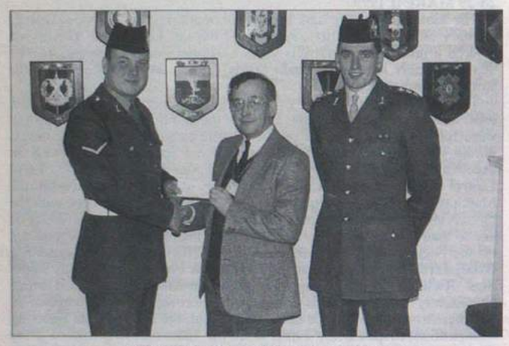
(L-R): WO2 (SSM) Garland, Sig Quail, WO1 (RSM) A. Hilborn, Lt Col A. C. C. Lapsley TD, Cpl Briggs, SOinC, Cpl Davidson



The GOC meets a group of Trainees

PRESENTATION OF CHEQUE TO ERSKINE HOSPICE

Two regular soldiers from 32 Sig Regt (V) recently completed long distance runs to raise money for the 'Erskine 2000' appeal. **Capt M. J. Chambers** travelled to New York to complete the New York City marathon and **LCpl Johnson** completed the Glasgow City half marathon. Their combined effort raised just over £1012 for this worthy cause. Well done to both and perhaps now the Adjt will settle down in his office, if he can remember what it looks like!



LCpl Johnson and Capt Chambers
hand over the cheque to Col R. L. Steele TD (Centre)

HEADQUARTER SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj C. Payn**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) K. Anderson**

EXERCISE SNOW LION 1999

Army Winter Ski Association Scottish Ski Meeting

The AWSA Scottish Ski meeting is held annually at Aviemore Ski Centre in the Cairngorms. The Regiment has been entering teams in this competition for the past 11 years and has over that time had its fair share of success. This year was no exception and we entered a team consisting of the following personnel:

Maj 'Cammy' Payn
WO2 (AQMS) Tom Davidson
Sgt Ray Macmillan
LCpl Suzanne Robertson.

Lt Dave McBride, OC LAD was also entered as an individual and performed well. The snow coverage was excellent and championships were completed without missing a day's racing, surprising in this area. The meeting culminates on the Saturday with the Territorial Army Giant Slalom and our successes of previous years continued. After some close racing **Maj Payn** emerged as the Royal Signals Individual Champion and the team became the Royal Signals Inter Unit Champions. In addition **WO2 Davidson** won the REME Individual Champions Trophy. A great team effort and we look forward to continued success in years to come.

51 HIGHLAND SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj M Strachan**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) D. Webster**

Training goes on apace here in the far North - after the worst snow in the Squadrons memory - **Sig Bogart** and **Sig Henderson** had to go on Ex Snow Lion in Austria to find even more snow! - coals to Newcastle I think.

CONGRATULATIONS

There are a lot of well dones here at 51 Sqn. Firstly to **Sgt (Tech PSI) John Gorman** on successfully coming off his promotion board - he takes up his new posing - sorry posting in late April. Next in line is **Sgt Nige** 'Scouse' **Allen** on his passing his colloquial Doric - sorry SerboCroat course - as this is being written the ordure has hit the air conditioning out there. Also many congratulations go to **LCpl Jackie Brook** on passing her police training course and being awarded 'best endeavour' cadet. Also at this time we are delighted to congratulate **Capt Linda Duncan** and her team of **Sig Scott** 'Son of SSM' **Webster** and **Sig** 'Cabbie' **Henderson** on their superb showing at the TA Cross Country Championship at Fleet recently – well done to all. **Capt Duncan** has led from the front by winning the trophy for fastest TA female - something we have suspected for a while now!

ARRIVALS

Welcome back to our two freeze dried **LCpls Ali Jamieson** and **Rorie Milne** - recently returned from the Falkland Islands - when asked how it was, they described it like a wet Sunday on Mull - except not quite as stimulating. We are in the process of gaining a number of transferees to our ranks from the Highlanders and RE's as a result of SDR - Welcome to 51 Sqn.

52 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj R. Sutherland**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) K. Swan**

Ex Lapsleys Leap 5-7 March 1999, the Squadron deployed to Barrybuddon. **Sgt** 'Dougie' **McDonald** was Det Comd, the weather was cold, wet and windy, so he sent **LCpl** 'Boab' **Nursimiloo** in the search for anything thermal!! She returned with three thermal gloves (all different sizes) and one pair of thermal knickers. (Boys kept the gloves for the necessary parts, and her the knickers). Welcome the Scottish Yeomanry to the March Trade Training Week at Edinburgh ETC. 52 Sqn had a excellent parade with a turnout of 75 persons every morning. SSM was delighted with the turnout. (Keep it up). The Sqn Adventure Training took place on the weekend of 19-21 March 1999 at Lochgilphead Cadet Camp. A group went cycling in the rain, whilst another group went walking in the scorching sun, and the remaining group went canoeing in the local swimming pool, (drills were different from the usual drills with **Sig McKay, Pte Mundie** and **Rec Tochel** trying their best at balancing, but failed miserably, but succeeded in capsizing drills better). The nightlife at Lochgilphead was a much better success where **SSgt** 'Rab 5ft 0ins' **Nimmo** met his match, a 6ft 6ins dolly bird at the disco. She insisted on getting him a pint and with **Cpl (Davie) Dougans** and **Sig Robbie Lawson** watching over he could not refuse. (Boy, were they jealous!)

61 (CITY OF EDINBURGH) SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj B. Shankland**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) G. Garland**

DEPARTURES

Just in time for Spring season in the Balkans, **YofS Jeff Jephcote** booked a six month tour with HM Travel and had in mind a spot of sun bathing by the Adriatic, leaving his dear wife far behind in sunny Fife. Unfortunately **Jeff** did not reckon on things hotting up quite as much as they subsequently did and has now asked the SQMS if he can forward his Kevlar helmet, webbing and a copy of 'Basic Battle Skills'. The Squadron has also said farewell to **LCpl** 'Mastermind' **Drugans** who has gone on an FTRS posting. Given the pick of all the exotic locations the British Army has to offer in the nineties, **LCpl Drugans** picked....Edinburgh - travel broadens the mind!

TRAINING

The annual trade training jaboree took place once again, being held this year in Edinburgh Training Centre and there was.... lots of Trade Training. Students from throughout 2 (NC) Sig Bde took part with 160 students attending in all. The only Sqn Trg of note was another ambitious military training weekend from resident training whizz kids, **Sgt Ian Stallard** and **Capt** 'Mad Dog' **Middleton**. Some Squadron members had not quite grasped the concept of a weekend in the field and set off with bergen's busting with everything but the kitchen sink! Later **Cpl Lynn Drummond**'s. teddy bear was found bayoneted in the corner of her Bivvie. **Cpl Drummond**'s other half (some might say better half?) let slip that it was his 30th birthday and was presented with a large teletubbies cake by our resident teletubby, **Cpl** 'La La' **Chisolm.**

QUALIFICATIONS

Congratulations to our intellectuals, **Cpl Lynn Drummond** and **Pte Sharon Woods** who passed their Military Clerk class 3 courses. **Pte Woods** pushed **Cpl Drummond** into place getting five A's as opposed to **Cpl Drummond**'s mere four A's and a B. The course was so bad for the nerves both ladies have given up smoking. Congratulations are also due to **Sigs Carol Clarke** and **Maz Anderson** on passing their driving tests. **Sig Anderson** who lists 'fighting' as a hobby will give an entirely new dimension to road rage on Edinburgh's streets.

SPORTING SUCCESS

Yes you did read that correctly. For the first time this century the Squadron was represented in a sporting triumph when Tech PSI **Sgt Ian Stallard** was selected to play for the Army Scotland Rugby Team (and he's such a devoted Scotland Rugby fan!). The Army romped home 23-0 against the RAF and 35-0 against the Navy. They now go on to play the Women's Royal Auxiliary Balloon Corps in the Final. **Cpl Betty Robertson** also took part in Ex Snow Lion at Cairngorm as a member of the Regimental Team which won the team prize for Royal Signals teams. Meanwhile far below on the nursery slopes **Capt Lockhart** was

struggling to introduce the 2IC to the delights of skiing. The best part appears to be that after every bout of excruciating pain the 2IC is allowed back to the cafe for more gluhwein. **Pte Sharon Woods** has also caught the skiing bug, after two weeks in Austria she got her Bronze award for Skiing (and gold for drinking).

RECRUITING

Two more new recruits have completed recruits course at Blandford congratulations to **Sigs Davanna** and **Moss**. After a shaky start our efforts to coax the local Eng Sqn to re-join God's Corps appear to be bearing fruit as their final parade looms nearer. Perhaps the tactic of parking an NCRS trailer across their gate covered in Signals posters was a bit extreme but it seems to have worked and a steady flow of engineers have been making their way to the OC's office to discuss transfer paperwork.

SOCIAL

Finally thanks once again to **Maj Brian Mayhem Murray** for organising another very successful Champagne Supper. For those not familiar with the occasion the purpose is to allow former Sqn officers to have an annual reunion sip champagne cocktails and talk about old times. In practice of course the evening invariably degenerates into a really good party with ex-members serving officers both TA and Regular and their civilian guests all having a cracking night. Well done **Maj Murray**, we look forward to your last party before retirement in 2000.

33 SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS

At the end of February, the Regiment said farewell to **Brig Ian Shapter DL** as Honorary Colonel, and welcomed the new incumbent, at a Regimental Dinner Night. The 'new blood' is **Professor Peter Toyne DL** Vice Chancellor of Sir John Moore's University. A warm welcome from the Regiment to you. Another goodbye to the Regiment was given by General Officer Commanding 5th Division, **Maj Gen Searby**, who visited RHQ at Huyton in mid-March. From 1 April 1999, the Regiment will be under command of HQ Scotland. Amongst the social occasions is the Regiment's fierce preparation for participation on Ex Lion Sword, DCinC's Exercise to develop the operational effectiveness of HQ 3 (UK) Division, occuring during April. It should be a learning experience for all!

42nd (CITY OF MANCHESTER) SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

Sqn Comd **Maj Ian Kelly TD** KINGS
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Graham Ward**

For the first time under our new historical title of 42nd (City of Manchester) Signal Squadron we go to print with the latest batch of *Wire* notes from the Manchester outpost of 33 Signal Regiment (V). Formerly the Squadron was known as 42 Signal Squadron (V), a rather conventional title which many people felt was a step down from the original 42 (East Lancashire) Signal Squadron. Despite the best efforts of the Squadron Commander to reinstate the original title, the Corps has now given permission for the City of Manchester title to be used in its place. This is a popular and sensible decision as the Squadron is in fact located in the City of Manchester and the new title can only help to foster relations with the local community as well as putting the Squadron firmly on the map.

COMMANDING OFFICER'S INSPECTION

February kicked-off with the inaugural Commanding Officer's Inspection when almost every member of our Liverpool based RHQ descended on Rusholme TA Centre to put the Squadron through a complete check of all its administrative, operational and training procedures while the accommodation and equipment was inspected by the CO, **Lt Col R. J. Steed MBE**. To say the Colonel is thorough, is to understate the case considerably. The day commenced at 1000hrs with almost a bang, due to the bomb alert called by our intrepid Adjt, **Capt John Harrington**, and finished at 2300hrs when the Squadron Commander was briefed on the outcome of the day by the Commanding Officer. In between every nook and cranny in each department was systematically examined by the RHQ teams and all paperwork scrutinised. Happily the Squadron provided most of the right answers and at the end of this ordeal emerged with considerable credit much to the relief of the Squadron Commander.

BELLE VUE

It had to happen sooner or later with an Infanteer in charge, and it is true to say that 42 Sqn has finally gone to the dogs! To be precise it happened on 11 February. This was the day when **Sgt Tim Mounfield** took 25 members of the Squadron to view the greyhound racing at the Manchester dog track in Belle Vue. Expecting the 'flat caps and cinders' scenario all and sundry were pleasantly surprised to find a very up-market and modern stadium where you sat in an enclosed gallery protected from the elements enjoying a meal and a beer while the waiters placed your bets. Being a member of the Manchester City Police Force, **Sgt Tim Mounfield** had negotiated a special price of £10 a head which included entrance fee, two beers, a meal in a basket and a free bet. Needless to say the evening proved a great success and it was agreed to repeat the visit in the future so that the OC Squadron and PSAO could perfect their sophisticated betting system of backing dog six in each race.



WO2 (SSM) Graham Ward looks on as the female syndicate celebrate a winning bet at Belle Vue
(L-R): Sig Michelle Holbrook, Sgt Lesley Deakin, LCpl Helen Carden, Sig Elenor Chapman and kneeling, LCpl Sam Hickson.

EXERCISE MANCUNIAN DRAGON 1999

Thirty members of the Squadron travelled to Scotland on Ex Mancunian Dragon 99 to take part in Winter Adventurous Training in the Cairngorms during the period 18 - 21 February. The party was based at Rothiemurchus Lodge just outside Aviemore. This magnificent centre is set in a remote part of the Rothiemurchus Estate in the heart of the Cairngorms. It provides accommodation for Regular and Reserve soldiers as well as cadets from all three services and their families. Fortunately there was plenty of snow and good skiing was available for experts and novice alike. The Squadron was pleased to include the Commanding Officer and the Training Major, **Maj Carl Storey**, in the activities but unfortunately due to a lack of space at the ski lodge they were forced to rough it by staying in a four star hotel in Aviemore.



Members of the Squadron skiing party
outside the Rothiemurchus Lodge at Aviemore

NATIONAL TERRITORIAL ARMY OPEN DAY

As part of the nation-wide, post Strategic Defence Review (SDR) TA relaunch, 42 Sig Sqn opened its gates to members of the public and local community groups on Saturday 13 March 1999. Media advertising had been arranged prior to the event with press releases being sent to all local newspapers, broadcasts over local radio and transmissions of Squadron personnel being interviewed by Man Live going out over cable TV. This publicity campaign paid off on the day with almost two hundred members of the public turning up. As well as the usual communications stands, assault course and miniature range, local community groups were invited to participate by providing their own stands to create more diversity and interest. Among those represented were the Red Cross, St John Ambulance, the Manchester Special Constabulary, 174 Air Training Corps, the Rusholme ACF, the Manchester Branch of the Royal Signals Association, the Manchester Amateur Photographic Society, the Manchester Fire Service and Local Scout and Guide Groups. Also, a number of dignitaries and businessmen were invited to lunch. Most notable amongst them were the Lord Mayor of Manchester, **Cllr Gordon Conquest**, the **Rt Hon Gerald Kaufman MP** (MP for Rusholme), the representative of the Lord Lieutenant, **Maj John Abbot** and the Lord Mayor designate, **Cllr John Burns**. An added pleasure was to welcome for the first time our new Colonel in Chief, **Professor Peter Toyne**, the Vice Chancellor of Liverpool John Moore's University, who was accompanied by the Commanding Officer and Regimental Sergeant Major, **WO1 K. C. Hallett**, and who arrived in time to sit down to lunch in the Officers' Mess with the rest of the VIPs.



TA National Open Day - 13 March 1999
The Honourable Gerald Kaufman MP
flanked by the CO and the PSAO

ROYAL SIGNALS CRICKET TOUR OF BARBADOS

Our resident gladiator, **PSI Chris Glover**, who is an Army volleyball player and represents the Corps at cricket has recently returned from a tour of Barbados with the Royal Signals Cricket Club. Asked to provide notes for publication in *The Wire*, he handed in several sickly descriptive foolscap sheets of the good times had sunning himself and plunging into a crystal clear sea, illustrated with pictures of sweeping white sandy beaches. Needless to say, the Squadron Editor, typing these notes in a rainy windswept Manchester, threw most of them in the bin in disgust. Seriously though, **Sgt Glover** is a very popular member of the Squadron and we are all delighted at his sporting success and pleased to see that if you are good enough you can still be rewarded, even in this hectic post-SDR era, by trips to foreign parts.

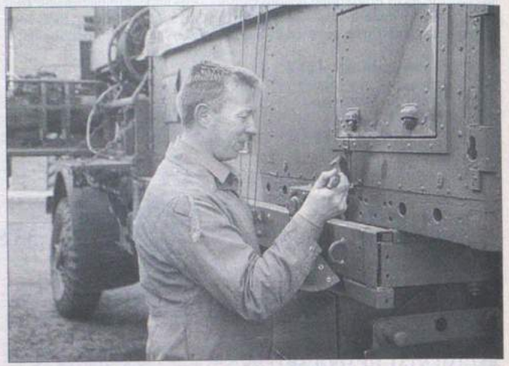


Sgt Chris Glover
with the legendary West Indian fast bowler Wes Hall

59 SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

Sqn Comd **Maj Chris Heaton**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Bob Paterson**

The Squadron have just come through a particularly busy time culminating in a weekend of inspection by RSIT combined with the national TA Open Day. Over the weekend 13/14 March the annual RSIT inspection took place. The TA soldiers put in a tremendous amount of work under the guidance of the Permanent Staff resulting in a very high percentage of battle-worthy installations.



SSgt George Sheppard heard saying quote, 'Too much grease here, not enough chalk here, paint all over etc, etc.'

SDR

The demise of 55 Sig Sqn (V) Aintree resulted in many of the TA soldiers transferring into the Squadron. Many will continue in the existing trades but some will have to retrain. All will remain in the Corps and hopefully enjoy the continuance of their TA career with 33 Sig Regt. The loss of Regular soldier posts prompted **SSgt Jim Eddowes** to comment, 'What's the problem, I do all the work anyway.'

80 (CHESHIRE YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)
POST-SDR

80 (Cheshire Yeomanry) Sig Sqn (V) have welcomed members of the disbanded 55 Sig Sqn (V) to their ranks. Amongst the new imports are the brothers **Hogan**. Six foot fourteen **SSgt Hogan** has already made an impression on the old hands with his imposing presence. We welcome all of the new members to the fold and wish them success with the Squadron.

PROMOTION

Cpl Brian 'Tank' **Sherman** is to be congratulated on his promotion to Sergeant.



LCpl Mick Thompson good humouredly 'pulling his finger out'!!

34 (NORTHERN) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO **Lt Col D. A. Hargreaves**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) N. C.Yarwood**

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS

A very quiet time in RHQ! What with equipment and manning trawls at the rate of about 3-4 a day, deadlines of yesterday, new establishments and the YofS, **WO2 Jim Thompson**, joining Cable and Wireless, life has been fairly relaxed! The major event was definitely the departure of the Yeoman. **Jim Thompson** will be greatly missed by one and all. A big heart felt thanks for his efforts over the years and good luck for the future. Rumour has it that Cable and Wireless has an abundance of Technicians.

49(WR) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)

Sqn Comd **Maj D. E. Sixsmith**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) A James**

NATIONAL TERRITORIAL ARMY OPEN DOOR DAY

This event, as the name suggests, was a nation-wide attempt to inform, interest and recruit the general populace into the TA. The event was successfully carried out at Leeds with 113 people coming through the front gate. A special report, produced by a 1st year Public Relations Student, **Miss Kelly Thornton**, can be seen at the end of this article.

LETS ALL GO TO CORSHAM

It seems that all roads lead to Corsham for our regular staff. **Cpl Al Henderson** and **Cpl Kev Ward** have already completed their stints and **Sgt Barney Phillips** has just begun his secondment. After much gnashing of teeth upon hearing the news, none of the above have been all that keen to come back early. Is this because they are having a cushy time down at the hub?

SIX EXCEL AT MEANWOOD

The Squadron has for the past couple of years taken part in the Six-a-side Corporate Astro Turf Football League. After a somewhat shaky start this season the Team has begun to gel and are mid table at present. The League Cup seems to be the best opportunity for a medal with the Carlton Gate Tigers currently heading their group. The team consists of:

2Lt Keith 'Work 'em' **Williams**
WO2 (FofS) Kev 'Hotshot' **Sturman**
SSgt (FofS) Steve 'It's my ball' **Moore**
Sgt 'Nobby 'Where's the goal?' **Clark**
Sgt Rob 'I haven't got any kit' **Godfrey**
Sgt Barney 'It's just like watching Brazil' **Phillips**
Cpl Al 'I'm just finishing my tab' **Henderson**
Cpl 'Olly 'You must be .... blind ref' **Oliver**
Sig Ben 'What's ball control' **Martindale.**

PROMOTIONS

Congratulations go to the following on their well earned promotion to LCpl:
LCpl Wreathall - from Access Troop at Hull
LCpl Booth - who is on his way to Corsham on FTRS

Congratulations to **Lt Ruth Middleton-Powell** and **Lt Jo Howard** for passing their JOTES Examinations.

NATIONAL TERITORIAL ARMY OPEN DOOR DAY
49 (WR) SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

The future of the Territorial Army could have been described as 'hazy' until someone, somewhere suggested a National Open Door Day. Let the public in and show them that the SDR (Strategic Defence Review) has not deterred the soldiers of the TA, but has made them more adaptable, more efficient and better trained than ever! Having spent Friday night dressed in 70's gear - covered in glitter and wearing a pink wig (don't ask - Comic Relief!), you can imagine my surprise when my alarm clock went off at 8am on Saturday. Feeling dazed and confused I proceeded to get myself together for what hoped to be a turning point in the future of the TA. (I have been on placement at 49 Sig Sqn, Carlton Barracks, Leeds since February, helping with PR and anything else **Capt Dave Hallas** throws my way. After what felt like hours of scrubbing the glitter from my face, I was on my way. I reached the barracks a little later than I had hoped, but luckily everything was under control? (Phew!!). The displays looked great, and thanks to the glorious sunshine, everyone was in good spirits. Even **Capt Hallas** who had been running the barracks practically single handed, as his colleagues had conveniently disappeared on a Regimental Recruit Weekend - RMC, oh and something called APWT for their bounty. (I'm still confused - where are your friends when you need them?) Despite the lack of manpower, everything was ready on time (ever heard of organised chaos!).

Final touches were made and at 10am the gates were opened as planned, the queues weren't exactly like those outside Harrods on the first day of the sales, and for reasons beyond me, people actually started to come in. Admittedly, as with most military exercises it was women and children first! Most popular by far was the climbing wall. Thanks must go to **CSgt Crossley** at Leeds University Officer Training Corps, for his time and patience. The NBC Suit, referred to as a 'Noddy Suit' came a close second. **SSgt Holdstock** set up his own ACIO (Army Careers Information Office) in the drill hall and proved that it isn't the Queens Shilling that is needed, but good old fashioned 'Gift of the Gab'. Throughout the day **SSgt (FofS) Steve Moore** could be spotted with a clip board looking official? (or just doing the Sun crossword!!) Not only did we have to deal with the hoards of people streaming through the gates! The soldiers were having a '2nd Line Inspection' too, which I must add didn't look too thrilling, job well done guys!!! (There are some things in life I don't need to understand.) By 1pm tummies were rumbling and people headed for the kitchen to sample the delights of **SSgt Gordon** 'Master Chef' **Hardaker**'s culinary skills, pie and beans for the main course and for afters - apple pie (I must admit I didn't know apple pie could taste so nice from a tin). As the day drew to a close, security were having to turn people away, (word must have got around about the rations, no genetically modified food here!)

Overall the day was a great success, I suppose it's safe to say that it went better than we expected, we saw a total of 113 visitors through the gates, of which eight signed to join. WELL DONE EVERYONE! For some the day didn't end there (yes, you know who you are!) inspecting the quality of the beer in Leeds !!! (Hic).

50 (N) SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

Sqn Comd **Major John Lambton**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Steve Tinkler**

ARRIVALS/DEPARTURES

Since the last submission we have bade a fond farewell to **Sgt Bob Lawson** who has decided to hang up his boots after a long distinguished career with the Squadron - our loss is Sunderland FC's gain. A number of our Regular members of the Squadron have been commuting between Darlington and Corsham for their sins. **Sgt Scott Margison** won the Squadron Xmas Draw and was detached to the Balkans for six months. Our Squadron Commander not too far behind him.

PROMOTIONS

Our congratulations go out to the following people who made the step up to the next grade. **SSgt Martin Clark** from Debdon Gardens and **Capt Steve Wayman** from Trunk Node Tp. The Squadron waits with bated breath for the next round of promotions that are due to be announced in April!

SPORT AND SOCIAL

On the social side, the Squadron has been involved in a number of functions. The Joint Messes (Officers/Sergeants) held a mess night in March, **WO2 (SSM) Steve Tinkler** again the main man in charge. On a sporting front a number of members of the Squadron are deep into training for The Lanyard Trophy/Nijmegen marches. The selection weekend at RAF Benson in April the first major hurdle to cross. **2Lt Jez Bailey** has been blazing the trail in the forests again, a second place in the M21 class at the recent 15 (NE) Bde Orienteering Championships and a good showing in the ongoing 2 Div Orienteering league, proof that you don't need a Degree to be a good Orienteer!

REGIMENTAL XMAS WEEKEND

1998s Xmas Weekend was held at Deverill Barracks, Ripon at the beginning of December. **Sig Emma Higgins** reports, 'A weekend to end all weekends, full of fun and activities. If we were not involved with Welly Wanging or the Crystal Maze, we were fishing for points with the REME Lads. **Cpl Sean** 'The Stunt Man' **Sweeney** decided to try his hand at being a stunt man during the weekend. A trolley on a piece of string bashing into a wall does not warrant the title 'Stunt Man' though! **Cpl John** 'Man with the golden gun' **Whiteman** proved the James Bond stand was too easy for the eagle eyed 50 Sqn. As with the rest of the stands they were all brilliant. Apparently there was a party on the night, just ask **Capt Steve Wayman** how he got the lipstick on his toga!!

As you can see another memorable Xmas weekend. Many thanks to **Capt** 'Taff' **Watts** and **Capt Graham Jennings** for all their hard work, especially **Capt Graham Jennings** who managed to attend the whole weekend although he was thousands of miles away in Australia with the Barmy Army, courtesy of the Squadron cardboard cut out! The weekend was rounded off with an Orienteering event on the Sunday, the only stipulation from the CO was that the Regiment got wet! This the organisers **2Lt Jez Bailey** and **Capt Steve Wayman** duly obliged. The weekend was rounded off with a Regimental parade, with a number of promotions and medal presentations and a drill display by a certain member of the Debdon Gardens Troop, who shall remain nameless, but we all know who you are. The RSM was heard to mutter, 'If only they spent more time on the square and not so much time in the garages, my job would be a lot easier'.

RECRUIT COURSE No 107

The Squadron had a number of members take part in the Regimental Recruit Training during January and February. **2Lt Jez Bailey** was detached to take on the responsibilities of OC Recruit Training for this period, along with **Sgt Al Gregory** who continues to do an excellent job in his recruiting responsibilities within the Squadron. A report on the above course is due to be submitted in the next offering of notes from Darlington - courtesy of **Sig's Alan Rayner** and **Mathew Graham**, who are, as we speak drafting this literary masterpiece!

HALTON TRAINING WEEKEND

After the usual slow start to the new year, the Squadron embarked on a training weekend to Halton, Lancaster at the end of February. An excellent timetable of events was devised by the Sqn 2IC for the troops. Saturday entailed, a round up of the usual First Aid, NBC, BFTs etc, followed by a night out in Lancaster. The Senior Corporals and Sergeants were involved in a Planning Exercise over the weekend which was deemed a great success. The weekend was completed with a Junior Ranks Squadron Orienteering competition at Beacon Fell, between Preston and Lancaster, which was notable for the initiative displayed by the assembled masses. The enthusiasm for the Sunday morning can be seen by the enclosed photograph, taken after the competitors completed the course.



TERRITORIAL ARMY NATIONAL OPEN DAY

To coincide with the National TA Open Day in March, the Squadron decided to put on a Cadet Competition to boost the attendees through the gates. Three local teams, from Darlington and Appleby, ACF and ATCs took part and the event was deemed a great success by all Cadets and members of the TA who helped. A number of potential Recruits were signed up on the day and we also entertained several senior members of TAVRA. The enclosed photograph sees **Cpl Ross Blair** and **Sig Emma Higgins**, explaining to potential recruits 'On Tuesday nights we practice folding our arms like this, it's great fun!'





35 (SOUTH MIDLANDS) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

XXXV

SUNDOME'S CLIVE ON THE MOVE

After 18 years with Shrewsbury Territorial Army unit 95 Signal Squadron, the Squadron Sergeant Major, **Clive Winstanley**, has been given a new job which means a transfer to Canley, Coventry. He is to join the headquarters of 35 Signal Regiment (V) as the Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant in the Spring, travelling from his Meole Brace, Shrewsbury home. The distance will not be a problem for **Clive** who is, in civilian life, a staff car driver with the Army in Shrewsbury. To mark his departure from 95 Signal Squadron's Sundome base, **Maj Joanne Fathers** presented **Clive** with a picture of the 200th year of the Yeomanry, watched by his son **LCpl Martin Winstanley**, also a member of the Squadron.



REGIMENTAL SPORTS PART DEUX

In the last edition of *The Wire* an update on Regimental sports activities was provided. Happily (for some at least) most of the competitions have now been concluded and final positions determined. In a highly competitive and often emotional but spirited Regimental Competition, 89 Sqn pipped an extremely disappointed and frustrated HQ Sqn at the post and secured the Regimental Sports Trophy following a Basketball competition that can only be described as electrifying.

The competition, which was held at Bramcote on Tuesday 26 March, was always going to be a two horse race between the two Squadron's and, after eliminating the opposition, the final glory hung on the last game. Both teams I am convinced sweated buckets of blood but a killer basket, thanks to a cool and deliberate performance by **Sgt Steve Crooks**, in the final minutes of this exhausting, tough and very physical game secured a win for 89 Sqn. Despite a magnificent performance and a brave but short lived comeback, led by **LCpl Brian Reed** and **Maj Jim Taylor** - HQ Sqn never fully recovered from this knockout blow and subsequently 89 Sqn were declared the overall winners of the Regimental Competition. At a special ceremony following the final stage of the competition, **Cpl Nick Harvey** the Squadron AIPT proudly accepted the Regimental Trophy on behalf of the Squadron from the CO, **Lt Col Miles Stockdale**.



The triumphant Team from 89 Squadron

ORIENTEERING LEADS THE WAY

The Regimental Orienteering teams appear to be going from strength to strength under the astute management and leadership of **SSgt Dave Arnot**.

During the past two months **SSgt Dave Arnot** has successfully entered and led the Regimental teams through two major competitions. On Sunday 21 February teams were entered into the 5 Div Championships held at Trentham Gardens near Stoke on Trent. All teams and individuals put in a tremendous performance which resulted in **Lt Anna Cliff** becoming the Divisional TA ladies champion. Her performance on the 'C' Course, which included male runners, was particularly satisfying as she beat most of the male opposition by gaining fourth place. Meanwhile **LCpl Sue Joyce** achieved Runner up on the 'D' Course after seeing off most of the female opposition. The collective performance of our female team, which included **LCpl Lorraine Cantrell**, resulted in the team becoming the TA Ladies Champions. Elsewhere the Regimental Permanent Staff after a magnificent performance in beating off the only other team (who were disqualified) are now pleased to be Divisional Minor Units champions. Unusually, 89 Sqn had a disappointing weekend and could only manage fifth place in the TA male competition - this was partly due to the squad being short of key members!

Following our highly successful participation in the Divisional Championships our sights were firmly set on achieving similar success in the Army and TA Championships held at Barry Budden over the weekend 10/11 April. After an exhausting eight hour journey in an uncomfortable mini bus, team spirits and morale were at a low ebb. However, after a spot of socialising with our North of the Border cousins and a good nights sleep team spirits and determination was quickly restored and we were ready to meet any challenge. Unfortunately our ability didn't match our enthusiasm and we faltered against very strong opposition with our only notable success being in the TA Ladies Championship where we gained a commendable third place. Congratulations are extended to the female team which consisted of **Cpl Tracy Haggan, LCpl Sue Joyce** and **LCpl Liz Judge**. Commiserations are of course extended to our intrepid Permanent Staff and 89 Sqn male teams who came eighth and forth in their respective competitions.

A CHANGE OF SCENE

Further changes have taken place during the last two months and the Regiment has made a particular sad farewell to **Maj Mick O'Hare**. **Mick**, a former regular soldier and RSM off 35 Sig Regt was commissioned into the TA in 1990 after completing 25 years service as a regular soldier. **Mick** was appointed a Troop Comd with 48 Sig Sqn on commission and quickly moved to the Trg Wing as OIC Recruit Training on promotion to Captain, during this appointment he can take credit for processing and moulding scores of recruits.



The sad farewell to Maj Mick O'Hare

In this appointment he also gained the admiration and respect of all members of the Regiment for his tenacity, skills, tolerance and understanding. His performance as OIC Recruit Training gained due recognition when he was promoted to Major and appointed OIC Training Wing. Following his successful tour with the Training Wing he joined 58 Sqn as Sqn Comd. His final appointment within the Regiment was with HQ Sqn as Sqn Comd a position he held until his retirement from the TA (after a combined total of more than 33 years service) in April this year. **Mick** has been a Regimental stalwart and although he remains an honorary member his skills, personality, sense of humour and organisation of the 'Burns Night' celebration will be sadly missed by all ranks. HQ Sqn have now welcomed his successor in the shape of **Capt Ricky Logan** who has just handed over the reins of the Training Wing to newly commissioned, **Lt Tony Walley**.

Elsewhere in the Regiment three important promotions and appointments have taken place, **WO2 Billy Henderson** has been promoted WO1 and appointed SVWO, **SSgt Kevin Robinson** has been promoted to WO2 and appointed SSM of HQ Sqn and finally **SSgt Pete Mouland** has also been promoted to WO2 and appointed SSM of 95 Sqn. Our congratulations and good wishes are extended to them all!

STILL IN BUSINESS!

Judging by the National Advertising Campaign which commenced in February following an announcement by the Secretary of State for Defence, expectations for the National TA Open Day may, at first glance at least, have appeared unreasonable. This was definitely going to be a high profile event that would let members of the public know we still existed and should, if managed in the right way, have a major impact on recruiting. It therefore needed a great deal of planning and preparation and critically an imaginative open day programme. Our first reaction was lets find out what happened the last time and improve on it. Unfortunately the files didn't go back to 1989 when the last Open Day took place and the realisation that no positive guidelines existed descended like a dark cloud of misery and despair. It was back to the drawing board, but at least we had the cushion of a generous grant from TAVRA to help the Regiment launch its own local campaign. The grant unfortunately didn't appear too generous when we discovered the cost of buying both airtime on the radios and the production of suitable adverts in the local rags - the term exorbitant springs to mind! Funds therefore were actually limited and thoughts turned to locally produced leaflets and posters and other means of advertising (such as radio interviews and large adverts on the sides of vehicles) to supplement the media campaign. That was our strategy which was implemented fully during the run up to the Open Day - thousands of leaflets were circulated promising an exciting day full of activities and fun events, hundreds of posters placed in prominent positions along main routes leading to town centres and TA Centres, vehicles deployed emblazoned with huge posters almost advertising the Open Day as the second coming and Banners spread alongside the gates of TAC's. One Squadron even resorted to using a political voting ploy by deploying a PA system mounted on a Landrover to advertise the Day.



Scene from the National TA Open Day

Now you are beginning to wonder after all that effort did it succeed? Well, how do you judge the success of such an important and unique event, should it be the numbers that came through the gate, the high profile and good will generated for the future or the number of recruits enlisted as a result. A good political answer would be a combination of all three and that is where I rest my case. Attendance figures varied throughout the Regiment from 15 in one location to 250 in another. All those who attended left with a clear message that the TA, in all of our locations, was alive and well and still recruiting - a vital message that would undoubtedly begin to circulate around local communities. Press coverage before and after the event repeated the same message and we are confident that the fifty potential recruits attracted by the Open Day will also carry the same message to their friends. Successful - of course it was and we met the Minister's expectations! Finally a special thank you is extended to all members of the Regiment who gave their valued support during the day.

PS: There is no truth in the rumour that these notes have been produced on a Laptop acquired through a dubious source from 33 Sig Regt!

WELCOME TO THE TERRITORIAL ARMY FAMILY

Two pass off parades have taken place recently, the first of which took place at Cateswell House on Sunday 21 February when twenty recruits completed their Phase 1 training and were presented their cap badges by the Honorary Colonel, **Brig Ian Sim** who also presented the award of Best Recruit to **Sig Phillip Wills** of 95 Sqn.

Following the parade the Honorary Colonel issued the traditional thanks and acknowledgements to Recruits, their parents, spouses, relatives and friends and to the Recruit Training Team; a dedicated group of unsung heroes who continue to give of their very best. A further fifteen recruits also paraded on Sunday 11 April and a repeat of the earlier pass off parade took place. Deputising for the CO, the Training Major, **Maj Tudor Hill** acted as inspecting officer. He presented recruits their cap badges and presented the award of Best Recruit to **Sig Munden Griffiths** of 58 Sqn and freely chatted to all present after the parade. To all of our new recruits who have successfully completed their Phase 1 very well done and once again welcome to the Regiment and a gentle reminder to contact their SPSI about the availability of Phase 2 courses at Blandford!!



Sig Phillip Wills receiving his award from the Honorary Colonel



Sig Munden Griffiths receiving his award from the Training Major

OLD SOLDIERS NEVER .....

On Friday 26 February the Regiment was delighted to welcome a very special guest centenarian in the formidable shape of 105 years of age, **Lt Col (Retd) Norman Edwards**. **Lt Col Edwards** was mobilised in 1916 and served with the Glorious Gloucesters at the Battle of the Somme where he was wounded and subsequently casevaced to Birmingham. Following a lengthy period of medical treatment, convalesence and retraining he then joined the Machine Gun Corps, so in effect **Norman** became one of the founder members of the Royal Tank Corps. **Norman** accompanied by his **Nurse Marie McQuirk** and guardian, **Maj (Retd) Alan Mountford**, was treated to a special lunch in his honour that was hosted by the CO, **Lt Col Miles Stockdale** and other Regimental Officers. **Norman**, although fragile, left an indelible impression on all those who attended the lunch, not least by his alertness and remarkable lucidity, but in particular his sharp recollection of many events that took place during the Great War. His memory on this unforgettable day served him well and his constant amusing and often thought provoking anecdotes and poem recitals captured the imagination and enthralled everyone. Thank you **Norman** for such a wonderful and memorable day!

ATTENTION ALL GOLFERS

Your problems are solved Golfballs that are truly
"SWIFT AND SURE"
The Museum are now selling the following Golfballs
inscribed with the Corp Logo

ROYAL SIGNALS

TITLEIST PTS WOUND – COST £6.50 PER PACK OF 3*
PINACLE GOLD – COST £4.00 PER PACK OF 3*
Also Golf Gloves – Excellent quality all weather gloves at £5.00 each*
*All costs are subject to change



Storming Norman!

36 (EASTERN) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO — **Lt Col J. A. Allan TD**
RSM — **WO1 (RSM) R. J. Stanton**

VISIT TO DRIU - HMS *EXCELLENT*

One morning in the Mess, during RSM's coffee, **SSgt Anita Smith**, who is the PSI HQ Sqn, announced that she had jacked up a trip to the DRIU. What's a DRIU? I hear you ask, well we wanted to know that as well because **WO1 (RSM) Bob Stanton** had just volunteered all the permanent staff to go on the visit! After some technical expressions trying to explain that it was the damage repair incident unit, **SSgt Paul Haggett** said, 'Have you seen the film Titanic? Well its the same as that except you don't get off!' *(Note: Many a true word said in jest!)* So there we were, a convoy of vehicles driving down the A3, led by **SSgt Si Hill**, (who has not attended the convoy commanders course) heading for Portsmouth.

We all arrived safely to be met and briefed by some big burly naval ratings. Focused faces and nervous laughs told the story and you had to be there to appreciate them. What had we let ourselves in for? Next we were shown around the DRIU, which looked like a huge ISO container on stilts. On the inside was like being inside a ship, loads of grey paint and thick doors to step through every couple of paces. A curious amount of wet floors and walls were noticed as everything was explained to us, in naval terms of course! Next we had to don orange waterproof boiler suits that were twice as large as **WO2 Gary Stevens** AGC, Yes, that big! With bibs and helmets issued we went onto the balcony for the duty photo before making our way to the start point. Individual team briefings and final reminders took place, the bibs indicated the teams: Blue team were the Pumps, Green team were the Diesel Generators and Yellow were the Mess Deck.



'The Motley Crew'

Suddenly, the sirens sounded and messages spewed from the tannoy about an imminent attack and Brace! Brace! Brace! We had been hit, water started to fill our relevant sections through holes in the walls and the unit began to list. Everyone immediately started to plug the holes as previously taught. Although the water was approaching our knees, things were going well when.....BANG! we were hit again and more water started to come from all angles, the unit began to list back and forth, the water following the list making it very difficult to steady yourself, the lights went out and the water was now up to our chests but still we kept on plugging the holes. The pumps were lowered down through the hatches but the water still kept on rising and the vertically challenged people such as **Capt Scott Youngson, Sgt Craig Sinclair REME** and **Sig Angie Burridge** were starting to float or sink, depending on the quantity of water inside their suits.



'Sig Chris Manion acts as safety man while Sgt Nig Back plugs the hole in the floor!'

Just when you thought it couldn't get any worse, smoke started to enter the compartments to simulate that a fire had started and a hatch was left open! Any ray of light had now disappeared and it was definitely not for the faint hearted. **Capt Carla Lankester** and **LCpl Scott Witts** checked the caps and found the offending article, the smoke stopped but didn't clear for what seemed like an age. **Maj Gary Mason** and **Sig Matt Joyce** were soon to be heard giving a large sigh of relief followed by war stories that would make your hair curl, as soon as the 'All Clear' and 'Endex' was given. Everyone couldn't believe how 40 minutes could pass so quickly as we made for the hot showers. **Maj Paul Willmott** was accused of trying to steal some water as a souvenir, judging by the amount he had in his boiler suit! Some of us stayed a little drier but I will remain nameless. A quick debrief on how good we were and off to town for a quick sight seeing trip.....but that's another story!

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON

Sqn Comd — **Maj Dave Watson**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) Mick Grimshaw**

One Saturday morning, the Officers and Warrant Officers turned up at Ilford to carry out the six monthly audit of the Regiment. Under the guidance of **Maj John Nixon** and **SSgt Gordon Cameron**, the rules were explained and red pens issued. At the same time the CO, **Lt Col Jackie Allan**, decided it would be a good idea to interview all of the R Signals TA WO2s to discuss the next 'cabinet reshuffle'. The biggest smile came from **WO2 (SSM) Mick Grimshaw** who is to become WO1 (SVWO), closely followed by **WO2 (SSM) Eddie Kikas** who is to become the RQMS (V) and posted to HQ Sqn. Which leaves the question: 'Who will replace them?'.....watch this space.....Just In.....**SSgt (SQMS) Tony Wells** has just been told he is to be promoted to WO2 (SSM) for HQ Sqn, well done **Tony**.

755 TROOP – NORWICH

Tp Comd — **Lt Simon Jenner**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt Martin Wright**

On Saturday 13 March 1999, 755 Sig Tp at Norwich threw open its doors to great success, as part of the National TA Open Day, to promote the TA in the public eye. Over 300 civilians visited the centre to view the stands, displays and talk to the TA soldiers from the unit, some of whom have shown an interest in joining. The Troop has recently enhanced its role with the addition of two Radio Relay vehicles, which it is keen to have fully manned soon. 18 members of the Troop turned out to show off their military knowledge and detachments, including one stand which involved a dismounted Trend linked to a vehicle mounted Trend, which the younger members of the public could send messages to friends who found this extremely entertaining! **LCpl Bob Brennand** found this a little bewildering due to the lack of proper procedure and was heard to comment 'who authorised this one?' The Troop were visited by the Lord Mayor of Norwich and his lady wife, who seemed very impressed and the Commander 49 Bde who was on a flying visit, as part of his tour of his command.



SSgt Martin Wright (755 Troop) talking to the Lord and Lady Mayor of Norwich

BEST TROOP TROPHY

The 'Best Troop' Trophy was awarded to 755 Sig Tp for all their effort and determination in achieving consistently high standards throughout 1998, well done!

STOP PRESS
REGIMENTAL GOLF

The Adjt, **Capt Scott Youngson**, is meant to write *The WIRE* notes for golf. He hasn't done this, so, **WO1 (RSM) Bob Stanton** is still the best golfer in the Regiment and that's official! The Adjt has assured me that he will write some notes for the next edition and states it's got nothing to do with Comd 11 Sig Bde, **Brig J. R. B. Cook** and Col R. Signals/INT CORPS MCM Div HQ APC, **Col D. McDowall MBE,** who are due to visit the Regiment on the golf course soon! *(Note: I wonder how many Gin 'n Tonics and career laughs on the patio will be spotted that day?)*

37 SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO **Lt Col A. J. Whittle TD**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) Cox**

EXERCISE BOTHIE DRAGON

Ex Bothie Dragon was a Regimental Alpine Ski Camp which aimed to teach TA soldiers the rudiments of skiing during two separate three-day courses in Aviemore. The Exercise was initiated with an idea from the CO which the Adjutant and RSM were duly tasked to organise. The Adjutant, **Capt Sara Copley,** provided all the administrative legwork and headed up the deployment. The instructors included **WO1 (RSM) Cox** and **SSgt Pete Harris** both from the Regiment and **SSgt Gary Greaves** of 216 Para Sig Sqn. The Admin Staff included **WO2 (RQMS) Andy Turner** and **Sgt Keith Harris** the Super Chef. Rothiemurchus Lodge in Aviemore was booked to accommodate the Exercise. Set well back off the beaten track it is highly recommended as an Adventure Training base.

The first group arrived whilst the Instructors were absent recceing the pistes. Unfortunately this day made national news as 5000 people descended on Aviemore for the Snow, Sun and school holidays. (Honestly this was Scotland!) Most of the Recce was conducted from a queue. The first group were kitted up and raring to go only to find that the top lifts were not working due to high winds and the good teaching areas unobtainable. The beginners found themselves facing a trek on foot up the slope to a patch of snow deemed suitable by the chief instructor. The more competent skiers trying not to hide their delight were able to jump on a button lift for a ski off with **SSgt Greaves** higher up the Cairngorm. The ski off was necessary to allow students to regain their ski legs and identify those who had not been entirely truthful regarding their skiing standard. 'Advance Skier' might actually mean, 'I can slide along unaided for a while!' Whilst 'I have skied on holiday' actually means 'I have skied on holiday when I was seven years old!' It wasn't long before we found our first student in this category and he duly returned to the beginners group, his name is withheld!

The first day for beginners, in both groups, involved the normal falling over problems which comes as a shock to a lot of well adjusted adults who all think that they are quite good at standing up unaided. However, progress was made through hard work and patience. Special mention must be made of **Sig** 'Lardy Bird' **Atherton** of 93 Sig Sqn who will never forget her experience on a button bar – hooked for life! **Sig Bonita McDermott** will have memories of men in red after a dramatic rescue from the slopes after twisting her knee. Entertainment in the evening for the first group was provided by **Cpl Eddie Goff** who took star turns at the local Kareoke. The second group were unable to brave the delights of Aviemore as they did not fancy pushing the bus the two miles back up to the lodge on their return on the compacted ice. With the snowfall increasing steadily throughout a superb week was had by all. Next year hopes to see a repeat Exercise and plans to enter a team into the Army Championships.

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON – REDDITCH

Sqn Comd **Maj John Riley**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Jo Krikorian**

The past months have witnessed a number of personality changeovers. The QM, **Maj Ian Dudding** left for 32 Sig Regt and was replaced by **Maj Don Holmes**. The Adjutant, **Capt Sara Copley** was posted to the delights of DCSA in April. The new Adjt, **Capt Lyn Burrell**, is very welcome from the horrors of AJD. **Sgt Hawkins** and his wife **Kerry** are welcomed into the technician family of the Regiment.

5 DIVISION CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIP

This year's 5 Div Cross Country Championship was held at Hopwas Wood and represented a novel challenge for some members of the Squadron. The team finished ninth out of 15 team entries but had to make do without their Sqn PTIs, who were attending a Lycra colour co-ordination meeting and were unable to run. **Sig Mackay** achieved an excellent result coming in in 35th postion.

67 (QUEEN OWN WARWICKSHIRE & WORCESTERSHIRE YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS) STRATFORD

February ended with the Squadron having a very wet day at the ranges. With all the rain that we had during the month, the stream that runs alongside the range at Besford had just about burst its banks and by Saturday afternoon we had a number of small lakes between each of the firing points. We even thought that the butt party might be spending the night there as the water continued to rise, but we all came safely home in the end, having passed our APWT's.

The early part of March was taken up with the TA open day 'Ex Open Door'. Members of the Squadron did leaflet drops in and around the areas where they lived during the preceding week, on the day we had our own fog-horn in the shape of the PSAO **Capt. Garry Pitman** travelling around the centre of Stratford inviting people to come up to the TA centre. We had a number of stands showing a full range of activities undertaken within the Squadron. The variety of communications equipment available interested many people and a keen interest was also shown in the PT stand (or it may have been the young men demonstrating the equipment!). The day itself was very successful with over 400 people coming through the doors of the TA centres at Stratford and Stourbridge; to date eight new members have joined at Stourbridge and two at Stratford. The end of March was taken up with a NCO cadre 'Ex Shape Up' at Swynnerton. Though only a small group attended, a full range of military training was achieved from an assault course to a Night Navigation Exercise. When it came to the First Aid stand 'Resusci Annie' needed CPR. **LCpl Smith** got stuck in giving mouth to mouth, but **LCpl Clark** insisted on doing the chest compression's (we did wonder if Anne would have any ribs left at the end of the Exercise).

While the NCO's were training at Swynnerton we sent three of our newer members of the Squadron along to Coventry to attended a potential officers course; it is hoped that they all passed and that we will soon have three officer cadets within the Squadron.



Capt Gary Pitman hailing all with the loudspeaker on Ex Open Door



Sig Sheard demonstrating the mould on Ex Open Door

93 SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS) - BLACKBURN

Sqn Comd **Maj A. Unwin**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Reid**

The New Year sees new starts for the Officers and soldiers of 93 Sig Sqn (V) based in Blackburn. Sqn Comd, **Maj Ross Parsell,** handed over the reins to newly appointed **Maj Alan Unwin**, now in his thirtieth year of service having attained every rank in the Squadron. A new Sergeant Major rose from the ranks in the new year promotions list. **WO2 Neil Reid** started out in the local Army Cadet Force and is every inch the determined, successful signaller, which the Squadron is renowned for producing. He works for British Telecom in his civilian job. **SSgt Heather Kenny**, (a podiatrist) takes on the first female Troop Commanders role at the Manchester Troop, with **Sergeants Geoff Small** (an expert welder) and **Paul Walsh** (an ex regular soldier who owns a white goods company) moving onto pastures new as Troop Seconds in Command at the Barracks.

ROYAL SIGNALS ADVANCE ON IT

The IT bug struck the soldiers of 93 Sig Sqn (V) recently as the Troops took on the latest advances in Information technology. Senior Squadron members, **Sgt Fitzpatrick, SSgt Graveson** and **Cpls Macgregor** and **Cornthwaite** taught Introduction to Computer Programming, Networks, PC Building and a beginners guide to the Internet. The guest speaker on Military Computer Security was **SSgt Phillips** from 42 Bde Headquarters in Preston. Information Technology plays an integral part of the Squadrons' role alongside Radio and Data Communications. Many of the Troops use IT in their civilian employment and the training proved very useful.

HATS OFF TO RAMBLING '93

The start was early O'clock, the O standing for Oh my goodness it's early Sunday morning and it's still dark. After some extensive de-icing and gritting, walkers and safety crews from 93 Sig Sqn (V) left their frozen Barracks at Canterbury Street in Blackburn to wind their way across the Moors to Tottington near Bury. As part of Ex Two Towers, an HF Comms and Navigation Exercise, the Squadron provided Land Rovers and safety crews for the Long Distance Walkers Association of Lancashire. Every January nearly 200 members sprint, jog, walk and sometimes crawl along the infamous and gruelling 25 mile boggy route which encompasses some barren, although tranquil scenery of Holcombe Moor and Tottington Reservoirs. Two teams of Signallers fought the elements and displayed great determination as they held their own, trudging through snow and peat, alongside the regular ramblers.

The route was marshy, up to the knees in places and the weather held fine until crossing Bull Hill at Holcombe Moor Training Area. There it rained, rain turned into sleet, and sleet into snow, followed by a downpour of hail and a blast of icy cold wind. The teams were soaked, cold, aching and downright exhausted by the twenty fifth mile. The Squadrons Mobile Dets were in position at each of the seven checkpoints where they provided the walkers with a well earned cup of 'Squaddie' tea. Secretly sniggering at the walkers, they were not the least enviable. The walkers finally returned to Tottington to earn a certificate, a badge and two slices of Pizza. Next stop, the Pub!

No doubt those who manned the Mobile Dets will be swapping with the walkers for the fun and games next year ..... Then again .....

96 SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

Sqn Comd **Maj R. J. Bowden TD**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Ray Campbell**

A recent highlight in the Sqn Calendar was the visit of Commander 2 (NC) Signal Brigade. Following a briefing by the Squadron Commander, **Maj Richard** 'Badger' **Bowden**, **Brig Hughes CBE** was given a guided tour of Westfield House where he managed to have a few words with everyone who wasn't actively hiding. After last parade, anyone who had so far escaped was collared by **Brig Hughes** over a pint and a Chicken Maryland prepared by our resident chef **Sgt Gary Wildsmith**.



Sig Ryan entertains Comd 2 (NC) Sig Bde

38 (CITY OF SHEFFIELD) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

COSY IN COMMAND

Staff at a Nottingham fireplace firm were glowing warmly when their medal winning Territorial won his dream job. **Sig David Tomlinson** has just taken charge at the city base he began his soldiering at 17 years ago. His military career has taken him from the ranks to command. He has served at bases around the region and has even done a six-month stint in Bosnia. But his dream has always been to lead the 70-strong 87 Signal Squadron, based in Triumph Road, Lenton. So he was delighted when his promotion to the post turned into a double celebration. For along with his new command he has received a medal for outstanding service as an officer in the Territorial Army (TA). **Maj Tomlinson** said, 'I've always had fantastic support at work. That's been so important in helping me get this far in my army career. In return I've tried to use the skills the TA has taught me to the company's advantage. I've always tried to give 110 per cent back.'



Grate Team
Maj David Tomlinson with Roy Parsons, Managing Director of Roystone Fireplaces

Maj Tomlinson said that when he received an urgent call to serve in Bosnia his managing director at Roystone Fireplaces, Canal Street, did not hesitate and **Mr Roy Parsons** gave him immediate leave. Within 24 hours he was on duty putting together a team of TA Signallers to manage communications in the war-torn Balkans.

Maj Tomlinson's first task in his new command will be to recruit more young men and women. Under the Government's Strategic Defence Review his unit has become a key part of Britain's new and more usable TA. The Squadron must now increase its strength by at least 20 more soldiers to meet its commitments.

EXERCISE SILVERSLIDE EBOR

On a bright but breezy evening on 22 January three minibuses, one laden with ski equipment, left Manor Top TAC bound for Dover and on to France for the unit's ski expedition. The journey was uneventful apart from **SSgt Mel Widdows** attempt to seduce two gendarmes by carrying out an emergency stop in the middle of the French motorway, you tend to get noticed using this method. Her feeble explanation about missing the fuel stop was met with suspicion and she was escorted to the fuel station and her passport was examined in detail. Her comment was 'They must have liked me they all wanted to look at my photo,' sad! Our arrival in Meribel made a great impression with the locals as we completely blocked the road whilst unloading. After unloading the ski equipment and baggage an impromptu briefing by the OC, **Maj Steve May** was held in the local pub.

The next day brought excellent weather and all groups put in a day's warm up skiing refining the group sizes into ability ranges. **Capt Lawrence** 'Mac' **McCourt** our chief instructor took on the beginners and kept them out until way past bed time! Our two other instructors **Maj Clive Milnor** and **Capt Neil Smeaton** on loan from 22 Regt RA REME Wksps, made sure the intermediates worked hard. Lunch? what lunch?!



LCpl 'Pretty' Jackie Spong and Cpl 'Banzai Bob' Barrington

The next few days sunshine and blue skies prevailed and all members of the party worked hard to improve their skills to take on the aim of the exercise. Skiing styles varied **LCpl** 'Pretty' **Jackie Spong** had style, **Cpl** 'Banzi Bob' **Barrington** had guts, **SSgt** 'Speedy' **Ned Needham** was quick, **Capts Thelma** and **Bob Ward** were sedate, and **Capt Fred** 'The Turn' **Nillson** could give us all plenty of rest!



Another turn from Capt Fred Nillson

We had enough talent to achieve the rather ambitious aim which was to ski the three valleys of Courcheval, Meribel and Val Thorens from highest to lowest point in one day. The Team carried out recce's of the quickest routes and quickest lifts, in each of the valleys. Each day the snow was wearing thinner and by Wednesday the rocks and grass were showing through at the lower levels and we were praying for some snow. On Wednesday night it snowed extremely heavily and the lifts did not open until 10am on Thursday, no routes out of the Meribel Valley were open as avalanche danger was high. The lower slopes were covered in powder and great fun. The snow continued to fall all day Thursday and by Friday morning we had to dig out the minibus which had almost a metre of snow on it. Again we could not get out of the valley but the powder was knee deep and everyone had great fun skiing in some great snow. There was no chance of achieving our aim but 10 soldiers learnt to ski and all enjoyed some superb skiing. The excellent weather of the first few days, in hindsight could have given us the opportunity to achieve the aim and 'If only' was used on more than one occasion. There's always next year.



The Chalet Maids?
Sig Linda Johnson, SSgt Mel Widows, LCpl Jackie Spong,
A real chalet maid, Sgt Andria Bilton and Cpl Jan Barrington



39 (SKINNERS) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS

CO	**Lt Col J. Crackett TD**
RSM	**WO1 (RSM) P. Anderson**

The Annual Regimental Dinner held at Skinners Hall in London took place on Saturday 6 March 1999. The Guest Speaker was **Mr D. J. Boyd QC**. Also attending the function were the Honorary Colonel, **Lt Gen Sir John Foley KCB OBE MC**, the SOinC(A), **Brig J. Griffin** and **Brig J. Shaw MBE**. Prior to the event, the Honorary Colonel presented **Padre David Sutch** with the bar for his Territorial Decoration. The presentation was somewhat marred, however, when later in the evening the Padre's exemplary service was ruined by his vandalising a piece of Regimental silver - namely the Adjutant's pigeon!! Finally, the Regiment wishes to thank all those who attended for their generous letters of thanks and are delighted that you felt the evening was such a success.

FLEET (PRE LONDON) HALF MARATHON

by LCpl Thurlow

The runners for the day were **Sgt Clark, LCpl Thurlow** and **Sig Smith** ably driven to the event by **Sgt Marsh**. The journey to Fleet was full of talk on how we were going to tackle the event which lay ahead. **Sgt Clark**



Lt Gen Sir John Foley, Mrs Sutch, Padre Sutch, Lt Col Crackett
after the medal presentation



The Padre tries to raise the dead pigeon
as Captain Bobby 'Pet-Slayer' Davis tries to look contrite

was the only one who could really give any advice since he was the only runner who had actually completed a half marathon before! In all cases, preparation for the event had been somewhat limited. **Sgt Clark** had run a 10km race the week before, **Sig Smith** had been out that week and I had done nothing at all!

The race itself was a particularly hilly course but the weather had decided to be kind to us. **Sgt Clark** (recovering from an injury) disappeared off the start line leaving **Sig Smith** and myself to run together. By mile five I had a blister, at miles seven through to eight my left knee started giving up and thus, myself and Smith WALKED the last three miles! However, there was still a sense of jubilation when I eventually crossed the finishing line in 2hrs 30mins (**Sig Smith** was given the same time) and receiving my medal. **Sgt Clark** completed the course in a respectable 1hr 47mins. The whole event left me utterly exhausted and a physical wreck but with a great sense of achievement for having actually completed the course. All that remains is to try and improve my time when I run the next one!

Finally, congratulations to **LCpl Hawkins** who ran the Bath Half Marathon in a time of 1hr 38mins.

47 (MIDDLESEX YEOMANRY) SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj M. H. Lansdown**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Prance**

Since our last notes it has been a very busy time for the Squadron. Exercises, trade training and training for specific events have all been high on the agenda for almost every member of the Squadron. The annual round of mandatory inspections have also placed a strain on an ever dwindling permanent staff. Many of those in the Squadron who took part in Ex Executive Stretch in 1998 would have found it a difficult Exercise to follow for pure enjoyment. However, thanks to 36 Sig Regt asking for the Squadron to act as enemy for them at Thetford in November, 20 lucky individuals led by the 2IC took part in a brilliant weekend of pure fun soldiering.

The now traditional range weekend in early December at Pirbright enabled nearly everyone to fire their APWT, carry out a night shoot, indulge in some serious house-clearing drills and overall fire about 450 rounds each during the weekend. An excellent Squadron Christmas dinner and social organised by the SQMS topped off an excellent weekend. Ex Bronze Lynx, which took the Squadron to Abingdon airfield, at the end of January saw the Squadron acting in a NMC role in the field. this was also an Exercise that allowed most dets to sort out their procedures in a non tactical exercise scenario. In February the Squadron went to Thetford for a Squadron FTX. For the first time the Squadron operated in Troops and took part in a variety of scenarios that were testing and imaginative. The weather was bitterly cold but each Troop managed to make itself reasonably comfortable in its base. Yankee Troop pioneered a new ambush tactic called the 'laid back'. This involves jumping into a Land Rover at the last possible minute, driving to the area of the ambush, getting out to do the ambush then legging it back to the rover for a leisurely drive back to base. This drill will be incorporated into the TA field tactics manual at the earliest opportunity.

Promotions have been many and well deserved and our congratulations go to the following: **Sgt Dave Lambert** to SSgt, **Cpl Dave Strevens** to Sgt, **LCpls Justine Jones, Lois Lane, Luke Holdom** and **Ben Newby** to Cpl. **Sigs Serrena Wheeler** and **Mark Joiner** to LCpl. **Capt Mike Atkinson** has left us for the watch-keepers pool and **Capt Carla Lankester** and **Lt Rod** (Not short for Rodney) **Hook** have both transferred (some say poached) to 36 Sig Regt. We wish them well in their new appointments.

EXERCISE MARS MARATHON

The opportunity for soldiers from the Squadron to act as enemy for a 36 Sig Regt Exercise was offered by the present 2IC of 36 Sig Regt. The fact that he had recently been the Squadron Commander may have had something to do with it. Recruitment of sufficient soldiers proved no difficulty, there being a deluge of people clamouring to get in on the act. The Exercise was to take place at STANTA in Norfolk at the end of October, and the Squadron was required to provide sufficient enemy to test the readiness state and defensive measures of the Radio sites set up by 36 Sig Regt. With this in mind, 18 soldiers from the Squadron, including the PSI Ops, **SSgt Tocker** and the PSAO, all commanded by the Squadron 2IC **Capt Carla Lankester** left Uxbridge on the Friday evening and set forth for Norfolk.

An advance party under **Cpl** '10 Bellies' **Cheshire** had already set up in Buckingham stables, so it was a simple matter to brief everyone regarding the nights activities immediately upon arrival. First task was to put two individuals equipped with CWS at each location being manned by the Regiment. Their task was to act as an OP to report on strength, vehicles and activity. Under no circumstances were they to risk capture! It turned out to be a long and cold night. Due to a larger than normal traffic flow on the roads, 36 Sig Regt were badly delayed in their deployment so the enemy waited and waited for signs that 36 were going to come out and play. This eventually happened at about 0400hrs on the Saturday morning and although the Ops did not get as much information as hoped, the aim was achieved.

For the rest of Saturday the enemy was tasked to carry out overt recces of each manned site, these recces usually acting as a decoy for other more direct military action. The type and variety of the overt recces have now gone down in Squadron legend. **LCpl** 'Hairbear' **Gross** and **LCpl Harkett** posing as orienteers who where so convincing that they were invited into the site for a cup of coffee, **LCpl** 'Ginger' **Thornton** and **LCpl** 'Cuddles' **Vallance** acting as hapless female navigators, receiving assistance from the sentry to get to a fictitious place in Norfolk on the sixth time that they drove past him. **SSgt Tocker** and **Cpl** 'Baldrick' **Howe** posing as mobile toilet repair men, and by all accounts doing a good job of actually repairing some!

This was a very enjoyable and worthwhile exercise. All the junior NCOs in the Squadron had the opportunity to plan and lead a small patrol. This did much for their confidence whilst in a position of command. All the soldiers were enthusiastic and threw themselves into the role playing and subsequent patrol actions with vigor and determination. It gave all of us an opportunity to see how other units of the same corps operated and, although roles were different, the problems faced invariably were the same. Thank you 36 Signal Regiment for giving us the opportunity to partake in the year's best and most enjoyable exercise.

EXERCISE YPRES TOUR

On the 12, 13 and 14 March, Yankee Tp of the Middlesex Yeomanry travelled to Belgium to tour the First World War battlefields of the Ypres Salient. The Troop met at 1000hrs on the Friday under the direction of **SSgt Lee Giles**. After packing the camping stores and the Troop's now customary wait for **Lt Matt** 'where's my passport?' **Watts** to arrive, we were off to Dover. **SSgt Giles** had prepared a file for each Troop member, giving maps of the area 'then and now' and some of the more interesting personal accounts and historical records of the fierce fighting around the Salient. After a swift and calm ferry crossing we were soon driving through France and into Belgium with **LCpl Abbey** 'Big William' **Crown** at the wheel. Having taken an unplanned, but scenic route around most of the local area we were relieved to arrive at the small rural town of Kemmel and get set up at the civilian campsite.

The first item on the agenda was a short trip into the historic town of Ypres itself. We parked in the shadow of the Cloth Hall, an impressive building that has been restored to its former glory after being virtually flattened along with the rest of the town during the war. From here we strolled to the Menin Gate. The Menin Gate is an enormous arched gate standing on the road out of the town towards Menin (hence the name). It was erected after the war on the site of an older gate to commemorate those soldiers of Great Britain and the Commonwealth killed in the Salient who have no known grave and bears nearly 54,000 of their names. Every evening at 2000hrs volunteers from the local fire brigade play the last post and there is a two minute silence. Despite the efforts of a couple of hundred school children the silence was observed, and after the crowds had dispersed we were able to spend some time studying the names and the monument in more detail. We returned to Kemmel to await the arrival of **Cpl Luke** 'the Padre' **Holdom** who was making his own way to Belgium on Eurostar. The rest of the evening was devoted to acclimatisation in the campsite bar, under the guidance of our cultural attaché **Cpl Kevin** 'Gerbil' **Huxtable**. We were pleased to discover that we were sharing the campsite with a group of Belgian teenagers claiming to be from the 'International Brotherhood of Youth', who seemed very keen to foster a spirit of European togetherness.

After a slightly later than usual reveille, and a hearty breakfast prepared by **Sgt Dave** 'Newboy' **Strevens** we piled onto the bus to commence our tour. The Ypres Salient was a small bulge in the western front around the town of Ypres, which jutted out into German held Belgium. It was the scene of almost constant fighting throughout the First World War, and is particularly infamous for the Third Battle of Ypres, fought in a sea of mud and known to most as Passchendaele. The first stop was Larchwood Military cemetery. This is a comparatively small cemetery, set in open fields alongside a railway. This was the area of the well-known 'Lovers Lane' communication trench and the site where tunnels were started to place mines under Hill 60 in some of the earliest operations of this kind.

We then made the short hop up to Hill 60 itself. Hill 60 was a small rise in the ground created from the spoil of a railway cutting. However, in this flat terrain it commanded an excellent view over Ypres and was therefore prized by both sides as an artillery observation post. It was fought over several times, and almost destroyed by mines. The hill itself is now regarded as a war grave and left to nature. Although the mud has gone, it is still pockmarked by craters of all sizes and has the remains of several field fortifications. At each of the sites we visited we were able to draw on a library of books from **SSgt Giles'** collection and read to each other from personal accounts and regimental histories. This brought the battlefields to life (or should that be death?) and helped us begin to imagine what it must have been like for the young soldiers who fought and died there. At Hill 60 we read about **Lt G. Harold Wooley** who won the Territorial Army's first VC there before going on after the war to become chaplain of Harrow School. We then drove to Hooge, and visited the museum there and the Hooge Crater military cemetery. From here we went to a small Cafe nearby for refreshments. The Cafe owner has made it his hobby to locate, excavate and dig out mines from the war and showed us his remarkable personal collection of photographs from these time capsules. The final stop of the day was Polygon Wood.

After a picking up essential supplies at the local supermarket we went back to the campsite and **LCpl Heather Thornton** prepared a tasty Spaghetti Bolognaise. Once again we decided to venture into Ypres to sample the local hospitality, and in **LCpl Thornton**'s case, cocktails. The next morning after breakfast, and breaking camp, we visited the German cemetery in Langemarck. This had a very different atmosphere to the Commonwealth War Grave Commission cemeteries we had visited previously. It was much bleaker, with black marble in place of our white and a total absence of flowering plants. It was time to make our way back, and after finally convincing French customs that we had no shells, grenades or mortar bombs in our possession we were allowed to head for Calais. Driving back all agreed that it had been an interesting and enjoyable (though at times very moving) weekend. Next stop, the Somme!

5 (QUEEN'S OWN OXFORDSHIRE HUSSARS) SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj R. D. Stone**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) G. T. Simpson**

VISIT BY 11TH DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH – 9 MARCH 1999

His Grace the 11th Duke of Marlborough made a visit to the Squadron on the Drill Night Tuesday 9 March 1999 to renew the Churchill family connection with the QOOH. Other prominent guests included **Brig Nigel Mogg**, Chairman TAVRA for Oxfordshire, **Brig John Powell**, Secretary EW TAVRA, **Col Rob Lucas**, Assistant Secretary EW TAVRA, **Col Tim May**, Chairman Oxfordshire Yeomanry Trust (OYT), **Lt Col Chris Laurence** and **Maj Ron Barnes** Trustees OYT and **Mr Nick Nicholls**, Secretary Old Comrades Association.

The programme for the evening started with a detailed briefing given by the Squadron Commander, **Maj Robert Stone**. **The Duke** and other guests were then show around the TAC visiting Comms Trg, Recruit Training and Equipment Husbandry/Preparation for the forthcoming National TA Open Day. After the guided tour **The Duke** and guests were invited to the Squadron Social Club where **Col Tim May** presented the Duke with an original picture of the Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars parading in 1911 at Blenheim Palace. **Cpl Steve Brady** then asked his Grace to officially name the club as the 'The Churchill Club'. Cheers were heard from all especially **Staff Sergeant Ray Phillips** as the PSAO **Capt Bob Sheldon** presented him with a bottle of Champagne for choosing the name of the club. The bill for the champagne is being sent to the previous Squadron Commander, **Maj Paul Wenlock**!



Major Robert Stone trying to explain IIP to the Duke!!



The Duke accepting the picture from Colonel Tim May



The unveiling of the Plaque by His Grace,
Ron and Joyce Pullen (Caretakers) show their approval

NATIONAL TERRITORIAL ARMY OPEN DAY SATURDAY 13 MARCH 1999

The Banbury TAC ready with NCRS Dets, FFR Det, Field Kitchen, SA 80 conversion on the .22 Range, Ongoing Recruit Training, Equipment Display, Churchill Club Bar & Refreshment and QOOH Exhibition opened at 1030hrs. Visitors were encouraged into the centre to sample army food, fire the SA80 and meet the members of the Squadron. The Banbury Guardian Reporter and Photographer sampled the excellent spread of food ably prepared by the Master Chef, **SSgt Les Kavanagh** and assisted by **Cpl Steve Brady**, Tele Tech!! The day was slow with visitors trickling through, but it was deemed a success with 14 names being taken to attend the 'Look at Life' selection weekend at the end of March.



Potential Recruit Alison Short a Health and Safety Consultant
('Please join,' said the PSAO),
on her guided tour with Sergeant Judith Phillips

MY FIRST SKIING TRIP
EXERCISE KNEES BEND 1999 (27 FEBRUARY - 6 MARCH)

by Pte E. J. Matthews AGC

It all started back in January, one Tuesday evening the Master Chef **SSgt Les Kavanagh,** who works at BAD Kineton, was talking about going skiing and was looking for someone to take the vacant place available for an RLC Skiing Exercise in Scotland. Like an idiot that I am, I jumped at the chance and said YES! (Oh Help!) and within a week I was booked to go. At first I thought, I'm really looking forward to this, then my next few thoughts over the following weeks, were 'I don't want to go now, I don't want to!!'

Saturday the 27th arrived, having packed a huge suitcase for what seemed like I was going for a month, let alone a week I was collected and we made our way up to Grantham for the first leg of our journey North. On Sunday we made the rest of the way up to Scotland by bus with 20 other people. A few stops later we arrived at Nethy Bridge House. Once everyone was off loaded, booked in, fed and watered, we had our hello briefings and were fitted out, I might add at this stage I was the smallest person in the group, so there were a few difficulties with sorting me out, for instance the boots they gave me were the smallest pair they had, so they had to send out for some more from the hire shop. The shop sent three pairs of which the last were the best ones to fit (JUST). The skis were all right they only had one pair small enough for me.



Pte Lizzy Matthews - 'Size doesn't always matter'

Monday dawned none too soon and it finally hit me I WAS GOING SKIING, ARGH!! We all loaded on the bus and made our way to the Lecht for my very first skiing lesson on the nursery slopes (see photo just a few of us first timers). Once we arrived and were instructed on how to put the skis on and move with them with, our instructor **Karl** with his wisdom said, 'Well I'm glad to see everyone has got the hang of this already'. Yes you guessed it I fell over and laughed because I could not get back up, so the more I laughed the more I fell over and vice versa until the afternoon when we had a chance to free ski down the nursery slopes by ourselves.

Tuesday saw us going to the Cairngorms for the rest of the week. When we got there we were paired off to go up the slopes on the T-bar. I was paired off with someone twice my own height (6ft this guy was, what a laugh that was) I fell twice when paired up with him, so **Karl** sent him up on his own and got me to go up with him, and we made all the way up without me falling off this time. And what of all the others, I hear you ask, did they fall off? Yep as soon as they got to a little hill, off they came so they had to go all the way down to the bottom and start again. We had to cut the day short because the weather got really bad (Wet and Slushy) so we all had a choice to stay in the BAR or go into Aviemore for a swim and jacuzzi. You would all be wrong in thinking I went to the bar.

Wednesday saw us all back at Cairngorm for a fabulous day of skiing and this time we all went to the top for a couple of hours skiing and practices before going back down to the half way point to ski in pairs on our own. This we did on Thursday as well, but with one slight difference, I DIDN'T FALL, when we skied right down from the top to the bottom on what I think was called the 'chicken run'.

Friday saw us all on the middle slopes warming up for the race which started mid morning at the top. Slalom time (I want my mummy!) we made our way up to the start and sorted ourselves into run order. I was fourth and was not looking forward to this one little bit, but eventually my turn came and down I went turning this way and that way going faster and faster every time. As I got to the bottom all I could hear was **Karl** and the slope personnel shouting go left, go left, so I went left, if you haven't guessed already, instead of going left through the time gate to stop my time, I went through the blue poles put up to say this is the finish I felt such an idiot, but who cares next year I'll do it properly, yep I'm going back, so if anyone is thinking of going skiing this time next year, WATCH OUT FOR ME!

57 (CITY AND COUNTY OF BRISTOL) SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj D. Watson**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) P. Packer**

Life in Bristol and Cheltenham continues to be as busy as ever. The Defence Review axe has unfortunately fallen on our detachment location in Cheltenham, however, all is not lost and the troops concerned will be moving to a new location in Gloucester. Plans are well underway for a final dinner at the Cheltenham TAC. Congratulations to the following on their promotion to the WO's and Sgt's Mess, **Sgt Addison-Scott, Sgt Filomena Zamparelli** and **Sgt Dave Gresswell**. Congratulations are also passed to **SSgt Jane Burn** and **Mr Chick Cheetham**, many will recognise him from his Regular Army and NRPS service, he is now a part time driver for the Squadron, golfer and tennis official. Both have recently been awarded a well deserved Lord Lieutenant's Certificate.



EXERCISE WINDSOR CASTLE – *by LCpl Stevens*

This momentous event was the Squadron's attempt to lose its JNCOs and Signallers over much of Gloucestershire. The idea was to work on our navigation skills and improve our voice procedure on a fun 'Treasure Hunt' type exercise! Unusually the TAC at Cheltenham was used as an Exercise base, this enabled the Officers and SNCOs to practice their SCP skills and for the PSAO to watch the international rugby on television in the bar. The winning formula was provided by a sparkling combination of good map reading, masterly driving, teamwork, excellent leadership and a good helping of lateral thinking. This combination resulted in the highest number of correct answers to a series of questions found at each checkpoint. The winning team consisted of **LCpl Joanna Stevens, LCpl Steven Holley** and **Sig Normile**.

71 (YEOMANRY) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO	**Lt Col C. H. Turner**
RSM	**WO1 M. Godwin**

REGIMENTAL NEWS
REGIMENTAL SKIING TEAM – *by LCpl Charlotte Foakes*

Ex Snow Lion 1999, the Army Novice Ski Championships, took place in Aviemore over five days in March. The newly formed Regimental Skiing Team, comprising **Sgt Martin Feather** (Team Dad), **Cpl Al Hyland** (Team Captain), **LCpl Charlotte Foakes** (Team Secretary) and **Sig Ross Nugent** (Team Member) departed Chelmsford TA Centre one Sunday in March for the 12 hour journey to the last Army Novice Championships of the Millennium. As Team Secretary I organised a route plan that was a little round the houses, as we somehow lost 200 miles and gained three hours. We eventually arrived at Cameron Barracks, Inverness at 2230hrs that night. We were tired, irritable, but raring to get on the slopes and find our ski-legs again under the expert tuition of our Team Captain, **Cpl Hyland**. After a much needed lie-in on Monday morning we eventually reached the resort, sorted out our kit and hit the slopes. To the amusement of the rest of the team, I decided after one run that my ski boots were chafing a little, so I went back and eventually persuaded them to give me a pair of boots that matched my ski outfit (all the gear, no idea).

The races started on Tuesday with a seeding race, and as none of us had raced with the Army before we had quite a wait until our turn. Our race numbers soon dropped as the week went on, with some respectable times, considering the less than ideal weather conditions. The last race of the Championships was the slalom on the Saturday with more than 300 skiers taking part. We all left the slopes sad to be heading back to the reality of work but happy that we had given the week our best effort.

By losing the minibus keys earlier in the week (don't worry MTWO, we found them again), **Sig Nugent** kindly volunteered to drive us all to the



The Regimental Ski Team – (L-R): LCpl Foakes, Cpl Hyland, Sgt Feather, Sig Nugent (sitting)

prize-giving at the Osprey Suite in Aviemore that night where, to our great surprise, I won the title of TA Women's Individual Junior Novice Champion. Altogether it was an excellent week's skiing and we brought home a cup for the Regimental silver cabinet to boot. Roll on March 2000!

REGIMENTAL SHOOTING TEAM

The members of the Regimental Shooting Team, under the leadership of their Team Captain, **Maj Barrie Corfield**, are congratulated on their outstanding performance at the recent TA Skill at Arms Meeting. Once again, they were extremely successful, winning a large amount of the silver trophies on offer. The 'A' Team won the Pistol Match, the Rifle Match and were runners up in the Combat Snap, while the 'B' Team won the Falling Plate and came third in the Rifle Match. At the end of the competition, the 'A' Team were declared 'Champion Royal Signals Unit', with the 'B' Team being declared runners up. The following individuals are congratulated on their superb performances: **2Lt Downing**, who was the Champion Pistol Shot, **2Lt Woodhams** who was the Champion LSW Shot and **Cpl Charter** who was the Champion Rifle Shot. Well Done!

HQ (KCLY) SQUADRON – BEXLEYHEATH

Sqn Comd — **Maj P. B. Corfield**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) M. J. B. Mustoe**

The Squadron has been very busy over the last few months. Recent high spots include the Driver Training Exercise held at Bovington in February. We turned up on a freezing cold evening to the Regiment's shooting lodge at Bisley where we were split up into teams. Early on Saturday morning, the teams were scattered far and wide within the south and south west of England. The tank training track at Bovington was where **SSgt Chorlton** and **Sgt Wallbridge** were instructing cross country driving in both Landrovers and 4-tonne trucks. A different kind of turning circle was discovered by **Sig Gross** with the CO on board, but fortunately, the most serious damage was done to **Sig Gross**'s pride. He is lucky the RSM did not catch up with him! **Sgt Lapidge** found out that **Sgt Gosling** could put a Land Rover anywhere – yes anywhere at all, and he kept appearing out of every hill and hole possible. **Cpl Smoker** looked very fetching in her 'Cas Sim' outfit, complete with glass protruding from her head. After a long and challenging day, we were grateful for the roaring fires in the evening to warm us up.

68 (IC&CY) SIGNAL SQUADRON
WHIPPS CROSS AND LINCOLN'S INN

Sqn Comd — **Maj E. J. H. Marshall TD**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) L. Evans**

The Squadron is busy preparing for Ex Capital Pursuit. More news next time....

70 (EY) SIGNAL SQUADRON – CHELMSFORD AND HARLOW

Sqn Comd — **Maj Simon Palmer TD**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) Paul Humphreys**

CONGRATULATIONS

The Squadron congratulates the following: The Sqn Comd, **Maj Simon Palmer** on the award of his Territorial Decoration. He was presented with his medal by **Maj Gen J. D. Stokoe**, Inspector General of the Territorial Army. **LCpl Charlotte Foakes**, on winning the TA Women's Individual Junior Novice Ski Championship. The Courage Trophy Team, who were led **by Capt Michael Wood**. They came first in the March and Shoot competition and sixth overall. **SSgt Liz Murphy** on the birth of a potential recruit, **Jamie**, who weighed in at 8lb 3oz.

TERRITORIAL ARMY OPEN DAY

In common with all TA centres throughout the UK, the Squadron opened its TA Centres at Chelmsford and Harlow to the public. The weather was excellent for the day and the hard work by all the permanent staff and the TA was in evidence for all to see. At Chelmsford, the Squadron was visited by the Mayor and Mayoress of Chelmsford, Brigadier TA, local MPs, employers and heads of colleges, plus a good turnout from the general public. At Harlow there were less VIP visitors, but the event was nevertheless well attended by the public. All in all, the day was worthwhile, and achieved its aim of publicising the TA Centres and assisting in recruiting.



Sig Gemma Cambron greets Brigadier Verey



Sgt Daz Lane briefs the Mayor and Mayoress on test equipment

COURAGE TROPHY



The 70 Squadron Courage Trophy Team



Sig Gowlett prepares for NBC drills

The Squadron are rightly proud of their Courage Trophy Team who participated in the London District Military Skills Competition held at Longmoor Training Area. The competition tested physical fitness, skill at arms and all the ITDs. The team comprised **Capt Wood, Sgt Swain, Cpl Bennett, LCpl Laskey, Sig Marsh, Sig Gowlett, Sig Nugent** and **Sig Stabler**. They came sixth out of 24 teams, which is a superb result. Well Done.

265 (KCLY) SIGNAL SQUADRON
BEXLEYHEATH AND BRIGHTON

Sqn Com — **Maj Hugh Robertson**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) Keith Wrate**

CHANGES

The Squadron has undergone a few major changes since last reporting. The SSM, **WO2 Keith** 'Snoozy' **Wrate** has stepped down as OC 890 Tp to allow **Lt Richie** 'Bald Eagle' **Woodhams** to take the reins.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations go to the following personnel who have recently been promoted: **LCpl Steve Turner, Cpl Sean Tanner, Sgt Dave Pryke, Sgt Emmet Vincent, Sgt Stuart Ridgewell**. In addition, **Cpl Sean Tanner** has announced his engagement to **LCpl Merissa Ferris**, who recently celebrated her 21st birthday. We wish you every happiness.

HEADQUARTERS TROOP

WO2 (SSM) Keith Wrate organised an extremely successful adventurous training weekend to Weymouth. The Troop departed on Friday evening, making good speed to the coast, where it rapidly ensconced itself in a comfortable hostelry. As ever, the OC, **Maj Hugh Robertson**, remained resolute and could not be tempted with the 'Devil's Brew'. Saturday morning arrived with an early morning dip in Portland harbour, to the enjoyment of all concerned. Once breakfast was over, it was time for the real fun to commence with a round robin of windsurfing, mountain biking and canoeing. Windsurfing produced a huge amount of laughter. The award for the biggest splash of the day went to **Cpl Davy Jones**, which had absolutely nothing to do with his love of burgers. Mountain Biking, on the other hand, rendered an unprecedented amount of blood, leaving most of the participants looking like extras from a 'Rambo' film. The canoeing stand involved circumnavigating Portland Harbour, which is no mean feat, even for the most accomplished canoeists. The weekend was thoroughly enjoyed by all concerned.



Sgt Dave Whitehouse finds windsurfing a doddle!

NEWS FROM THE SQUADRONS

20 ARMOURED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (200)

OC — **Capt N. J. O'Kelly**
RSM — **WO1 (RSM) T. P. Crane**

FAREWELL TO THE OC – 26 MARCH 1999

So it was a very dreary day on Friday 26 March 1999 when the OC, **Maj Jim Richardson MBE** left on promotion. When I say dreary, not just the weather but the hangovers from the night before. This was an Officers and Seniors Regimental Dine Out which was held at a local restaurant. An excellent meal was arranged by the RSM, **WO2 Forbes** and **SSgt McCrae** which included all the trimmings and a couple of surprise sketches at the end. Notably the imitation Squadron Conference arranged by the Foreman was so close to the mark. Finally on Friday, the OC was bidden farewell in true style, on the front of a Foden truck! He was led off in style by the whole Squadron to his new job in Upavon. Our thanks and best wishes go to **Lt Col Richardson MBE**, **Paula** and family.

RSIT – *by LCpl Alexander*

Another year; Another RSIT – everyone's favourite time of year! (what else is there to look forward to after Christmas?) For the two new Techs who arrived in mid January, this meant being dropped right in at the deep end – character building apparently. Everything went well though, and everyone in the troops carried out masses of work preparing the Panzers and Rovers. Even the Techs had work to do! (Honest!) Then the big day arrived, and things continued to go well as the vehicles passed their inspections. With only a few minor faults to deal with here and there, by Thursday it was all over for another year and we could all take a sigh of relief. As for a reward for our efforts (and a good RSIT report), the Squadron was stood down for a well-earned long weekend. Well done everyone who was involved.

EXERCISE MAILED MAESTRO

Now we all know what fun it is to go on Exercise, don't we? There was a little bit of restlessness on the first day because we didn't deploy until 2330hrs, but everyone knuckled down and got on with the job. There were a number of us wondering how many of the Panzers would make it out of the gates, but the majority held together. This was a new experience for a number of the newer members of the Squadron and there was a great deal of work to do. The weather held out too – after weeks of rain and cold, the sun shone for us throughout, although it was still very cold at night. Time passed quickly and we all made it to Gutersloh on Thursday (THE FINAL DAY!!) On the whole it was a successful Exercise and everyone learnt many new things (especially how to do pan bash!) But it was good to get back to Barracks again for a nice hot shower !

EWT 4 (FEBRUARY 22-MARCH 5)

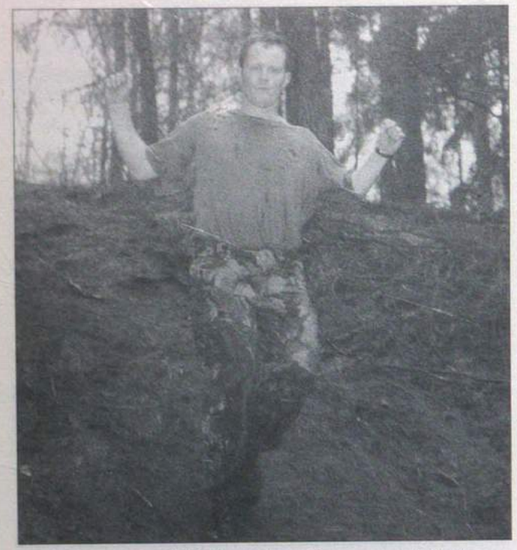
by LCpl Ormiston

Ex Winter Training is run every year by the Army at the British Alpine Centre, Bavaria. It was aimed at both the novice and the more advanced skier. Having never skiied before I thought I was in for an easy two weeks – How wrong can you be? The course was split into three sections – four days Alpine, four days Nordic plus two days Ski Touring. Everyone enjoyed the 6am rises, and vowed to return next year if given the chance again. The instruction was excellent and I'd recommend everyone gives it a try – even if you think that it's not for you. YOU'LL BE SURPRISED!

LEADERSHIP COURSE
HALTERN TRAINING CAMP 5-12 MARCH 1999

by LCpl Trott

The Leadership course was run by the RSM and was designed to assess the Leadership qualities of senior Signallers and new technicians. We were split up into two sections, which we remained in for the duration of the whole course. The days started early with PT which was all about team work. It involved carrying logs, stretchers and large ammo boxes. Four nights were spent out in the field where we had a chance to practice our night navigation skills. Also we all carried out section attacks which was very informative if not extremely knackering. Each person was given a chance to become section commander and they were assessed on their ability. When we were not in the field we were in the classroom learning about Battle First Aid, writing appreciation's and problem solving. Each person was required to give a lesson to the group about any subject they wished, some found this very daunting. At the end of the course we had a Regimental dinner which was attended by all JNCO's from the Squadron. It was an excellent night and was enjoyed by everybody.



The Foreman (WO2 Forbes) looking very gay indeed



Sigs Coverley and Riley enjoying an ammo box job



LCpl Trott and Sig Jones trying to situate the appreciation

ALPHA TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt R. Jones**
Tp SSgt **SSgt M. Payne**

The post Christmas period for Alpha Tp has been characteristically busy, but unusually successful. RSIT arrived and picked up only minor points, being generally impressed by what they saw. We then had an excellent leadership course, where Alpha Tp picked up Gold, Silver and Bronze, the three being **Sig Matt Coverley, Sig Gaz Collins,** and **Sig Matt Dorling**, the fourth member gave a spirited performance, but was clearly concentrating more on his upcoming Army bowling championship. Next on the agenda was Ex Mailed Maestro, the preparation went well, and the vehicles were in a battle worthy state. The least said about the poor garage preparation by the troops the better. The rest of the Exercise was a success, everyone worked hard, the tempo was spot on, and the Troop even managed to earth the generators, this made the Foreman a very happy man. The Troop has come to a point where it is to say farewell to four resounding pillars. **Cpl Ray MacCleod** is off to 2 Sig Regt, at least for the weekend, before flying to Kosovo. **LCpl Rowland** is off to 1(UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt, **Sig Foyle** is off to gods country and 14 Sig Regt, and **Sig Morrison** is off to JCUNI. To those who are going, good luck and farewell. There are no new arrivals to date but the Troop is assured that replacements will arrive before the end of May.

BRAVO TROOP

The past few months have been quite busy for Bravo Tp in the Premier Signal Squadron. With preparing for RSIT, RSIT itself and then putting in some quality time with the loves of our lives, the 436's. With all this going on we still had time to do some ITD's and supply manpower and vehicles for HQ 20 Armd Bde JOTES package. The young Subbalterns from the Squadron managed to attend and congratulations to the OC 'A' and the OC 'B' for just about scraping through, Well-done Sirs! Before Easter leave, the Troop managed to deploy all its assets on Ex Mailed Maestro 1. WATCH THIS SPACE....

HELLO'S AND GOODBYES

Bravo Tp would like to say hello and welcome to the following people, **Cpl Dunbar** from 1 (UK) Div Sig Regt, **Sig Flannagan** from Sunny 259 and **Sig Lawrence** from Civ Div. We also like to say a sad and tearful farewell to the following people, **Cpl Gaz Dixon** off to 1 Div Sig Regt, **Cpl Wood** off to 2 Sig Regt, **LCpl Gray** and **LCpl Marsh** who are both off to 249 Sig Sqn (AMF L), get some snow under your boots lads.

MAINTENANCE TROOP

The tech workshops would like to welcome **LCpl Alexander, LCpl Harrocks** and **LCpl Trott** to the unit. Also we would all like to say good bye to **Cpl Milligan** who's just passed his Det Comds Course and is off to N. Ireland and **Cpl Jay** who's left us to go to 1 Sig Sqn

LEADERSHIP COURSE - THE D.S. PERSPECTIVE

The 'A' Team consisting of **WO1 (RSM) Crane** - ('Slightly Silver!') 'Fox' **Crane, WO2 (RQMS)** 'Hawk' **Drew, WO2 (FofS)** 'Brains' **Forbes, Sgt** 'Cookie' **Mason, Sgt** 'Action Man' **Peters, Cpl** 'Fixit' **Dixon, Cpl** 'Les Battersby' **Shuttleworth, Cpl** 'Mr Motivator' **Wood** and **LCpl** 'Bog Eyes' **Morrison** arrived a day early to take over Haltern Camp for the next ten days. The following day the course arrived and were immediately introduced to the DS standing side by side (looking more like a police line up!) we were introduced one by one by 'Fox' reading out each individual's specialities. Afterwards the 'A' Team disappeared to be seen again (occasionally).

Day One, of course, began with good old PT at 0600hrs, conducted by 'Mr Motivator' and subsequently every morning thereafter! Afterwards the course deployed on Ex First Try incorporating all manner of military skills and occasionally visiting stands conducted by the DS such as deciphering codes, meeting agents, and dealing with casualties. On return to camp there was no respite. It was straight into debates and discussions on a whole manner of subjects to the amusement of all involved. At the end of each night the DS would have a debrief/brief of what had been covered during the day's activities, and what would come the following day. At each briefing the course's files would be filled out covering a large amount of headings.

The following day consisted of a casualty simulation conducted by **Sgt** 'Action Man' **Peters** and **Cpl** 'Les Battersby' **Shuttleworth.** The course firstly being taught CASSIM; then conducting it themselves to a high standard. Then came command tasks conducted by 'Fixit' and 'Bog Eyes'. Five command tasks were completed in around three hours by both teams culminating in a trailer race. Then it was back to camp for food then more debates (again highly amusing). Afterwards came teaching practices, which were pre-prepared on a preferred subject by the student, again completed to a high standard for the level of experience. Later that evening the course received orders from 'Fixit' for Ex Final Try. In their orders they were told to be on 15 minutes to move. As the course received orders the DS plotted their dastardly plan of attack as enemy, headed by 'Brains'.



The following morning was an early rise for the DS as we were going to 'Kidnap' the course and dump them on the area. They were not happy, or a pretty sight, at 0500hrs in the morning when the DS came in and gave them a rude awakening shouting and bawling in dodgey Spanish accents, with woolly hats, balaclavas, shamags and the like on, we could not have been a pretty sight either come to think of it! So now the course were on Ex Final Try and the DS could come into their own! Periodically the DS would pop up during the courses patrolling and open up with GPMGs and rifles, either dying gloriously for our leader, or getting away before the cold, wet and tired people catch us! Even at night there was no rest as pyrotechnics lit the sky and blanks filled their ears, just to keep them alert (and awake!) Afterwards the DS would return to their sheltered, temporary accommodation for hot coffee, stickies and the radio (someone's gotta do it!)



On the final morning the great general Ragamuffin, aka - 'Brains' - aka - **WO2 (FofS) Forbes** was planning a visit to see his loyal troops, however, the leadership course had gathered information of this fact from dead men's hands and lay in wait. At 1100hrs precisely the General arrived to give a stirring speech on our impending great victory over the enemy. As his speech reached it's peak, shots were heard and the great battle had begun. The DS put up a superb fight but were eventually wiped out with all dying glorious deaths (especially **Cpl** 'Holly' **Wood**). The fight was over, the course had won. So it was back to camp on the transport for tea and medals (or was it?) in true army fashion it was on the bus, off the bus two minutes later for a run back to camp of around four kilometres carrying various heavy objects, with the DS running alongside. (The DS always win in the end).

The final evening was a Regimental dinner night, with superb food, supplied, of course, by 'Cookie' and his boys. The usual speeches and toasts followed then of course, alcohol consumption and off to bed. Rising early next morning to tidy up camp and hand it over and return to camp for a well earned weekend's rest.

7 ARMOURED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (207)

Sqn Comd **Maj Andy Bristow**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) Colin Milne**

After another busy period of Exercises, the low level training is now complete and the Squadron goes on a well deserved leave ready for the challenges ahead and the building-up of our skills and drills as the training year continues.



The Squadron OC swaps the 436 for a Challenger 2

ALPHA TROOP

Tp OC **2Lt Andy Hill**
Tp SSgt **SSgt James Runchman**

After a series of beat-up Exercises, the Squadron was given a well deserved long weekend which saw the Troop disappearing to the four corners of the world with some returning to the UK and a number going to Budapest. After this, the Troop was straight back into it with the culmination of its training on the Squadron Test Ex. The weather was typically Hohne but the Troop performance was good nonetheless. Thirty hour shifts were the norm to meet the standards required by **SSgt James Runchman** and **Lt Helen Murphy**. The Troop performed particularly well considering we were breaking in a new Complex Corporal - **LCpl** 'Ginty' **McTurk**, whose voice was a constant source of encouragement to **LCpl Clifton**. At the end of it all, we retired to the bar to what we do best!

After a week of prepping the wagons for first lines, the Squadron deployed for a week of ATD's and Military training. Being Signals and perhaps not the best of infantry soldiers, there were a few mistakes. The most notable being the outbreak of joviality when the Troop OC left the Platoon Sergeant behind at the FRV by mistake. Another light hearted moment came as the Troop OC (again) got dunked in a puddle and then **Cpl Dave Langridge**, thinking it looked like fun, decided to join her. A special mention ought to go to **LCpl Chris Alston** and **Sigs** 'Spanky' **Harris** and **Rob Ross** who pan bashed for the week. After a hectic three and a half months, the Troop is looking forward to its well deserved Easter leave.



A lull in the battle for SSgt James Runchman and WO2 (YofS) Keith Parsons

Finally we must say a few welcomes and goodbyes. Firstly to the outgoing OC, **Lt Helen Murphy** who is off to New Zealand for four and a half months, and secondly to **LCpl Chris Alston** who is off to 21 Sigs. A big welcome to **2Lt Andy Hill,** our new OC, who had to leave rather early in the day and to **Sig Tom O'Hanlon** who joins us from 14 Sigs - we hope you both enjoy your time here.

BRAVO TROOP

Tp OC **Lt Adam Corkery**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Dave Sloane**

As always, it has been another busy period for the Squadron with a lot of new faces and a lot of people leaving. From all of Bravo Tp, we would like to say goodbye to **LCpl Chris** 'Gump' **Moore** who leaves us for 21 Sig Regt. Also to **Sigs Nick** 'Tiny' **Graham** (19 Mech), **Gaz Whetlor** (11 Sigs) and **Dave Edwards** and **Andy Workman** who both leave us for Civ Div. Thanks for everything you have done for the Troop and the best of luck to you all for the future. We would also like to welcome **LCpl Tony Marsh** and **Sigs Chrissie Strain** and **Chris Brogan** - we hope you enjoy your tour.

February finished with a Squadron Test-Ex to put what we'd been practising all year so far to the test. **Sig Ian Tranter** was particularly disappointed to have missed the Exercise due to skiing commitments in Bavaria (or was he?). The Exercise was a total success with the Brigade Headquarters being set up and torn down in lightning quick time and achieving excellent comms.

ITD CAMP '99

After a weeks break it was exercise again for ITD's and battlecamp at sunny Haltern Training Area where the sun never shone once. After three

days of ITD's it was time for a three day battle camp to brush up on our infantry skills. During the first day's tabbing most of 3 Section couldn't walk for falling about laughing after attempting to cross a large stream. **Sig Michelle Cowley** went in up to her waist and **Cpl** 'Ritchie' **Richmond** up to his knees. **LCpl** 'Barny' **Beevers** doubted they were crossing at the narrowest point and after convincing himself that he had found somewhere more suitable, took a run up that Linford Christie would have been proud of. We watched in anticipation but he unfortunately jumped right into the middle of the water and was soaked after just an hour in the field! By the end of the Exercise, even though everybody's feet and shoulder blades were sore, everyone agreed it had been a good Exercise, but nonetheless couldn't wait to get to the bar.



The Bravo Troop Rebro Boys
(L-R): Sig Stevie Homer, LCpl 'Barny' Beevers, Sig Ian Tranter

OPS/ES TROOP

Tp OC	**Capt Jason Gray**
YofS	**WO2 (YofS) Keith Parsons**
FofS	**SSgt (FofS)** 'Mac' **McCallum**

The last couple of months have been exceedingly busy. Along with many other departments within the Squadron we have been concentrating on the new ITD's. The whole Troop thus had to depart to Haltern Training Area, where we completed two days of ITD training followed by a three day battle camp (Jimmy's Sword). For a few Troop members this was a good educational experience, but for others it was just another 'day out'. These include **Cpl Brown** and **Cpl Marlow** who must now have been on their second or third Jimmy's Sword. Thoughts also go out to **Cpl Cation** (REME) who has probably done more time as a Corporal than most of the other Troop JNCO's have done in the Army! Everyone however learns from a 'Back to Basics' exercise although there are some that could have benefited more than others. Special mention ought to go to **SSgt (FofS)** 'I just want to make it clear in my own mind' **McCallum** who told us that he had given up being green at the 11 year point! Well, that's Foremen for you.

Finally congratulations to **Sig** now **LCpl Livesey** who is duly fined for his promotion and mention in *The Wire* - **Livesey**, **Livesey**, **Livesey** & **Livesey** *(Editor – an extra one for luck!! It makes him sound like a firm of solicitors.)* - that should keep us happy for a few more months.

SUPPORT TROOP

QM	**Capt (QM) Dave Wilson**
RQMS	**WO2 (RQMS) Rod Cowan**

Line and Power - Just a few congratulations and farewells this issue. Congratulations to **LCpl** 'Taff' **Elston** on passing his B1 and to **Cpl** 'watch out for that cam net' **Pearson** on passing his EFP. Congratulations also to **Cpl** '8 Slabs' **Nordon** who is now wearing his Cpl's stripes and to **Sig Nikki Stead** and her husband **Lee** on the birth of their first child. Farewells now as the reorganisation of the Squadron occurs and many from the Troop depart to the comms Troops. We would like to say farewell to **Sig** 'Head' **Barclay**, **Sig** 'Cow Eyes' **Nixon**, **Sig Gaz Davies** and **Sig** 'Lolly Pop Head' **Milne** who move to Bravo Tp and to **Sig Soppitt**, **Sig Danny** 'Monkey Hanger' **Richardson** and **Sig Phil** 'Vortex' **Brown** on moving to Alpha Tp.



24 AIRMOBILE BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (210)

Sqn Comd	**Maj I. Hooper**
RSM	**WO1 (RSM) G. Hodgson**

SQUADRON OVERVIEW

Life at 210 Sig Sqn is as busy as ever as the unit continues with an intensive training programme combined with implementing changes in line with adapting to the new future role as the Air Assault Brigade. On returning from Ex Lion Sun, the Squadron will form two new Troops including Charlie Troop who will join the unit from 216 Parachute Signal Squadron. The unit has a lot to look forward to. Following Ex Lion Sun the Squadron will embark on Summer Camp which is to be held in Cornwall. Ex Artful Issue is being held and hosted in the UK this year and gives the Squadron the chance to work with its fellow Brigades which form MND(C). Attention throughout however is firmly fixed on the new role and we look forward to the challenge that this brings.

ALPHA TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt Dan Ashton**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Chris McKenna**

There have been a number of changes in the Alpha Tp ORBAT. Hello's go out to **Cpl Jo Ruth** from 3(UK) Div and to **Sig Jase Williams** and **Sig Paul Bowes** both from 11 Sigs. Welcome back to **Cpl Drew Mechen** who has just completed a six month attachment in the Antarctic! Sadly we say cheerio to **Cpl Dan Hill** who is posted to Radex Troop at 11 Sigs and to **LCpl Dan Slaughter** who is off to JCUNI. Finally, congratulations to **Cpl Neil Tarry** and **Sig Karen Abbott** who got married on 10 April 1999.

BRAVO TROOP

Tp Comd	**2Lt Rob Hamilton**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Tony May**

It has been a busy time for Bravo Tp with a number of Exercises. The Troop deployed on Ex Gryphons Flight and is now preparing for Ex Lion Sun. However, the entire Troop are in fighting spirit after Easter leave and are looking forward to the forthcoming Exercises. New arrivals include **2Lt Rob Hamilton** who is now in the chair as OC 'B'. **Cpl** 'Smudge' **Smith** has very kindly agreed to show up again at the Troop after six months of hiding in Bosnia. **Cpl Wilson** arrived in April from 16 Sigs along with **LCpl Chris Scadden** from 3 (UK) Div. Finally **Sig** 'Chocolate' **Hack** has been posted in from Blandford. Farewells go to **Lt Guy Bowdler** who goes to 11 Sigs; good luck! Best wishes go to **Sgt Tweddle** and his wife **Sal** who is posted to 7 Sigs – congratulations on the promotion. Finally, cheerio to **Cpl Jase Curley** who goes to 30 Sigs and to **LCpl Si Dyble** who joins Civ Div and goes global trekking for the next year!

SUPPORT TROOP

Tp Comd	**Capt Steve Clarke**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Phil Latimer**

A plethora of personalities are off to pastures new. The QM, **Maj Ben Britton**, leaves to join ARRC Headquarters at Rheindahlen, 2IC **Capt Andy Coulston** is off to tackle the joys of Junior Staff College and **Yeoman Tomlinson** goes to 16 Sigs . Farewells also go out to **Sgt** 'Taff' **Hill**, **Cpls Andy Hall**, **Daz Perry**, **Ian** 'Tommo' **Thomson**, **Bob** 'The future's Orange' **White** and **LCpl Cummery**. The Troop would like to welcome our new QM, **Capt Steve Clarke**, 2IC **Capt Paul Merry**, **WO2 (YofS) Proud**, **Cpls Murray** and **Shepley**, and **Sigs Egerton** and **Gorvey**.

EXERCISE GRYPHON'S FLIGHT

by Cpl 'Taff' Reed, LCpl Si Childs and Sig Hack

The scenario was along the lines of numerous other Exercises we have been on in our Army careers – a country with a completely unpronounceable name (one of those troublesome states within the UK which has an excellent economy and a wealth of mineral resources, much to the disgruntlement of its neighbour) had been overrun in which a number of the locals had been too slow to escape the evading forces. In a bid to save these hapless souls, 24 Airmobile Brigade deployed to a country that looked very similar to Scotland in its geographical composure (but whose name would have been worth ten times as much on a Scrabble board) in order to save them from certain doom. Consequently 210 Sig Sqn deployed northwards and began the task of providing communications the staff users required in order for the operation to be a success.

Alpha Tp were the first tasked to provide the Brigade Headquarters and set up on the Catterick Training Area. As is always guaranteed, the only timing that was fixed was the arrival of the rain, which quickly turned the area into a quagmire of mud. Thankfully the Ops Officer **Capt Rachel Harvey** was only too keen for us to lay some gravel down, which barely stopped the Staff Officers drowning in the horrors of the Catterick geological soup. Worthy of note were the antics of **Sig** 'OJ' **Olejnik** whose previous profession as Spiderman ensured that the antennas were mounted in some of the most inaccessible sites known to man, yet providing excellent communications to the users!

Support Tp deployed to Catterick along with Alpha Tp. Sandbags were brought in to give some sort of protection from the weather, which of course could only be filled by one trade group – the techs. Little happened as most people were acting as the civilian population, apart from **Sig Egerton** and **LCpl Comery** who decided that the best place for the POL point would be on the top of the Brigadier's car!

Bravo Tp were having just as much fun as Alpha. They deployed to Catterick, recce'd a good area and began to set up the Brigade Headquarters. Unbeknownst to all present, the chosen area actually represented quicksand mire covered with grass which quickly devoured the lead Landrover. A change of location was decided as the best option and the rest of the convoy headed off to a new hide. It was slightly disturbing to find that the site was only twenty metres away from the British Motor Cross Championships circuit, but by now time was pressing and the Troop needed to get the links in! Worthy of mention were **LCpl Si Childs** and **Sgt Watts** who were detached from Bravo Tp to provide a HF Rear Link for the Lead Aviation Battlegroup. Having boarded the helicopter in glorious sunshine they were devastated to land in the pouring rain in Otterburn. **Sgt** 'Whinging' **Watts** became firmly attached to his poncho and refused to move for anyone… apart from when the helicopters came in to collect certain elements of the battle-group and forgot the Signals Detachment! The rain refused to stop, yet a rather soggy Squadron continued to provide all the required links. After frantically rounding up the remaining refugees we headed for home…

…..or so we thought. The move back towards Colchester was to be on a Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship. After loading the vehicles at Newcastle onto one ship and boarding another we set sail at a blistering thirteen knots towards Harwich, ruing the day that boats were never fitted with a fifth gear.

Without doubt the Exercise proved to be very challenging and tested every single individual, particularly in providing communications in unfamiliar environments. With hindsight, we all learnt a great deal and, it must be said, had an enjoyable time. Just a little less rain next time please!





238 (LONDON) SIGNAL SQUADRON

SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS

Sqn Comd	**Maj Steve Hunt**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Ewan Hall**

The reorganising of SHQ has come of age over the last few months with **WO2 (SSM) Ewan Hall** finally cutting his ties, in February, with 11 EOD Regt (RLC). Rumour has it, the SSM is still searching the local car boot sales for a pair of 'best boots' prior to the ceremonial season starting in May. Meanwhile, **LCpls Sophie Morris** and **Carmen Michalska** continue to go from strength to strength in the running world, with **LCpl Morris** finishing second in the recent Woman's Inter Corps Cross-Country and first in the Inter Services Cross Country at Plymouth. **LCpl Michalska** continues with her ambitions for the GB National Squad with a 'gruelling' three weeks training programme in the USA. Trailing in their path, but not far behind, **Maj Steve Hunt**, continues in his pursuit of excellence. The recent Fleet Half Marathon is keeping him firmly on track for the big event of the year - the London Marathon.

VISIT OF BRIGADIER S. G. HUGHES CBE TO THE SQUADRON

Brig Hughes, 2nd (National Communications) Signal Brigade Commander, made an impromptu short notice visit to the Squadron on Wednesday 7 April 1999. The visit gave **Sgt Simon Schofield** the ideal opportunity to present his Mark 2 version of the unit's Investors in People database to the Brigadier. Despite the short visit, **Brig Hughes** did find time to sponsor **Maj Steve Hunt** in his forthcoming attempt at the London Marathon.



The Sqn OC (right) making sure he has a firm grip on the sponsorship money from Brig Hughes, a mere 12 days before the London Marathon - witnessed by Maj (TOT) Howes!

GAMES NIGHT

During the long nights of January, the OC threw down the gauntlet to the ULOTC, 31 Sig Regt, 36 Sig Regt and 71 (Yeomanery) Sig Regt for a long awaited games night. From a cast of many, **Sgt** 'Chalky' **White** and **LCpl Lee Lester**, a veteran of many games nights, put together a variety of games ranging from adult Nintendo to **Lee Lester**'s crazy golf and 'get your hands off me' Twister! Such was the competition, **Lee Lester** had to resort to a DIY loud hailer to get his final round of questions over the highly participative audience. Regrettably two of the Regiments were unable to send teams due to other commitments. However, the evening proved to be very competitive with the youthful ULOTC pushing hard against the experience of 31 Sig Regt. Wedged neatly between the ULOTC and 31 Sig Regt were the 238 Sig Sqn 'B' Team whose Team Captain, **Cpl Paul Bone**, had extreme difficulty communicating with his own team, probably due to the fact that he was speaking in another language. The evening, however, was a great success with many thanks going to 'Chalky' **White** and **Lee Lester** for organising a great night. 31 Sig Regt walked away the proud winners vowing, to a rematch on their own home turf. We await the challenge!

TRAINING WING

Trg Offr	**SSgt Si Hadley**
Trg NCO	**Cpl Steve Hook**

LIFE IN THE TRAINING WING - *by SSgt Si 'I am a God' Hadley*

Much has changed in the Training Wing over the last six months, the OC, **Maj Steve** 'Trained and Developed' **Hunt** wanted to create a training wing of excellence, and so the 'Wing' (as its fondly known) was formed with myself, **Cpl Paul** 'Grenade' **Crabb** and **Sig Greg** 'Green' **Burgess.** Unfortunately, **Cpl Paul Crabb** was up for parole in April and was successful in his application for Dog Handler in Northern Ireland. We wish him well on his posting and good luck for the future. All the girls from Kings Cross send their love, enjoy the air miles!

In came **Cpl Steve** 'I'm off on another course' **Hook**, stolen yet again from the clutches of Radio Tp to become the new Trg NCO. Gone are the days of kit inspections and bulled boots, time for some real work! That now makes all members of the 'Wing' Martini Club, sorry 'Crabby' but with no front teeth, no chance.

The 'Wing' has had a paint job, unfortunately, the cries ' Why can't I paint it DPM' from **Sig Greg** 'Green' **Burgess** were denied. And now we are back in the business of Training. Future events include CORPSAAM, with assistance from **Cpl Bart** 'ready, aim, fire' **Story** the Team Captain, Battle Camp, Summer Camp, Offshore Sailing and the famous Exercise Bruno Endeavour the five, one week ITD (A) training weeks. Not

forgetting our second role the ceremonial duties, approaching fast. 'Oh' to be in the sleepy hollow of Radio Tp again! Teething problems are reducing. **Sig Greg** 'Green' **Burgess** has now seen his first PC and even understands 'Save As'.

Training and development is progressing well, thanks to the new Training Wing database, designed and built by **Sgt Si** ' I'd get loads of money in civvy street for this' **Schofield**, at least we haven't crashed the system too many times. Well its time to go, ' What's that **Burgess** another jiff 'oh no' tasking for the 'Wing'. Just one more thing, the 238 tradition is to get the beers in if your name is mentioned. Well don't get mad get even. **Capt Kerry Levins, Capt Levins Capt Levins** and finally **Capt Levins.** Oh don't forget there is **Capt Levins** and not forgetting **SSgt Si Hadley, SSgt Si Hadley, SSgt Si Hadley** and **SSgt Si Hadley.**

OSCAR TROOP

Tp Comd	**Maj Dave Gilchrist**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Karen Ripley**

This has been a fairly quiet period for the Troop, we must have been suffering from an elongated festive hangover! A big congratulations to **Sgt Sandra Thompson**, who conquered all before her on her Sgt's course, welcome back from your fellow crypto ops. **Sgt Debbie Gosnell** has been thrust into the limelight and now fills the ADA post, combining this with the Help Desk 'at times', no you can't take home two lots of pay is the cry from the (Tfc). **Cpl Chris Vallance** has successfully attended his crypto course, welcome back **Chris,** but more importantly welcome to 'HMS Nightshift' the fun starts here.

On the sporting front, we are pleased to announce that **Maj Dave Gilchrist** was voted sports personality/person of the year by the fellow sportsmen/sportswomen of the Squadron. This was down to his phenomenal performances throughout the last calendar year at windsurfing. Well done. The Troop recently put in a decent performance in the Squadron Challenge Cup Volleyball Competition. Watch out Mike Tp, you're in our sights, the trophy is coming our way this year. We all eagerly await the orienteering and squash/rowing in the next few weeks.

Again a fairly quiet period for people coming and going from the Troop. MCM Div decided for a number of reasons to cancel the few posting's in that we had. So it's hello to **Cpl Sarah Dyer** and only just arrived **LCpl Mark Leak**. Bon Voyage to **Sig Lee Pearce**, who departed for the shores of sunny Bosnia in January. Just a quick one **Lee**, next time you are posted/detached remember to take your **BONEDOME.** We all await the beers upon your safe return.

MIKE TROOP

Tp Comd	**Maj Howes**
Tp SSgt	Vacant

The Troop welcomes **Cpl Twizell** and his wife **Janet** to London and we hope that they enjoy their stay. Although having just got here after completing his T-1 in Blandford, **Cpl Twizell** is to return to Blandford in April to attempt the new Royal Signals Junior Commanders Course, we wish him well. **Mr Paul MacArthur** is also welcomed into P.A. Section. There have been no tearful farewells to make, although April will see the departure of **Maj (TOT) Richard Howes** as he leaves the military for civvy street. Congratulations to **Sigs Ben McFaul** and **Ayesha Muhammed** and also to **LCpl Smith** who have all just completed a five week intensive course on computer maintenance. Mike Troop wishes **Cpl Paul Bone** well on his Climbing Aptitude and Safe to Climb (CASC) Course at RAF Digby as he proves that he really is safe to climb. On returning from Digby, **Cpl Bone** and **Sgt Corey Pennicott** depart for the Squadron trekking and rafting expedition in Nepal. Good Luck to you both.

The whole Troop is still grafting under an unrelenting workload. Systems Section continues to deal manfully with the ACISG whilst Radio Section has almost buckled (again!) under the strain of the barrack maintenance site visits (and avoiding wearing uniform at all times.) The whole Troop is busy preparing itself for the summer season.

Finally, after last year's victory in the Squadron's Challenge Shield, a somewhat disappointing start has been made to this year's campaign. After three events the Troop is currently in a magnificent third place (out of the three competing Troops), although with seven events remaining, the Troop still has high hopes of repeating last years winning ways and has decided that now is the time to start winning..... possibly.

RADIO TROOP

Tp Comd	**Capt Kerry Levins**
Tp Sgt	**Sgt Simon Schofield**

At the moment Radio Tp is in the eye of the storm with the last couple of months being relatively quiet before the 'silly' season starts in earnest. Being quiet, the Troop have been busily bulling boots and sorting out No 1 Dress Uniforms, with the odd kit inspection thrown in by the newly promoted Tp Cpl, **Cpl Gibbo** 'two tapes' **Gibson**. Who said promotion can go to your head?

ULOTC PASS OFF PARADE – 21 MARCH 1999

Every year the Troop supports ULOTC with its Pass Off Parade by providing two stick men in Ceremonial Dress and two of our Police Spec Pan Europeans motorcycles. This year **LCpl** 'Buster' **Keeton** and **LCpl Lee** 'Conehead' **Lester** were put into the breech as stick men, with **Cpl** 'Gibbo wheely' **Gibson** and **Mr** 'Milkfloat' **Stevens** riding the Pan Europeans. The day was met with rain and hail storms which is particularly good for best boots and blues just in time for another kit inspection.

On the sports front, the Troop have been battling away with the Squadron Challenge Cup by winning two of the three events so far, namely the Orienteering and Volleyball and a close second in the Badminton. Watch out Mike Troop, Radio Troop is back! The Troop send their best wishes to **A/Cpl Mick** 'its my bar' **Breydin** and **A/Cpl Daz** 'Billy Whiz' **Pond** who have been sent to Bosnia with 1 Mech Bde for six months and are now up a mountain somewhere missing all the fun here in London. Finally welcome to **LCpl** 'Buster' **Keeton** his wife **Zee** and their two children, we hope you enjoy your stay with us.

243 SIGNAL SQUADRON

THE X-ZONE CHALLENGE (BRITAIN'S FITTEST MAN 99)
by Sgt Jim Robertson

The X Zone Challenge is a National competition (not military) incorporating all the health and fitness clubs in the UK to find 'Britain's Fittest Man or Woman'. It all began back in November 1998 when the General's Cup Superstars Inter-Branch competition took place at HQ LAND. The results from this competition were passed onto XL Leisure who selected the people with the quickest times to go forward to this national event. A team of four were selected from HQ LAND, of which two were R. Signals, and were **SSgt** 'Taff' **Burdge** and **Sgt** 'Jim' **Robertson,** part of the conditions for being selected was to raise money for 'Childline' of which £1000 is hoped to be raised. The Team Captain for 'Childline' was 'Rebel' from Gladiators.

The weekend started at 6am leaving sunny Salisbury for the NEC, on arrival in Birmingham all the competitors familiarised themselves with the equipment they were to use, this involved the following:- 1.5km recumbent cycle, 40 'marine' press-ups, 3km running machine (at a gradient), 20 over-grasp pull-ups, 1.5km rowing machine, 6mtr rope, 40 floors stair-master machine finishing with a 3km on the upright cycle with the clock running between events.

The day finally started at 3pm with the heats. The standard of the competition was extremely high and included four previous winners of 'Mr Ultrafit' and 'Iron-Man' competitions. Day 1 ended with all four of us qualifying for Day 2, this meant we were among the Top 65. After the learning experience of Day 1 the lads paced themselves to produce even better times towards the end of Day 2. Our results were as follows:

	UK Grading	UK Age Grading
SSgt Taff Burdge	52	12
Sgt Jim Robertson	61	16

We would both recommend this competition to any soldier liking a challenge, hopefully this competition will gain more publicity within the forces next year. The competition is to be screened on 'Sky Sports 2' from 19 - 24 April 1999 and will be presented by **Kelly Holmes**. So we will see you next year, if you've got the bottle!!



(L-R): WO1 Paul Ogden (RLC), Jim Robertson, Kelly Holmes, SSgt Andy Burdge, Maj Paul Harrison(RA)



The Team pose with other teams and members of the Gladiator squad (Cobra and Rebel)

EXERCISE SPARTAN HIKE
by LCpl N. Vincenzi

Towards the end of last year it was decided the HQ LAND would enter both a male and female team into Ex Spartan Hike, HQ LAND, HQNI and TA Army Ski championships held in Serre Chevalier, France between 4-20 January 1999. After trawling the unit for volunteers, eight willing members were finally found (four male and four female) all of different Cap Badges. We all varied in levels of experience, from novice to veteran.

In the early hours of Monday 4 January 1999 we packed up the minibus and set off on our 17hrs trip. We arrived at our apartment, provided by Skiworld, unpacked the minibus and set off on a recce of the local après-ski.

The next day was the start of a four day training package called Ex Rossie Iron Lion. This was used to get us used to skiing poles and improve our technique. There were very few slopes open due to a lack of snow so it took up to 3hrs travelling to and from other resorts. By the end of the third day we were skiing (falling) down Red and Black slopes.

On 10 January 1999 saw the start of the Competition and the early morning sunrise (0530). The first race was the seeding GS, used to prioritise competitors for the forthcoming races. This was the first time many of our female team had ever raced, and the nerves were setting in. The closer we got to the starting gate the worse the nerves got. However, once we got to the bottom, still in one piece, the nerves turned to relief.

Over the next ten days we took part in various races including Slalom, Giant Slalom and Super G. The downhill race was cancelled (unfortunately) due to the lack of snow. Day by day the confidence in our team grew (as did the number of bruises). Although none of us will make the next Olympics we had a really good time trying and is was definitely an experience to remember.



HQ LAND COMD TEAM
Back Row (R-L): Maj Brain (RRW),Maj Pearson-Gee, Maj Milo (RRF), Maj Hughes (RLC)
Front Row (L-R): LCpl McFayden (AGC), Sgt Wolley (RLC) and LCpl Vincenzi

249 SIGNAL SQUADRON
ACE MOBILE FORCE (LAND)



The snow, the mountains, the BV concentration area

ALLIED OFFICERS WINTER WARFARE COURSE
ELVERUM, NORWAY
SKYTE- OG VINTERSKOLEN FOR INFANTERIET
(SCHOOL OF INFANTRY, NORWAY)
by Capt Alistair Fawcett

This six week course based in Elverum, Norway is designed to teach Officers and SNCOs, from across NATO, the basics in military skiing techniques, minor tactics in cold weather conditions and survival. The course is primarily aimed at the infantry and had students from sixteen different nations taking part. With fifty on the course the British had the largest contingent taking part. Of the fourteen from Britain six were Marines, four were from 22 SAS, one from the Special OPs RA, two from CSS Bn AMF(L) and myself. The other students came from as far a field as USA and Estonia, which did present a number of language problems during orders sessions as well as on the social front. The majority of them were from their own countries Special Forces, for example; my section consisted of a Greek, a Spaniard, two Danes, a German, some Americans, and a few British.

The course started with the usual rounds of briefings and kit issue, which were necessary prior to the start of the training itself. In order that every student had equal 'benefit' from his equipment the only kit we could use was that issued by the Norwegian Army. This meant no Gore-tex, no thermal lined Alico Ski-march boots, no bivi bags, no expensive tents and wooden skis. The Norwegians are quite open about the standard of their kit, but with their experience in the Arctic climate they know what is necessary and what is sufficient. Their equipment is mainly made from natural materials such as cotton and wool, simple but functional. We don't know how lucky we are!

The skiing was the first important skill to crack and this had to be done in a couple of days prior to the start of the first Exercise. Many of the students had no experience with military skiing and therefore it paid to have a sense of humour. Having never skiied before I was concerned over my ability to assimilate the required skills before the start of the Exercise. After a week of skiing we deployed into the local training area complete with bergens, webbing, an AE-3 issued rifle, pulks (sledges for carrying equipment), carrying radios and on skis. The average pace of a proficient section on skis should be approximately 4km per hour. We didn't quite manage this but everyone was impressed with our progress. It is not easy patrolling tactically on skis and yes there were a lot of falls. The learning curve was immense and by the end of the first Exercise we were skiing at night, while navigating, pulling pulks and in wooded locations.

As the weeks progressed and individuals became better at skiing the distance of moves became further (up to 35km at a time) and the Exercises became more tactically based. The temperature rarely went above –5 and on occasions dropped as low as –38. This proved difficult when in the mountains and while on sentry duty at night. The entire way you operate is dictated by the weather conditions but you soon learn what you can and can't do. Many students were from Scandinavian countries and were excellent at operating in this climate. They could generally ski very well but by the end of the course the majority of the other students could keep up with them. The final Exercise had possibly the hardest start with a long 24hr infiltration ski, followed by setting up Ops on various targets. This is very time consuming, as it is very important to leave no sign of your presence. The final task was a platoon ambush on a BV mounted Coy HQ while on the move followed by a rather long and quick exit ski march.

The course itself was excellent. The Norwegians have a totally different attitude to working in Arctic conditions and try to use it in their favour

rather than let it dictate to them. The course was well structured with weekends being free, a number of Mess functions and a lot of good laughs, but ultimately it was testing both mentally and physically. An interesting aspect of the course was working with the other nations. After each Exercise, lecture, ambush or attack, for example, there would be the opportunity to discuss how each nation would have carried that particular aspect of the training. Generally there were similar methods but some details were wildly different. I would certainly recommend the course to any willing volunteer, but as we are the only Squadron who can load officers' and SNCOs on to the course you had best get your posting preferences sorted.



Sig 'P' Perkins and those first faltering steps

THE COLD WEATHER WARFARE INSTRUCTORS COURSE
by Cpl Foster

It was a cold Saturday night when we touched down at Bergen, Norway. Ahead lay the Cold Weather Warfare Instructors Course, six arduous weeks of skiing and ski-touring. We were to be based in Brandseth Camp, approximately 20 minutes from the town of Voss. The initial three weeks consisted of giving lessons to and providing demonstration for the Arctic Ski and Survival Courses (ASSC). For the first two weeks we assisted the course run for the Staff from HQ AMF(L) in Heidelberg. Many of whom were from differing NATO countries. It was during this phase that my accent came in to its own when I managed to confuse not only the students but most of the instructors as well. The culmination of this course was the survival phase. In which many chickens met the big chicken in the sky by way of the cooking pot.

On the third week we had to give a penetration demonstration to the members of the first Arctic Ski and Survival Course from UK. Included in this was the concurrent activities of section attacks and Skijoring. Skijoring, my lesson, consisted of a lot of laughs as personnel were towed behind a BV at speeds of up to 25km. Needless to say balance was frequently lost and many spent their time digging themselves out of snowdrifts. The Section attacks were hard and **Sgt Phil Render** quickly realised that attacks in deep snow with snowshoes are pretty difficult. The final night of the course was attack by our course against those on the ASSC. The ensuing battle looked very much like the opening scenes from 'Saving Private Ryan', nevertheless it was both enjoyable and a fitting end to the week.

In week four the course began the serious ski touring in the mountains of Voss. The going was good until the course ran into difficult weather. Visibility was virtually zero and we had to find shelter in a mountain hut. This weather did not clear and four days later we had to come down from the hills. It later emerged that many had been blown off their feet while attempting to get down. This was all part of the build-up to the final week, a mammoth ski-tour of 137km, during which temperatures dropped as low as -37. Fittingly the ski-tour ended at entertainment establishments of the town of Geilo. At the end of the course **Sgts Phil Render** and **Chris Trowbridge** gained their Cold Weather Warfare Instructors qualification.

EXERCISE ADVENTURE EXCHANGE 1999

The Squadron saw a quick turn around post Norway ready for the AMF(L) annual cold weather deployment. This years Exercise was based in north-east Italy in the regions of the Carnil Alps and Friuli Venezia Giulia. The Exercise itself was part FTX and part CPX and involved five battalions including NATO's newest members, the Hungarians, Polish and Czechs. The deployment, based on an Article v Scenario, lasted approximately two weeks and saw the progression from deterrent operations to combat operations.

The Squadron deployed ready for adverse weather conditions with the BV 206 over-snow mounted RRBs carrying ski equipment, white cam nets and sufficient rations should the weather have closed in. Each individual carried cold weather equipment including cam whites and the SOP kit list for any cold weather deployment. Upon landing at the APOE we soon realised the initial weather reports had been woefully wrong and only the highest peaks were snow capped. The temperature was well above zero and at times reached into the twenties. Only the detachments on the highest features were in the snow line, but most still required 'careful' siting by the more experienced det comds.



RRB C and D carefully sited

Geographically the region is very mountainous with a number of valleys crossing both west to east and north to south. This presented a number of 'problems' for communications but the Command Net, and Squadrons main effort, remained consistent throughout. Both headquarters were in place with the alternate HQ providing the real-estate for the GOC, **Maj Gen Reith**, to trial a prototype battlefield integrated CIS system. The prototype is a complex command and control facility designed to fuse information from the various staff cell databases and present it on a virtual screen. Still in its early development stage it did have a number of teething problems, but it has highlighted the way forward in many respects. The Staff had to work double time updating both the physical bird table and the virtual bird table, but Rome was not built in a day. This trialing did, unfortunately, mean the Exercise was relatively static with the change of control between HQs occurring only twice.

Deploying with the Squadron were a number of personnel on their first Exercise. **Sig Johnston**, a case in point, arrived from Blandford on the Monday and was in Italy on the Thursday. A sudden realisation that he was no longer in Radio Group at 11 Sig Regt but providing communications for the Force Helicopter Unit (FHU). At FHU **LCpl Daz Walker** had the unique opportunity of providing communications from the air, in the back of a command-variant Blackhawk, whilst flying with the GOC. In addition we had four augmentees from 35 Sig Regt, who managed to cope with the arduous 'arctic' conditions experienced and provided much needed operator support.



LCpl Daz Walker - Comms from the air

As with any major deployment the Squadron role of honour is long and distinguished and a few individuals deserve a mention. **Capt** 'The strawberry blonde' **Stokoe** after dealing with one DAMCON incident managed to play a number of games of football and reach level 10 on 'Quake' (oh how hard 2ICs work). **WO2 (YofS)** 'The Gun Slinger' **Bartlett** managed to shock all in G6 with his sudden posting, but promised everyone the Squadron would be getting a full-sized grown-up Yeoman as his replacement. **SSgt** 'Saddam' **Marsh** proved again that he wears the trousers in his Troop (right under his pinny) by producing a fine display of Indian cuisine throughout the Exercise. **Cpl** 'Mountain Goat' **Upcraft** will again never deploy without sufficient cigarettes as he almost had a heart attack carrying out a personal resup. **LCpl** '…I'll just remain in bed until Brig Radcliffe arrives' **Douglas** for demonstrating the professional nature of the Squadron's JNCO's by remaining true to the motto 'a good soldier sleeps when he can' despite Comd AMF(L) UK Element's visit being imminent. Last, but by no means least, **Cfn** 'Starksy' **Hardy** for demonstrating his defensive driving skill at the SPOD. A big well done to them all.

251 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj John Oakes**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Jim McNaught**

HAIL AND FAREWELL

This has been a very busy time of year for the Squadron with a welcome abundance of new arrivals and an equally sad abundance of departures! Welcome to **WO2 (YofS) Billy Cardwell** from 280 (UK) Sig Sqn, **Sgt Daph Clash** from JCUNI, **Sgt Moore** from 1 UK Armd Div, **Sgt Bev McAuley** returned from Bosnia, **Sgt Fran Poulsen** from 9 Sig Regt (R), **Cpl Roy Hanbidge** from 15 Sig Regt, **Cpl Andy McNally** from 7 Sig Regt and finally **Cpl Helen Shearan** on her return from maternity leave.

Farewell to **WO2 (YofS) Bren Kelly** who is leaving the army after 22 years service, **Sgt Bev McAuley** posted to 21 Sig Regt, **Cpl** 'Pomps' **Wardell, LCpl Nicky Cooney, LCpl Mandy McHugh** all leaving for civvy street and last but not least **Sig Brett** 'girls just wanna have fun' **Merrick** currently on detachment in Bosnia with 1 Mech Bde HQ Sig Sqn.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to **LCpl Nikki Dean**, who after winning the Army Cross Country Championships, coming second in the Interservices, surpassed herself by winning the Inter Corps Championships, the last major event of the season held at Blandford! Royal Signals proved too strong on the day just edging out the APTC to also win the team event. To round off her busy racing schedule **LCpl Dean** participated in the Woking 10km breaking the hour barrier in a time of 59.40! Unfortunately this resulted in a hamstring injury which needed lots of massages from the physio staff in the Aldershot rehab centre (3 massages a day!!??)

EXERCISE TRUMPET DANCE – *by Sgt Ray Carter*

Having completed an RMQ 1-3 course in March 1996, I had almost resigned myself to the fact that doing RCO on the annual squadron APWT would be about as adventurous as I could get with my qualification! However, an opportunity arose in mid December 1998, when the Squadron received a request asking for Range Qualified personnel to assist a Guard Battalion on Ex Trumpet Dance. The Exercise was a 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards battle Group Exercise taking place at Fort Lewis and Yakima Training Centre Washington State, USA. Within two days of volunteering I had been accepted as Safety Staff on the Permanent Range Team (PRT). With words of encouragement such as, 'You're on a swan' ringing in my ears I travelled to Pirbright on 4 January 1999. On arrival I soon realised that everyone else was from various Infantry units including nine members from the RAF Regiment.

We arrived in the USA on 5 January 1999, to warm sunny weather which quickly changed to rain as soon as the range package began and continued for the next two and a half weeks! The second phase took place at Yakima where the weather was totally different, snow and temperatures of minus 25 - 30 degrees C. One of the highlights was the Multi Purpose Range Complex (MPRC), which was four and a half km long and two and a half km wide. This was situated in the middle of a range which extended 40km by 50km. The MPRC enabled troops to practice section, platoon and company live firing attacks and company in defence and withdrawal.

The range package was an experience not to be missed, although having only three days off in four and a half weeks and working 12-15 hour days did have me thinking maybe I had jumped in too quickly! After completion of the range package the PRT had eight days R&R to do some sightseeing. This included places such as Vancouver, Seattle, Tacoma and hiking in Mt Rainier National Park. All in all it was a worthwhile experience and an insight into how the infantry do things, (or don't)!

FLEET HALF MARATHON – *by LCpl Jules Dolan*

It's that time of the year again, where hundreds of keen (or mad) runners turn up to take part in the 'Annual Fleet Half Marathon'. The course consists of 13 miles of lovely southern scenery (not forgetting the picturesque scenic pubs, that were very tempting along the way). A small contingency of 251 Sig Sqn 'warriors', decided to take the challenge on. The team consisted of **Maj John Oakes, Sgt Dave** 'Mr. Bean' **Green, Sgt Jim** 'Viagra' **Kelly, LCpl Nikki** 'Whippet' **Dean, LCpl** 'Crown Jules' **Dolan** and not forgetting our civvy counterpart **Sara Chivers**.

The run was sponsored by different National Charities. However, in addition the Squadron decided to raise cash for our local 'Queen Mary's Nursery' here in sunny Aldershot. The money raised would go towards buying new play equipment for the rowdy youngsters. **SSgt Glynis Watton** raised a substantial amount of money, but sadly in the end was unable to take part due to illness – all that training gone to waste.

The race began with the OC and **LCpl Nikki** 'whippet' **Dean** sprinting off into the March sunshine, while the rest of us decided to take a nice steady bimble around the course. The first couple of miles weren't too bad, but pressure on the calf muscles got a bit too much for some of us which slowed the pace down. The team ran their socks off and all completed the run to receive a souvenir medal and huge round of applause. The Physio dept will be very busy dealing with all the aches and pains that we have sustained, it's all in a worthy cause!!

259 SIGNAL SQUADRON

SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS

Sqn Comd **Maj S. Turnbull**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) D. Ewing**

To dispel any rumour that Cyprus is a sunshine tour, 259 Sig Sqn has had an exceptionally busy start to the year, though we have still had time to enjoy ourselves. The Squadron Development course, which was organised by **Lt Sarah Pedder**, saw **Sig Hicklin** from Episkopi Tp receive the prize for best student. The course consisted of a gruelling week of mental, physical and academic tests, culminating in a final Exercise that would have stretched the most stalwart of commanders. Well done to all the Squadron Seniors who helped in the planning and organisation of such a worthwhile course. With the arrival of the good weather, the Squadron has hosted many welcome visitors to Cyprus. The **Master of Signals**, being one, spent a day with the Squadron, during which he presented three well-earned LS & GC Medals to **SSgt Whitty** and **Sgt Crowton** both of Dhekelia Tp and **SSgt Jarnell** in J6 HQ BFC. All three having successfully kept their noses clean and their secrets well hidden for 15 years!!

Finally SHQ have to say a few farewells, hellos and congratulations. A Farewell and Good Luck to **Capt Paul Merry** who has finally left the Squadron to become the 2IC of 210 Sig Sqn, Colchester and to **SSgt (YofS) Thomas** who is posted to 1 (UK) Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt in June. Hello to **Capt Katy Caie**, the new Sqn 2IC, who having taken over, has done nothing but write and re-write visit programmes, and last but not least, congratulations to **WO2 (FofS) Rutherford**, who has successfully been selected for promotion to WO1.

EPISKOPI TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt S. Pedder**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Tierney**

The final event of The Hodgeson Shield (the Inter-Troop sporting event) took place on a hot afternoon when the teams lined up for a spectacular one-man cross-country race. **Sgt Steve Lynch** of HQ Tp clinched victory, with a few of his colleagues close behind, followed by the remainder of the Squadron. It was a well-supported event with military, civilian and family members taking part. This only left **Lt Pedder** to present the Hodgeson Shield for this year to his own department. Ironically most of the SHQ wins had taken place while **Lt Pedder** was on leave! On the social front we continue to use the adaptability of **LCpl Steve** 'Stelios' **Cooper** in the building of the new Jimmy Club. It has now taken shape and I am sure will become the new landmark for Signals on the Island. We welcome new arrivals **LCpl**'s **Reade** and **Quinn** and **Sig Atkinson**, the experience is more than welcome. We also say sad farewell to **Cpl Izzard** returning to sunny UK, **Sigs Rodda, Flannagan, Shepherd** and **Davies** the latter hanging up his fighting uniform and picking up his de-mob suit.

AIRFIELD TROOP

Tp Comd **2Lt Gareth Kemp**
Tp SSgt **SSgt R. Stenhouse**

The Troop is currently over-stretched and undermanned with major projects and many other 'Shhhh!!!' jobs. There are numerous fibre and structured cabling jobs and much good work has been done, so much work, so little time! The first week of March saw the upgrade of the 3 ISDX Telephone exchanges on RAF Akrotiri. This was the first stage in the TRANCHE2 upgrade for the Cyprus Fixed Telecommunications System. Prior to this, there was a requirement for **Sgt** 'Dolly' **Parton** to undergo arduous and rigorous radio training (NOT) in Milan, Italy. Always taking the rough with the smooth, **Cpl** 'Not another course' **Kev Waring,** got the short end of the stick and ended up on an ISDX course in Beeston. **Sgt Parton** learnt how to live on a budget when he discovered that Italian banks don't like Cypriot Pounds!!

The Troop has had a few social visits to the localities of the Island. There was a Troop function at the civilian Troop Storekeeper's son's restaurant at Lofou. Were there any back-handers there? **SSgt Bob**

Stenhouse, SSgt (FofS) Eric O'Halloran, civilian Telemechs **Terry Hibbs** and **Keith Lowe** sampled the delights of a fish Meze and copious amounts of local wine and beer at Zygi, proving that fish can be tasty!



Posing on Ex Winter Warrior
far left - Sig Bate, 1st from left - Sig Kervil, far right - 2Lt Kemp

Three members of the Troop, **2Lt Gareth Kemp, LCpl Sharon McCreaddie** and **Sig Adam Holley** took time out of a hectic work schedule to take part in Ex Winter Warrior. The two weeks, skiing proved to be a challenging introduction to Nordic, Alpine and ski touring. All members of the group improved immensely although no one brought the silverware home in the races. **Sig Adam Holley,** however, should have a good future career as a stuntman after his practice at falling over with style!

DHEKELIA TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt N. Morris**
Tp SSgt **SSgt J. Whitty**

Dhekelia Tp welcolme **Sig Stewart**, straight from RSS Blandford, **Sgt Witty** from AFCENT who joins her husband, **SSgt J. Whitty**. The Troop is cracking on with various projects but has supported the Troodos Horseshoe Hike and 12 SU walkabout, a rare busy moment for Radio Ops and Radio Techs. The weather continues to warm up and the Troop look forward to many BBQ's at the newly refurbished Bitsa Bar and BBQ patio. **Cpl Bob Kirby** has worked wonders with discreetly acquired breeze blocks and cement!

280 (UNITED KINGDOM) SIGNAL SQUADRON (LANDCENT)

Sqn Comd **Maj Simon Hutchinson**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) McKenna**

The changes to the Squadron future establishment and ORBAT slowly continue. We are now in the gradual process of reducing our manpower in preparation for the introduction of RDCM, our new piece of NATO communications equipment to replace the RMA system. However, whilst the majority of BFG has been focused on operations in Macedonia and Kosovo we have also been quietly continuing our task with the Multi-National Signal Group in Bosnia, a commitment we have had since September 1996. Inevitably the experience that the Squadron has acquired in Bosnia is now being utilised in Macedonia, with **Cpl Chris Read** being deployed to HQ KVCC as the resident CRONOS/IDNX expert.



The Multinational Commanders of the LANDCENT Signal Group (L-R): OC 280 (UK) Sig Sqn, OC 414 (US) Sig Coy Maj Frarley, CO 990 (GE) Sig Regt Lt Col Williche, Deputy Commander LSG Lt Col Rodriguez

EXERCISE CENTRIFUGAL FORCE 10 – 19 MARCH 1999
by WO2 (FofS) Flather

The Squadron recently participated in Ex Centrifugal Force, the final ever LANDCENT Signal Group (LSG) Exercise. This is due to Headquarters LANDCENT and LSG being disbanded later this year as part of the changes to the NATO command structure. The Exercise was, as ever, truly multi-national, comprising of our sister LSG units; 990 (GE) Sig Regt and 414 (US) Sig Coy. It was the first time that all three LSG units have had an opportunity to Exercise since 1994 as we have all been fully committed to operations as part of SFOR until the end of last year. The Exercise, which was held around the Heidelberg area, was also the last chance to use the present RMA system due to be replaced by RDCM in the immediate future. The Exercise also received a number of high-powered visitors such as Commander LANDCENT **Gen Dr Klaus Rheinhardt** and **Maj Gen Milne**, the senior British Officer and Director of Support at HQ LANDCENT.

DAVID BEATS GOLIATH
KREFELD STATION BOXING TOURNAMENT

The inaugural Station Boxing Tournament between 280 (UK) Sig Sqn and 7 Sig Regt was recently held at Bradbury Barracks, home to 7 Sig Regt. There is a friendly rivalry between the two units and the competition was viewed as a 'David versus Goliath' confrontation, with a Squadron taking on a Regiment. The result was a highly contested competition between two sets of very determined and skilled boxers. The individual standard of boxing was very high with all boxers demonstrating a natural flair for the sport. Despite their amateur status, and the fact that many had never fought prior to the competition, all the boxers put on a tremendous display with a standard of boxing that would have not shamed the professionals. The competition consisted of seven bouts, from light-heavy weight to lightweight, and had a nail-biting finale with the score at 3-3 after six bouts; The final deciding bout of the competition being between the light heavy weights. After a tough three rounds the winner was decided on points with our own **Cpl Bailes** having the edge and being declared the winner, hence the overall competition went 4-3 in the favour of 280 Sig Sqn.



The victorious Squadron Boxing Squad celebrates their victory over 7 Sig Regt in the station boxing tournament



SSgt Barker attempts to give boxing advice to a bemused and confident looking Sig Darkes

The victorious Squadron Boxing Team consisted of **Cpl Danny Bailes, LCpl Simon Cook, LCpl Robbie Turner, Sig Tony Darkes, Sig Dave Machin, Sig Brian Parrington** and **Sig Remi Osbourne**. Credit must also go to the individuals who were not selected to fight but completed the training and carried out an excellent job in the preparation and encouragement of the team, they were **Cpl Steve Slaughter, Cpl Leon Teasdale, Sig Nobby Styles, Sig Smiejekowski, Sig Bernard Brennan, Sig Ginge Mortimer** and finally to the team coaches **Sgt Bob Dunford** APTC and **SSgt Tony Barker.**

ALPHA TROOP

Tp Comd **2Lt Higgs**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Barker**

The Troop would like to say a hearty farewell and good luck to newly promoted **Capt Richard Todd**. He is off to Blandford to become OC Leadership Troop. A traditional send-off was required, so **Cpl** 'Look at my body' **Wells** and **Cpl** 'RMA' **Icke** organised an orienteering competition and fun march with different prizes (stolen from **Capt Todd**'s room) at each station. This was followed by sombre farewells in Club 280 and by the end of the night **Lt 'Toddy'** was in his usual state, with full support from everyone. Farewell too to **LCpl Dave Turnbull**, who is leaving after four and a half years with the Squadron. Rather than the norm of sitting down with a few crates the Troop secretly set up Club 280 for a formal Regimental dinner complete with our own Mr Vice, **Sig Gary Thompson**. It was a good night and we wish **Dave** all the best. The Troop also recently deployed on Ex Centrifugal Force. After a two-day plug-up in camp we deployed to a local training area where we linked-up with our fellow US and German LSG units. We then deployed south to Heidelberg but before moving, and in the interest of public relations, we played football against a German side from 990 (GE) Sig Regt. The spirit of 1966 lives on and we won 4-1 (thankfully no penalties), the only person not caring for the celebration was **Sgt** 'What's wrong with that tackle' **Valentine** – who is Scottish. Finally a welcome to **2Lt Higgs**, the new boss.



Maj Gen Milne, senior British officer at HQ LANDCENT, meets the troops on Ex Centrifugal Force
(L-R):Sig Ellison, Cpl Walker, Sig Thompson, Cpl Venables

BRAVO TROOP

Tp Comd **Capt Craig**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Weavers**

The Troop would like to give the a hearty welcome to the new arrivals, **LCpl Jacko Jackson, LCpl Andy Trestle** and **Sig Craig Harrison** from 11 Sig Regt on completion of their T3 courses. On a sadder note we say farewell to **Cpl Nick McAnulty** (to 11 Sig Regt and his T1) and **Sig Richie Calladine** (to 19 Mech Bde) who are leaving us for greener pastures, or so they think. We wish them both luck. Congratulations to **Sig Jenny Sarsfield** on passing White Helmets selection and continuing to brave it out despite dislocating her shoulder – that will teach her for falling off the pyramid. On a lighter note the Troop was rewarded for all its hard work over the last two months by being taken on a day long 'R n R' trip to Duinrel in Holland. It would have been a much shorter day out but for the fact that **Sig Si Hall** doesn't know the difference between north and south, which would explain why we came back to St Tonis via Amsterdam…

CHARLIE TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt Rae**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Baker**

There has been a lot of movement within the Troop over the last couple of weeks. We would like to say goodbye to **Cpl Matt** 'Civpop' **Lennie** who leaves to join the big wide world. Goodbye also to **Sgt** 'Turkish Delight' **Jones** and **Cpl Danny** 'I think I have dress sense' **Bailes** who both leave for courses/education (?) at Blandford; Yeoman of Signals and class one respectively. Congratulations go to **Sig Glenn** 'Planetoid' **McDonald** who on a recent visit by Commander LANDCENT found himself looking up to the General in a whole new way after falling over while attempting to come to attention.

MOTOR TRANSPORT TROOP

The Troop would like to say farewell to **Sgt Mick McDonell** and family to 17 Cdt Trg Team, **Sig Tony Darkes** to 2 Sig Regt and **LCpl Wilson** to 33 Sig Regt (v). Big hellos to **Sig** 'Double to the Gate' **Crowder** and **Sig** 'Lightening' **Walker**. The highlight of recent months has been the boxing tournament – the EDs won their bouts, sorry linemen.

QUARTERMASTER'S TROOP

With the football season coming to an end it's time for the golfers to start having all the sports afternoons off. **SSgt Dave Maw** knows the score on everything about golfing but we could have a new Nick Faldo; **Sgt Scottie Scott** has just taken up the sport. Congratulations on **LCpl Beatty** on eventually getting to wear his stripe. The whole Department has just had a paint job, we would have all settled for a nice shade of blue or red but after much debate we settled for the Army's favourite colour, magnolia. All our best goes out to **SSgt Rob Melotte** on his progress, 'Well done **Rob**.'

THE BOBSLEIGH SEASON
by Cpl Barnie Barnett, Combined Services Bobsleigh team



Cpl Barnett, Army and Combined services bobsleigh team, in action and in preparation for the 2002 Olympics

One fine summer's morning I asked the assembled MT if anyone wanted to go Bobsleighing, low and behold I got one volunteer who wanted to try this fast and exciting sport – **Sig Steve Wildridge**. The pair of us then departed for 'Ice Camp' in Lillehammer, Norway where **Sig Wildridge**, as a complete novice, was shown what a bobsleigh actually was, how to steer it and then shown the track that he would be hurtling down. The first four days of training were fine as the novices were pushed off the ladies start but on the final day **Sig Wildridge** finally went off the top of the track and managed to get to the bottom on all four runners. In January we went to Igls, Austria to compete in the Army Novice and Junior championships. **Sig Wildridge** also took along a couple of crash test dummies from the Squadron with him, in the form of two brakemen, **Sig** 'Lloydy' **Lloyd** and **Sig Mac McDonald**. The result of the pairing of **Sig Wildridge** and **Sig Lloyd** was a well-deserved Second place in the novice championship and qualification for the Army championships.

In the Army championship I came Third pushing **WO2 Pete Gunn** AAC who has been my driver at both Army and International level. We then went on to represent the Army in the Inter-Service championship which the Army successfully won for the sixth year in a row.

EXERCISE FRAN - EAGLE 22 FEBRUARY - 5 MARCH 1999

On the 22nd of February 1999 twelve members of 280 (UK) Sig Sqn set off on Ex Fran-Eagle, a basic Para-Gliding course held at the British Alpine Hang-Gliding and Para-Gliding centre in Bavaria. The group consisted of **Lt Emma Rae, WO1 (RSM) Mick McKenna, Sgt Baz Eglinton, Sgt Mick McDonnell, Cpl John Pollock, Cpl** 'Cosy' **Powell, LCpl** 'Junior' **Sears, LCpl Andy King, Sig Charlie Lister, Sig Jeanette Lloyd, Sig Scouse Brennan** and **Sig Emily Watts**.

The journey down to Bavaria was reasonably uneventful until the last hour when the driving of the mini bus was taken over by **LCpl Andy King** whose winter driving abilities left a lot to be desired. On arrival at the centre **LCpl King** managed to get the bus snowed in, in a no-parking area while the remainder of us started up what seemed to be the North face of the Eiger to the Lodge. When the intrepid 'mountaineers' finally got to the top of what seemed to be a never ending vertical climb, we all settled into our rooms before retiring to the bar for an initial briefing and beer with the staff and instructors.

The first day proper was spent with the issue of all the equipment we needed to fly and more! SNOW-SHOES. Due to the deep snow on the training slope the instructors decided that we would be the first course to wear what appeared to be shoes borrowed from Scott of the Antarctic and his team. Most of the group managed to fit, wear and walk in their snow-shoes with no problems. Not everyone was totally happy though especially **Sgt Baz Eglinton** who spent the next fifteen minutes walking, or trying to walk, with one shoe fitting correctly and the other wrapped around his shin. This is not the most comfortable of positions to be in particularly when trying to walk on approximately six feet of soft snow. At least this brought a smile to everyone's face if not his. Eventually when everybody had mastered the snow-shoes, or so they thought, it was time to learn how to pack and unpack our canopies and have the first of our flight theory lessons.

Day Two and we were ready for the training slopes. After a short drive we arrived and parked up the transport, put our packs on our backs, snow-shoes on our feet and started the trek off to the slope. We all arrived at the training slope (eventually due to snow-shoe problems and **Sgt Baz Eglinton** looking for his teddy that he had thrown) full of expectation and anticipation only to be told that the winds were too strong so it was back to the lodge for a theory lesson and then a bit of sledging down the largest mountain in the area, the Grunten. **WO1 (RSM) Mick McKenna** and **Cpl** 'Cosy' **Powell** caused a bit of concern when their sledges both went into free-flight down the mountain. **Cpl John Pollock** saved the RSM a long walk by diving in the path of his run away sledge. Unfortunately 'Cosy' **Powell** had to trek down to the bottom of the mountain and collect his now battered vehicle.

Day Three and we finally got onto the training slopes. After a demonstration on how to inflate the canopies we started to try it for ourselves on the flat. At this moment in time it appeared that nobody had any major problems so the party, now split into two groups, progressed to the lower levels of the training slope. By the time we reached the lower levels many of us were wondering if it was para-gliding or mountaineering we were here for but at least now we were ready for our first flight. You know the saying that some things look a lot easier than they really are, well, this also includes para-gliding in the snow with snow-shoes on as we all found out. At first there was not much flying but a lot of rolling down the hill getting wrapped up in para-cord and trudging back up the hill. Eventually all attempts at launching and flying stopped due to a loud scream followed by a girlie squeal swept through the air. To our amazement **Sig Jeanette Lloyd** was in the air, gaining height and actually flying. The landing left a lot to be desired but she was the first one of the course to fly. She was rapidly followed by **Sig Emily Watts** and **Sgt Baz Eglinton** and the feeling going around was that flying was not just for the birds (feathered kind). After what we all felt had been a good day in general we retired to the lodge bar for a well deserved beer.

Day Four and with what the instructors described as a perfect day for the training slope we all set off again in high spirits. The high spirits were just starting to fade after the long slog through the snow with the infamous snow-shoes but we all arrived at the training slope and the confidence was high even though we had moved half way up the slope by now. This day proved to be very successful for all those involved with the exception of **Sgt Baz Eglinton** who did not manage to get off the ground once. There were one or two close shaves on this day worth a mention. **Cpl** 'Cosy' **Powell** decided to have a very close look at the trees on the edge of the slope much to the alarm of the instructors but he managed somehow to pull off a very sharp right turn avoiding the branches at the last minute. **Cpl John Pollock** was having probably his best flight of the day so he decided to try and go a little bit slower. So slow in fact that he was on the verge of stalling before he took the brakes off and managed to carry on flying. One or two of the team were compared to the birds but not because of their flying ability. **Sgt Mick McDonnell** for some reason could not stop flapping his arms like an albatross and wondered why he could not get off the ground and then there was **Baz** 'the Penguin' **Eglinton** - he had the wings but just could not fly. All in all though it was the most encouraging day so far of the course, so by the end of it we all felt that we deserved a well earned rest.

Day Five and due to the weather not being on our side once again a trip to the PX in Garmish was planned. Thanks to our illustrious leader **WO1 (RSM)** 'Mick the Pathfinder' **McKenna** it proved to be quite an eventful journey. The Boss who said he knew the quickest way to Garmish did not explain that his route meant our mini busses would have to use roads closed in Austria due to avalanches but give him his due, we did eventually get there before the shops closed. That evening announced the arrival of the OC Sqn, **Maj Simon Hutchinson** and Chief Clerk **SSgt Pat Farrell**. Officially they were there to see the para-gliders and how they were progressing but suspicion was aroused when they asked where the nearest ski hire shop was.

Day Six started with everyone determined to show the OC and Chief how good we all were at flying now. Unfortunately this did not prove to be the case as once again the wind proved to be too strong. Rather than waste time back at the lodge all of the students attended an impromptu lesson in the art of Ski-Doo driving. All with the exception of our visitors, the OC and Chief Clerk accompanied by **WO1 (RSM) Mick McKenna** who somehow managed to find the local ski hire shop. A special mention should be made of our intrepid three skiers who managed to lift the entire group when they visited us during the Ski-Doo lesson. First on the scene was **WO1 (RSM) McKenna** looking very professional on his ski's until he tried to stop closely followed by the OC, **Maj Simon Hutchinson,** who still insists that when we saw him it was the first time he had fallen over. Eventually the Chief, **Pat Farrel** came into view. He is the only man who, when he manages to stay on his feet, can go faster than Franz Klammer even whilst attempting the snow plough. That evening was spent with the whole group along with our visitors and instructors having an enjoyable meal in a local restaurant.

Day Seven and once again the weather had prevented us from actually flying but all was not lost. The morning was spent on the flat ground by the training slope practising reverse launching. Some proved to be more adept than others at the reverse launching but it was a worthwhile morning. The afternoon was spent with more theory with everyone hoping that the weather would ease off. We all wanted to do more flying and put all the theory into practice.

Day Eight did not prove to be much of a success again due to the weather with all bar **Sig Charlie Lister** managing to get just one flight from the training slope before the winds again got too strong.

Day Nine started with the winds yet again proving to be too strong so the morning consisted of finishing the remaining theory lesson. By now we could all talk a good flight but could we actually put it into practice? The afternoon showed that we could. The winds had eased to give perfect flying conditions so we rapidly left for the training slope. Everyone felt very confident as now we all were equipped with our mountain flying harnesses and canopies and a very successful afternoon it was. It seemed like all the practice had come together and everyone was getting into the air with no major problems. The fact that the snow had cleared meant the snow-shoes had been gotten rid of may of contributed to this fact. Even **Sgt Baz Eglinton** managed to get off the ground with no real problems. The fact that his canopy resembled a Zeppelin may have helped matters. The afternoon was not without incident though. **Lt Emma Rae** proving that co-ordination is still not taught at Sandhurst after she put on a sharp left turn for no apparent reason and nearly left her mark permanently on a nearby tree line. Not to forget the **RSM Mick McKenna** who had one of his best flights of the course only to land in the most swamp like area of the field below. Everyone now felt that we were ready for the mountains, even the instructors, so we prayed for good weather for the final day.

Day Ten started with the final written exam which everyone passed some by the narrowest of margins not to mention any names 'Scouse' **Brennan** but on completion of the exam we were all qualified Elementary Para-Gliding Pilots. Now it was off to one of the local mountains, the Mittag, which was over 1500m high. Launching off this would mean over 15 minutes in the air and travelling around 7km but yet again the wind proved to be our enemy. It was blowing far too strong at the top of the mountain so we had to complete our course with all of us having not done the one thing we all wanted and that was a mountain flight. All is not lost though, it seems that everyone thought it a well worth while course and are planning to return to gain their Club Pilots licence in the near future.

JOINT SERVICES SIGNALS UNIT (AYIOS NIKOLAOS)

NO WINGE FROM 'GINGE'

Ever had one of those days where everything went right? No?! Well obviously being ginger, beloved by God, I've had a few. However, nothing prepared me for my hat-trick, at the Regimental Lottery! The hero of the tale **Sgt** 'Ginge' **Hall** (that's me) found out he was soon to become **SSgt Hall**, and then to cap it all he won the First and Second Lottery prizes. A whopping total of £550!!!!!! Feeling magnanimous our hero bundled a total of £300 behind the bar! Needless to say everyone on camp was a winner that day. Even the wife was duly impressed when I eventually staggered in, 'Yow, what a day **Rachel**, not only did I get my Staffy, but we've won £250 pounds!!!' Still what she doesn't know won't hurt her.

CLOSING OF THE COMMCEN 9 SIGNAL REGIMENT (RADIO)

by Sgt Paul Dedman

There has been a COMMCEN at Ayios Nikolaos for over 52 years ever since 9 Signal Regiment (known as 2nd Special Wireless Regiment then) moved to Ayios Nikolaos from Baghdad. Over the decades titles have changed from 2nd Wireless Company to the 2nd Special Wireless Regiment to 9 Signal Regiment (Radio) and now on 1 April it became the Joint Service Signals Unit, Ayios Nikolaos. On 22 March 1999 the COMMCEN was formally closed by **Lt Col Whitby**, CO 9 Signal Regiment. The honour of unveiling the commemorative plaque fell to **Sgt Dedman** who, when he leaves, will be the last member of Comms Troop. With IT at the forefront of communications the need for COMMCENs has been drastically reduced, now that most formal messaging is done by e-mail, with this we also see the demise of the COMMCEN Operator, Data Telegraphist or Tele Op Data (depending how old you are) who, like COMMCENs, have been riding off into the sunset quicker and quicker as the years go by.



Sgt Hall receives the cheque from SSM Thomas

JOINT COMMUNICATIONS UNIT FALKLAND ISLANDS

Since our arrival in the Falklands all the members of 2 Sig Regt have been extremely busy on all fronts. The work load, especially for the technicians, Linies and EDs has been extremely heavy. The expression 'Work Hard, Play Hard' is probably the best one to describe life in JCUFI. On the sporting front we are taking part in any competitions going. Our best results came in the Gurkha Challenge a 100km cross island team race. We entered four teams. Three teams ran in the 'Fun' race which started at 1200hrs, the fastest finishers in this event were **Cpls Claire Rutter** and **Jodie Wood** who finished in approximately 14hrs, some 2hrs in front of the next team in. The fastest team in the main competition also came from JCUFI. Unfortunately due to the fact they lost **LCpl Steve Hayward** at the 50km point, (due to the blistering pace the team had set in the early stages of the race) **Cpl Steve Cadywould, LCpl Lee Wilkinson** and **Sig Ian Bailey** had to settle for a special prize for the fastest time 11hr 13mins. They could not take the first prize as they had to finish with a full team of four. The next team came in 45mins later.

Many of the other runners in this gruelling race dropped out at the 75 Km point as many of them were suffering from exhaustion (not surprisingly). The other members of the regiment that took part were **2Lt Kerry Cochran, Sgt** 'Baloo' **Humphries, LCpl Kev Hesketh, LCpl Yam, Sig Page, Sig Greenhill, Sig** 'Sammy' **Samson** and **Sig Hick**. Unfortunately we have not been as successful on the football pitch as we were knocked out of the BFFI Cup in the first round and then beaten in the semi finals of the Plate competition. The rugby players are looking forward to their first match which will be on 17 April in a 'Friendly!' against Eng Sqn.

Lt Alex Clixby, the USM **WO2 Mark Neighbour** and **SSgt** 'Chalky' **Meek** have been running on 'high' adrenalin after a bout of Tailgate surfing at 250ft courtesy of 1312 Flt and Albert the Hercules. **Lt Clixby** and the USM also managed to get their hand on the controls at 3500ft an experience we are hoping to arrange for a few more members of the unit. The Falklands has just been visited by **HRH The Prince of Wales**. After a 3hr wait a cross section of the unit had a brief but very enjoyable chat with HRH. The JCUFI 'stand' was introduced by **2Lt Cochran** with **WO2 (USM) Neighbour** keeping a watchful eye on the proceedings.

CHARLIE TROOP

by Cpl Claire 'Where's Sven?' Rutter

Tp Comd **Lt Alex Clixby**
Tp SSgt **SSgt** 'Chalky' **Meek**

Since arriving in the Falkland Islands, all of the JCUFI personnel have settled into the social ways of MPA very well. Apart from working and drinking, we have indulged in some physical activity, in order to justify the alcohol consumption. The JCUFI hierarchy partook in their own endurance event concurrently with Trailwalker. **Maj Dave** 'Slide Show' **Gaul, Flt Lt Jim** 'Smells like a Rose' **Lawn** and **WO2 (USM) Mark** 'Run Forrest' **Neighbour** had to endure 6 hours in a Land-Rover with **Lt Alex** 'Not a rose' **Clixby** and **SSgt Chalky** 'Sewage Plant' **Meek.** Not for the faint hearted. Our most recent sporting event was Formula One 'Go Karting', which was won by **Sgt Ed** 'Team Imprezza' **Ramus**, who left **WO2 (USM) Mark** 'Zimmer' **Neighbour** in his wake. We saw a disappointing performance by **Lt Alex** 'Black Flag' **Clixby**, who was disqualified for purposely blocking **Cpl Conrad** 'Wise Monkey' **Williams.** A good day was had by all. Hopefully the next few months will pass as quickly as the first. Hopefully the laughter will continue too! Only 40 'Timmys' to go!

ALPHA TROOP

Tp Comd **Flt Lt J. Lawn**

Alpha Tp is headed up by an RAF Flt Lt and a Royal Navy CPO. It is responsible for the HF Transmitter and Receiver Sites; organised by a mixture of RN/RAF personnel, and RADCON, which is purely Army manned; responsible for the South Georgia Det, Campito Hill and Mount Adam RRB sites.

RADCON

The main party of 219 Sig Sqn arrived on the 22 Feb 99 and was immediately thrown into a hurried handover from 1 Armd Div personnel. During this first six weeks RADCON personnel have made the most of the decent weather holding a number of BBQs and generally getting to know the camp and its personalities. **Cpl John 'Pingu' Love** has already moved from IC FFRs to take over as Det Comd at the Campito Hill RRB site, it is not true to say that this is because of his non-stop moaning.

Quality is a big issue in the Falklands and RADCON have become aware of it in a big way, especially after OC A deployed in his LandRover with half of RADCONs tools on the bonnet (what does FOD stand for again). A two-vehicle party set off for a land resup of Campito one day with 5 people. Due to the top vehicles in theatre one vehicle and 3 persons eventually arrived. **SSgt (YofS)** 'Bill' **Barnes, Cpl John Love** and **Sgt Andy Feathers (RAF)** from Receivers eventually faced the hike up the hill after leaving 2IC JCUFI and OC A Tp at Goose Green with their broken vehicle. Sorry Boss. **Cpl** 'Naked Charley' **Farley** and **LCpl** 'BC' **Brand Cotti** have impressed all and sundry with their party tricks. **Sig Iain Bailey** is to be congratulated on his fine effort on the 100km Gurkha Challenge with the unofficial best time with his team.



Back Row (L-R): Sig Hicks, Cpl Farley
Middle Row (L-R): Sig Bailey, Sig Allardyce, Sig Hughes, Cpl Love, SSgt (YofS) Barnes, Sig Crighton, Cpl Huges, LCpl Brand-Cotti
Front Row (L-R): LCpl Collict, LCpl Tubb, Sig Soraine, LCpl Thomas, Sig Sampson

CAMPITO HILL RRB SITE

by LCpl Steve Pountney

Det Comd **Cpl Dave Maxwell**

Having been up here for over a month now, the crew has settled in very well. Such skills as cooking and throwing darts are improving daily (sometimes we can hit the treble twenty). Apart from that, the watching of low quality videos is one of our favourite pastimes. Shortly after arrival, I ventured down to the farm at the foot of our hill; after speaking to the farmers' wife (who obviously hadn't spoken to anyone for months) I vowed never to return again. **Cpl Dave Maxwell** and **Sig Mark Brooks** are into that fitness thing and the det gym is certainly getting a right battering from those two. Morale is high, boots fit and the mail is getting through. All said and done, things in general are running pretty smoothly although the phrase 'Groundhog Day' springs to mind.



(L-R): Sig Brooks, Cpl Maxwell, LCpl Pountney

SIGNALS DETACHMENT SOUTH GEORGIA

Det Comd **SSgt Andy Allan**

The South Georgia detachment deployed from York on New Years Day and deployed to the Island via MPA arriving on 8 January. The highlight of the trip was the roller-coaster trip on HMS *Sutherland* and being greeted by banners and flares from the outgoing crew. Numerous admin problems have been encountered by the Detachment but after three months things are starting to take shape. The crew have all completed the Mountain Movement Survival Course (MMSC), five days with two days in the mountains carrying more kit than can humanly be carried without several Sherpas. In all, South Georgia is an experience. It may not be the end of the world, but you can certainly see it from here. To all potential S. Georgia crews, whoever you are, not yet nominated; read this and (weep) plan ahead!



(L-R): Cpl Owens, Sig Edwards, Cpl Purdon

MOUNT ADAM RRB SITE

Det Comd **Cpl Phil Owens**

The Mount Adam crew continues to be a contented bunch although constantly shrouded in mist with no sunshine. **Sig 'Eddie' Edwards** continues to drain JCUFIs supply of batteries for his various electrical appliances.

THE TERRITORIAL ARMY ON TOUR

by LCpl Terri Collict

On January of this year, I embarked on an S Type engagement with 2 Sig Regt on loan from 34 Sig Regt (V) in Leeds. Prior to deployment 219 Sig Sqn carried out training in York to bring everyone's skills up to speed. This proved to be a bit of an eye opener for me; with differences between the Regular and Territorial Army's way of doing things making me wonder if I had done the right thing.

After the 18-hour trip from Brize Norton to Mount Pleasant, the Advance Party greeted us on a warm sunny day. What followed was a whirl wind 24 hours being herded around the Garrison like lost sheep, the day ending with a night in *Sharkeys*, JCUFIs bar. After a slow recovery from the night before I began to find my feet and was detailed a dilapidated FFR which was supposed to be a Flying RRB, well it might be. I am hoping the rest of the tour goes smoothly without any problems and before I know it I will soon be home again.

1 (ROYAL BUCKINGHAMSHIRE YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON (SPECIAL COMMUNICATIONS)

Sqn Comd **Maj David Raleigh**

SSM **WO2 (SSM) Dave Scott**

As usual this has been a very busy couple of months for the Squadron. No sooner were the hardened winter warriors back from arctic training in Norway than it was time to dig out the Ray Bans and issue Factor 15 for Florida. At the same time there was the small matter of running an Assessment Course for the Regular recruits, and then starting the four month Special Communications course which will lead some of them to be the highest paid operators in the Corps. Throw in a couple of weekend TA based Exercises and a TA Centre Open Day, and it has been basically business as normal.

We have said farewell to **Sgts Gillie Gilbert** and **John Denison**, and also to **Cpl Ian Kennedy**. The Squadron owes a great deal to these three and we wish them well for the future. **Cpl Leslie Jay** has been posted in from 20 Armd Bde. Having passed the Assessment Course she appeared in the Squadron only after attending a RACE maintenance course and spending two weeks on exercise in Bermuda, but who needs embarkation leave anyway?



Cpl Al Parker in the canal whilst on the Assessment Course

EXERCISE GLOBAL LYNX 3

Ex Global Lynx 3 was the last big Exercise to have a major input from **WO2 (YofS) Paul 'Ginge' Willimont** who has been in the hot seat for nearly five years. After seemingly endless phone calls to HQ Land, clearance was finally obtained and 30 odd Special Communicators (TA and Regular) crammed into a C-130 with all the radios and headed off to MacDill Air Force Base in Florida. As this was a bit far, the RAF provided an overnight in the Azores, sleepiest place in the middle of the Atlantic, and a quick re-fuel at Bermuda. **LCpl Paul** 'it's going to be an easy exercise' **Hadfield** was especially pleased to get back on the Hercules, to fly to Florida and then straight back to Bermuda to deploy his det. Other dets went to Fort Gordon (with **LCpl Hodge** 'I haven't used this kit for years' **Hodgson**) and Belize (the TA det, with **Cpl Mark** 'Junior Yeoman' **Gott** in charge).

In MacDill the Squadron was superbly hosted by the US Joint Communications Support Element (JCSE), and especially CW3 **Frank Pizzi**. JCSE also provided a Satcom det for Bermuda and Belize. The one and only **Sgt Lumsden** 'LL Cool G' **Gordon** masterminded setting up the Base, whilst the Yeoman and Foreman struggled to put up a RACE antenna which might work. A few days of bedding in were followed by the arrival in all locations of the staff officers with their piles of messages to send. The exercise proved a thorough test for the Squadron, with a chance to prove that the hard work of the last four years has been worthwhile, and boy was it hard work this time! **LCpl Sue** 'you can park it in my room Sir' **Jordan** is the most experienced base operator in the Squadron but even she was running out of energy for Ybor City after a manic day shift on set. **LCpl Scouse** 'I'm not on anyone's shift so I never get to go out' **Hardy** didn't have that problem in Comms Ops so he set about cultivating his Elvis sideburns once again. The Airborne SC crew of **Cpls Mick Peace, Jase Trimmer** and **Jase Broome** spent a week on standby but did eventually jump with JCSE and were awarded their US Para Wings. The Americans, from JCSE and veterans of 'Airborne School', flatly disbelieved the stories about log races on P Company.



Cpl Jase Broome, LSgt Jase Trimmer and Cpl Mick Peace who qualified for their US Para Wings

Communications to Belize proved bit problematic at first. **Cpl** 'It was hard work but we proved we can do the job' **Gott** had a steep learning curve and the BATSUB CO wasn't sure whether he enjoyed being called 'Boss' instead of the 'Sir' he was used to. Half of the comms problems seemed to stem from the Belize troops playing golf though the antenna field every afternoon, and the other half from **LCpl Pete Litchfield**'s 'Spiderman' approach to putting up the antennas. By the end of the first week, though, their staff officer was thoroughly confident in their blossoming abilities. The messages which he and the detachment sent out about Bill and Monica and free cigars all contributed to the Anglo-American special relationship! How to stop **LCpl Jim** 'Colonel Mad Dog' **Holgate** plotting a coup in Brownland was another matter entirely.

THE FORT GORDON DETACHMENT

by LCpl Gaz 'I have some funny religious beliefs' Woolley

On the 1 March 1999, the Fort Gordon det, consisting of **LCpl Simon** 'Hodge' **Hodgson, Cpl Carlton Holmes-Smith, Sig Stu Adams** and I arrived at Augusta Airport. We were met by our hosts from Battle Command Lab (Gordon), **Maj Robin Clapp** and **Mr David Milburn**.

Fort Gordon is a camp the size of Milton Keynes, but we managed to locate our primary comms site and the erection of what was to be the Fort Gordon detachment commenced and **Cpl Holmes-Smith** proved to be a competent mast erector.

As the Exercise progressed our staff officer started to throw traffic our way. He threw and threw and threw, but it seemed all that we were catching and handling very well. This phase of the Exercise was very busy with all operators tested and **Cpl Holmes-Smith**'s driving ability improved, which is really the only way it could go. The det did manage to get out for a few hours and visit the local bowling alley, where everyone seemed friendly and in one instance a little too friendly. A young American women decided to join our jolly group and an in depth conversation on her home town, her job, her friends, her family, and generally her ensued, during which time our now slurring new friend was stacking the Buds. We could only stop for a few hours and as we left we said our good byes, she didn't seem to want to let **LCpl Hodgson** go. We finally escaped as she disappeared off into the distance.

As the week progressed several tasks were set. These included a recce for an alternative comms site - a vast array of hotels were inspected for their suitability, and due to the bearings of the different stations a south facing room was necessary. Looking back I can still picture the scene, stood in a hotel reception trying to bluff the receptionist I needed a south facing room for a friend, who was of such a religion that he required to pray to south every morning and evening. Most of them fell for it and offered us a room. Eventually a hotel was agreed and **LCpls Hodgson** and **Woolley** moved into the hotel with **Sig Adams** holding the fort back at the Fort, and **Cpl H-S** driving to and fro distributing traffic.

During this time it was extremely busy and sleep was rare, although all det members enjoyed this phase. After a day or so the det were once again re-united at Fort Gordon and the staff officer set us to work on a hasty plan of extraction. The det continued to communicate 15mins before departure to the airport, which involved a great deal of work. At the airport there was no hanging around, and within 15mins of the plane landing, all kit was stowed and the C130 airborne again, destination AFB Macdill. Once the kit had been turned around a few days of relaxation were afforded and R&R commenced. **LCpls Hodgson, Hardy** and **Miller**, plus **Sig Adams** and I decided to make our way down to Miami in what can only be described as the 'A' Team van. With stops off in Orlando for a night and Fort Lauderdale for two nights, it was decided that diving into the shallow end of a pool was not good for the chin - **Hodge**. The five eventually found themselves at South Beach Miami - an experience that will never be forgotten.

All that remains for me to say is a big thank you on behalf of the Fort Gordon det to **Mr Milburn** and **Maj Clapp** for their tremendous efforts in support of the Exercise.

THE BERMUDA DETACHMENT - *by LCpl Paul Hadfield*

On the detachment were three operators, myself and two TA operators, and two techs who were there to provide support to our hosts, the Bermuda Regt. Also three Americans from the Air National Guard joined us to provide a Satcom link. After the first morning establishing comms to the other detachments **Sgt Jeff** 'I'm not just a cook' **Hope-Jefferson** and **Sig Al** 'Easy Rider' **Shrewsbury** set off to the local hire shop and returned later that day with big smiles and our two new toys - two scooters. The next couple of days were spent improving all our comms links and cross training with their American friends. By day four the scooter display team were well into their training, with **Cpl Leslie** 'What's this button do?' **Jay** demonstrating crash techniques whenever possible. Eventually it was time to start earning all that extra pay, and for the next seven days everyone worked their little socks off to get all the traffic passed and to complete any other tasks we were given.

Before everyone gets too jealous of all this time in sunny Bermuda I will let you into a little secret. It started to rain one hour after they landed and did not stop until about 15mins before we boarded the Hercules to fly back to Florida. At one point **LCpl Paul** 'Just call me Romeo' **Evans** had the pleasure of changing antennas in a hail storm and by the end of the comms phase everyone on the detachment was ready for a spot of R&R in Orlando.



Tell us about the rain in Bermuda again, Jeff!

HEADQUARTERS (PUBLIC RELATIONS) SUSSEX ARMY CADET FORCE

THE NATIONAL FIRE SAFETY YOUTH QUIZ BRIGADE FINAL UCKFIELD FIRE STATION – EAST SUSSEX – 25 FEBRUARY

Five members of Eastbourne Cadet Troop, Sussex ACF, attended the above final. East Sussex Fire Brigade had put on a first class evening for the four teams taking part, they all had great fun and learned a great deal about fire safety, which hopefully will be of use to them for many years to come. The Cadet Team Instructor, **Leading Fire Fighter Bob Newton** from Green Watch, Eastbourne Fire Station (**Lt Col Bob Newton MBE,** Deputy Commandant East Sussex ACF, in another life!) The scores of all four teams were very close, the Cadet troop Team taking third place. During the evening the Team picked up a few winning pointers for next year's event, so they will be going for gold!



WILKINSON SWORD OF PR EXCELLENCE WINNERS 1998

Sussex ACF have won the Wilkinson Sword of PR Excellence for 1998. The magnificent trophy was presented by the General Manager, **Malcolm Ordever** in London on 17 March at the Wilkinson Sword Factory 19/21 Brunei Road, London W3 7UR

Sussex have beaten 61 other Counties from all over the UK to win. **Lt Col Bob Newton MBE**, the County PRO, received the trophy on behalf of Sussex and said that it was a great honour to receive such a magnificent trophy. Sussex are the first winners of this new award from Wilkinson Sword presented for PR work for the Army Cadet Force. **Lt Col Newton** said that Sussex had a great deal of fun running a very busy campaign throughout 1998, this included over 150 articles in local papers and magazines, appearances on TV and the Local Radio plus many recruiting posters. All this hard work has raised the profile of Sussex ACF in the County and recruiting figures have been the highest for many years. We are working hard, once again, to win the 1999 award. Sussex Army Cadet Force have been very grateful to Caffyns PLC for their help, advice and support with PR during the 1998 campaign.



(L) Lt Col Bob Newton MBE, (Deputy Commandant & County PRO)
(R) General Manager, Malcolm Ordever, Wilkinson Sword Factory, London

THE ROYAL SIGNALS INSTITUTION JOURNAL

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JOINT OPERATIONS IN SPACE

Capt T. M. P. Mountford

This article is intended to introduce readers to the United Kingdom Military Satcomms System (UKMSCS) and to give substance to the process of Satellite control and Satcomm traffic processing which may appear transparent to Army users. It is hoped to develop this theme over the coming months with updates on developments in Satellite and Satcomm technology.

In the light of increased joint operations, and the growth of Army satcomm, an SO3 (W) post has been established at 1001 Signals Unit Royal Air Force. This will allow the designated officer to become familiar with the engineering technicalities of space operations at an early stage in his or her career. This should prove an asset to the Army, an environment where satcomm and the use of space is rapidly expanding whilst knowledge is still limited to specific areas. Capt T. M. P. Mountford R Signals was selected to be the first Army officer to fill the post and after seven months of training is now a spacecraft operations officer and an integral member of 1001 SU.

Royal Air Force Oakhanger is located in rural Northeast Hampshire close to the towns of Alton and Farnham. The station is home to 1001 Signals Unit Royal Air Force. 1001 SU provides satellite communications for all three services and also to various government departments. Together with 9 SU, 1001 SU has recently become part of a Lead Service Business Unit under the control of the newly created Defence Communications Services Agency which is headed by Maj Gen A. J. Raper, late Royal Signals. 1001 SU also controls three Skynet 4 and two NATO IV spacecraft in orbit and operates a telemetry and command site (TCS) on behalf of the USAF.

ORGANISATION AND ROLES

No 1001 SU was conceived and built as the UK anchor unit for UKMSCS in the late 1960s and the inexorable growth in SATCOM traffic has resulted in continuous expansion of the facilities ever since. The vulnerability of a single satellite ground station has led to a diversification programme, which has grown into the architecture of today's UKMSCS. This is shown pictorially later. Work to expand and update the communications system is continuing and with the huge demand for military satellite communications will require newer and more advanced technology to meet the demands for the next century. The components that support the UKMSCS at present are:

a. **Enhanced Satellite Operations Facility.** The ESOF is co-located with the Satellite Network Control Centre (SNCC) and Satellite Ground Station (SGS) at Oakhanger and is housed in an Electro-Magnetic Pulse Protected (EMPP) splinter proof operations building. The ESOF is fully operational and provides command and control for the current constellation of five satellites.

b. **SNCC Oakhanger.** The SNCC is housed in the operations building at Oakhanger and is the control and management centre for satellite accesses and technical inter-site links.

c. **SNCC Rudloe Manor.** The second SNCC is located in a semi-hardened NBC protected, EMPP building, adjacent to the Controller Defence Communications Network (CDCN) compound at RAF Rudloe Manor. The facility duplicates those available at SNCC Oakhanger.

d. **SGS Colerne.** This semi-hardened, NBC protected, EMPP SGS is equipped with four Satellite Ground Terminals (SGTs).

e. **SGS Defford.** SGS Defford is located on a DERA site and is equipped with 3 SGTs.

f. **SGS Oakhanger.** SGS Oakhanger has four SGTs.

g. **TCS Oakhanger.** No 1001 SU is responsible for the operation of satellite tracking facilities at TCS as directed by 750th Space Group, USAF Space Command. Under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) we have the use of one of the SGTs at TCS when necessary. TCS is also the site for the Skynet Dedicated Antenna (SDA) which can be used to monitor telemetry from the three UK military satellites.

h. **Space Segment.** The UKMSCS Space Segment currently comprises of the three UK military communications satellites: Skynet 4A, 4C and 4D.

1001 SU is commanded by a Wing Commander Engineer and is organised into four Squadrons as follows:

a. Space Operations Squadron.
b. Communications Operations Squadron.
c. Telemetry and Command Squadron
d. Administration Squadron.

The role of Space Ops Sqn is primarily to maintain the health and safety of the Skynet 4 and NATO IV constellation of communications satellites and for the operation of the ESOF at RAF Oakhanger. This makes the Squadron unique within the UK military, in that its personnel have direct responsibility for the flight of operational UK national spacecraft. In purely monetary terms the Squadron flies five spacecraft at a cost of £150 million a piece, giving each a similar purchase price to a squadron of Tornadoes or a Regiment's worth of Ptarmigan.

The ESOF provides the means necessary to control and monitor the spacecraft. Telemetry, from each individual spacecraft, is continuously monitored on the spacecraft's command console within the ESOF. Telemetry is monitored for any Out-Of-Limit (OOL), which may be expected, dependent upon the operation being performed, or unexpected, indicating a problem with the spacecraft, which must be acted upon. 5 Space Operations Sqn (5SOPS) at Onizuka Air Force Base, Sunnyvale, California provides operational support.

The Squadron is broken down into two main elements. Firstly, Day support Staff who will be Category 1 Spacecraft Operations Officers (SOOs). SNCOs and civilian contractors, they are responsible for the day to day planning and scheduling of space operations and control of the ground segment as well as in house training.

Secondly, there are the duty watches. Space Ops Sqn has four watches each led by a Category 1 or 2 SOO, who will be a Flight Lieutenant, with a staff of five Spacecraft Operations Assistants (SOA), all Sergeants. In addition a Category 1 qualified SOO from the Squadron Day Support Staff will provide advice and support to the duty watch in the event of a spacecraft anomaly, ground segment problem or other incidents affecting the health and safety of the spacecraft. Whilst on watch our role falls into two areas:

a. **Routine Ops.** Routine Ops are tasked by contracted spacecraft analysts and input to the daily command schedule by the SOAs on watch. At pre-determined times, dependent upon the Op, the commands are transmitted to the spacecraft and the returning telemetry is monitored for confirmation that the command has been executed.

b. **Unscheduled Ops.** Following the diagnosis of any anomalous spacecraft behaviour, or unexpected OOL, the first consideration of all spacecraft operators is to maintain the health and safety of the spacecraft. SOOs and SOAs are authorised to carry out actions that they deem necessary to ensure the health and safety of the spacecraft, based on their own engineering judgement. Our primary concern is to ensure that, should the spacecraft fail, it does so into a safe and recoverable state.

TRAINING

Spacecraft Operations Officers join the squadron following training from Satcom Squadron, No 1 Radio School. After four months of classroom based technical training on all aspects of the spacecraft sub-systems and some practical commanding using simulators the SOO designate sits a practical board and, if successful graduates, as a Cat 4 SOO. The level of detail in this training in this segment should not be underestimated. Officers are expected to have a thorough technical understanding, down to component level, of both the spacecraft and the Ground segment.

Once the SOO has achieved Cat 4, he will have the opportunity to visit 5 SOPS and the Lockheed Martin Facility at Onizuka Air Force Base, California. This is to undergo further formal training in Orbital Dynamics and to get to grips with the USA's own Air Force Satellite Control Network. The proximity of San Francisco and the delights of northern California are of course an excellent enhancement to the visit.

On returning he will then spend some time on watch experience, achieving Cat 3 status within one or two shift cycles. This for the first time allows the SOO to carry out commanding of a live spacecraft. There follows approximately six weeks attached to a watch during which time he will carry out a number of assessed commanding exercises and familiarise himself with ESOF procedures. Finally the SOO will spend a further three weeks in the classroom to consolidate the seven months training before the Cat 2 Board.

On graduation the SOO is assigned a shift and commences normal operations. He now has the authority to command the fleet of spacecraft and is directly responsible for their health and safety. A watch lasts for 12 hours and the normal cycle is two day watches followed by two night watches rounded off by three days time for personal administration or any secondary duties.

A Cat 2 SOO will normally spend up to 12 months with a duty watch, during which time he will carry out three further months of formal training with the objective of achieving Cat 1 status. Category 1 SOOs have considerably more freedom of action than Cat 2 SOOs and thus are given a greater share of the responsibility for Space Ops.

Once qualified a Cat 1 SOO will normally move from their watch to fulfil a day support role within the Squadron. Cat 1 SOOs are expected to have a deep understanding of each spacecraft and their associated idiosyncrasies, they will be required to draw upon their knowledge and experience to provide innovative solutions to unexpected anomalies. Additionally the Cat 1 is likely to be involved with outside agencies, both military and civilian. He will be required to provide expert advice to OC Space Ops Sqn when dealing with these agencies.

JOINT SPACE OPERATIONS

There has for some years been a Royal Naval Officer on exchange to Space Ops Sqn filling one of the SOO posts (The Royal Navy remains the largest user of, and contributor to, UK military Satcomm) . In line with SOinC (A)'s Strategy for Royal Signals of December 1997 and to reflect the sharp increase in Army satcomm usage since the Gulf Conflict it has been decided to establish a similar Army post, SO3(W) Spacecraft Operations Liaison Officer (SOLO), with the officer being drawn from Royal Signals.

SOLOs terms of reference specify that he is to provide the interface between the Army as a satcomm user and 1001 SU as a satcomm provider. He is to be the Army's exchange officer within 1001 SU, being an integrated member of the unit, undertaking the duties of a SOO and further technical duties as directed by the CO 1001 SU. In simple terms SOLO is the green presence within 1001 SU thus increasing Army visibility within a sister service to reflect the joint nature of the modern operations. It is initially daunting to make the shift from our traditionally tactical to a strategic view of communications, but it is all a matter of scale and capacity, of course tactical experience does serve to benefit the relationship.

In professional terms the post offers variety and a chance to serve with another service, providing an early baptism into joint operations, whilst at the same time reaching the first rung of the Sq(W) ladder. SOLOs link to the Corps is via DCIS (A) at MOD and his reporting chain reflects this. The high strategic importance attached to Space Ops coupled with the singular nature of the post provide ample opportunity to shine at reporting time. Thin lipped careerists take note!

On a personal level 1001 SU offers relative stability for those who have experienced a turbulent last few years. The area is attractive and just over 30 miles from the centre of London with easy access to Airports and ports making it ideal for the single officer desperately seeking a social life or the married officer unable to remember the faces of his family.

This role requires an officer who is technically confident, with a science or engineering degree, and a good understanding of information systems. At the same time the officer needs to be capable of operating outside the Corps within an RAF unit that has different operational perspective to that of a Royal Signals regiment deployed, for example, to Bosnia.

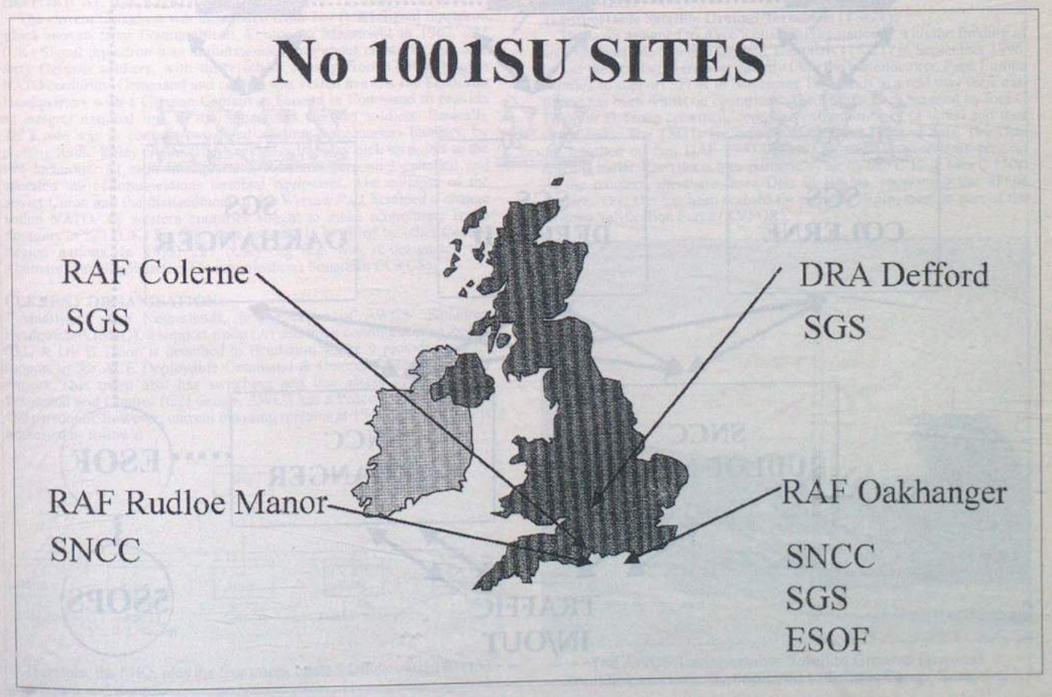
FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Recognition of the intrinsic benefits of military satellite communications has spurred the development of the UKMSCS into the sophisticated resource it is today. However, continuity of service has become an essential requirement, which must be addressed within the limited lifetime of our current in-orbit satellites and infrastructure.

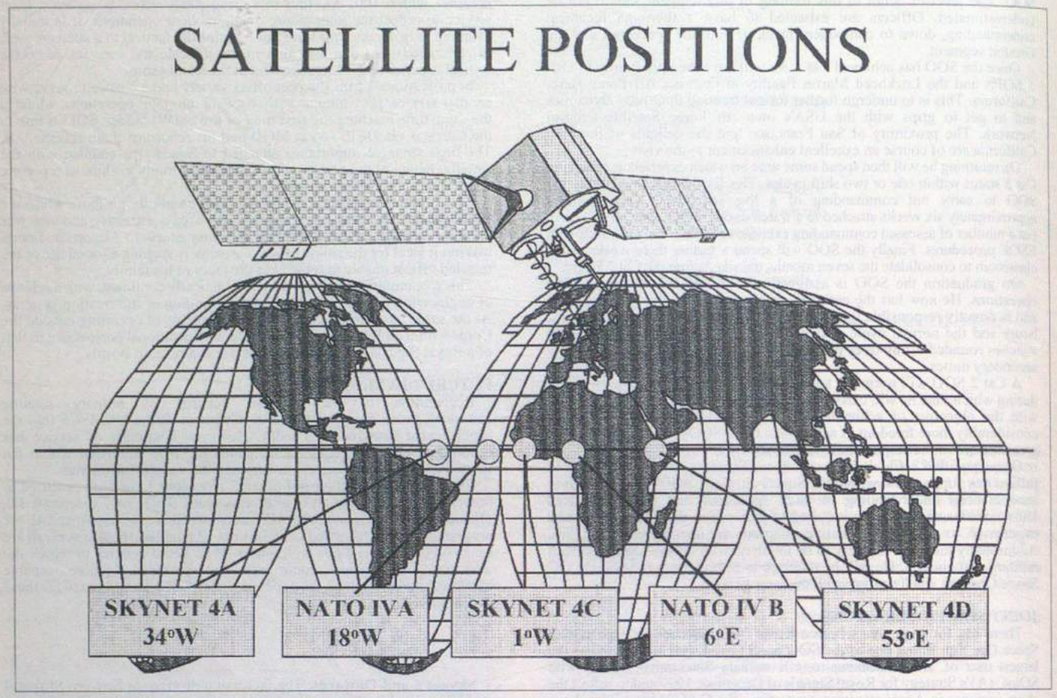
Skynet 4 Stage 2. Skynet 4 Stage 2 spacecraft have been procured to provide a low risk solution to near term needs. Three new spacecraft 4D, 4E and 4F have been procured. 4D was launched in January, 4E and 4F are programmed to be launched over the next 18 months. These spacecraft are based on the Skynet 4 bus with improved on board systems to reduce the workload on mission controllers and provide a more capable communications payload for our future needs. The launch dates for these spacecraft are:

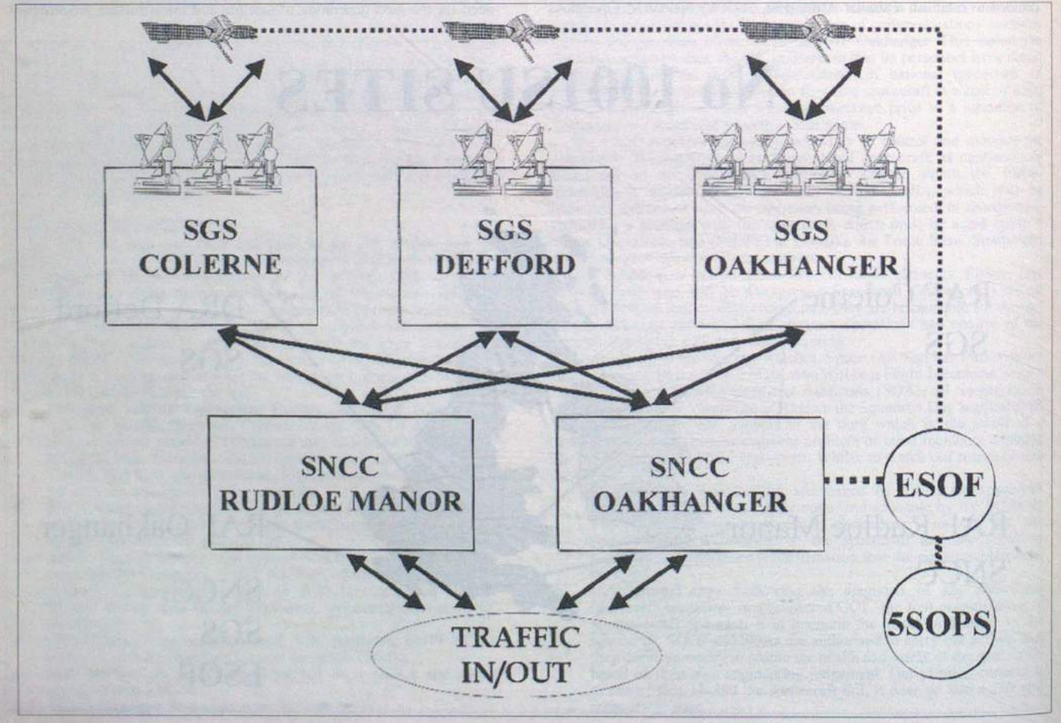
a. 4E - Feb 3rd 1999.
b. 4F - late 1999.

Skynet 5 and Onwards. The increasing divergence between Skynet 4 capabilities and evolving operational requirements underpins the essential need for the next generation of satellite and infrastructure procurement.



The MOD has undertaken a number of feasibility studies into the next generation of satellite systems to meet the growing needs of the UK military. Essentially, due to the extremely high costs involved, there is no guarantee that any new system will be solely a military system procurement. The next generation of military spacecraft may well be procured by Public Private Partnership with the private partner taking an unspecified role in operations. Until recently, a likely way forward was the proposed joint UK/German/French venture called TRIMILSAT. However, newspaper reports of 13 August 1998 state that TRIMILSAT has now fallen by the wayside. Watch this space – no pun intended.





THE ALTERNATE WAR HEADQUARTERS COMMUNICATIONS SQUADRON

by Maj P. M. Kelly R. Signals Officer Commanding

A CORPS SECRET . . . . .

Since 1967, the Alternate War Headquarters Communications Squadron (AWCS) has proudly provided real communications support to the Commander In Chief, Allied Forces Central Europe. Throughout the period known as the 'Cold War', AWCS played its part in ensuring an effective visible deterrence was maintained. Since that time, AWCS has participated in Exercises with our former East European rivals, now our partners and has since 1996 taken an active role in the NATO forces deployed to the Former Yugoslav Republic. Since 1990, we have seen changes that were thought to be impossible a mere decade ago. National downsizing and lack of funding have placed strains hitherto unknown to AWCS. The Squadron has taken these developments in its stride, and has undergone an important cultural change to reflect the fact that it must now deploy on a moments notice to support SFOR, deploy a MF HQ or send a SATCOM anywhere in the Central Region.

The challenges of the past and those of the immediate future provide the milestones that displays to all the professionalism that makes the Alternate War Headquarters Communications Squadron the finest in NATO.

INTRODUCTION

The Alternate War Headquarters Communications Squadron (AWCS), is an independent, multinational communications squadron based in Maastricht, the Netherlands. The Squadron provides field CIS for the Commander in Chief Allied Forces Central Region (CINCENT), through the Staff of the Central Region Signal Group (CRSG) in Brunssum. In the future, the Squadron will expand into the ACE Contingency CIS Assets Pool (ACCAP) Bn; which will become essentially SACEUR's Article 5 and out of area CIS, Battalion. At the moment, MCS performs both the old and new with current operations in Bosnia and elsewhere being much in the ACCAP role. The aim of this article is to familiarise the reader with a background to the Squadron while concentrating on AWCS' current missions and tasks at home and in support of NATO's Stabilisation Force (SFOR).

ROLES

AWCS has six roles. They are:

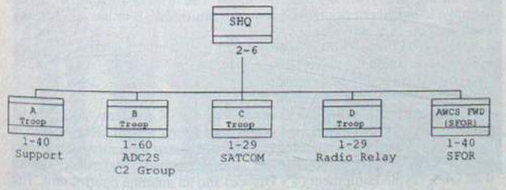
a. CIS support to CINCENT's Interim War Headquarters.
b. CIS support to the CJTF HQ trial.
c. Participation in the NATO/French series of Exercises, CONNECTION FLARE.
d. Conversion to the ACCAP Bn role.
e. ADC2S Project Support.
f. CIS Support to SFOR and elsewhere.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The current Squadron was descended from 227 (UK) Signal Squadron which moved from Fountainbleau, France, to Maastricht in 1967. 227 (UK) Signal Squadron was multinational, with about eighty British, and forty German soldiers, with thirty others coming from Central Region NATO countries. Command and control was vested in a UK run Squadron Headquarters with a German Captain as Second in Command to provide an integral national link to the Squadron's German soldiers. Basically 227's role was to connect two fixed wartime headquarters bunkers, by running Radio Relay chains from various radio relay pick up points to the two locations. At each headquarters, squadron personnel installed and operated the communications terminal equipment. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the disbandment of the Warsaw Pact heralded a change within NATO. As western countries sought to make economies, Troop strengths in 227 (UK) Sig Sqn were reduced to be filled by other Central Region nations. In 1991, 227 (UK) Sig Sqn was re-designated the Alternate War Headquarters Communications Squadron (AWCS).

CURRENT ORGANISATION

Maastricht, The Netherlands, is the home of AWCS' Squadron Headquarters (SHQ), a support troop (A) and three communicating troops (B,C & D). B Troop is detached to Brunssum where it provides project support to the ACE Deployable Command & Control System (ADC2S) project. This troop also has switching and line assets as part of the Command and Control (C2) Group. AWCS has a Peace Establishment of 180 personnel, however, current manning remains at 154. The Squadron is organised as follows:



Therefore, the SHQ, plus the five troops totals 7 Officers and 180 (153 actual) men and women.

PERSONNEL



AWCS is very much a multinational squadron as demonstrated by this group photograph taken in SFOR

Personnel are drawn from five nations. Men and women come from the Army or Airforce, depending on their specialisation, and work in the English language. Shown below is the personnel breakdown by nationality:

AWCS NATIONAL REPRESENTATION
(Actual)

NATION	No. of Persons
Belgium	58
Germany	8
Netherlands	25
United Kingdom	34
United States	28
Total (Actual Strength)	153

EQUIPMENT

Transportable Satellite Ground Terminals (TSGT):

The tasks assigned to AWCS changed dramatically with the fielding of six Transportable Satellite Ground Terminals (TSGT) in September 1996. In fact the first two were sent directly from the manufacturer, Page Europa (Rome), to support SFOR in November 1996; thus in a real way their trial period has been whilst on operations. The TSGTs, each manned by four C Troop or D Troop crewmen, comprise two multi-links (4 links) and four single links. The TSGTs are capable of carrying 2Mbt of data. The Dets are installed on two DAF 2300 trucks with 60KVA generators plus an antenna trailer. Each det is transportable by air by one C 17 or four C 130s. At the moment, there are three Dets in Bosnia, supporting the SFOR mission. One Det has been warned for possible deployment as part of the Kosovo Verification Force (KVFOR).



The AWCS Transportable Satellite Ground Terminal multilink as currently deployed to Butmir Camp, Sarajevo

ACE Deployable Command and Control System (ADC2S):

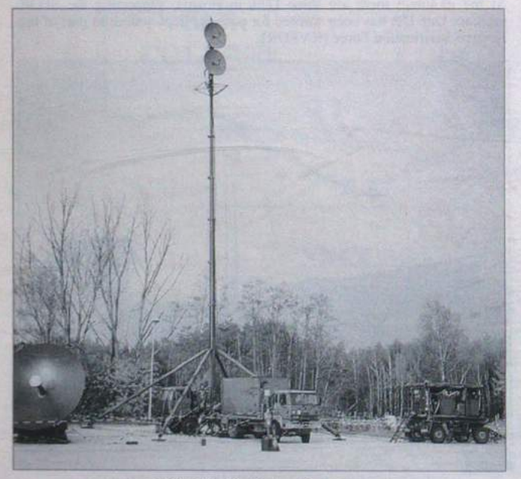
ADC2S is a project currently under development by Siemens and HQ AFCENT. Military manpower is provided by AWCS' B Tp, based in Brunssum, NL. Their job is to provide technicians and operators to operate and maintain the system on exercise and in garrison. ADC2S is a command and control system providing internal and external voice/data communications interconnected via a fibre optic ring. ADC2S facilities can be extended to other shelters by using Network Extension Modules as developed by NC3A in The Hague. After successes during Exercises Cooperative Guard 7 (a PFP exercise) and Allied Effort (NATO's CJTF HQ validation exercise), it is possible the system will be fielded in 1999.



Inside an AWCS Ace Deployable Command and Control System (ADC2S) Communications Control Shelter

'85 Buy Line of Sight Radio Relay (RR)

A survivor from the Squadron's former incarnation, the '85 Buy RR has been adapted to ever changing tasks. The nine Dets, each manned by a crew of four from D Tp, provide an SHF, 2Mbt link carrying voice/data. The range possible between Dets is 50km. This Troop achieved great success during Ex Allied Effort by engineering into the Bundeswehr AFMIS BW system and linking HQ AFCENT to the Exercise area via HQ 1 GE Armd Div in Hannover. Additionally the RR Troop has deployed to Sarajevo for test shots and deployed two detachments to Tuzla, supporting Multinational Division North.



An AWCS Radio Relay Detachment at Trauen Training Area, Northern Germany

Ancillaries

B Troop are the guardians of the Siemens HICOM 372 and 353 switches. In theatre B Troop personnel operate the COMSFOR's HQ Ericsson switches. B Troop provides the Squadron's operators for its VTC capability as well as all line and cable work. An Indication of the immensity of their tasks was that B Troop laid over 70km of line for Ex Allied Effort held in the Trauen training area.

MAASTRICHT HOME STATION TASKS (1997 - 1998)

Other than the routine round of garrison training, maintenance and inspection challenges, AWCS has undergone a full exercise timetable during 1997. Sqn members participated in five Squadron level comms Exercises, Cobalt Flash in Germany and The Netherlands. We have an ongoing commitment to continue with interoperability exercises with the French Signals in the Connection Flare series of Exercises. In support of NATO's Combined Joint Task Force Headquarters (CJTF HQ) trial, the Squadron deployed to the field in northern Germany (Trauen, Fassberg and Munsterlager) for 96 days in 1997.

Already in 1998, AWCS participated in eleven Exercises of various sizes. Ex Strong Resolve in Spain in March, Hungary on Ex Co-operative Lantern in May and a Troop deployed to SFOR as part of Ex Dynamic Response/Strike '98 in April/May. The average AWCS soldier/airman will spent 133 days away from his or her family - this total does not include any deployments to Bosnia in support of SFOR (primarily concentrating on SATCOM and Radio Relay personnel).

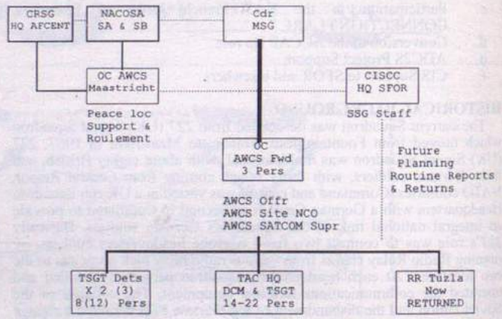
SUPPORT TO SFOR MISSION

General

Since Nov 1996, AWCS has deployed personnel and equipment in support of the SFOR mission. In that time, personnel strength in theatre has fluctuated from a low of ten on initial deployment to a total 56 with four TSGTs, a Mobile Communications Module (MCM) and the Radio Relay Troop deployed. In order to ease the ambiguity, and to respond from a requirement to lead our soldiers in the field, SHQ AWCS has from Jan 1997 kept and officer an SNCO in theatre as AWCS Fwd, to act as a liaison with the Staff on matters of planning, operations and to see to the needs of deployed personnel with regards to leadership, management, discipline, transport, supply and administration.

AWCS FWD COMMAND AND CONTROL RELATIONSHIPS

The following is the AWCS Fwd C2 relationship whilst deployed to SFOR:



* MSG denotes Multinational Signal Group

SATCOM

The Transportable Satellite Ground Terminal (TSGT) mission is to provide data circuits, VTC and telephone switch connections between HQ SFOR and the major commands, as well as to the Deployable Communications Module (or CIS Gateway Shelter (CGS)) of COMSFOR's TAC HQ.

MCS has three TSGTs in theatre. One multi link (OL5X) is based HQ SFOR, Ilidza and the Squadron has deployed a multi link (OLM to Butmir. In addition there is a third single link TSGT (OL1X) whose mission is to support COMSFOR's TAC HQ. A TSGT can be operational within one hour after arrival in a deployment location as witnessed at Glamoc Ranges BiH, during Ex Dynamic Response/Strike. The TSGTs are similar, but do not have identical configurations (two are multi link, four are single link). They do, however, provide:

a. G703/G704 2Mbt channels per link.
b. 2-W analogue voice circuits.
c. Synchronous data circuits.
d. Asynchronous data circuits.

Additionally, the multi link features four QPSK modems, four SSMA modems, five up converters, six down converters, a dual HPA system, a Low Noise Amplifier, a monitor control and alarm system which allows for remoting outside the shelter, an atomic frequency reference system with GPS, crypto equipment (4 x Disbee) and an antenna control unit. The single link features only two QPSK modems, two SSMA modems, three up converters, four down converters and crypto equipment (2 x Disbee). Otherwise the Dets have similar equipment.

DEPLOYABLE COMMUNICATIONS MODULE OF THE TAC HEADQUARTERS

Out of the concept of fielding a TAC HQ for COM establishes the following TAC HQ (and by association MCM) missions:

a. Provide C2 during an incident.
b. Exercise theatre command in special circumstances.
c. Facilitate liaison in resolving a crisis.
d. Assistance to the Strategic Reserve.
e. Show of Force.

The configuration of the TAC HQ will change according to the mission it is to accomplish and will be tailored to satisfy various requirements. The TAC HQ is based on five, 5metre staff shelters provided by the HQ SFOR Tpt Coy. The TAC HQ comms element, the AWCS MCM (CGS), provided and manned by AWCS (14 to 22 personnel depending on mission/task), comprises the necessary communications to field secure CRONOS and IPN facilities (a successful MSE trial was conducted in Nov 97). Computers and STU IIBs will be provided by the staff user.

The AWCS MCM provides the following facilities:

a. SATCOM via an AWCS TSGT to an HQ SFOR based AWCS TSGT.
b. TSGT connection to the CGS#1 shelter via a fibre optic cable.
c. CRONOS Data connected to an IDNX to the Router and LAN Plexor using a fibre optic cable to a Hub then out along fibre optic cables to the CRONOS workstations in the TAC HQ.
d. IPN Voice connectivity is achieved by connecting the IDNX to an Ericsson MD 110 Voice Switch to the entry panel in CGS1#1 using 26 pair tactical cable to distribution boxes via 2 pair cables to RJ 11 C blocks to subscribers in the TAC HQ.
e. MSE/TRITAC interface.
f. VTC capability.

The AWCS MCM (CGS) provides the user with the following facilities:

a. 30 IPN telephones.
b. 3 STU IIBs.
c. 1 Secure Facsimile machine.
d. 2 INMARSAT terminals.
e. 1 UHF TACSAT, LST-5E.
f. 4 Hubs.
g. 15 Work Stations.
h. 2 Black and White printers.

'85 BUY RADIO RELAY DETACHMENT - TUZLA; MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

AWCS deployed a crew of four men and two '85 Buy RR Dets to Tuzla in order to establish a 2Mbt link from an IDNX through a remote RR det located at Tuzla Main to an IDNX connected to a manned RR Det, located at Camp Commanche. This allowed administrative traffic to pass between the Commander MND North and the Commander 4 Avn Bde, 1 (US) Armd Div. This mission ended in mid 1998.

CURRENT IN THEATRE MANNING

At the time of writing (October 1998), AWCS had one Officer and 24 soldiers in theatre; providing HQ AWCS Fwd including a SATCOM supervisor, three manned TSGT Dets and an MCM crew. This represents approximately a third of AWCS' communicator strength and also includes personnel on their third, and sometimes fourth, tour in Bosnia. AWCS is also preparing an MCM for possible deployment to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FRYOM) as part of the KVFOR.

CONCLUSION

AWCS will continue shoulder the burdens of having to effect a conversion to the ACCAP Bn over the coming year, combined with continued operations in Bosnia and elsewhere plus a full exercise timetable at home.



A selection of Sarajevo based AWCS personnel

Although for many, 1997/1998 was a very busy period, I believe that 1999 will be just as busy and that AWCS will continue to rise to the challenge at hand without flinching. As a Squadron we are proud of the work we perform at home, and abroad. A posting with AWCS allows the soldier and his family to get to know the Benelux countries, receive training on state of the art equipment plus a guarantee of an operational deployment. With all that's going for it, MCS should not remain 'a Corps Secret' for much longer!

MALAYSIA/SINGAPORE REVISITED NOVEMBER 1998

By Maj Gen (Retd) H. Hild

My wife and I have recently completed a 'Round the World trip' which included Malaysia and Singapore. Quite an adventurous training expedition in its way - for a couple of old geriatrics!

LABUAN - 33 years on!

Heard of Borneo - Confrontation - JCUB/266 Sig Sqn?

It was striking to visit Labuan after a gap of 33 years - and with my wife this time. So much development, tarmac roads, even traffic lights at the main crossings.



Outside Army Headquarters Labuan
Lt Kol Tom Kim Swee (2nd from right) and RHQ Staff, 1st Royal Malaysian Signal Regiment

Headquarters - The hutted HQ (in wooden 'Bashas' with corrugated iron roofs) still stands, occupied by 1 Royal Malaysian Signal Regiment. The Tape Relay Centre has been gutted and replaced by a small message centre (piled high with paper tape) until the introduction of a PC-based messaging system currently on trial. The System Control is now a bedding store. The GOC's office is used by the CO, and the Ops Corridor next door has been converted to an Officers' and Senior Ranks' Coffee Room. The RAF Complex has become a quiet room set aside for prayer, and the CRSIGNALS offices have been turned into a lecture room. My old office, which conjured up images of so many old friends is derelict and boarded up! What of SSM Gibbs, Sig Bardsley and many others?

Fairyland - The transmitter site, with its name 'Fairyland' much in evidence, continues to exist – taken over by the Royal Malaysian Navy. Brick/concrete buildings replace the wooden huts which, in our day, replaced the original transmitter vehicles and canvas! True to naval style, a permanent barracks has been built to house the staff. Indeed, Labuan has become a permanent Naval Base for East Malaysia.



Fairyland Transmitter Station

Membedai and Airport - The airport terminal is still easily recognisable despite some extensions and refurbishing. A new, exotic 'International Terminal' is being built and may even be open by now! The old Membedai Lines and RAF LABUAN seem to have been swallowed up by development - at least we did not see them. A new permanent Air HQ, with large air defence radars, has been built for RMAF on the North of the island, near the Victorian Mine chimney (now a tourist attraction).

Surrender Point – The site of so many barbecues and a centre of social life for the Squadron, has been developed into a 'Peace Park', financed by the Japanese. This has been tastefully done, preserving the stone monument commemorating the Japanese Surrender to the Australian 9th Division in 1945.



Surrender Point Peace Park
The Stone commemorating the Japanese surrender 1945

Tenuous Circuits - Nearby is the PTT 'Tele Port', with enormous satellite dishes, which replaces the VHF LOS system to Mount Kinabalu relay station and on to Jesselton (now Kota Kinabalu) of the 1960s. This scale of communications is needed to meet the ambitions of Labuan as an offshore commercial and financial centre. Oh, that we could have had even simple satellite communications! One of our circuits from Labuan to Kuching went via Mount Kinabalu to Jesseiton, then by SEACOM cable to Singapore, on radio relay to the Johore transmitter station and eventually to Kuching by HF! Little wonder Christopher Last and Tony Boyle had nightmares!

Officers Mess - Only two of the four accommodation blocks are in use. The unused blocks (including my room) stand empty and deteriorating rapidly! Now my wife understands why I warned my neighbours (among them John Ridge) before dictating tapes to our children. The mess dining and kitchen etc facilities have been moved and re-erected to avoid erosion into the sea! What unknown dangers we survived!

SINGAPORE - 28 years on!

Many people will have visited Singapore since we left it in 1971 on the withdrawal of the British military presence. Apart from doing touristy things, we wanted to see what has become of our old haunts around Dover Road?

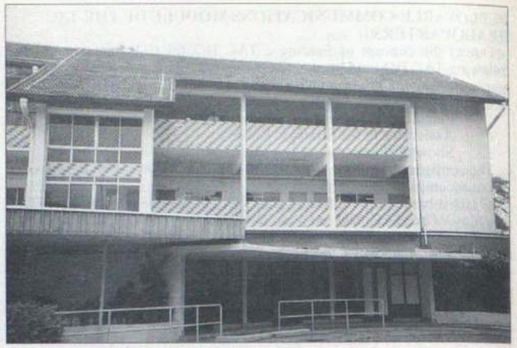
Dover Road - We walked the whole length of Dover Road for the first time! It is now becoming a dual carriageway, with development either side. *Meiktila Barracks* has been (is being) redeveloped with high rise blocks and *Rochester Park* will follow within the next couple of years. On the opposite side of the road are various schools, foremost among them is the Atlantic College (formerly St Johns School).

Princess Mary Barracks (18th Signal Regiment) including its playing fields, stadium and Dover Road Pool, have been redeveloped as the Campus for the Singapore Polytechnic. Three buildings remain: the *Moberly Block*, the *Sergeants' Mess* and the *Officers' Mess*.



The Moberly Block
The Barrack Block turned into a Practical Telecoms Laboratory

These are used as practical laboratories, a child care centre, and a junior school respectively. There are in addition the *Moberly Close* and *Princess Mary Walk*.



Officers' Mess turned into a Junior School

Sports Complex - The Doyer Road pool has been enlarged to Olympic standard with nine lanes. The sports stadium next door remains and has had a spectator stand added. All around are sports halls, multi-purpose indoor and outdoor facilities; squash, basket ball and tennis courts. In the middle of the complex is a large 'Telecoms Tower' - quite appropriate I suppose!



Dover Road Pool - now Olympic Standard with nine lanes
Note the Telecom Tower!

The Warren Golf Club has gone from strength to strength since we handed it over to Singaporean membership and management. Permanent buildings have replaced the old club house and a country club, with swimming pool, tennis and squash courts, has been added. Sadly, the Golf Club land is required for expansion by the Singapore University (on Kent Ridge) and the Warren will move later this year to a redeveloped site at Kranji, with an 18 hole course and country club facilities. Readers may be interested to know that the entrance fee is now S$80,000 (close to £30,000!

Rochester Park - Our great delight was to find our old quarter (No 23). Apart from modernising the kitchen and building a swimming pool in the garden, the house remains the same. We were asked in by the current occupants - a German lady and gentleman from Mauritius, with two small children. The estate is run by the Singapore Government and let commercially. The houses will be pulled down and the site redeveloped in two years time. The main new feature is the MRT (Mass Rail Transport (?) - on monorail) which runs past the estate less than 100 yards away!

Singapore, in general, is very impressive - green, clean and efficient. Well worth a visit though you might need a guide to find old haunts! However, taxis are cheap, as are the MRT and buses. Almost everything is air-conditioned!

Zainab bte Ali widow of Capt Jimmy Yahya formerly of 18 Sig Regt. Many members of the former 18 Sig Regt, will remember Jimmy Yahya, who was successively Malay RSM and Malay Captain. He died quite suddenly of a heart attack in 1991, while working for a Palm Oil exporting company in Butterworth. Part of our trip was to visit Zainab. She is, of course, much older and a little more frail but is well looked after by her eldest daughter, Zainon. Shortly after our visit, they moved to Sandakan, on the East coast of Sabah, to live with her second daughter (who is a doctor) and family. Sadly, they have had to leave her youngest daughter, Zarina, behind in West Malaysia for higher education. Zainab did great work for the Malay families in Singapore, and those who remember her will be pleased to know that she is in good hands.

And Finally - our thanks to the following who made our trip to Malaysia and Singapore such a pleasure and success:

Lt Kol (R) Idris bin Md Jadi, Sec Gen Ex-Services Association of Malaysia, Lt Kol Tan Kim Swee, CO 1 Royal Malaysian Signal Regiment, Haji Abdul Majid bin Abu Bakar, Chairman, Penang Region. Ex-Services Association of Malaysia, The Staff of the Singapore Polytechnic and the Warren Golf Club.

30 SIGNAL REGIMENT ADVENTURE TRAINING EXERCISE NATAL DRAGON 5 - 24 NOVEMBER 1998

by WO2 (YofS) Jim Knight and Sgt Ken Barker

INTRODUCTION

As I write these *Wire* notes I am very conscious of the fact that there has been a recent article in the *The Wire* (October 1998) on the very subject of Adventurous Training in South Africa. South Africa has recently been given Table III status in the Adventurous Training Compendium, meaning that units can legitimately visit the country for the purpose of training. It therefore seems logical that the popularity of a new country should grant such interest from military units. From conception to inception it has taken nine months to plan a 19-day trekking package around the battlefields of Kwa Zulu Natal, the foot hills and the high peaks of the Drakensburg Mountain Range. Despite a number of very senior individuals volunteering to attend, the concept was to involve some of the younger Signallers in the Regiment. The final team consisted of

WO2 (YofS) Jim Knight	Expedition Leader UEL(S)
Sgt Ken Barker	2IC UEL(S)
Sig Dave Steadman	
Sig 'H' Harrison	
Sig Ray McKay	
Sig Oscar Phillips	
Sig 'Maca' McCarthy	
Sig Si Mooney	Special Agent
Sig Sean Martin	
Sig Graham Wooton.	

DEPLOYMENT

The ten members of the expedition paraded at Bramcote guardroom on the 5 November at 1500hrs. A last minute check of essential documentation was made prior to setting off. We arrived safely at Heathrow after a uneventful trip including a traffic-jammed M25. We all checked in at 1800hrs to find half of us overweight (and that's the baggage I'm referring to) some as much as 12kg. This could be due to the fact that Sig 'Si' Mooney had all his water bottles full. After sweet-talking the BA desk we were let through without any extra payment. Whilst we were waiting for the flight, I was informed by all the lads that they had watched the video of Zulu, the previous week, for research. The plane was delayed by one hour, which had no impact on an uneventful 12hr flight that included a refuelling stop at Jo'burg, during which we remained on the plane.

ARRIVAL IN SOUTH AFRICA

Hello South Africa - yes they drive on the left. We picked up the hire car from the Durban Airport and an alleged ten-seater minibus with only eight seats. When this was pointed out to Budget Rent A Car, they said that although it only had eight seats we could cram ten in - after all this is Africa! This was as good as we were going to get and so we paid our £300 extra deposit excess in case of accident - would we get it back? We then drove the 31/2hrs to Dundee via Pietesmaritzburg and Ladysmith in a fair amount of rain - isn't Africa supposed to be hot? We checked into two Rondavels (circular huts with bunk beds) at the Municipal Camp Site, which had all the normal campsite facilities. A local Wimpy bar was found for ten famished people and then after a shower, shave, shampoo, we hit the town for a few quiet sociables. The local townsfolk seemed friendly enough and made us most welcome. WO2 Jim Knight met a Sergeant Major from the local SA Army Kommandos Unit who promised us a trip out the next day to visit the battlefields.

THE BATTLE OF TALANA – LOW LEVEL TREKS

The next day we were ready by 0830hrs for this trip that never materialised. The alleged Sergeant Major did turn up, but couldn't make the trip because he was off on patrol. The morning was spent food shopping and meeting Pat Rundgren who was to be our guide for the following day's visit to Rorke's Drift. In the afternoon we drove to just outside Dundee to Talana Hill museum. This was the site of the first battle of the second Boer War (20 October 1899). The museum was very interesting and afterwards we walked the Talana battlefield route with Sgt Ken Barker acting as narrator. *'The route followed the advance of the 4500 British troops stationed in Dundee under Lt Gen Sir William Penn Symons towards Gen Lueas Meyer of Vryheid who had occupied Talana and Lennox Hills with 3500 Boer riflemen and artillery. The engagement involved the Royal Irish Fusiliers (This was the first battle in which British troops were completely kitted in khaki uniforms) assaulting the forward slope of Talana hill. It took the British troops six hours to take the hill for the loss of 41 men killed and 185 wounded'.* It was quite impressive to walk the route, which near the summit turned into a scramble. After a visit to the Talana cemetery and memorials it was back to the Rondavels for a Barbecue. Sig Oscar Phillips then informed us that he'd spent the whole day walking with a Silva compass in his boot and didn't realise it - just as well it wasn't a prismatic.

ISANDHLWANA AND RORKES DRIFT

Reveille 0800hrs (well it is Sunday) drove with tour guide Pat to following places: Louis Napoleon's death site, *'The only son of Napoleon 111, had joined Lord Chelmsford staff as his aide-de-camp. The ill-fated Prince set out on a reconnaissance on the 1 June 1879. Zulu warriors attacked his scouting party. The 17 stab marks in his uniform bear testament to his courageous stand, thus ended the Napoleon dynasty'.* At Isandhlwana we walked the battlefield from the Nqutu plain where the Zulu's were first discovered to Col Durnford's last stand and the site of Col Pope's demise. *'Isandhlwana was the biggest defeat of British troops throughout the Zulu wars of 1879. Lt Col Pulleine had been left in command of the encampment of 1500 troops, he had sent scouts out when they discovered 25,000 Zulu's waiting in a ravine some five miles away. They covered the ground quickly and amassed themselves in front of the British position, a sea of Zulu warriors over a mile and half long advanced to the encampment. In the space of several hours the British had been wiped out, with 1300 men killed. The bodies of the dead lay on the battle field for five months'.* The remains of those fallen soldiers were piled up and covered with white cairns, those cairns remain on the battlefield today. We then moved onto Fugitive's Drift. *'Some of the survivors of Isandhlwana tried to escape, making their way towards the Buffalo River. In particular Lts Coghill and Melvill tried to save the Queen's Colours. They made it all the way to the river where they were killed, having thrown the Colours into the river. Thus effectively saved the Colours were eventually recovered some weeks later. Lts Coghill and Melvill were both awarded the VC and their graves remain where they fell'.* The last stop of the day was Rorke's Drift. *'Of the 25,000 Zulu's involved at Isandhlwana, 4000 of them advanced to the mission station at Rorkes Drift some 30km away. During the 12hr engagement, 100 British troops defended the station and in the process won 11 VCs'.* Pat our tour guide was excellent and kept the interest of the party all day, if only history lessons at school had been this interesting.



Rorkes Drift
Standing (L-R): Sig McCarthy, Sig Phillips, Sgt Barker, Sig Mooney, Sig Wooton
Sitting (L-R): WO2 Knight, Sig Steadman, Sig Harrison, Sig Martin, Sig McKay

A lot of miles were covered in the day and on the way back in the minibus, a stone flew up and smashed the front light - oh no two days in and we may already be losing the excess deposit. A very long day but worth it. That evening was spent in the local watering hole watching pirate videos of 'Antz' and the 'X Files'. Everybody was exhausted and retired early to bed.

FUGITIVES DRIFT

In the morning it was back to Isandhlwana to walk the route that Lts Coghill and Melvill followed to Buffalo River, know as Fugitives Trail which turned out to be an 18km walk in sweltering heat over arduous country. I certainly wouldn't like to do it with 4000 Zulu chasing me! The countryside was liberally covered with thorn bushes, which tore into the legs of those who were wearing shorts. Lots of water was drunk, but gladly no sunburn casualties. Sig 'H' Harrison and Oscar Phillips led the route on a very difficult to follow path with the help of a makeshift map. We stopped off for lunch in an isolated settlement which only had one person living in it and he seemed determined to escort us all the way back to Isandhlwana. He obviously thought there would be some money in it for him.

COMBINED OPERATIONS

The evening was spent at the South African Army mess belonging to the Dundee and Glencoe Kommando Unit which at first we thought were real commandos but it turned out that they were the local version of the TA and the Sgt Major turned out to be a wide boy Private. Anyway Yeoman Jim Knight presented their CO with our Regimental plaque and we got some deaths heads (their insignia) in return. We were extremely well hosted; their QM got some rations and a rifle out for us to play with. We eventually managed to extract ourselves at about 2300hrs.

THE KOP

Up early and away to the Boer War battlefields with our trusted guide Pat. All of us (except for Sig Graham Wootton, who had a problem with his bowels and underwear) walked the Spioenkop Ridge (of special interest to Sig Dave Stedman from Liverpool as The Kop is named after this battle); *'The battle took place on 23 - 24 January 1900. It was the scene of the most futile and bloodiest of the battles to relieve the town of Ladysmith. The British took the hill, occupied it and gave it up all in 24 hours'*. We then moved on to Colenso, Tugela Heights (we actually won that one). *'The battle occurred shortly after Spioenkop on 21-26 February 1900 and saw a series of skirmishes which resulted in Gen Buller re-occupying Ladysmith, it also resulted in the artillery losing ten of their twelve guns to the Boers during the fight for Colenso, hence the reason that they wear the white lanyard'*. In the evening we were guests of the MOTHs (Military Order of the Tin Helmets or their version of the Royal British Legion) for a few sherbets and war stories before going out for a meal and bed. During our stay in Dundee we seemed to have generated quite a lot of interest by the local town folk. This was topped off by a reporter from the Northern Natal Courier coming to interview us for an article in the regional paper - I suppose it is all valuable Public Relations.

THE MOVE TO THE DRAKENSBURG – HIGH LEVEL TREKS

Prior to saying our goodbyes to our newly found friends from Dundee, Pat turned up with a new headlight for the minibus, costing only £15 - would we still get the deposit back. We then moved off and made our way towards Ladysmith and the site of Telegraph Ridge. This high feature that looks over Ladysmith was used as a heliograph position, prior to and after the Boer siege of the town. The purpose of our visit to Telegraph Ridge was to hold a minute's silence for remembrance at 11am.



Remembrance Day - Telegraph Ridge, Ladysmith
(L-R); Sgt Barker, Sig McCarthy, Sig Steadman, Sig Wooton, Sig Phillips, Sig Martin, Sig Harrison, Sig McKay, Sig Mooney

We then had a six hour drive to Himeville, which nestles in the shadow of the Drakensburg. Here we had a restaurant meal (our last for a while). Most opted for steak and chips but some went for a Roast Pork and vegetables and one risked a chicken curry. We did a final bit of shopping in Himeville and then made the final 45 minute drive to the guesthouse in the Mkhomazana valley. The drive was interesting to say the least as the weight in the hire car gave it almost no ground clearance and the bottom was scraped a few times (more worries about the deposit). The road was full of potholes and stones. At the site the local residents seemed dubiously spaced out of their minds - we kept to ourselves. The rooms were luxurious including double beds and bedding. There was a local hotel nearby (the Sam Pass hotel) which was a bit too posh for us and definitely out of our price range. We sorted our kit out at the house for the expedition phase over the Drakensberg Mountains and had a reasonably early night.

THE EXPEDITION

The Expedition phase – 0640 hrs reveille for most of us. Sig Dave Steadman made bacon and eggs for the five occupants of his house but poor WO2 Jim Knight got nothing because his group hadn't the foresight to buy the fry up ingredients the day before. The 2km to the start of trail was accomplished and we were ready to start the Giant's Cup Trail at 9am.



The Drakensburg Mountains – Giants Cup Trail'

The walking was reasonably easy along a platform formation, the path then climbs for about 600m, contours round for another 2km before descending to the Gxalingenwa River and the Nigenwa Rock Pool. The weather was scorching hot and water had to be taken frequently. The Rock Pool (1750m) proved the ideal place for seven of the party to strip off for a freezing cold swim. The older members of the group decided that it was just too cold, after removing all the tick's that we had picked up we moved on. The rest of the day's walk was across dry, arid, rocky countryside dispersed with Protea trees, we made good time and crossed over the suspension bridge arriving at Pholela hut (1650m) in the mid afternoon. Here at the parks reception was a shop and ice cold pop we quaffed was most welcome. The receptionist made us cough up £8 for park entry fees, which we thought we'd already paid but he could not be swayed. The hut was basic and had wood fires, which provided hot water for showers, but no electricity. A few of the lads were sore from the sun despite liberal use of sunscreen all day. At the hut were a lot more ticks, which embedded themselves in to our legs, we used Vaseline to suffocate them, this seemed to work and they fell off. If you try and pull them out though, the tick's head breaks off inside you and can go septic. When we went to start cooking it was found that the Peak stoves did not run on metholated spirits and only the two Trangia cookers worked - so much for the Peaks, a bit of prior P and P would have saved a lot of trouble lads. After food we built a fire outside and had a couple of beers from the shop and told jokes until about 2100hrs, all that is except for WO2 Jim Knight who didn't seem to know any.

Up at 0700 hrs but WO2 Jim Knight was up at 0530 hrs and ready for 0630hrs. We are due to leave at 0845hrs, I did manage to get a cup of tea in bed. Breakfast went quite smoothly despite only having two cookers and we were ready in plenty of time. Only 9km to walk today though our rucksacks did not seem any lighter, despite having eaten one days rations. The walk started with a steep climb and then eased off to pass Tortoise Rocks where we saw a group of baboons and lots of deer. An elongated NAAFI break at Bathplug Cave (1750m), which was in some welcome shade. The weather was very hot and the sun very strong, only half of group wore shorts today. We arrived at the hut at 1215hrs after a long descent down past Siphongweni Cave where some Neolithic rock art hasrecently been discovered. The hut was basic with absolutely freezing showers. Sgt Ken Barker took Sig Oscar 'Para' Phillips on 3½hr afternoon trip to the Pimple (1978m), and to Mount Titty (2112m), due to time the nipple was not achieved but the cleavage was walked (all real names I assure you). The total was a round 12km trip. On return Sig Phillips was tired out and flaked instantly, some potential airborne soldier he is proving to be. The rest of the party went to a nearby rock pool for a swim and then back for a siesta. After the evening meal it was an early night but some lads stayed up to tell ghost stories and Sig 'H' Harrison woke up in the night shouting after having a nightmare.

The next day we were all ready for 0800 hrs, what these boys do without their mums to look after them - admin vortexes or what. The weather was very hot by 0700 hrs. After crossing the suspension bridge below the hut it was a steep climb up to Little Bamboo Mountain, named after the indigenous grass, which grows here.

Stunning scenery but we were all finding it hard going due to heat. Good water economy was the order of the day as most of the marked streams had dried up, including Crane Tarn at the saddle (1850m). Crane Tarn is so named because blue cranes frequent it. There is also a forest in the vicinity of the saddle. A long walk down followed this, paralleling Killicranki Stream with its irresistible rock pools. The path continued down to a road (are they sure it was only 5km) where we lunched in the



Giants Cup Trail - suspension bridge

shade of some gum trees. Here WO2 Jim Knight let those who wanted to make a welcome phone call home on his mobile (restricted to 1min unless your name is Sig Dave Steadman whose girlfriend was still in bed). We then walked another 2km to a bridge where we saw people driving past with ice creams. Sgt Ken Barker, Sigs Oscar Phillips and Graham Wootton were duly despatched to find the shop whilst the others went swimming to cool down - they left the river soon after the fresh water crabs started snapping at their feet. After 2½km a clubhouse was found in an exclusive holiday resort. We were stinking and filthy but were allowed in to purchase some ice-cold lemonade. As these were poured, I was reminded of a scene from 'Ice cold in Alex'. The barman then said that we were all welcome to watch the Wales v S Africa rugby test that afternoon and that the campsite that we would be staying in was only 1km. further north. We returned to the bridge with a rucksack full of cold drinks and got to the campsite just before the heavens opened in what turned out to be a normal afternoon deluge. At the site there were more Rondavels which were basic but comfy and had the coldest showers this side of the Antarctic. All bar WO2 Jim Knight went to the clubhouse to watch the rugby he drew the short straw to look after the equipment. Afterwards the holidaymakers who insisted on buying us beverages and smuggling food out of the restaurant invited us to the patio outside. We all told jokes and made some good friends who gave us some useful advice on staying in Durban and where to go. It was a long muddy walk back to the Rondavel in the dark.

Another scorching hot day. The first 5km were very steep and had us all puffing hard; there was grassland in all directions only broken by the occasional Protea tree. We saw more baboons, a snake and some Bok. Once we were up Black Eagle Pass and onto the slopes of the Garden Castle, the going got a bit easier. The sweeping views of the escarpment on either side of Rhino Peak were breathtaking. Below us stretched the valleys of Mzimkhulu and Mlambonja rivers to the right and the Mzlmude Rivers meandering curves and oxbow lakes on the left. Not the best days walking, but the views and occasional sightings of black eagles made the day. We arrived at the hut for about 1300 hrs and this is very good - this hut has hot water and electricity. As usual Sgt Ken Barker, Sigs Oscar Phillips and Graham Wootton despatched the extra 1km to sign in on the trail and get the cold drinks. In the afternoon the heavens opened again with lots of thunder and lightning. Many phoned home from the reception phone booth using phone cards purchased from the small shop there. The evening was spent around a fire in the hut gassing about nothing as usual.

Up at 0600hrs (WO2 Jim Knight up 0520 hrs - but I did get another cup of tea in bed). Away by 0730hrs for the final day of trekking of this phase, despite the usual scorcher, there was a steady climb to Bucquay Nek and down to the Mzimude River and pool. After crossing a suspension bridge, the path rises in terraces, and these last two sections lead uphill - and uphill it was, reaching Langalibalele Cave (2010m). The group arrived at Bushman's Nek at 1115 hrs after one of the longest kilometres anywhere in the world. Surprise, surprise, the vehicles were there (having been driven there on the Friday as part of the tour package). After a soft drinks and ice cream stop drove the 33km along a dusty track to the main road and then to Himeville. Here ten plates of steak and chips were wolfed down with the utmost alacrity, a lot better than flavoured noodles. Then we all did some more shopping before the return drive to the guesthouse to sort our kit out prior to moving on the next day. WO2 Jim Knight and Sgt Ken Barker drove back to Himeville to see Beryl our friendly tour guide to book a Safari park and hostel in Durban for R and R. All back to Himeville for a meal and a couple of beers in the evening before retiring back at the guesthouse.

ANOTHER STAMP IN THE PASSPORT

Reveille 0730hrs but all up for 0700hrs (except WO2 Jim Knight up at 0520hrs) for really good fry up all round. We were then driven up the Sani Pass half in a SA Army 4 tonner (complete with puncture, bullet holes and German tourists), the rest in a comfy 4 by 4 landrover. Over the border into Lesotho (another passport stamp) and up the pass with some absolutely stunning scenery. The 4 tonner group ended up on the German tour and went to an authentic Lesothan mud hut to see their way of life complete with bread cooked in cow dung. After the obligatory whip round we were driven back to the Sani Top hostel which was very reminiscent of some Rebro sites I have served on. We met up with the others who had arrived by Landrover; they were relaxing drinking hot chocolate. The weather was good but then closed in but we were in the highest hostelry in Africa so we weren't too bothered. The evening meal in the Sani Top hostel was excellent - soup, bread, steak, rice, vegetables and apple crumble, all eaten by candle light as the hostel generator had failed. After booking a guide for 0530hrs, and making a packed lunch we were all in bed by 2000hrs ready for the assault on Thabana Ntlyanlana the following morning.

THE HIGHEST PEAK IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

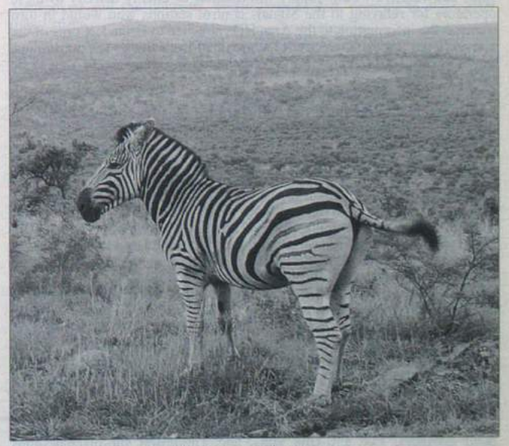
The weather in the morning was chucking it down and no guide. We waited till 0610hrs for the guide, but still no show - perhaps he knew something we didn't. Off we set and despite wearing waterproofs we were all soaked within half an hour. The walking was reasonable and uphill, with not much of a discernible path. This was like a day in the Peak District especially as the rain never once let up all day. After several hours walking we found a disused mud hut which was commandeered as an impromptu rest stop. The climb continued up and we all disappeared into the mist. The summit was attained by 1000hrs after some very steep ascents up grassy and rocky slopes. The summit of Thabana Ntlanyana (11145ft) is very difficult to appreciate as the surrounding hills all look to be of the same height or perhaps even higher. It was not until the 1960's that it was identified with the aide of satellites as the highest peak in Southern Africa. On the summit the flags were duly produced and pictures taken in cold and driving rain of the soaking wet adventurers. The walk down was long and laborious but due to the weather not many rest stops were taken and we were back at the hostel by 1300hrs. All were soaked and tired but after several welcome cups of hot chocolate were soon in high spirits again. The afternoon was spent trying to dry our kit out and snoozing. Another gorgeous meal that evening, again we retired at about 2000hrs.

MOVE TO DURBAN

Ranging around in the morning for transport (well this is Africa and you must work on African time which is at least an hour slower than anywhere else in the world). It did show, however, and we were driven down to our vehicles at the guesthouse in the Mkhornazana valley by lunchtime. After a quick kit repack we drove to Durban to the Traveller's Rest Backpacker Lodge. This was a very good hostel and suited our needs amply. We were in a ten man room with bunk beds and soon the place looked like a bomb had hit it with kit all over the place. A local washer woman eyes opened wide with delight when she was told she would get 300Rand (about £33) to do our washing but they soon closed again when she saw how much of it there was. The hostel was guarded by a supreme example of an Alsatian dog called Shaka, which put our minds at rest. In the evening we went for a meal in a fine local restaurant where smoked salmon, roast duck and other gourmet meals were had along with beer and port and we were astonished when the bill came to under 800Rand. The local night-spot was then sampled for some well-earned refreshment.

UMFOLOZI SAFARI PARK

Up early for the drive to Umfolozi Safari Park, about 3 hrs north of Durban. The weather was hot again and the huts were of a high standard although no food was provided, so 3 of the team, under the guidance of Sig Maca MacCarthy were despatched to buy food for the evening meal and breakfast. They returned late after negotiating access to the roads past a rather large elephant and rhino. Later on we drove around the park in the minibus and saw even more animals, including zebras.



Umfolozi Safari Park

During this trip Sig Sean Martin decided to break the door lever on the back door of the minibus and it was noticed that the aerial wouldn't retract (we definitely will not get our deposit back now). In the evening after dinner six of the group went on a night safari which was excellent if not overlong. In total four of the 'Big 5' were seen only the leopard avoiding our cameras. Lights out was at 2200hrs and so to bed.

R and R

WO2 Jim Knight made breakfast (does he ever take a lie in) and then we all drove around to the hippo pool and crocodile hides where no hippo or crocodiles were seen. It was then on to Richard's Bay for bank, lunch and shopping. The prices in South Africa are very reasonable and many souvenirs were bought. Now the central locking has gone on the minibus! The afternoon was spent driving back to the hostel in Durban where we had another gourmet meal and sampled the local nightlife.

The next day the vehicles were taken by a couple of the lads for cleaning at a very reasonable price. All then went down to the beach but typically because this was R and R the weather was overcast and raining. We therefore visited a snake park, which was very interesting and saw snakes at feeding time, a few of the lads got involved in feeding the snakes a mixture of live and dead bait. The others had their photos taken holding boa constrictors - not for me. The afternoon was spent looking around a local flea market and then it was back to the hostel for a barbecue. The evening was spent packing ready for departure the next day.

THE LAST DAY AND RETURN

Up early to find that someone had smashed the window of the minibus obviously trying to steal it, glass everywhere but the assailant did leave a screwdriver behind (is there no end to the tale of woe for our minibus). WO2 Jim Knight then had the unenviable task of taking the minibus back to Budget Car Hire, to explain. Budget quite understood and said that there would be some money to pay but we may also still get a refund. We were given another minibus, which we had all of 12hrs to look after, but at least the ariel, back door and central locking worked. The morning was spent doing a shopping survey for HQ LAND for CILOR purposes and final shopping. A shop was also found to develop our films and seeing as there were 30 rolls of them to be developed we were afforded a 15% discount. The vehicles were returned at 1630hrs and because of the valetting they seemed more than happy (at least they didn't look under the car) and we got some of the excess back only being charged for the window of the minibus. We then checked in with only a couple being overweight but again sweet-talking saved any extra payment. The flight was on time after another short stop in Jo'burg (remaining on the aircraft again).

We arrived back at Heathrow that morning at 0730hrs. The Regimental driver was there to meet us and as we were loading our bags on, a rather diligent traffic warden presented him with a parking ticket- Oh its good to be back. We arrived at Bramcote for about 1130hrs; it looked just the same as we had left it cold, wet and miserable.

SUMMARY

In conclusion I have to concur with Lt Karl Jeeves and his article in the October *'Wire'*, South Africa and Lesotho are ideal for Adventurous Training, with such contrasting countryside and activities available. The expedition achieved all its aims with the vast majority saying they will return at some time in the future.

THE BRITISH RESISTANCE ORGANISATION

In 1938, with the increasing threat of Germany's militancy, the idea was conceived by a Major in the Foreign Office of organising some form of resistance by civilians in the event of invasion. Although no funds were made available he and another officer created several subsections in a secret department to enlarge the project, one section investigating the development of weapons suitable for use by guerrilla fighters. Early in 1939 the Department was transferred to the Military Intelligence Directorate and renamed Military Intelligence (Research) - MI(R).

By mid-1939 a Maj Gubbins, who had studied guerrilla warfare, began to select British civilians for training but was then posted to Poland and MI(R) continued with the expansion of a guerrilla force under the original officer. After the outbreak of war explosives and other stores were dumped around Britain but with no co-ordination, hopefully to be used by any persons willing to carry out sabotage behind the German occupation. When Gubbins, now a Colonel, returned after the withdrawal from Norway, he immediately began the formation of an underground army under the direct aegis of the Commander-in-Chief at GHQ Home Forces, Field-Marshal Ironside. Winston Churchill expressed great interest and the plan prompted his 'We will fight them on the beaches' speech.

Auxiliary Units, the cover name given to the organisation, comprised two parts. The first consisted of specially selected civilians with a good knowledge of their local area and physically capable of living rough and fighting and harassing enemy forces. The other part consisted of local wireless networks operated by Royal Corps of Signals personnel with outstations near the coast, each having a civilian operator. A system of spies and runners would supply information of enemy activity to these operators for relaying to the Signals control stations who would in turn transmit the information to the Area HQs attached to Brigade/Corps of the conventional forces. Each control station had from five to ten outstations, Southern England having a larger number as the more likely area to be invaded.

In June 1940 the selection and training of the patrol members began in earnest. Gubbins appointed Col Andrew Croft, his Intelligence Officer in the Norwegian campaign, as operational and training officer and by the following November Croft had trained 24 seven-man or eight-man groups in Essex and Suffolk. Croft then opted to return to Commando units. Brigadier Gubbins had by then made his HQ and training centre at Coleshill House, a Palladian mansion owned by the Pleydell-Bouveries, about ten miles from Swindon, with large parklands and woods very suitable for guerrilla training. Every Thursday evening large numbers of patrol members would arrive, accommodated in the large stable block, to spend the next two days receiving instruction in the use of modern explosives and weapons and unarmed combat during the day, while at night they were transported several miles into the surrounding countryside and required to find their way back in the dark (in the light summer evenings they wore dark eyeshields), marking tanks and planes hidden in the woods as destroyed, avoiding tripwires and patrolling sentries. Auxiliary Units received priority, even over the Commandos, with the issue of plastic explosive and delayed-action chemically-activated time pencils, ideal for silent booby-traps. They were the first troops to be issued with stick pencils, a simple mine stuck in the ground and known later by Eighth Army soldiers as 'castrators', tyre-bursting mines, phosphorous hand grenades, Piat anti-tank guns, and Thompson sub-machine-guns imported from the United States. Each member was issued with a Fairbairn Commando dagger, having received instruction in silent killing, where German sentries could be approached silently and stabbed before they had time to warn others. Pistols and rubber truncheons also formed part of their equipment and they wore thick rubber-soled boots, later used by the Commandos. In some units certain members were issued with a special .22 rifle fitted with a telescopic sight and silencer, capable of firing high-velocity bullets which could kill a man a mile away. It never became general issue, however, lacking the sturdiness of army rifles.

Returning to their local areas, the patrols continued their training several nights a week, often to the chagrin of regular forces. One patrol breached the security of an airfield, marking several Spitfires as destroyed. In a planned Exercise on a military HQ another patrol commandeered a baker's van, entered the main building, leaving evidence of the raid, the army commander describing the tactics as unfair, having expected an attack by conventional forces. This Exercise highlighted the probability of German parachute troops destroying command HQs and security was tightened accordingly. Although not in the official Home Guard, the patrols were formed into three special Home Guard battalions as a cover - 201 for Scotland, 202 for Northern England, and 203 for Southern England. In some cases it was noticed that these men were not taking part in normal Home Guard Exercises and, sworn to secrecy and unable to explain their absence at night, they came under suspicion of being engaged in nefarious or extra-marital activities! The patrols' areas of activity extended from the north of Scotland down the east coast and round to the south of Wales. About 3,500 men were trained at Coleshill and, with a number trained locally, a total of nearly 5,000 well-trained and armed men awaited a German invasion.

AUXILIARY UNITS SIGNALS

Operating in the same areas as the patrols but completely separate and unknown to the patrols were the wireless networks, designated the Special Duties Section. Early in 1941 the Royal Corps of Signals established an HQ at Bachelors Hall at Hundon in Suffolk under G2AW Capt (later Major) Hills and his aide Capt Ward, where radio 'hams' were recruited to design and manufacture a small radio telephony set. Simple to use, able to withstand damp conditions and operating on high frequency over a short distance of 10-20 miles. With G2QV Capt Shanks and G2RD Ron Dabbs appointed sergeant in charge, G8CK Bill Bartholornew designed the transceiver, G8J1 Tom Higgins and Ron Dabbs the receiver, G8CK Bill Bartholornew and GM8MQ Jack Miffle the transmitter, G8PP Les Parnell, GM2M Jimmy McNab, and John Mackie the power supply and metalwork, 2FWX Bill Air completing the team. G2K1 George Spencer joined Capt Hills at Hundon before of the other 'hams' but, as they proceeded with their project, he was allocated the task of choosing sites for the planned wireless control/zero stations which required concealment from the public (and a invasion, force) and nearby trees for the erection of aerials, providing good wireless reception. Units of Royal Engineers were then detailed to construct these underground dugouts but were unaware of their use. The dugouts consisted of an entrance chamber accessed by a hidden trap door and a straight-down ladder and appeared to be complete but a cleverly concealed door led to the operating chamber. At the far end was another door, well sealed against fumes, leading to the generator chamber where batteries were charged, the generator providing lighting and ventilation facilities. In the far wall was an escape tunnel which came out some distance from the dugout. The majority of zero stations were built to the same design.

The wireless set produced by the team was code-named TRD (transmitter/receiver and coincidentally using the initials of Ron Dabbs), was housed in a metal case about 15in long, 93/8in. wide, and 91/4in high, powered by a large conventional 6-volt 85 AH accumulator battery, the voltage being boosted by the, vibrator in the set to 240 volts with a power output of approximately 11/2watts. The frequency range was 48-65mcs, then rarely used but now commonly used by BBCI television. After extensive tests a sum of £2,000 was allocated for the purchase of parts which, generally, were obtained from commercial companies.

The metal case was constructed by the Metalbox Company of North London, the back and sides in one piece and access to the components was by removing the front panel with the attached component chassis. The transmitters were TVO/310s or RK34s, twin triodes and were used in a self-excited configuration, having a coil across the two grids, while the anodes were connected to a coil between them, the anodes being fed by a centre tap on the anode coil, and an RF choke and capacitor to the HT supply, which was supplied by the vibrator pack, using mainly a 4-pin vibrator and an OZ4 cold cathode rectifier, producing around 250 volts, DC.

Occasionally the vibrator was a self-syncronous 6-pin type which produced the DC without a rectifier. These were fed by a transformer, all contained in a Masteradio vibrator pack made by the Masteradio factory in Rickmansworth Road, Watford, Herts. The self-excited oscillators were anode modulated by a 6V6 fed by a metal valves of the octal variety, as were the OZ4s. The aerial terminals inside the front panel were inside via a piece of flat twin feeder, ending in a single-turn loop the same diameter as the coil and between the turns at the low impedance point at the centre tap at which point the HT was fed via a RF choke with a value of 23 milli-henries. Outside the front panel, the aerial terminals were connected to a 72 ohm flat twin feeder leading to the dipole antenna hidden in a tree. The microphone was an ordinary Post Office telephone. The receiver was a super-regenerative type and, although very sensitive, had to be isolated from, the radiation caused (and thereby giving away the position to the enemy) by the simple means of using an untuned buffer RF amplifier, which was an EF50, a popular valve at the time with tiny pins. The super-regenerative valve was a Mullard Red 'E' type EF39. The output was via a 6V6 tetrode and could be via either a loudspeaker or headphones.

In preparation for the use of these sets Intelligence Officers had been vetting civilians along the coast for their suitability as clandestine operators to send information to control stations farther inland, all to be capable of operating under enemy occupation. The civilians were chosen from all walks of life: doctors, vicars, farmers, shopkeepers, housewives and, at Ringwood in Hampshire, a barmaid. They had no uniform and would undoubtedly have been shot as spies if caught. The outstations were concealed in various ways. Some were in attics (Réné's secret wireless in Granny's bedroom in the TV farce 'Allo 'Allo was true in Britain!) sheds, dugouts, and other ingenious hides. One was at the top of the mausoleum 'folly' in Brocklesby Park in Lincolnshire another in a summerhouse on the roof of a mansion in Ottery St. Mary, Devon; and a chicken farmer near Axminster entered his bunker by lifting the complete wooden seat, together with bucket and contents, of his outside privy. The small radio compartment was revealed by swivelling a wooden beam. His 'runners' would swing aside a tree-stump to reveal a hole into which they dropped a split tennis ball containing any messages which would then run down into the bunker. A large number of 'spies' would have been engaged in gathering information of enemy activity for this purpose and 'letter boxes' were set up in birds' nests, chicken houses, hollows in trees, empty cans, drain pipes, etc, for collection by the runners. With 125 outstations and 78 sub-outstations, the number of civilians involved in this intelligence-gathering organisation amounted to at least 3,250.

The Royal Corps of Signals personnel eventually numbered 69 men, including the radio 'hams' engaged in construction and maintenance of sets, sergeants who were in charge of the area networks, and wireless operators and instrument mechanics to man the control stations. Seven officers each had control of several areas and had at their disposal several drivers, engineers, and carpenters from other units. Earlier, Major Hills had left Auxillary Units Signals and Major R. M. A. Jones (who had been with Pye Radio) took over command. At stand-down, Major Green was in charge, while Capt Shanks remained with Auxillary Units Signals from its inception. Beatrice Temple, niece of the then Archbishop of Canterbury, was appointed Senior Commander of ATS personnel and began recruiting young women, many officers in the ATS, as operators in the control stations. Unaware of the work involved, 93 women were invited to volunteer for a special and possibly dangerous assignment, Major Temple conducting the interviews in the public lounge of Harrods in Knightsbridge. A number were selected for voice tests at Hundon and eventually 43 were chosen for training in the use of the TRD sets, each given officer status. They were later allocated to three-woman units manning the Area HQ control/zero stations situated close to Brigade/Corps HQs, forming the final link between the civilian outstations, their control stations, and the conventional defence forces.

Each control station covered an area about the size of a county, serving five to ten outstations and manned by three Royal Corps of Signals personnel, using a but for everyday use. After invasion this would have been destroyed and the operators would have moved to an identical 'zero' station hidden a short distance away. It was equipped with stores for a month; cooking, sleeping, and toilet facilities. In the adjacent sealed chamber was a generator to provide lighting and ventilation and to charge batteries which was necessary as the sets were in constant use, unlike the outstations where the sets were used only for occasional messages. The zero stations were also cleverly hidden. One was built under the vegetable garden of a manor house at Winchester, sliding a cold-frame to one side to reveal the ladder down to the dugout. Another at Hume Castle was under the ruins, the aerials concealed in the ramparts, and at Buckland St Mary, near Taunton, the bunker was in the rim of an old Roman defence work at the end of the Blackdown Hills, part of a farm where the Signals were billeted with the farmer and his wife.

All the control/zero and outstations required copper-wire dipole aerials 7ft 9in wide (3ft 101/2in each side) with Belling Lee 80 ohm flat twin down-leads. Where possible these were strung in the highest trees, for good transmission and away from prying eyes. The down-leads were buried behind the bark, sometimes requiring imaginative camouflage. A broadcast distance of up to 30 miles was expected but this was extended in many areas when sited on high ground and sometimes with the addition of an 8ft reflector. A good example of this was at Abergavenny where the control/zero station was on the Blorenge Hills, now the site of a large TV mast and within a few yards of the memorial to the famous show-jumper 'Foxhunter'. The longest operational link was 64 miles.

Pre-invasion, the Signals operators had a dual role. With one operator manning the set, the other two were required to visit each outstation each week, replacing the batteries with fully-charged ones, checking the equipment, and climbing the trees if necessary to cheek that the aerials were secure. These maintenance visits required extreme caution in avoiding detection, taking place in daylight. Having parked the scout-car some distance from the outstation, two heavy accumulator batteries and other equipment had to be carried to the site and the entrance approached only when safely undetected. Any tree maintenance needed especial attention, sometimes taking several hours so as not to be seen. On completion, camouflage of the site was paramount, removing any signs of activity. Where sets were in private houses, security was again difficult and precautions taken to avoid apparent contact with the military.

In 1942, the Signals HQ was moved from Hundon to Coleshill where construction and improvements to the TRD sets continued including the TRM and TRF. At stand-down the number of sets in use numbered 250 TRD, 28 TRM, 36 TRF, and 200 No. 17 sets. At the same time the Special Duties Section established their HQ at Hannington Hall, owned by the Fry cocoa family, five miles from Coleshill. Here, Major Maurice Pethericik recruited additional intelligence officers to continue the expansion of the spy organisation supplying the information for the wireless networks and Beatrice Temple administered the ATS section. The ATS officers were accommodated in approved civilian billets, being ferried to their secret operational stations by Royal Signals personnel. Watches were programmed throughout the day, not only for their own network but also for any broadcasts by enemy agents, which were immediately notified to Intelligence. Early versions of the sets were sensitive to thunderstorms and sunspot activity and sometimes to tank radios. No instructions were given in writing except changes in the codes used. These were on special 'digestible' paper which had to be chewed and swallowed. As with all parts of the organisation, security was so tight that at no time was, an 'indication given of the numbers, stations, or activities of anyone else. These details were known only by the Intelligence Officer and his Royal Signals Sergeant in charge of each area.

The Royal Signals personnel also lived with civilian families, who were completely unaware of their work, and wartime discipline was well observed by not prying into details. (After the war many men maintained contact with their wartime 'mums' remembering how well they had been treated. During their daytime work Signals personnel obtained their meals locally, sometimes in British Restaurants, the meal-places set up by the government in many towns, and were left to fend for themselves, being responsible only to their Intelligence Officer who had two or three stations under his supervision. Each day's journey required a transport movement conventionally signed by a transport officer but in the Signals case it was signed by an NCO or Signalman. Auxiliary Units were directly answerable to GHQ Home Forces and avoided contact with conventional forces. This required a particularly resourceful and independently minded breed of soldier.

With the threat of invasion lifted through the successful establishment of the Normandy landings, Auxiliary units were disbanded in September 1944 and the patrols in the following November. The dugouts being destroyed after the contents had been removed, although there have been some instances where patrol bunkers, hastily established in 1940, being overlooked and the contents, badly deteriorated, coming to light after many years

Afterwards. The zero station at Winchester has been known to the property owner for many years but unaware of its purpose and the Shipley zero-station has also been excavated. Both are in good condition, with original construction features intact. Some younger patrol members, with their specialised training, enlisted in the SAS and other active units. Older members resumed their normal lifestyle, receiving no public recognition other than a letter from the Commander-in-Chief Home Forces, expressing the value to the country of their devotion to duty in facing the dangers of an invasion and the maintaining of secrecy was a matter of special pride. Some training officers were parachuted into France and both Capt Bond and Capt Ian Fenwick and a dozen of his men were killed there. Signals personnel returned to Catterick in Yorkshire for retraining and to other theatres of war; some were retained by the Operator Training Battalion as instructors because of the expansion in training required for the final effort against the Germans in Europe and the Japanese in the Far East.

The National Trust now administer Coleshill House Park at the Coleshill Estate Office. The house, built in 1662, caught fire during refurbishment in 1952 and was demolished. The main stable block still exists, as do the impressive main gates. Early in 1996, as part of a tree-planting scheme, it was decided that seven should be dedicated to the memory of the Auxiliary Units. Members of the Somerset group, the South-east Essex and East group, and Auxiliary Units Signals made donations for the planting and maintenance of a tree dedicated to their units, while another two trees were dedicated to individuals who joined the SAS and were killed behind enemy lines in 1944 and executed by the Germans, Henry James Pascoe, aged 28, and Alan George Ashley, aged 24. Another two trees are dedicated to Auxiliary Units members in all other areas.

Satellite technology, has obviated the need for trig pillars and, to avoid these falling into disrepair, the Ordinance Survey invited members of the public to adopt them. Four families of former Auxillary Units members have adopted pillars in Gwent, Sussex, and Devon, near former OBs, and these now bear plates recording their dedication. The Imperial War Museum in London has allocated a section to Auxiliary Units in its

permanent SOE exhibition 'Secret War' and a British Resistance museum has been established at the WWII Memorial Museum to the 390th Bomb Group of the United States AAF at Parharn (Framlingham) in Suffolk where application has been made to re-erect an underground bunker for public viewing. The connection was formed when the trustees of the museum discovered that the airfield was built on farmland owned by brothers who had been patrol members. Unbeknown to the brothers, one of their relatives was a wireless operator on the Signals side. The story of Auxiliary Units has remained a well-kept secret for 50 years and the sacrifice that members, many now passed away, were prepared to make, unknown to their families, receiving no recognition, has now been recorded in many ways for the benefit of future history.

SPORT

CROSS COUNTRY

RECENT EVENTS

Inter-Services Championships - The Inter Services Cross Country Championships were hosted by the Royal Navy at Plymouth on Friday 26 February 1999. This event comprises of four races: Senior Men, Senior Ladies, Veteran Men and Junior Men, and a total of 13 Royal Signals athletes were selected for the four squads.

On one of the most exciting days for many years the Army came out victors in three of the four events, losing only the veterans event, **LCpl Sophie Morris** of 238 Sig Sqn won the ladies race, narrowly beating the reigning Army Champion, **LCpl Nicky Dean** of 251 Sig Sqn. **LCpl Paul Clancy** (216 (Para) Sig Sqn) produced a fine run in the senior men's event, finishing 7th overall in a field which included some of the country's top runners. Disappointingly, three promising juniors, **LCpl Jim Kemp** and **Sig** 'Scouse' **McArthur**, both of 3 (UK) Div HQ and Sig Regt and **Sig Ian Bailey** from 2 Sig Regt, were all 'unavailable' and were therefore denied Inter-Services winners medals, and it is regrettable that units do not put more effort into ensuring that athletes are made available for these top honours.

Inter-Corps Championship - The Inter-Corps Championships were hosted by the APTC and took place at Blandford on Wednesday 3 March 1999. Despite gaps in the Corps teams due to operational commitments the Corps' overall results surpassed all expectations and during the final medal presentations Corps track suits were never far from the rostrum. Notable performances included **LCpl Nicky Dean**'s aggressive run to reverse the Inter-Services result and leave the Silver medal to **LCpl Sophie Morris** on this occasion. Solid runs from the ladies' team captain, **2Lt Lindsey Calderhead**, and **LCpl Cas Burrows** of 30 Sig Regt resulted in a win for the Corps edging the APTC into second place with the PLC following on. **LCpl Paul Clancy** again finished in third place in the men 's race, but **Sgt** 'Ginge' **Davey** of 15 Sig Regt, after a disappointing result in the Army Championships, produced a much better result to come fourth. Team Captain, **Sgt Dave Kilgallon**, also of 15 Sig Regt, led the remainder of the Corps' team home with a solid run in 14 place to give us second team place behind the strong RLC squad.

SHOOTING

ROYAL SCHOOL OF SIGNALS

BLANDFORD CAMP REGIMENTAL SHOOTING TEAM
EXERCISE FIRST SHOOT/CORPS SAAM
28 MARCH-16 APRIL 1999

The Regimental Shooting Team achieved great success in both training on Ex First Shoot and during Corps SAAM throughout the following periods: Ex First Shoot from 28 March-8 April 1999 and the Royal Corps of Signals Corps SAAM 99 held from 9-16 April 1999 at Ash/Pirbright range complexes.

All members were selected to fire as part of the Regimental Shooting Team consisting of x 2, 5 man fire teams and x 6 individual entry firers and despite the appalling weather produced some very creditable scores. All members exuded an air of professionalism throughout the training period and although scores varied during the competition a sense of achievement was shared by all.

All the experienced shootists within the team ably coached those with little or no shooting experience to a successful Corps SAAM. The presentation was shared by all Corps Teams, unfortunately, however, not the prizes. The presentation consisted of prizes being awarded to an equal dissemination between 30 Sig Regt and 11 Sig Regt, however, the Regimental Shooting Team confidently won the majority of team matches and a numerous amount of individual team medals and bars which all 16 members received, especially **Sig Harris** who required two medals to hold his successions of achievement. All scores were extremely good given the blustery wind conditions, heavy rain and hailstone showers and could not have been achieved without the enthusiasm, dedication and good humour of all those within the Regimental Shooting Team.

Other achievements were as follows: Top Royal Signals (all weapons) shot - **Sgt D. Copley,** Top Pistol Shot - **Lt Col R. T. Hoole**, Team and Inter Corps Winners Combat Snap, Runners-up Falling Plates Match, Winners Pistol Team and Pistol Tiles Match, Runners-Up LSW Team Match, Top Young Soldier - **Sig D. T. Harris** and Inter Corps Methuen Team Match unanimous winners - The Royal Corps of Signals.

If all team members can maintain the consistency and form shown throughout the above periods, things are looking bright for the Royal Signals team in the forthcoming 3 (UK) Div SAAM held from 4-8 May 1999, the prestigious Queen's Medal Competition and other central matches held at Bisley from 29 June-7 July 1999.

The following four members of the Regiment (**Capt B. G. Navindra, SSgt J. P. Johnston, Sgt D. Copley** and **Sgt G. Nirmal**) were also selected to represent the Corps in the Inter Corps Methuen Match held on Friday 16 April 1999 which was convincingly won, producing an outstanding performance and result.

On a final note, certain individual awards were presented with great pride to **SSgt J. P. Johnston** and **Sgt D. Copley** with international medals as team members for the British Army Combat Shooting Team (BACST) - Canada and South Africa 1998. Praise was also given to **Capt B. G. Navindra** and **Sgt D. Copley** for their selection to Australia with the BACST from 4-27 May 1999. Both **SSgt J. O. Johnston** and **SSgt S. K. Rideout** were also presented a thank you gift by the Secretary of Corps Shooting, **Capt G. G. A. Reith,** for their personal contribution and achievements to Corps Shooting.

In conclusion the CO and OIC Shooting congratulates all team members on behalf of their achievements and thank all OC Sqns/Tps/Depts for their support in releasing individuals and assisting the Regimental Shooting Team when required. Also to all team members for their participation in the success of the Regimental Shooting Team, this benefited not only the team members but also the Regimental Trophy Cabinet.



The Royal School of Signals Regimental Shooting Team Photo
With seven Major Unit Team Trophies



Presentation of the Hudson Trophy Bowl
Winner Lt Col R. T. Hoole



Presentation of the SOinC's Trophy and Plinth
Winner Sig D. T. Harris



Presentation of the Queen's Gurkha Signals Trophy
Winner Sgt D. Copley

RUGBY

The rugby match between The Royal Signals and The Royal Artillary took place at Larkhill in damp and windy conditions, with the Corps taking advantage of the wind in the first half. The Corps side dominated the set scrum and held their own at the lineout. The forwards managed to produce good ball from the loose play but the conditions did little to promote good running rugby and the Corps back division was under-strength due to the unavailability of key players. The Corps led at half time by 21 points to 8 with three converted tries. However, the determination of the RA combined with having the wind to their advantage, enabled them to come back strongly in the second half.

1998/99 ARMY MERIT 1 TABLE RESULTS

CORPS	PLAYED	WON	DRAWN	LOST	POINTS
RA	5	2	1	2	5
RE	5	2	0	3	4
R. SIGS	5	4	1	0	9
RLC	5	1	0	4	2
Inf B	5	1	0	4	2
REME	5	4	0	1	8

Sheer determination and an excellent defence kept the score at 21 to 16. With three minutes left to play the RA, after a sequence of penalties, went over for a try. This time the wind did them no favours and the conversion missed. The final score was 21-21. The Royal Signals remain the only unbeaten squad in the competition. The final match, against the RE, took place at Chatham on 7 April 1999, and decided the Championship. The Royal Signals needed to win to remain unbeaten and become the Merit Table winners. The game was played under ideal conditions and the Corps' Squad rose to the occasion, playing their best rugby of the season. The final score of 39-10 was more than enough to secure the Merit Table 1 Championship

ROYAL SIGNALS RESULTS

ROYAL SIGNALS	OPPOSITION	FOR	AGAINST
ROYAL SIGNALS	RA	21	21
ROYAL SIGNALS	RE	39	10
ROYAL SIGNALS	RLC	23	12
ROYAL SIGNALS	Inf B	21	9
ROYAL SIGNALS	REME	28	17

END OF SEASON SUMMARY

Since Match Reports have been submitted throughout the season, and as readers may well be thinking more about cricket and Summer rather than rugby, I shall keep this Summary short. I write with still a month to go in terms of matches to be played but with the knowledge that, not long ago, the Squad achieved its principle target for the season by winning Merit Table 1. The final league match against the Sappers being played at Chatham and the Royal Signals had not won there for the past seven years! A good all round display saw a good and well deserved victory by 39 points to 10 as is reported by the Secretary, **Capt Tom Hall**, in his separate report.

It has been a successful season for the Squad even taking into account the hard fought draw last month at Larkhill against the Gunners. An unbeaten run means that we can plan with confidence for next season. This year has not been without its challenges as operational demands upon units and the continuing overstretch has impacted on the availability of players. It is to the credit of the coach, Secretary and Squad members that we have done so well, often without the opportunity to prepare that we would have wished. Thanks are particularly due to all the units that have supplied players to the Squad. I know only too well the conflicts of interest that have to be taken into account, and also the additional tasks that are pressed upon already busy people to accommodate the need to release our players for the matches and the pre-match preparation. I hope that the success the Squad has been able to achieve this year will be a small token of thanks for all the support that the Corps has given, often in very difficult circumstances by all ranks in the units.

The photograph shows members of the Squad with **Brig Gordon Hughes** holding the Cup. In what has been a Squad effort it is invideous to mention names, but it would be wrong not to pick out **Sgt Paul Jones,** of 15 Signal Regiment, who was named as 'Player of the Year'. One result of availability problems was that we had to call on a number of 'Captains'. However, without exception they led from the front and were able to bring all the hard work of our Coach, **Capt Trev Keats**, to fruition.



Publish it in
THE WIRE
The Editor is always pleased to receive interesting articles

THE ROYAL SIGNALS ASSOCIATION

Patron: HRH The Princess Royal

President: The Master of Signals

Chairman: Major General A. Yeoman CB

Vice Chairmen: Brig C. T. Garton Area 1; Brig W. H. Backhouse Area 2; Brig S. G. M. Gordon Area 3; Brig K. H. Olds Area 4; Brig P. J. Evans CBE Area 5; Lt Col J. G. Billingham Wales; Maj R. Sampson CBE Scotland

General Secretary and Treasurer: Col A. R. Carter MBE — **Assistant General Secretary: Lt Col I. J. Hamilton**
Welfare Secretary: Mrs J. Nicholson — **Administrative Officer: Mr. P. J. Cuckow (Membership & Records)**

Association Office, RHQ Royal Signals, Blandford Camp, Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 8RH. Telephone: Military System 737 2090 or 01258 48 2090. Welfare Secretary Telephone: Military System 737 2089 or 01258 48 2089.

All contributions for *The Wire* should be addressed to the Editor and any queries referred to him on extensions 2079 or 2085. Internet: www.royalsignals.army.org.uk/museum/rsa.htm

The Association communicates with its branches and individual members through the pages of The Wire, *which contains accounts of Branch affairs as well as a forecast of Association events.*

Branch Secretaries are asked to check that their Branch members receive sufficient copies of The Wire. *Association HQ can arrange for copies to be delivered in bulk to Branch Secretaries for further distribution if this is convenient: it helps us save on postage.*

Dates of Branch events can always be published in The Wire *and should be submitted to the Editor. We also welcome letters, requests to contact old comrades and announcements of births, marriages and deaths. We hope that each Branch will contribute a short account of its activities, preferably with photographs, at least once a year.*

NOTES FROM THE AO'S DESK

Branch News - At their recent AGM, the Newark Branch elected **Mr John Knott** as the new Hon Secretary. **John's** address is 34 Spring Lane, Balderton, Newark, Notts NG24 3NZ. Thanks go to Chairman **Fred Dixon** for standing in until the new secretary was found. 'Chippy' **Wood**, Hon Secretary of the Harrogate Branch has a new Tel number; 01423-505326.

Address changes - Too often we are asked by our members why they have not heard from us for some time. Upon checking we find that the address shown on their record card is well out of date and that we have not been informed of the change. To illustrate the point, the instruction for this year's Reunion was sent to those individual members who attended last year and within a week of despatch several were returned by the Royal Mail saying, 'No longer at this address'. Please inform us of any change to your address.

The RBL Cenotaph Parade - This year's Cenotaph Parade at Whitehall, London, will be held on Sunday 14 November. All who have served under command of British Forces and War Widows/Widowers are eligible. Assembly time is 1010 hours on Horse Guards Parade, marching off at 1015 to Whitehall. Members of our Corps will again be in column 'F', which will be second in order of march. All those on parade must have admission tickets, which can be obtained, without charge, from Association HQ. Dispersal will be at approximately 1220hrs. All those who wish to march with the Corps contingent are asked to fall in on **Michael Aimable,** who will be holding the 'R SIGS' board on Horse Guards Parade.

RSA AGM - 119 members attending the combined AGM/Branch Representatives Meeting held in London on 10 April 1999. 65 of our 88 Branches were represented, with nine Branches sending their apologies. **Maj Gen A. Yeoman CB** chaired a lively meeting, which included a briefing on the serving element of the Corps by the SOinC (A) and an update on the accommodation situation on Blandford Camp by **Lt Col Terry Canham**, CO 11 Sig Regt. Our thanks go to **Cpl Paul McGarrity** of 83 Sig Sqn (V) for his assistance with the arrangements in the Duke of Yorks HQ. Thanks also go to all those who took part in **Dave Walker's** raffle on the day, which raised the magnificent total of £171.98 for the Benevolent Fund. Well done **Dave.**



I don't care who you are Sir!
You can't attend the meeting without a current Membership Card!

SOE - Duncan Stuart, the SOE Advisor in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has informed me that details of service with the SOE are no longer regarded as classified and that he welcomes soldiers' accounts of their service. Please send your story/diary/item to RHQ and we will forward them on. *The WIRE* would also be interested to hear from you with a view to publication.

249 Sig Sqn – FARELF - Graham Jolly is in contact with several persons who served in 249 Sig Sqn (FARELF). **Graham** is on 01233-637792 and would be pleased to hear from anyone from that unit.

New Life Members - A warm welcome is extended to the following newly enrolled Life Members. To all those who have recently been released from the Corps, we wish they the best of luck in their second career and trust that they will remain in touch with the Association.

Rank	*Name*	*Branch*	*Served*
LCpl	John 'Wag' Wardle	Beverley Ex-Boys	1949-51
Dvr	John Cooper	RHQ	1953-57
LCpl	Paul Jones	RHQ	1991-99
LCpl	Ollie North	RHQ	1989-99
Sgt	Mandy Precious	RHQ	1985-99
Cpl	Steven Sorbie	RHQ	1983-99
WO1 (RSM)	Ivan Shiels	RHQ	1975-99
Sgt	Mick Roe	RHQ	1976-98
SSgt	Steve Nickless	RHQ	1977-99
WO2	Tom McCutcheon	RHQ	1974-98
Lt Col	Chris Melhuish	RHQ	1964-99
SSgt	Pete Farrington	RHQ	1975-99
Cpl	Martin Bunkle	Doncaster	1978-94
Cpl	George Clarke	Beverley Ex-boys	1951-56
Sgt	Sharon Wright	RHQ	1991-99
LCpl	Trevor Stamford	RHQ	1989-99
Sgt	David Scragg	RHQ	1988-98
Sig	Mark McGuire	RHQ	1991-99
Cpl	Simon Elston	RHQ	1988-99
Cpl	Jim Harding	RHQ	1989-99
Cpl	Brian O'Sullivan	West London	1949-51
Sgt	Arthur Gabbitas	East London	1940-46
SSgt	Mick Medderman	East London	1967-date
Cpl	Lilian Hooper	RHQ	1942-44
Cpl	Eddy Smerdon	RHQ	1989-99
Sgt	Bill Hills	Loughborough	1945-70
Sig	Ernie Glover	Hull	1944-48
Sig	Cliff Olley	Hull	1946-49
Sig	S. C. Crouch	Southampton	1939-46
Sgt	John Forster	RHQ	1947-49
LCpl	Victor Major	RHQ	1940-46
Sig	Tony Wilson	Middx Yeomanry	1962-65
Sig	Mervyn Bushnell	Hull	1947-53
WO2	Paul Barrett	RHQ	1975-99
Cpl	T. W. Stevenson	Spennymoor	1950-56
SSgt	J. K. Voke-Williams	Spennymoor	1974-95
WSig	N. J. Voke-Williams	Spennymoor	1991-94
WO2 (RQMS)	Elgan Davies	Llanelli	1969-91
Sig	Robert Steel	RHQ	1990-99
Sgt	Alistair Morton	RHQ	1983-99
WO2	Peter Hillier	Beverley Ex-Boys	1950-74
Sgt	R. E. Ward	Norfolk	1949-67
SSgt (FofS)	R. S. Dodson	Norfolk	1948-62
WO1 (RSM)	Jim McLachlan	Glasgow	1975-99
Sgt	Lee Robinson	RHQ	1988-99
Cpl	Simon Quinlan	RHQ	1985-99
Dvr	Ron Martin	RHQ	1942-45
Cpl	Howard West	RHQ	1954-57
Maj (TA)	Ross Parsell	Preston & Blackburn	1984-date
Cpl	Malcolm Haywood	Doncaster	1955-58
WO1 (RSM)	Steve Mitchell	Catterick	1977-date
Sgt	Sam Coombes	West London	1947-68
Sig	Gary Taylor	RHQ	tbc-1991
Cpl	David Standley	N Ireland	1989-date
Maj	Tony Lomax	N Ireland	1961-date
WO1 (RSM)	Chris McGinley	N Ireland	1977-date
WPte	Margaret James	RHQ	1995-97
Cpl	Trevor Teale	Middx Yeomanry	1951-55
Cpl	Kenneth Taylor	Birmingham	1947-49
SSgt	Kenneth Selmes	RHQ	1938-54
Sgt	David Crawford	RHQ	1943-47
Sig	G. L. Hunt	RHQ	1957-60
Sgt	A. S. Hall	Derby	1992-date
WPte	Ruth Smith-Jacobs	East London	1986-94
Sgt	Ken Fleet	Cornwall	1945-47
Sgt	Peter Kendall	Cornwall	1939-46
Sig	Bill Skeet	Beverley Ex-Boys	1952-60
LCpl	Nick Berry	RHQ	1992-99
SSgt	Keith Carter	RHQ	1975-99
SSgt	Steve Cooper	RHQ	1977-99
SSgt	Tony Doherty	RHQ	1977-99
Sgt	Ian Foulkes	RHQ	1980-99
LCpl	Dennis Hewitt	RHQ	1990-99
Sig	Andrew Hine	RHQ	1993-99
LCpl	Paul Thomson	RHQ	1992-99
WO2	Reg Whitehead	RHQ	1977-99
Sig	Gordon Wilkinson	RHQ	1992-99
SSgt	R. C. Thomas	Harrogate	1971-94
LCpl	Malcolm Hayhoe	RHQ	1976-81
Cpl	Andy Oxley	Hull	1993-date
Sig	B. F. Ambrose	Southampton	1959-61
WPte	Stella Thomson (Webb)	Cornwall	1942-45
Sig	R. A. Downes	Leeds	1973-75
Cpl	Scott Mitchell	RHQ	1992-99
Sig	Mark Roberts	RHQ	1991-99
Sig	Kirsty Thomson	RHQ	1996-99
LCpl	Amanda Voss-Rorke	RHQ	1992-98
WO2	Neil White	RHQ	1975-99
SSgt	Geordie Wightman	RHQ	1977-99
WO1	Steve Young	RHQ	1975-99
Cpl	S. D. Lloyd	Southport	1955-57
Sig	J. Roach	Southport	1955-57
SSgt	Stuart Read	RHQ	1975-99
LCpl	Andy Campbell	Doncaster	1971-85
Sig	George Humphreys	Norfolk	1940-47
LCpl	Paul Gregory	Doncaster	1973-79

ALDERSHOT BRANCH

A dinner to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the formation of the Aldershot Branch presented a glittering occasion. Pikemen at the door, reminiscent of past glories, were provided by 216 Para Signal Squadron and personnel from 215 Signal Squadron looked after our parking and security. Five members of the Corps Band, under the direction of **Sgt Hancock** presented a wonderful programme of music throughout the evening.

We were happy to welcome as our guests the Master of Signals, **Maj Gen Ian Sprackling OBE** and **Annie**, particularly so as the Master had to make an early start the following morning for the AGM in London. We were also delighted to have with us **Barbara Torrie**, daughter of **Gen Fladgate**, who along with 'Dodger' **Green** founded the Branch in 1949, and 'Dodger's daughter **Jocelyn Boniface** and her husband. 'Dodger' was Vice President until his death in 1996. The Band's rendering of 'Sweet Lass of Richmond Hill' was a tribute to the presence of the President of the Aldershot Branch of the WRAC Association, **Lt Col Sue Westlake**, Adj Gen Corps and three other members. The Toastmaster, **Mr Lionel Pope**, was a past member of our Corps.

Our able Chairman, **Brig Noel Moss**, **Col Paddy Verdon OBE, Carole Thomas** and other Members of the Committee did us proud, and **Joe Fairbairn**, Garrison Sergeant Major and the staff of his Mess presented a wonderful occasion for us, long to be remembered and worthy of the great traditions of the 'Home of the British Army'.

In March our President, **Maj Gen Henry Hild MBE** and a contingent from the Branch met in Aldershot to cheer the Corps on to victory in the Army Rugby final. Well done chaps. What would you have done with out us!

BRISTOL BRANCH

Greetings. Yes the Bristol Branch is still alive and kicking, with meetings held every month at the TA Centre Horfield, Bristol, and with an extra social event thrown in for good measure.

In December last, we had an excellent Christmas Dinner which was kindly attended by the Association Chairman, **Maj Gen (Retd) Alan Yeoman** and his good lady as our principal guests. I am assured by all who attended that they had a very enjoyable evening.

In January we held our AGM. Unfortunately our Hon. Secretary, **Jayne Burn,** has had to step down due to work commitments in her new job. Thank you **Jayne** for doing and excellent job during your term of office. **Mr Ray Rigg** kindly volunteered to take on the Secretary's job for the time being, hopefully we can persuade him to do it permanently. Both the Chairman, 'Chick' **Cheetham,** and Treasurer, **George Fairfull** were re-elected for a further term of office.

As part of our Social Programme, we have enjoyed two very good skittle nights (one versus the Bristol Branch of the Police Officers' Association) these events were organised by **Jayne Burn** and **Ken Davies** and were a great success.

As mentioned above, our new Hon. Sec. is **Mr Ray Rigg** who can be contacted at 65 Kings Drive, Bishopston, Bristol BS7 8JQ, telephone 0117 924 1925. **Ray** says that if any member of the Association is planning to visit Bristol, or failing that should any Branch of the Association like to arrange a day in Bristol, to let him know, and he would be happy to meet them and provide a guided tour of the highlights of the city.

COTSWOLDS BRANCH

The Annual General Meeting was held at our monthly meeting in March, when a good proportion of members gathered at the Victory Club, Cheltenham. Our long serving President, **Col Freddie Worth OBE,** was present and was duly re-elected for the 21st time. A truly remarkable achievement, considering that he is aged 93 and lives some ten miles from our meeting place. **Maj Arthur Cropp** was re-elected as Chairman and his wife, **Marjorie**, was re-elected as Treasurer & Secretary. The remainder of the Committee was re-elected en bloc.

We were informed that our long serving Standard Bearer (up to 1996), **Len Flanagan**, was not very well and just a few days later we were told of his death at the age of 84 years. He will be sadly missed by his many friends (see obituary). A large number of our members attended his funeral, where our standard was carried by **Alan Wingate**. The Standards of the Burma Star Association and the Royal Military Police Association together with members of their Associations were also present.

DARLINGTON BRANCH

Hello there, Branches everywhere. As far as this humble writer can ascertain, this is the first time that Darlington Branch has submitted anything for publication in our Corps magazine, so once again, 'Hello.'

I write to report a social event that we held on Sunday 28 March. A Northern 'get-together' if you like, of local Branches. Seven Branches in all were invited spanning the area from Newcastle to York, we being in the middle. The idea was received very enthusiastically and we welcomed, including our own members, a total of over 100 association members, wives and partners to a sumptuous lunch and an afternoon of socialising, down memory lane chit-chat, liquid refreshment also a grand raffle and a game or two of 'Housey'.



Who won what?
(L-R): Jack Dobson, Cyril Cooke, Guest, Terry Cushen



(L-R) round the table
Terry Cushen, CO 34 (N) Sig Regt (V), Dai Rees, Mrs Birtwistle, Mrs Cushen, Maj Gen A. Birtwistle

Our chairman, **Terry Cushen**, greeted our official guests, **Lt Col D. A. Hargreaves** R.SIGNALS, CO 34 (N) Signal Regiment (V) and **Maj J. A. Lambton** R.SIGNALS, OC 50 (N) Signal Squadron (V). Although they attended in combat gear, having been on Exercise, I am reliably informed that they enjoyed themselves thoroughly. The lunch must have been better than 'Compo' and I don't mean him from 'Last of the Summer Wine. We also welcomed **Bill Barnes** and Members from Catterick, including **Maj Gen Archie Birtwistle** and **Mrs Birtwistle, Chrissie Meikle** and Members from Newcastle, **Margaret Dadson** and Members from Middlesborough, **Norman Hyland** and Members from Spennymoor along with their wives and partners. It was also good to see **George Holden**, a Branch Member, who has been seriously ill for a number of years, accompanied by **Mrs Holden**, enjoying themselves and meeting new friends.



Some of our guests



Some of our guests
(L-R); George Holden, Mrs Williamson,
SSgt Tommy Williamson, Maj J. A. Lambton

After a day that passed far too quickly, well just over half a day, the last of our guests left in the late afternoon and the first reports are that this gathering together was enjoyed by one and all. Our best wishes and heartfelt thanks to all our guests for attending and supporting this Sunday gathering and helping to make it the success it turned out to be. This humble SC (ex) certainly enjoyed it. The idea of trying this 'get-together' arose from us attending a similar event at Middlesbrough in September last year. Both that and this gathering proved to be very successful and hopefully they will be forerunners of similar events in the future. Bye.

DERBY BRANCH

The marriage of **Sgt Snow** of 46 (City of Derby) Signal Squadron (V) and **Cpl Eley** of 87 (City of Nottingham) Signal Squadron (V) took place on 31 October 1998 at Newstead Abbey Nottinghamshire.



(L-R): Cpl Dave Parnell, Mr Phillip Clarke,
Cpl Lianne Snow (Nee Eley), Sgt Darran Snow, Mr Paul Smith,
Sgt Pete Beedle

EAST KENT BRANCH

Sunday 14 February thirty members with some guests and juniors assembled at the Ashford Bowl for our Annual Branch Ten Pin Bowling Competition. This was a new venue-rather more up market than the Whitstable Bowl. It was described by one lady member as 'sexy' since the overall lighting was dim but each lane was bordered by running red lights and the balls were iridescent in the Ultra Violet light. Whether that improved the skills is not certain but the fact remains that the **Oaten** and **Andrews** families dominated the results. The overall winner was **Fred Oaten**'s daughter, **Jane** and the runner up was **Roy Andrews'** grandson, **Barry** whose young cousin had to be content with the wooden spoon. **Roy** had very generously added an additional shield for the Runner Up to the Branch Trophy and also the spoon. Afterwards, everyone repaired to the restaurant area for a meal and refreshments. A successful day.

Saturday 13 March sixty members met at Bluebirds in Dover, (slightly drier than as **Donald** saw it, see cartoon) and it was nice to see so many whom we had not seen for some while, for instance **Ted** & **Joan Carn** and **Bert** & **Ann Stone** to swell the number of regulars. We came to listen to a fascinating talk by the retired Coxswain of the Dover Lifeboat, **Mr Tony Hawkins MBE** who had been in the service from the age of 17 and had completed 34 years. As can be imagined, he was able to draw upon a plethora of experience, related with modesty, although we knew that he had risked his life on numerous occasions to save the lives of others. It was a reflection of the excellence of his talk and for all the members of his boat that the Raffle produced a record sum of £100, a cheque for which was handed to **Tony** by **Marion de Rose** who had organise the raffle. Afterwards we partook of an excellent Lunch organised by **Alan Barker** who himself was a crew member under **Tony Hawkins**. Members dispersed having collected or congratulated others on their raffle prizes.



All Branches Area four, don't forget our funday on Sunday 11 July 1999. If you don't want to take part in the games come along and support. To enable us to gauge numbers for catering please contact Hon Sec ASAP on 01227 470340.

NEW MEMBERS

We are delighted to welcome **Mr Bert** and **Mrs June Buchanan** of Ramsgate who have recently moved there from Reigate. **Bert** served as a National Serviceman from 1942-1947 in 15th Scottish Div, 10th Indian Div Signals in Egypt and 234 Bde Signals in Leros before going to the Army & RAF Legal Dept in London. By coincidence they had been neighbours of **Marion** and **Vincent de Rose** several years ago. We also extended a warm welcome to **Roger Stone** at the Ten Pin Bowling event, he lives in Canterbury, served as a regular from February 54-August 78 starting as an apprentice at Harrogate and then with 7 Armd, 5 Div, 1 Div Sig Regts and 210 Sig Sqn in Kenya and the Engineer Brigade before ending his service with the TA Sqn, 265 (KSY) at Bexley Heath.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Robin Hood sends his best wishes to all members and it is good to know that both he and **Irene** are recuperating from their recent health problems. Likewise **Donald** and **Kit Robathan** send their best wishes, they have had some traumatic health problems over the New Year but are thankfully now on the mend. **Roy** and **Pat Andrews'** holiday in Tenerife did not turn out as planned, when **Roy** got a severe attack of bronchitis and spent five days in the local hospital, but they were on good form at the ten pin bowling. Our Chairman **Donald Crisp** has recently completed his SSAFA course and is now a fully fledged caseworker and was pitched in at the deep end with a most complicated case.

GLASGOW BRANCH

At the Branch meeting on 16 February 1999, **ex-WO1 (RSM) Jim MacLachlan**, who has just retired from active service as a regular, after 24 years with the Royal Signals, the last two as RSM of 32 Sig Regt, at Jardine Street Glasgow, was officially welcomed into the Branch as a new member. **Bill Taylor**, the Branch President presented **Jim** with an inscribed hip-flask and a bottle of whisky, with a personalised label specially printed with his name on it. This was from the Branch Members to **Jim** for his support of the Branch whilst he was the RSM of 32 Sigs. **Jim** thanked the members for their welcome and good wishes. He said that it had been a pleasure to have worked in harmony with the Branch and he was very pleased to be able to join the Branch. Knowing all the personnel in the Regimental HQ, he would help in any way he could to keep and foster the goodwill existing between the Branch and the Regiment.

The Chairman asked that all members who had expressed their desire to attend the RSA Reunion at Blandford this year, should confirm their intention by handing theit names and monies to the Secretary, **Ivana**, who is already in the process of arranging transport costs. It is a long journey but those who have been in previous years, consider it well worth the effort. Ten names are listed and there could be more if the accommodation was available, as there is a waiting list should a vacancy become available. The Social Convenor, **Jim McMillan**, said he was open to suggestions for activities the members may like to take part in but whatever is suggested it must be supported. He had looked into the cost of a coach trip to Inverness but required the support of at least 36 members to make it worthwhile.

GUERNSEY BRANCH

It was in the August 1998 edition of *'The Wire'* that news of our Branch last appeared and it is time therefore to update readers on our activities. Before doing so the following additions to the Committee are reported-Members - **Alvaro Salazar** and **Alf Laine**, welcome and thank you for your efforts and enthusiasm

Branch members who attended the Guernsey Bowls Stadium on the evening of Friday 4 September enjoyed a wonderful evening and were educated in the art of indoor bowling by Committee Member **Alvaro Salazar** and his wife **Betty** with helpers. A Chip Shop Style supper was served during the evening and full bar facilities were available. A round robin, knockout competition was held with small prizes for the winners and a booby prize for the abject failures! So popular was the occasion that all concerned immediately requested that the function be repeated in the not too distant future.

On Sunday 18 October we held a very successful Pub Lunch at La Favorita Hotel. The lunch was well supported and the meal and venue were ideal. Once again we had reason to thank our Social Secretary (and Treasurer) **Dave Bichard** and wife **Kathy** for a very pleasant and well organised function which was appreciated by all those who attended.

It was at a Branch meeting on 11 August that a proposal was made that the Committee, accompanied by their wives or lady friends (but not both) should dine together one evening. The proposal was well received and superbly executed on the evening of Friday 27 November at the Havelet Grill. What little organisation was needed was carried out, with his usual aplomb, by **Dave Bichard**. When I add that he was the proposer of the event you will know what a glutton (for punishment – not food) he is. The signs are that this is likely to become an annual event. Hurrah!

The Branch again chose the St Margaret's Lodge Hotel for their annual Christmas Dinner which was held on Wednesday 9 December 1998. Another excellent meal was enjoyed by members and their guests, the service and festive decor left nothing to be desired and in his after dinner speech the Chairman, **Mike Brock** thanked **Dave** and **Kathy Bichard** for all their hard work towards the success of the evening. **Mike** then called forward **Tom Remfrey** (late Intelligence Corps) and, after outlining **Tom's** long and loyal service to the Guernsey Branch, which included spells as Committee Member, Secretary and Vice Chairman, presented him with a special Association lapel badge and a certificate to mark the well deserved award of Associate Life Membership. The bemused recipient had to wait for the applause to die down before he was able to thank the Chairman and the Royal Signals Association, for the honour conferred on him. Congratulations **Tom**. So ended yet another happy Christmas Dinner and our final function of the year.

Finally the Chairman, Committee and all Members of the Guernsey Branch wish you all a very happy, healthy and hopefully peaceful final year of his millennium.



Tom Remfrey reads the letter granting him Associate Life Membership while Chairman Mike Brock waits to present the framed Certificate and the Lapel Badge

HUDDERSFIELD BRANCH

The Signals personnel who attended our Christmas dinner, are:



Back Row (L-R): Mr A. Dunn, Mr J. Hirst, Mr D. Crawshaw,
Rev J. N. Dearden, Mr R. Mitchel, Mr L. Rosendale
and Mr D. Pollard.
Front Row (L-R): P. Ling, Mr D. Tippen, Mrs B. Mellor
and Mr G. Scott

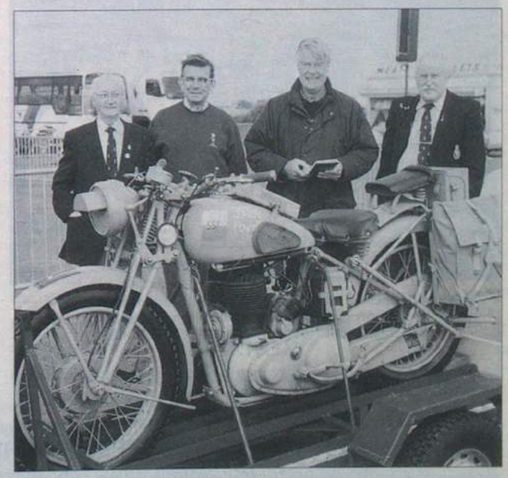
The Dinner was attended by 27 people including wives and guests, and everyone had a good day.

SHROPSHIRE BRANCH

Well it is twelve months more or less to the day since we last 'penned' our Branch notes. A lot has happened so I will highlight two events that deserve mention.

A Gift to the Corps Museum - One of our stalwart members, **Emyr Edwards** who hails from Oswestry. He served in the Corps during the last war and saw service in the Orkneys and the Middle East with some time spent in Palestine. He was a Don R. Regrettably, whilst still in Palestine, he suffered a serious accident whilst aboard his steed. He was sent home after undergoing operations and finally settled in Civvy Street. In the latter years **Emyr** acquired a military spec. motor cycle in very poor condition. To cut a long story short he completely renovated the machine and restored it to A1 condition. It carried the livery of Palestine Command at the time he was stationed there. Also he obtained a tailors dummy' and dressed that in the uniform which he wore during his service. Over the years he displayed the motor cycle and Dummy' at the majority of Military, Vintage Shows and Rallies.

The injuries that **Emyr** sustained all those years ago have taken their toll on his health. No longer feeling the reason to 'rally', he decided to donate his gallant steed to the Royal Corps of Signals Museum at Blandford. So on a wet and windy 13 September last year, he, accompanied by our Branch Secretary **Brian Podmore**, complete with towing trailer, set off for the pastures of Blandford. A formal presentation was made and **Maj Gen C. N. Last CB, OBE**, Chairman of the Museum Trustees accepted the motor cycle and 'dummy' on behalf of the Museum.



The formal handover
(L-R): Emyr Edwards, Roger Pickard - Curator, Maj Gen Last,
and Brian Podmore



The motor cycle and 'Don X'
with full insignia and Palestine Command emblems
as it stands on display in the Museum

Our Annual Ladies Dinner Night took place on Friday 19 February 1999 at the Abbey Meads Hotel, Shrewsbury. Our President, **Lt Col John Hudson** and **Mrs Barbara Hudson** were our Guests of Honour. 27 members were present and the accompanying photograph depicts a few of the membership and their ladies enjoying themselves.



(L-R): Gill Hine, Malcolm Hine, Sheila Resoun,
Phil Johnson (Treas) Colin MacMillan, Thea Johnson,
SSgt Brian Resoun and Janet MacMillan

Well that's all for now goodbye from the beautiful county of Shropshire (and Northwest Staffordshire)

TORBAY BRANCH

Mr Benny Goodman represented this Branch at the dedication memorial parade held at Torcross, South Devon on Sunday 25 April 1999. **Mr Benny Goodman**, the Branch Standard Bearer, was a National Service Soldier who completed his service as a Dispatch Rider in the Middle East, following his training at Catterick and Ripon.



On the night of 27/28 April 1944, six weeks prior to 'D' Day, Operation Tiger took place on Slapton Sands, from where 3,000 civilian residents had been evacuated to facilitate training for the American Forces and secrecy in preparation for the Normandy Landings.

Seven German 'E' Boats from Cherbourg penetrated the Royal Navy defence, and attacked the embarking Americans taking part in the Exercise. This major action was deliberately concealed. There was a cover up. Mystery shrouded the final resting place of the 700 Americans who perished off the Devon coast, and a further 300 men who were wounded. This represented a great loss of life. More than that sustained by the invasion forces during the assault on Utah Beach on 'D' Day.

Half way along the two mile stretch from Torcross to Strete Gate, there now stands a memorial in memory of the 700 Americans who lost their lives. More recently a Sherman tank was recovered from the water by a local hotelier, restored and is now on display at Torcross.



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NORTHERN IRELAND BRANCH

Unfortunately I have to start once again on a sad note. I regret to say that our long standing Member and Branch stalwart **Gerry McCullough** has passed away. **Gerry** was for many years a very active Member and was for some time Branch Representative, attending RSA meetings in London regularly. It was while attending one of these that **Gerry** had a fall in his Hotel. This, added to his existing health problems and later the death of his wife, caused him eventually to become house bound. During this period Branch Members visited him regularly, It was fitting that at his funeral the Royal Signals flag draped the coffin while the Branch Standard hung in the Church. A good representation of Branch Members led by Chairman, **John Loveday** attended the funeral.

The Branch AGM was held in February. The main changes in Branch Officers were - Chairman **John Loveday**, Vice-Chair **John Brown**, Treasurer **Jack Donaldson** and Blandford Reunion Member **Edgar McCall.** Once again **Ian** & **Debbie Wolfe** accepted re-election as Joint Secretaries as indeed did most of the other Branch Officers, the list being too long to publish all of them in this article. We are grateful to all who take Office as without them the Branch could not work efficiently. We would like also to record our thanks to **Tom Maguire** who served us so well as Chairman for several years and we are glad that the benefit of his experience will still be available; on the Branch Committee,

On Friday 2 April we held our Formal Dinner Dance in Clonaver TAVR Centre with an attendance of eighty, probably the best attended yet. We were suitably entertained during dinner by the Ravenhill Temperance Flute Band. Their choice of music and standard of playing showed why they have been prize winners for many years. After opening remarks by Chairman **John Loveday**, **Lt Col G. J. T. Rafferty**, Commander Royal Signals NI & CO 15 Sig Regt. and **Lt Col A. P. R. Roberts**, CO 40 Sig Regt (V) each spoke. Branch President, **Maj Bill Douglas** closed the proceedings and also made a presentation on behalf of the Branch to **Sgt Andy Leishman**, who will be leaving the Regiment soon, for his valuable assistance in helping to organise these functions for several years. The 'Formal' was a great success and our thanks once again go to **Ian** & **Debbie Wolfe, Andy Leishman, Jim Hagan** and all those willing helpers before, during and after the event.

For the first time for several years Branch Secretary **Ian Wolfe** was unable to attend the RSA/AGM in London but Chairman **John Loveday** ably stood in for him on this occasion. It is understood that our nomination of **Lt Col (Rtd) Terry Lightfoot** as Northern Ireland Representative to the Central Committee was accepted.

Once again my usual reminder to those serving and ex-Signallers (Regular & TAVR) come and join us in Clonaver TAVR Centre, Belfast any the third Wednesday of each Month.

REUNIONS

! STOP PRESS !

THE MIDDLESEX YEOMANRY ASSOCIATION

Due to circumstances beyond our control, our Dinner Date has had to be changed to

8 OCTOBER 1999

The Lafone Day Parade at St Paul's Cathedral remains

10 OCTOBER 1999

3RD DIVISIONAL SIGNALS REUNION CLUB

Those who read the *Daily Telegraph* will have seen that we held our 47th AGM and Reunion Luncheon on Saturday 27 March 1999 at the Victory Services Club in London. Our Guest of Honour was the Signal Officer in Chief, **Brig J. H. Griffin ADC**, who was accompanied by his wife, **Marion**. Our President, **Brig Ronnie Stonham** presided and among our other guests were **Lt Col Neil Couch**, CO of 3rd (UK) HQ and Sig Regt, **Capt Dave Stachini**, the Club Liasion Officer, with his wife **Marie** and the new RSM, **WO1 Gary Stoker**, with his wife **Joni**. We also had with us **Cpl. McLean** Royal Logistic Corps, winner of last year's Ernie Bayley Award, who was accompanied by **Mrs McLean.**

After the Loyal Toasts the President welcomed our guests, congratulated **Kathleen Percival** on her award of Associate Life Membership of the RSA, introduced **Cpl McLean** to the gathering and invited **Brig Griffin** to tell us how the Corps was doing. The SOinC in an interesting address brought us up to date with developments in manning, technical advances, the opportunities offered to the Corps by the growth of IT and how the young men and women of the Corps were taking it in their stride and still managing to enjoy interludes of sport and adventurous training. We can still be proud of the people who wear the Jimmy. After thanking **Brig Griffin Brig Ronnie** then invited the CO, **Lt Col Neil Couch**, to make the 'shareholders report' on the Regiment.

Col Neil started by remarking that it was becoming SOP for the COs of 3 (UK) Div HQ and Signal Regiment to do their handovers/takeovers in the middle of an Operational Tour, it made for interesting accounting. The Regiment had acquitted, and was acquitting, itself well in all the tasks presented to it, be it in the Balkans the Falklands or wherever, the soldiers just got on with the job and produced the results asked for. No one could ask for more. But it was not all work and no play. They still managed to play the odd game of Soccer, Hockey and Rugby and in fact were pretty good at all those activities. He was very proud of the Regiment and was sure that we would be too when we took up his invitation to visit the Regiment in Bulford for the Regimental Weekend in June of this year. The president thanked **Col Neil** and proposed the toast to the Regiment.

The Chairman, **Maj Derek Roberts**, then said a few words mainly to say that this was one of the few occasions nowadays that he got the chance to do anything, not that he was complaining. He introduced our 'first footers' **Mr Norman Hands** and **Mr Alex Mair** after which he proposed the toast to The Ladies. The Secretary, prior to proposing the toast to Absent Friends, mentioned the names of a few stalwarts, who for various very good reasons were not present, among them **Joy Stonham** and **Pam Roberts, Col Peter Hoskins, Bill Barnard** and **Bob Piper. Bob**, you will recall, has given some good examples of treen-work for our raffle, rather facetiously I asked if this year's item was to be an armchair. Well that is just what he produced, admittedly not a full sized chair but the kind that you sit a doll or teddy bear on. We thought it too good for our little raffle so we are taking it to Bulford in June where we hope it will make lots of money for the Regiment and us. **Bob** makes a lot of these items which he and his wife donate to various local charities. The raffle, even though we had a much reduced attendance, made the handsome sum of £100-00, our thanks to the donators of prizes and the ticket sellers.

John Templeton then invited **Maj Ken Smartt** and **Mr Ernest Packham** to fall in front and centre and asked the President to present both with the 50 Year Badges recently awarded to them by the Central Committee of the RSA. Ken is a founder member of the Club and has served on the Committee, continuously, for over 40 years as Treasurer, Chairman and now as Vice President. **Ernest**, despite various health problems, has been on the Committee for some years and is at present our most hard working Treasurer. Our hearty congratulations to both.

'F' BOYS COMPANY ROYAL SIGNALS 1920-41 REUNION

The eighth reunion of 'F' Company members will be held at theUnion Jack Club, Sandell Street, London, situated just behind Waterloo Station on **29 September 1999**.

Facilities: Private Room with bar from 1100hrs until 1500hrs. A curry lunch will be provided or an alternative meal if we are advised well in advance. The cost this year remains at £12.

Invitations will be sent out in June who are currently on our list, but all who served in 'F' Company 1920-1941, are eligible to attend. Contact Hon Secretary, **Vic Dugdale**, 12 Deep Well Drive, Camberley, Surrey, GU15 2HF. Telephone: 01276 29176.

LOST COMMS

60s 16ers

THE 1960s 16 SIGNAL REGIMENT

REUNION CLUB

Including HQ BAOR Signal Troop. For details contact

Chris Bartlett

45 Whitehouse Road, Leigh on Sea

ESSEX SS9 5SR

Tel: 01702 524620

(1) E-mail: chris60s16er@tesco.net

(2) E-mail: chris60s16s@hotmail.com

160 contacts to date, Annual Reunions.

ERROR

Printed in April's LOST COMMS column was a reference to **Mrs Helga Sanderson**. Unfortunately the contact telephone number for **Mrs White** was printed incorrectly. It should read 01189 783773.

If responding to any advertisements in *The Wire* please mention that you saw it in your Corps magazine

Mr Roger Poyner is trying to contact a former or possibly still serving member of the Forces, **Cpl Freemantle,** on behalf of his brother who will celebrate his 40th birthday on 18 June 1999. **Cpl Freemantle** R. SIGNALS had a wife called **Winifred** 'Fred'. His last known posting was Cyprus BFPO 57, and that was about three or four years ago. He has also served at Treninwick, Newquay, Cornwall and was attached to the RAF at Wyron Huntingdon. If anybody has any news of them please contact **Mr Poyner** on (0044) 115 975 2205.

Mrs Maire Joyce is trying to find any photograph which includes her late husband, **Brian Leslie Gilbert Joyce** (23162326) during his National Service with 7 Training Regiment, Catterick Camp from 1955 to 1957. If anyone can help, could they please contact **Mrs Joyce** in Abingdon on 01235-863365.

Winston V. Manning would very much like to contact an old friend, **Gordon Robson**, that he served with in Junior Leaders Regiment in Denbury, Newton Abbot, Devon - 1956/59 and met up with again in Osnabruck, Germany, in the early 60s. **Gordon** came from Newcastle-upon-Tyne. If anyone knows **Gord**, it would be appreciated if they could pass on **Winston**'s address. **Winston** feels that it would be fantastic to see **Gord** at the Reunion Weekend or indeed any of his old friends from those days in Devon and Germany. Please contact **Winston** at 129 Oakburn Road, Kanata Ontario, CANADA K2L 1E5.

Douglas Smith, 43 Operating Section, 1st British Corps Signals from 81/3 Frant Road, Tunbridge Wells about June 1942 to approximately March 1945 Iserlohn, Germany, would appreciate hearing news of former colleagues. He can be contacted at 34 Park Avenue North (Abington) Northampton NN3 2JE.

Seeking **ex CSM Donald Galbraith** (2324250). **Donald** served with the SOE in Malaya prior to the Japanese invasion and was dropped into Poland on Op Freston in 1944. The Attaché in Poland and the SOE Advisor in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office would like to hear from anyone with information on **Donald**'s current whereabouts. Call **Duncan Stuart** on 0171-238 4473.

CAN ANYBODY HELP?

Pat Ryan would like to know the whereabouts of **Gerry (G.G.) Barnes** and **Keith Geoffrey Hackett. Keith** was a witness at **Gerry's** marriage to **Helene Pissides** at El Ballah, Egypt on 6 January 1951. **Pat** was with the Egypt Command Signals Regiment 1949-52 and would be delighted to hear from anyone who served there, especially rugby players!

Mr Peter Sharman is seeking the whereabouts of **Edward Sharman**, who served at Denbury in 1951/52. Anyone with information is asked to contact **Peter** on Newton Abbot (01626) 360856.

249 Signal Squadron
(FARELF)

is trying to contact all ranks who served in the 60s and is already in touch with 45, please ring **Graham Jolly** on: 01233 637792.

CORRESPONDENCE

From: **Silvano Casaldi**
Museum of Allied Landing
Sangallo Castle
Via Gramsci, 5
00048 NETTUNO (Rome)
Italy

Dear Sir,

Being the curator of The Allied Landing Museum I intend to collect photos of veterans of the Anzio-Nettuno Beachead, for future publication. These photos need to be in two's. One needs to have been taken during the subject's period in the Army - preferrably as near to 1944 (the time of the landing) as possible and the other photo to have been taken in the present. From this I will be able to produce a 'Then and Now' record book. The photos will be accompanied by a potted history of the subject.

Joe Bloggs.....
POTTED HISTORY

PHOTO

Of course, everyone that sends me original photos will have them returned and also receive a copy of the publication free of charge.

With warmest regards.....

From: **Ronald M. A. Hirst**
Mathildenstrasse 4
D – 65189 WEISBADEN
Tel: (0611) 561856
USA 01149-611-56 18 56

Dear Editor,

Signalman R. Marks, 22031264, Royal Corps of Signals died in Berlin Airlift-related operations 3 June 1949. He lies buried in the Post-War-Plot, Ohlsdorfer Friedhof, HAMBURG, Germany. His gravestone reflects an age of 19 years. I wish to know more about **Signalman Marks**.

An American Airlift veteran, I am doing biographical profiles on the 32 Americans who died in Airlift-related operations. I am also concerned to identify the 77 names which appear on the Airlift memorials at both Berlin and Frankfurt (Rhein-Main Air Base). Mission accomplished on 76 names. **Marks** is the 77th and no one seems to know who this man was! Nor, how his name came to appear on the memorials! I'm working on that one too.

Either way, I've written to the Royal Signals Association who couldn't help and now I write to you in the hope that one or more of your readers may be able to help.

I thank you kindly.....

(Editor – We have contacted the Army Records Centre and forwarded a copy of your letter to them. If they have any record of Sig Marks they will forward a copy of your letter to his next of kin, that and publishing your letter is the best we can do. We have also checked with the Royal Signals Museum.)

From: **Mr J. J. Carruthers**
38 Beech Avenue
Upton
WIRRAL
L49 4NJ
Tel: 0151 605 1378

Sir,

Whilst serving with the Corps in 1952 in the Hong Kong and Kowloon Garrison, I was a member of the Internal Security Troop stationed in Whitfield Barracks, Nathan Road, Kowloon. During the middle of that year there was a Physical and Battle Training Competition being held involving all units who were in the colony at that time.

The Royal Signals Regiment, stationed in Victoria Barracks, Victoria Hong Kong Island, had a Preliminary competition, with the intention to select the most suitable team to represent the Regiment in the Competition proper. The outcome of this was that our Troop Team was selected to be the representative for the Corps. After some very tough training sessions in all aspects that were being tested the event took place at the Sek Kong area of the New Territories. A few of the units involved were KSLI Middlesex, KOYLI, Gurkhas, RA and many more.

The competition was very well organised and involved a good amount of team work. Our Troop had one of the best physical training qualification and then went on to win the overall battle course event. This was achieved mainly by our Tp Sgt, **Sgt McMahon** who was an experienced army running competitor. He was first to the wall scaling area and assisted all other team members to climb the obstacle.

The Troop was presented with a Shield for the competition and I am enclosing a copy of the photograph taken of the team. I have never met any of the team members since my service days nor have I any idea whether this event was carried on in future years. The photograph shows the Troop OC, **Capt Walker** behind the shield, on his left is **Sgt McMahon** and I am second from the left, front row.



If this article is published in a future edition of *The Wire* maybe some of the other team members may be around at the 1999 Reunion Weekend. It would be very nice to recall that event and the other good times out in Hong Kong.

Yours Sincerely.....

From: **Mr J. W. H. Jarman**
Meadow View
Upper Thornton
Milford Haven
PEMBROKESHIRE SA73 3UF
Tel: 01646 692673

Dear Sir,

Having just read my April edition of *The Wire*, and following the news from the Signal Regiments, I read the account of the Christmas Party and entertainment that 14 Signal Regiment gave to the children from Portfield School for Handicapped Children. Not an easy task at any time. Whilst waiting at the Withybush Hospital to see the Specialist in Ophthalmology on 8 March. I was sitting next to a young lady with her severely handicapped son in a wheelchair. On the side of the wheel chair was a Signals Sticker from 14 Signal Regiment. I asked her why it was there, and she told me of the wonderful time her son had received at the Cawder Barracks and that the Commanding Officer and his men were always supporting the children of the school, adding that never before had they been shown such sympathy and kindness. This is not all that 14 Signal Regiment does in this area, supporting the community and charities whenever they can, despite the many NATO Commitments. In this day of falling standards it is good to know that the present members of the Royal Signals are of as high a quality as ever. We were always known as the Gentlemen of the Army, (or do I say Gentle Persons). To all the members of 14 Signal Regiment at Cawder Barracks, Brawdy since you moved here three years ago you have established yourselves as an asset to the County of Pembrokeshire, keep up the good work.

Yours Sincerely.....

From: **Steve Bresloff MSM (Ex- Breslofsky)**

Dear Editor,

Brig G. Jackson was correct. I moved back from Harrogate, as the GD Boy Sergeant, to start the new Royal Signals Boys in 'Hulse Block' Richmond Barracks Catterick in late 1949. They then moved on to Beverly sometime in 1950/51. The OC was, I think, **Maj** 'Doc' **Holliday**, who was killed whilst riding a motor-cycle sometime in 1950. The Boy Staff Sergeant was **Bob Morris** (Where are you now?).

So many wonderful people over the years. It is said that old men are all made of their memories.

Yours Sincerely.....

From: **Col D. T. W. Gibson MBE**
Hamstead Drive
Yarmouth
ISLE OF WIGHT PO41 0YE
Tel: 01983 760041

Dear Editor,

Reference the April edition of *The WIRE*, correspondent **Maj Burns** is, of course, quite right. 2 Wireless Regiment – 9 Signal Regiment was 'raised' originally as No.2 Wireless Company in the Middle East, and moved to Sarafand in 1930, as explained in **General Nalder**'s history. As he says, it has one of the longest continuous histories of any regular units of the Corps and, for that matter, from before the Corps separated from the Sappers.

The writer of the friendly account of my visit, with my wife, to Cyprus after 39 years, may have misused the word from my description of the changeover party we arranged in 1959, whilst I was CO.

A large '2' and an equally large '9' were made of wood, and put on the end of long poles, fixed at right angles. A big bonfire was built on open-ground, inside the barbed wire perimeter, refreshments were available and the '2' stayed proudly aloft by the bonfire. We felt sad at the passing of history. Then to our delight and surprise, from the darkness outside the wire, just before midnight, the pipes of that very fine Regiment, the Royal Ulster Rifles, sang out and we cheered, opened a gap in the wire and welcomed in the RUR party. As midnight arrived the '2' was lowered into the flames and the '9' was raised to take it's place. It was an emotional moment, and a great party was had by all who had been able to be spared from duty that night and their families.

The Royal Ulster Regiment was then based in Famagusta and, as our neighbours, we had close links. We all enjoyed and appreciated their joining in. It was a rough and ready occasion that fitted the circumstances, EOKA was still operating. The present CO of 9 Signal Regiment (Radio) and the CO of 33 Signals Unit very kindly invited me and my wife to the merger ceremony of the two units on 1 April 1999. However, we were unable to be there. It was a great privilege to command such an interesting Unit with such a long history. Although the environment in which the new unit operates is different from the one that I knew, the challenges are similar and just as severe and important. I wish all who serve in it the very best of good fortune.

Yours Sincerely.....

From: **Col A. Hawksworth TD, DL**
105 Grangewood Road
Wallaton
NOTTINGHAM NG8 2SX

Dear Editor,

Thank you for publishing in the April edition of *The WIRE* my obituary for **WO2 Dorothy** 'Dot' **Williamson**. I was disappointed, however, that you chose to edit my draft by changing 'Chairman' to 'Chairwoman'. **Dot** had strong views and her own version of equal opportunity was that she would be called 'Chairman', regardless of her sex. At one stroke of the ubiquitous PC pen, you deprived her of this right. She would have been livid!

Yours Faithfully.....

From: **Mr Bernard Spencer**
12 Norton Place
Morcambe
LANCASHIRE LA3 1PJ

Dear Editor,

Many thanks for putting my war experience – Memories – in the April edition of *The Wire*. There was just one small mistake, the name of the village should be 'Cassibile'.

I enjoyed the poems you printed and thought you might like this. It is my first attempt, a couple of months ago.

THE VETERAN

They ask us why we do it,
Why we still parade,
Now that we are older
And just a little staid.

It's not for the sake of glory
Or the medals on our chest,
It's simply we are comrades
Who survived through every test.

The civilian women and uniformed too,
Made us proud of what they had to do.
Both at home and abroad, steadfastly relying,
On those at the Front to keep the flag flying.

On the sixth of June, that fateful day,
A day no one should forget.
Many laid down their lives, like Jesus,
To pay for man's inhuman debt.

And when God asks the question
'Who are you my man?'
I will proudly answer
'Lord – your servant and a loyal veteran'.

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LAST POST

Bailey - Cpl J. E. Bailey	Served 1937/46	Died 08/08/98
Barnie - Capt E. V. Barnie	Served 1936/46	Died 09/02/99
Chitty – Maj G. J. Chitty	Served 1952/73	Died 13/02/99
Collins – Col M. F. Collins	Served 1959/77	Died 04/02/99
Colquhoun - Maj R. S. Colquhoun	Served 1928/46	Died 01/03/99
Dunlop - Maj (QM) H. R. H. Dunlop	Served 1932/72	Died 16/04/99
Flanagan - WO2 L. Flanagan	Served 1934/69	Died 19/03/99
Fitzgerald - WO2 T. G. Fitzgerald	Served 1928/46	Died 19/04/99
Fletcher - WO2 R. F. Fletcher	Served 1939/45	Died 26/02/99
Gaddas - Cpl D. Gaddas	Served 1958/67	Died 19/03/99
Gray - LCpl L. Gray	Served 1940/46	Died 06/03/99
Griffiths - WO2 K. W. Griffiths	Served 1950/77	Died Aug '98
Hall - D. A. Hall	Served 1939/46	Died 14/06/98
Heathcote - F. V. Heathcote	Served 1943/46	Died 07/04/99
Hurley - Sig C. Hurley	Served 1939/46	Died Mar '99
Hutchinson - Mr C. H. Hutchinson	Served	Died 07/01/99
Kelleway - Sig J. A. Kelleway	Served 1940/46	Died 03/04/99
Maddison - Harry Madison	Served 1961/84	Died 01/02/99
Morrow - Sig W. C. Morrow	Served 1944/47	Died 19/03/99
Newman - Dvr J. L. Newman	Served 1954/55	Died 08/04/99
Nimmo - Cpl D. Nimmo	Served 1948/50	Died Feb '99
Pearson - Capt W. J. Pearson	Served	Died 18/02/99
Petschi – Mr R. F. J. Petschi	Served	Died Dec '98
Pettifer – Maj F. C. Pettifer	Served	Died 14/02/99
Pike - Capt C. H. Pike	Served	Died Jul '98
Ponsonby - Brig W. M. Ponsonby	Served 1925/57	Died 16/03/99
Raby - Cpl I. M. Raby	Served 141288	Died 17/02/98
Rawsthorne - R. Rawsthorne	Served 1947/57	Died 05/04/99
Roberts - LCpl C. W. Roberts	Served 1940/46	Died 20/04/99
Shaw - Capt T. J. Shaw	Served	Died 05/03/99

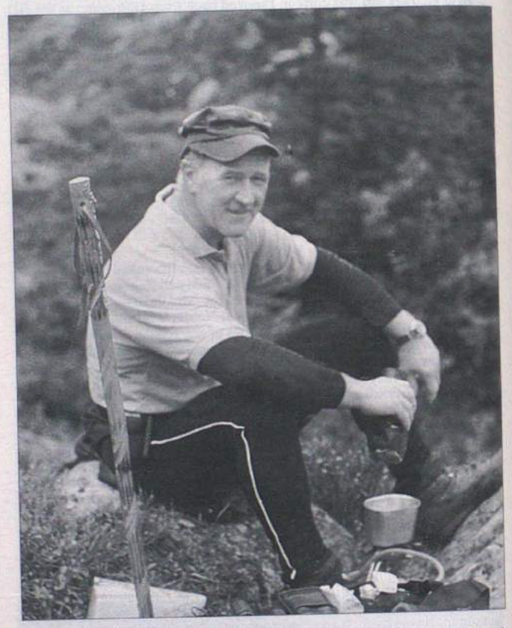
Skinner - Sig J. E. Skinner	Served 1940/46	Died 16/03/99
Stringer - Maj A. Stringer	Served 1945/86	Died Mar '99
Terrey - Maj F. A. L. Terrey	Served 1939/72	Died 10/03/99
Thuillier - Maj Gen L de M Thuillier	Served 1926/58	Died 21/03/99
Welton - Lt Col L. A. Welton	Served 1950/79	Died 14/09/97
Williams - Col S. J. Williams MBE TD	Served	Died 15/04/99
Wilson - Cpl D. D. Wilson	Served 1951/54	Died c1987
Wright - Sig Terry Wright	Served 1960/62	Died 22/03/99

Raby - Cpl Ian Michael Raby. It is with deep regret that the death of **Ian Raby** is announced. **Ian** had many friends within the Corps having served in Germany, Denmark, The Gulf, Former Republic of Yugoslavia and UK. **Ian** will be greatly missed by all, especially within 90 (NR) Sig Sqn where he was serving as a Permanent Staff Instructor for Royal Signals Volunteers at the time of his death.

Flanagan – WO2 Leonard Flanagan died on 19 March 1999 at the age of 84. **Len** enlisted in the East Lancashire Regiment in 1934 and very quickly qualified as a Regimental Signaller. This led to attachments for duty with the Royal Corps of Signals, in Egypt before the Second World War, in Burma during the war and in due course his permanent transfer to the Corps after the war. Attachment to the Corps in Burma lasted from 1943 till the end of hostilities during which time he served with 36 Divisional Signals. Before posting with his Battalion to Burma he had been with the British Expeditionary Forces in France and was a veteran of Dunkirk. Post-war, in the 1950s, he served with 1 Corps Signal Regiment in Germany, 2 Wireless Signal Regiment in Cyprus and 14 Signal Regiment (COMCAN) in the UK. Completing his Regular Army Service in 1960 he then joined the Territorial Army for a further five years serving in 57 Signal Regiment TA from 1962 to 1967. As a civilian he took up employment with the Ministry of Defence working at the Boddington Tape Relay Centre until 1979, when at 65 he reached retirement age. **Len** was a devoted member of the Corps family and a life member of the Association. Having first joined a Branch formed in 1 Corps Signal Regiment in the early 1950s he had, by the time of his death, effectively been a member for over 43 years. As Standard Bearer for the Cheltenham and District Branch, renamed the Cotswolds Branch in 1979, **Len** proudly and regularly paraded the Branch standard at numerous events, including the Catterick and Blandford Reunions, Remembrance Day services, Royal British Legion Dedication Services, Commemoration Parades and Services at Dunkirk, Battle of Britain Parades, funerals of former comrades and on every other appropriate occasion. He was a member of not only the Royal Signals Association but also of the Dunkirk Veterans Association., the Burma Star Association and the Council of Cheltenham Old Comrades Associations (CCOCA) on which he served for many years, until failing health caused his resignation, as the Cotswolds Branch Representative. He was twice winner of the CCOCA Cup awarded for the best Standard Bearer, judged over a year's performance. He later joined the panel of judges. In 1992 he was awarded the Association's 50 Year Badge. He twice had the honour of being presented to our Colonel in Chief, **Her Royal Highness Princess Anne, the Princess Royal**, at Catterick in 1983 and on the occasion of the Corps' 75th Anniversary celebrations at Blandford in 1995. **Len** was a truly dedicated Old Comrade who will be greatly missed by all who knew him. He will be remembered with affection. We offer our condolences to his sons **Neil** and **Keith** and their families.

Wright – Terry Wright. Terry was one of the original four who set up and established the Langeleben Reunion Branch, of the Royal Signals Association, in April 1993, and was the first person to be it's Secretary. He continued in this position until I, **Frank Mitchell,** took over the position in 1995. **Terry** then became Assistant Secretary. **Terry** was called up for National Service in January 1960 and was posted to Langeleben in January of 1961, where he remained until his demob in 1962. **Terry** had his service extended by six months due to the building of the Berlin Wall. **Terry** will be sadly missed by all members of the Langeleben Branch, as he had put so much into it's growth in membership. He leaves a wife, **Brenda**, a daughter **Lorraine** and a son **David**. Rest in peace **Terry,** my good friend.

Maddison - 'Harry' Maddison. It is with particular sadness that I record the sudden and untimely death on 1 February 1999 of **'Harry' Maddison.** When we were both serving in 216 Para Sig Sqn, the year was 1966 and it was the start of a lifelong friendship. To cover the many and varied aspects of **Harry's** life would take many pages as he had done so much over the years, he was a unique character, a soldier's soldier and a man's man. He possessed a wonderful sense of humour and always gave one hundred and ten percent to everything he put his mind to. **Harry** enlisted on 18 April 1961 joining the Junior Leaders Regiment Royal Signals in Newton Abbot. Always looking for a challenge. On leaving Denbury he volunteered for the Parachute Signal Squadron and on successfully passing P Company he served with the Parachute Brigade from 1969 His next big challenge was SAS selection and in 1971 he passed selection and joined 22 SAS Regiment, in his own words 'this was the proudest moment of my career'. In Hereford he met many old friends from his days in Aldershot. **Harry** spent the next 10 years with 22 SAS serving all over the world on operations. His last three years were spent in BAOR at 14 Sig Regt (EW) and his final six months at Thorney Island with 63 (SAS) Signal Squadron (V). **Harry** was discharged on 23 September 1984 as a WO2. He dabbled in security for a time and then became an Instructor at West Buckland School in Barnstable, Devon. He was a postman for a short while but eventually he came 'home' and started work as a civilian in the Diving Cell 22 SAS where he was once again amongst old friends and comrades. Our sympathies go to his wife **Deanna**, his daughter **Laura** and son-in-law **Peter** and their children **Chloe** and **Peter. Harry's** funeral service was held in Belmont Abbey, Hereford on Monday 8 February 1999. The Abbey was packed with standing room only for the several hundred friends and comrades who had come to say their final farewell. Below is a photograph of **'Harry'** as I best remember him, with a smile on his face making a brew.



Gaddas – Cpl David Gaddas enlisted 30 May 1958 for nine years. **David** was married to **Hazel** in 1959 and remained happily married for the next forty years. He did his square bashing at Catterick before going to Germany where he served six years as a Driver with 614 Signal Troop Park Brahct. He was the CO's Driver for a time and a Mechanic. **David** then got posted to Bulford Camp in 1963 where he was a Driving Instructor. From here he was sent to Cyprus for six months in 1964. Whilst in Cyprus he was made Acting/Sergeant, which rank he kept when he was posted to 15 Sig Regt in Aden for his last nine months of service, then it was back to Catterick. When **David** was in Cyprus, so he always said, 'He was one of the first soldiers to wear the UN beret, cravat and badge. **David** joined the Army Fire Brigade on demob, serving at Middle Wallop, Tidworth, Netheravon and Bovington where he was Station Officer, also of Lulworth and West Moors. **David** and his wife returned to Yorkshire in 1977, where he took up employment as Fire/Security Officer at Magnet, (which was then called Magnet-Southern), in January 1978. **David** was popular and enjoyed his life in the Service. He was an NCO who received respect from ranks both Junior and Senior to himself.

DON'T BE DISAPPOINTED

Copy must be received six weeks before the publication date

Barnes - Colonel Basil Hilary Purcell Barnes OBE died on 17 November 1998 at the age of 83. He was educated at Imperial Service College and RMA Woolwich, and was commissioned into Royal Signals in January 1935. He may be remembered best as a distinguished Commanding Officer of 1 Corps Signal Regiment in the period 1958 - 60. He took over this large Regiment, later split into 7th and 22nd Regiments, when circumstances had caused it to be at a low ebb. He saw its performance, morale and reputation all prosper during his time. He was awarded the OBE at the end of this tour.

After the 'Q' course, he spent two years with 3 Divisional Signals at Bulford, where they practised with a six-horse cable train. He was then posted to India where he remained until 1941. He had happy memories of his period in India particularly of his activities when riding in racing silks. He spent the next two years in the Middle East, mainly in Iraq, but including staff qualification at Haifa later converted to psc. He returned to UK in 1943 for a year in the Military Department of the India Office. It was at this time that he met and married his wife **Naomi** whose charm and concern for others have been appreciated by all who have known her.

He finished the War Years in India and Burma and returned to UK in 1947 to join the Degree Course at RMCS Shrivenham from which he graduated with a London University BSc in Natural Sciences. After Shrivenham he was posted to 1 Divisional Signals in Tripoli and then as GSO2 in Egypt, returning to UK in 1952 as the senior Royal Signals Officer at the School of Artillery, Larkhill. On promotion to Lieutenant Colonel in 1955 he served first as GSO1 at HQ BAOR followed by his period as OC 1 Corps Signal Regiment. Next he went as Colonel to the British Joint Military Staff Washington, then to Whitehall as Colonel GS Military Intelligence, and finally as Chief Signal Officer Western Command. He retired in 1966 to Hartley Wintney where he was born and spent many years as an RO with Aldershot District, administering married quarters and locally he became an effective Church Warden. Of his four children his eldest son **Christopher** was commissioned into Royal Signals from Sandhurst and served 1966-78.

Basil Barnes had a very good brain, in 1949 he managed to win the prestigious Bertrand Stewart Essay Prize at the same time as taking the finals for his degree. He liked to get to the bottom of things, and his solutions to difficult problems were always practical and ingenious. His stories always had a special 'twist' at the end. He had time for everyone irrespective of rank, and will be much missed by his many friends.



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THE Wire

and the Journal

August 1999



The Royal Corps of Signals

AT

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The Wire

(Incorporating the Journal of the Royal Signals Institution)

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Editor Lt Col (Retd) P. Valder
Assistant Editor Mrs J. A. Herring

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THE FRONT COVER

Comes to us courtesy of the Scarborough Branch of the RSA. It shows **Wendy Popple** trying out the Flotation Blanket with pupil **Anthony Lowery**, aged eight, whilst being watched by some of the Branch Members. (L-R): **Brian Mortimer, Derek Fowler, Irene Mortimer** and **Harry Harper**. For full details see the Branch notes.

THE BACK COVER

Comes to us courtesy of 251 Signal Squadron. It shows the OC, **Maj John Oakes** presenting a cheque for £342 to the Matron of Queen Mary's Nursery. The money was raised by a team, including the Major, who were sponsored to run in the Fleet Half Marathon. For full details see the Unit notes.

WARMINSTER SCHOOL

SERVICES SCHOLARSHIPS

Warminster School is proud of its long association with the Services. In recognition of this, it is the School's intention to offer scholarships to support children with parents serving with the Armed Forces. These scholarships would be available from September 1999 and would, where appropriate, be in addition to Boarding School Allowance. Details are available from the School at Church Street, Warminster, Wilts BA12 8PJ. Tel: 01985 214129.

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FROM THE SIGNAL OFFICER IN CHIEF

It is an enormous privilege to be appointed as the serving head of the Corps and to follow in the footsteps of such an outstanding predecessor. I am sure that all members of the Corps will want to join me in wishing **Brigadier John Griffin** and **Marion** the very best in their new life. In his short time as Signal Officer in Chief, **Brigadier Griffin** set out a very clear path for the future development of the Corps, reinforcing its place at the heart of the Army's operational capability. Winning the information battle for the Commander is our main effort and, with over 70% of the Corps involved in operations, there has never been a time when our role has been more immediate or so sharply focused.

Whilst the information battle will be won by the skills and dedication of those deployed with our Regiments and Squadrons, their ability to sustain the operation depends upon the maintenance of the infrastructure of the Corps, not least upon our families and those who administer the rear parties. Theirs is a vital but often uncertain and thankless role and I wish to pay tribute to their commitment and support. The Corps has a very bright future. We continue to prove our mettle on operations. Whilst we do not enjoy the formal designation 'Ubique', the Corps is and will continue to be everywhere. We are at the heart of the information revolution in Defence and our soldiers are some of the best trained and motivated people in the Services. Undoubtedly the future holds some significant challenges for us all, but I am convinced that there is nothing that we cannot overcome together.

I look forward to meeting as many of you and your families as possible during my tour of duty and working with you to take the Corps forward to even greater successes in the new Millennium.



MUSICAL NOTES

THE CORPS BAND

Director of Music **Maj. D. F. Wall LTCL BBSM psm CA Mus**
Bandmaster **WO1 A. Booth BA(Music) LRSM CA Mus**

Now that we are well into 1999, and a new chapter in band history, our new Bandmaster **WO1** 'Bill' **Booth** has been true to his word and involved us with public relations and recruiting work within the community. Although Downlands School, here on camp was the first and very close to home, we have been into Blandford and all the way to Puddletown to entertain school children. We can only hope that Royal Signals might benefit one day from our visits.

We have just returned from one of our annual trips to Northern Ireland. Not only do service personnel have the pleasure of listening to our music, but yet again schools, the elderly and infirm get to see us. The sight of musicians acting out "Old MacDonald" will be remembered for a long time, we didn't realize that he had a gorilla though! The Band managed to cover over 500 miles during the week without incident, apart from a slight accident when our kit truck managed to demolish a flagpole at one of the schools whilst reversing. Many thanks to 3 Bde. for quickly filling the breach with the offer of a new one!

By far the biggest venture for many years is to involve youth in a concert performance. Members of the Dorset Youth Wind Orchestra participated with us on Friday 14 May in the Poole Arts Centre. With the theme of 'Youth' being very much a part of the Millennium, we thought that the Museum and the Joseph Weld Hospice would benefit from a concert where youth are involved. Over 100 musicians took part in a concert that was thoroughly enjoyed by audience and participants. The concert also featured elements of the Corps Pipes and Drums including Scottish Dancing by **OCdt Katie Provan**. Our Assistant Bandmaster, **WO2 Matthew Brown**, composed a Fanfare especially for the occasion entitled " Youth in Mind".

We welcome **Musician David Byrne** to the band on Trombone after completion of his phase two training at Kneller Hall.

The remainder of the year looks busy, especially with preparations for the millennium. The high point will be a six-week tour of Canada in July and August, watch this space for a report on what promises to be a busy and fulfilling summer.

THE PIPES AND DRUMS

32nd (Scottish) Sig Regt (V) have always had a Pipes and Drums Band. During recent years the popularity of the Band and requests for pipers to play at dinner nights has grown at a dramatic rate. Pipers now exist within the Regular Corps, spread throughout our Regiments and Squadrons. The Pipes and Drums were renamed the Royal Corps of Signals Pipes and Drums Band and are currently a Corps asset, administered and managed by 32 Sig Regt (V) from RHQ in Glasgow.

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Training: The Pipers and Drummers are a dedicated bunch, training during weekends takes place in the north of England, in Catterick (half way between Aberdeen and Blandford!). Both TA and Regular soldiers attend the training, which is run by **CSgt Stout** and **WO2 D. Y. Smith**. **CSgt Stout** is a regular soldier based in Blandford who oversees newcomers and piping training within 11 Sig Regt. **WO2 D. Y. Smith** is the volunteer Pipe Major, and the lynch pin in holding the band together.

Performances: The Pipes and Drums are a popular Corps asset and requests for performances come in thick and fast. The Band recently piped 242 Sig Sqn out of Benbecula in front of a large crowd and the Colonel Commandant. Pipers will be accompanying the Corps Band on the Canada tour this year and have already been requested to play at Earls Court in the new millennium. Upcoming performances include the RSA weekend followed by a tour of Germany. Over the last twelve months pipers have been requested to play in Cyprus, South Africa, Sweden and Bosnia! Pipers, Drummers, a Mini Band or the full band can be booked by ringing or faxing the Adjt of 32 Sig Regt on Glasgow Mil (9) 4566 5024 (fax 5041). A piper makes an excellent accompaniment to a Mess Dinner night or a junior ranks function. As the Band is unfunded a small donation to the Band Fund is requested.

SLAINTE! The Pipes and Drums are a Corps asset, made up of both Regular and volunteer soldiers from throughout the Corps. Units may not be aware that they have bandsmen in their midst. Those that do support the band are thanked as the Pipes and Drums is currently unfunded and travel costs for training fall onto parent units. Remember - the future's bright - the future's tartan! *(Slainte is a Gaelic word meaning to your good health - as in 'cheers'. It is pronounced 'slange'.)*

THE CORPS TA BAND

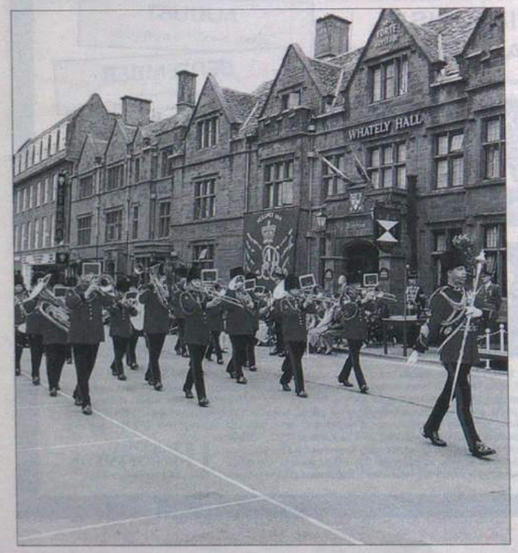
NRPS **SSgt J. Robinson**

After a long and arduous campaign against proposed SDR cuts to TA Bands, I am pleased to report that the Corps will retain its only TA Band. This is mainly due to the determined efforts of the CO 34(N) Sig Regt (V) in recruiting the support of the SOinC, Comd 11 Sigs Bde, and many more prominent members of the Corps, to put forward to HQ Land new proposals in order to retain the Band. The success of the campaign means that the Band will become an integral part of the Corps and will retrain in a new secondary role as Driver/Lineman. The primary role is being retained as Musician.

Having survived the cuts and in recognition of the tremendous support from the Corps in doing so, it only seems fitting the Band should in future be known as **The Royal Corps of Signals TA Band.** In addition to this, the Band has adopted the music to the film ' The Great Escape' as their own!

The engagement forecast for 1999 is, as ever, very busy. There have been several Corps events at which the Band has performed already this year and many more throughout the next few months. The most prominent of these will of course be the RSA weekend in June in Blandford, where we will join forces with the regular Corps Band and the Corps Pipes and Drums to perform a display and Retreat Ceremony. The current strength of the Band is 36, 22 are ex regular and there are 9 female members. Recruiting is good and there is currently a waiting list for musicians to enlist into the Band.

The Band Annual Camp this year will be in two phases. Phase One will incorporate the retraining as Dvr/Lnm and Phase Two will take the Band to Jersey to perform at the Island's major attraction 'The Battle of the Flowers'. The photograph is of the Band leading the Freedom Parade for 39 Signal Regiment through Banbury.



SWANAGE RAILWAY

Ex Topham Hatt is the long standing Exercise which encourages Royal Signals Units to assist the Swanage Railway in Dorset. During the past 15 years the Corps has played a major part in the installation of a comprehensive Strowger telecom system.

EXERCISE TOPHAM HATT

It has been an extremely good year for the Exercise as a whole. In spite of, and arguably because of, the heavy commitment to Kosovo there have been three visits to Swanage. In January, 222 Sig Sqn from 3 (UK) Div Sig Regt spent an extended weekend on two main tasks. Following the lead from 11 Sig Regt more work was carried out on Project Herston. Herston is in fact a railway halt one mile out of Swanage. When 30 Sig Regt installed the first one mile cable route to the location it was the terminus of the railway and extremely busy! As the Railway has extended ….. the 'End of the World' has moved on which has resulted in ten years of minimal attention.

Project Herston identified a full programme of work which could, in the main, be carried out in a general DIY vein. It commenced with a huge bank-side clearance campaign over a quarter of mile of the track which has now been 'adopted' by the Corps. The boundaries of this area are marked by posts as would have been done a hundred years ago by the original track gangs; guess what colours the posts are! The Railway then re-fenced the track-side area, the passenger foot crossing has been rebuilt, all the plain (vertical wooden) fencing has been replaced and the whole area landscaped. The finishing touches at this stage were completed in May during a second visit by 222 Sig Sqn. The major part of that effort saw 37 litres of paint splashed everywhere, a good deal of sign-writing and eight flower-beds lined in Purbeck stone; these have since seen the arrival of shrubs and plants thanks to the generosity of the Purbeck Hotel.

May was planned to be a busy month for the Exercise and three units were due to visit during the month. Regretfully 16 Sig Regt had to cancel their visit. However 30 Sig Regt were able to send a party of 11 under the direction of **Capt Mike Grearson** from 256 Sig Sqn. The Regiment had been encouraged to attend as it was the first unit to undertake an Exercise on the Railway, all be it under the guise of Ex Cygnet Train! During their visit 256 Sig Sqn were set to task removing and then building 60 metres of wooden fence at the top of the main street in Swanage; a high profile job if ever there was one. As the world turns circle it is ironic that **Cpl Steve Nelson** was a Junior Sergeant Major on the Exercise which last worked on that particular task when Junior Soldiers from Kohima Tp visited in 1992. Despite all the many comments from the locals and some not so local, impressive progress was made and only the gloss coat remains to be done. The fence is a vast improvement and totally enhances the area. The many generous comments since received are a credit to the Squadron.

TELECOM

The first major telephone pole replacement programme in 16 years was completed in January when 222 Sig Sqn assisted with help from **SSgt** 'Shuggy' **Hughes** and **LCpl Karl Francis,** installed 12 poles during a long and arduous day. During the most recent telecom history we have only lost one pole. In 1995 a new route was installed between Corfe Castle and Norden most of which sees the track proceed round gentle curves next to the Castle. These were stayed and left in a steady state by 4 Bde Sig Sqn. However, the ferocity of the wind flowing through the Purbeck Hills and round the Castle was underestimated and a pole was literally picked up and blown away! The efforts of **Cpls Paul Lester, Steve Nelson** and **Sig Andy Carvin** should ensure this does not happen again. As this was proceeding 15 now redundant poles (since the arrival of underground cable) were removed and taken back to the pole stack.

April saw the commissioning of a third Strowger exchange at Herston. It has been installed in a large wooden hut provided by Officer Cadets from Southampton UOTC, and then erected by the old Charlie Tp at 11 Sig Regt. Having been switched on there was some quick work to transfer telephones off the two other exchanges and onto Herston. A number of 'old faithfuls' assisted in this task including **Frank Nevens** and **Daz Watts**, both of whom left the Corps last year and **Lt Guy Garatt** PWRR and **2Lt Jason Cropper** soon to be R SIGNALS.

May saw a good deal of maintenance on telephone and fax machines in Swanage. **Sgt** 'Little John' **Simons** and **Cpl Adam Burman** managed to check and repair nearly 60 phones and 12 fax machines of different varieties, most without handbooks! Following the Herston Switch-on, many of the Swanage extensions have been moved around. That work was completed during a four day period which saw a number of new facilities and a good deal of cable ducting installed by **LCpl** 'Herbie' **Hyde** and **Sig** 'Max' **Holland.** Finally the bells; the techs had to be called in for them; **Cpl Adam Burman** for Herston platform and **LCpl Hayley Moore** for Swanage.

MERCURY GROUP

The Mercury Group are a Group of 130 soldiers who have, as individuals, joined the Swanage Railway, In addition to a number of other objectives one aim is to meet in Swanage once a year and test all social attributes; to the full.

1999 marks the fifteenth anniversary of the working association between the Corps and the Railway, and in true style members of the Group decided to celebrate this occasion on Saturday 12 June 1999. Previously this year **Maj Gen (Retd) A. C. Birtwistle CB CBE DL** had agreed to become the Hon President of the Group, and he was invited to attend and unveil a large piece of Purbeck stone at Herston Halt on that day. This special event in fact formed the focal point of many weeks of work at the Halt.

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Pictured from the left are Maj Gen (Retd) Archie Birtwistle, Swanage Railway Secretary, Mark Wolley and Royal Signals Exercise Co-ordinator Frank Roberts

Planning for the day had been proceeding all year in spite of the Kosovo go or no-go situation. It is pleasing to report that 'Gen Archie' (the ex Master of Signals) and all those who were able to be present had an excellent day. Many members of the Group were able to attend including some from Bosnia, Germany and one from Cyprus. They were joined by 43 members of the Railway, members of the Royal British Legion (in particular **George Louden** and **John Burt**, both ex members of the Corps) and several local councillors. Many Royal Signals units were represented including 11 Signal Regiment by the CO, **Lt Col T. W. Canham** and the Second in Command **Maj R Brown.**

The Group, the Swanage Railway and the involvement of the Corps has an interesting future. Despite heavy commitments on the shoulders of most units, there is still a need to entertain short breaks for small parties of soldiers - even if only for retention purposes. A massive effort over the past two years has ensured that authority for Ex Topham Hatt is authorised, that administration is streamlined and minimised, that health, safety and security are clarified and that logistic support is provided. This has now been done. Units are invited to release parties of up to eight under the leadership of Sergeants or Corporals to assist with this Corps project; further details from the Second in Command, 11 Sig Regt.

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RED WINDS FROM THE NORTH

By Norman 'Taff' Davies

Just before dawn on 25 June 1950, the North Korean Army crossed the 38th Parallel and invaded South Korea. It was the start of the 'Forgotten War', one of the bloodiest wars of the 20th Century. On 27 June the United Nations voted in favour of intervention and over the next weeks troops were mobilised in many member countries and embarked to Korea. The first British troops, the 27th Brigade from Hong Kong, arrived in South Korea at the end of August 1950. At the very beginning of November 1950, the 29th Independent Infantry Brigade from Britain arrived. The war lasted well into 1953 when an armistice was signed. The two Koreas are still divided and their forces still face each other across the 38th Parallel. The British Army fought some of its biggest battles since World War 2, above all on the Imjin River in April 1951.

This book recalls the memories and personal experiences of a young nineteen year old regular, Royal Signals, Junior NCO who served in the 29th Brigade from October 1950 to August 1951 and then in the 1st Commonwealth Division until April 1952.

About the author: Norman Davies was born in 1931 in the Welsh town of Bluith Wells. In 1948, at the age of seventeen and a half, he signed up with the Royal Corps of Signals. Over the next twenty years he served in the Korean War, Germany, Singapore and Malaya. He finally took early redundancy in 1968 leaving the Corps with the rank of Warrant Officer 2. In 1968 he emigrated to South Australia where he worked for the Postmaster General's Department. Finding life too tame, he took a contract as a mercenary with the Zambian Defence Force serving from 1970 to 1972. After a short spell in Rhodesia he went back to South Australia to take up his old job in the Post Office. He remained there until 1975 when he returned to the UK. Joining the British Aircraft Corporation he worked on communications for the Rapier Ground to Air Missile System. In 1979 he made a move to Portsmouth taking a position with Marconi Secure Radio Systems and remained there until he took early retirement in 1992. He is a member of the Wessex Branch of the British Korean Veterans Association, the Royal British Legion and the Royal Signals Association.

The book is dedicated to the Royal Corps of Signals especially those who served through the Korean War. The book is 'a labour of love' and the proceeds from the sales will be donated to the Royal Signals Association.

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ARMY CADET FORCE EXPEDITION TO SOUTH AFRICA 1999

by Cpl Scrase

EXERCISE WILDERNESS CHALLENGE 1999

Twenty-one members of the Army Cadet Force, selected from the whole of the UK, made final preparations for their trip to South Africa (11 July to 2 August 1999). They had just completed four days pre-expedition training on the South Downs that included time to bond as a team, to check fitness and equipment, discuss how they would work with the Zulu Schools at Rorkes Drift when they got there. They also compared notes on their efforts to raise the £1600 necessary to fund their individual places on the expedition. The task of raising money remains the most difficult one for most of the cadets, and for **Cpl Scrase** 11 Signal Regiment. Individuals, organisations, trusts and companies have been very generous but there was still some way to go before everyone could be sure of achieving their target. Still more help was needed and we appeal to those who can appreciate the value of this sort of expedition and its affects on those taking part to support the cadets. Past experience has clearly shown how much the individual cadets have benefited. The schools at Rorkes Drift appreciate the growing bonds of friendship and a proportion of the cost of sending a cadet to South Africa is used to sponsor a township African on a similar wilderness course.



Col C. Blessington (centre) with the expedition members

THE EXPEDITION

The group would spend ten days on walking trails with the Wilderness Leadership School in the trackless wilderness areas of the Black Umflozi River, and the Drakensberg Mountains. They would carry all their own food and equipment, but not tents, watches or soaps and deodorants. A field officer and experienced Zulu game-guard accompanied them. For the period they were in the wilderness they relied entirely on their own resources and were free from any human contact, other than their own sub group of six to eight people.

During their time in the low veldt of the Black Umfolozi valley they were in intimate contact with all the wildlife of the area. This includes elephants, rhinos, lions, leopards, crocodiles and all the other small game indigenous to the area. In the mountains they explored the rugged heights, lived in bushman caves and navigated their way across the vast emptiness of the wilderness landscape.

A wilderness journey is a unique personal experience, a physical, mental and spiritual adventure that the cadets will never forget. They discovered a sense of wonder, re-examined their personal priorities and realised that the wilderness is only a part of what they came to discover. Somewhere, out there in the bush they discovered themselves. After their wilderness trail in the mountains they visited Rorkes Drift to meet and work with the young Zulus of the area. They renewed the close friendship already forged by previous ACF expeditions to the area. They exchanged gifts of sports equipment and school text books and presented two trophies (ACF Wilderness Challenge Trophies) that will be used as prizes by the schools for their own sports tournaments. They also visited the battlefields of Isandlwana and Rorkes Drift and listened to **David Rattray**'s account of the events.

For the final phase of the expedition they travelled north to Timbavati in the Eastern Transvaal where they took part in a game ranger's course, learnt to track game and identified indigenous animals and birds. At Swandini they spent time learning about snakes and other reptiles, and how to handle them. They saw crocodiles and hippos in the Blyde River Dam and visited the famous animal rehabilitation centre at Moholoholo to learn about the problems facing Africa's endangered wildlife. **Cpl Jason Scrase** from 3 (Harrogate) Squadron, 11 Signal Regiment has been assisting Sussex Army Cadets Force since he joined the Royal Signals in 1986, and was offered a position on the expedition by **Col Blessington** last year. He, along with **Cadet SSgt Oliver Stowe** from the Warwickshire and West Midlands Army Cadet Force will be the only Royal Signals going on the expedition.

Should anyone wish for more information or to financially assist future expeditions please contact:

Col. C Blessington (The Exped Ldr)
HQ Sussex ACF
198 Dyke Road
Brighton
EAST SUSSEX
Tel: (01273) 552222

Cpl Scrase
3 (Harrogate) Squadron
11 Signal Regiment
Blandford Camp
DORSET
Tel: (01258) 482492



Cpl Jason Scrase (left) Cadet SSgt Oliver Stowe (right)

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Team Sgt — **Sgt Don Brebner**

TEAM UPDATE

by the Team Capt, Gordon Newell

Since taking over the role of Team Captain last year I have found that there are many misconceptions about the White Helmets and what they do. I was told that riders didn't get promoted and that it was a bad career move for soldiers to spend time in the Team. Nothing could be further from the truth and I have found an environment full of talent from every trade group in the Corps. Since September I have seen five of my 26 Team members get promoted and watched them disappear off on upgrading or other career courses. In this issue of *The Wire* I have let Team members write their own thoughts and feelings about the White Helmets and the Army. I expect that after reading this article many questions will be answered and any members of the Corps interested in doing something unique, challenging, interesting and above all fulfilling can approach the Team for a tour.

THE WHITE HELMETS OPENING SHOW - 23 APRIL

by Sig Marcus Fiddes

The 1999 Royal Signals White Helmets Motorcycle Display Team put on a spectacular opening show in front of the SOinC (A), **Brig J. H. Griffin** here at Blandford Camp on St George's Day, Friday 23rd April. The day started for the team in appalling weather conditions at 0800hrs. The pre-show nerves were all too apparent, would the rides get round the rain-drenched arena? Would the tricks slip from beneath the riders when cornering? In a matter of hours these questions would be answered. In the mean time the team spent their time prior to the show making final adjustments to uniforms and bikes. The atmosphere in the garages, nerves aside was positive. As the bikes were wheeled out for the line up, a photographer from the *Classic Motorcycle Magazine* could be seen snapping away. Any problems had to be sorted out now or the mistakes could cost the team dearly in the arena. At 1030hrs **Sgt Don** 'Where's my hair going' **Brebner** gave the word to move. The Triumph Tiger 750's moved on to Hawke Square just out of sight of the viewing dignitaries. As **Sgt Brebner** called the team around the show board for a final brief the band of the Royal Corps of Signals made their way on to Hawke Square. The key points from the briefing were, 'Make it good, make it safe, and ride to the conditions'. This in mind the team moved to their bikes, while **Sig Marcus** 'Full head of hair' **Fiddes** and **Sig Scott** 'Sad Sack' **O'Neill** prepared to lay the arena out on the Honda ATV.

The SOinC (A), **Brig J. H. Griffin** then arrived on Hawke Square in his vintage Jaguar flanked by four Triumphs of the White Helmets. Riding were **LCpl Tonka** 'What! Do I look like a storeman?' **Richardson, LCpl Paul** 'Fozzy' **Forster, LCpl Scott** 'E' **Eccott** and **LCpl Jason** 'Gypo' **Hooper**. He was then greeted by **Sig Tony** 'Smart as a guardsman' **Annetts** and **LCpl Baz Fullerton**. As the SOinC (A) and his wife were shown to their seats by **SSM Mantelow** the Band of the Royal Corps of Signals marched off the square and the ATV moved out. With the arena being set, it was time for **Lt Col Amberton** to give the opening address. Tension was now at a high - this was it - all the months of training had to pay off, today of all days. The first year riders were eager to get the coveted White Helmet. **Lt Col Amberton** gave the words ' I'll now hand you over to **Sgt Don Brebner**', With that **Sgt Brebner** signalled the bikes to fire up. The Triumphs rumbled forward with the opening ride going straight out and the trick bikes taking their respective positions. **Cpl John** 'Not out of my stores' **Strachen** and **Sig Kev** 'Big as a house' **O'Leary** prepared for the first trick of the opening show, the Double Jimmy, with **Sigs O'Neill, Hodgson** and **MacDonald** waiting next to them ready to perform the Four Tees. The show ran smoothly up to the half way point when the Three Bike Fan dismantled in front of the SOinC (A). The first year riders moved into their positions awaiting the presentation of their prestigious White Helmets. Once the presentation was over the second half of the show started in earnest. The weather was unrelenting throughout but this didn't dampen the spirits of the team. The show was going well and no one wanted the dreaded 'Black Peak', which is presented to the rider who crashes or falls off in front of a public audience. As the world-famous Six-Bike Fan made it's way around the arena the show was almost over. Only the closing ride remained awaiting the final trick 'The Angel' to come in. **Sgt Don Brebner** along with **Capt Gordon** 'Kick Start' **Newell** led the pennant bikes into position to take the final salute. **Capt Newell** said he 'Wanted to stay behind after the other bikes had pulled off because his Big Mac was almost ready. When told 'This isn't a drive through' **Capt Newell** started his bike and joined the others pulling off the square.

The show over, The team formed up waiting the SOinC (A)'s address. He expressed his feelings about the show, which, in his opinion was 'The best he had ever seen'. He didn't keep the team long, knowing how keen they were to get to the post-show reception. With that the Triumphs were moved back to the White Helmets garage. After a quick change it was off to the reception in the function rooms of the Semaphore Arms. The afternoon reception was attended by the SOinC (A), Mayor and Mayoress of Blandford, and sponsors of the White Helmets along with family and friends of the team. Chief Mech. **LCpl Tonka Richardson** and his fellow mechs were presented with the Elson Trophy for the biggest contribution to the team over the 1998 season. The speech for the Elson Trophy saw ex-team OC, **Maj Keith Russell** make a return and the presentation was made by 'Elly' **Elson's** Mother, **Mrs Pat Barnsfield**. 'Twelve Monkeys', Zoro, the Terminator, a gangster, two dodgy looking girls, and Lilly Savage attended the evening reception. The monkeys were seen dancing late into the night and one of the dodgy looking girls (**Sig Hodgson**) seemed to be putting it about a little too much. The night faded into a haze but the day will be remembered as a complete success.



The 1999 Team
Standing (L-R): Sgt Don Brebner, Capt Gordon Newell, LCpl Daz Hankin, LCpl Gypo Hooper, Cpl Bob Sizeland, LCpl 'Scotty' Eccott, Sig Marcus Fiddes, Sig Mac Macdonald, Cpl Adam Malin, LCpl V-mal Hildreth, LCpl Finbar Saunders, Sig Scott O'Neill, Cpl John Strachan, LCpl Mossy Keatley, Sig Keith Hodgson, LCpl Saggy Marsh, Sig Fish Fisher, Sig 'Tin-Tin' Owen and Sig Tony Annetts
Kneeling (L-R): LCpl Gaz Ryder, LCpl Ricky Ross, LCpl Baz Fullerton, LCpl Fozzy Forster, Sig Matty Adams, LCpl Tonka Richardson and Sig Scouse O'Leary. Missing from the photograph are Cpls Andy Butterfield and Charlie Chester and Sig Malcolm Cooper

THE RHEINDAHLEN SHOW - 15/16 MAY

by Sig Gaz Fisher

Our second show of the season gave us the opportunity to venture abroad to JHQ and the Rheindahlen Show. The show was to take place on the 15 and 16 of May so to allow for travelling and show preparation we departed from Blandford on the morning of the 12th. We got the ferry from Ramsgate to Ostende and following the four hour drive to JHQ, saw the team drawing into the camp gates at 4am. As expected the following day saw nothing more than a typical Army bed and quilt for most people.

The first show day began promisingly with the sun appearing early on. The show-ground was very well laid out with attractions for all the family from craft tents to fairground rides to vehicle sales. Our first show saw a couple of incidents - firstly the '4 tees' by **Sig Marcus** 'Sky-scraper for a head' **Fiddes** who decided to eject his three passengers half way round the arena to display their recently received White Helmets to the very appreciative crowd. Secondly **Sig Gary** 'Fish' **Fisher** struggled to hold the 'Reverse Jimmy' in the arena and brought it down early as the crowd dispersed from their viewing point. After the show a few experienced words from **Sgt Don** 'I'm getting a parrot, I'm getting a parrot' **Brebner** about the ground conditions put us in good stead for an excellent second show later in the afternoon.

The evening saw the Team Capt, **Gordon** 'Judge' **Newell**'s display his mixing antics on his disco equipment while the team made the American Rodeo Team feel welcome with burgers and alcohol. The barbecue (made by **LCpl Gaz** 'powerlifter' **Ryder**) stood up well and as the evening wore on the team were challenged to a game of American football by the yanks. The game ended in a win for the White Helmets with the Americans saying that they no longer wanted to play as we were a bit too rough for them. Maybe they need to stick to riding wild horses and wrestling bulls! On the second day the shows were very successful with only **Sig Matty** 'kite' **Adams** and **LCpl** 'Scotty' **Eccott** colliding in the '4cx' after **Matty**'s bike cut out 10 metres from the cross-over point. A broken heel and bruises were the result but the show carried on without further incident. Although many of the local soldiers were away on duty in various parts of the world their families and other members of the public were very appreciative and made the whole show worthwhile. The team also got to catch up with past friends and acquaintances they know, such as the RAF Flying Falcons Parachute Display Team with whom we shared a photo shoot. Again the night dwindled into a haze with only headaches as a reminder of the previous evening. All that was left to do was top up on duty free and endure the long trip back to Blandford ready for our next show in Driffield, Yorkshire.

THE SEASON SO FAR

by LCpl V Mal Hildreth

The Team finds itself in the busiest part of the year with all weekends between April and October spent out on the road at various shows around the country. No doubt the Royal Tournament will be a highlight of the season - especially since it is expected to be the last one ever. Our appearance at the Yorkshire Water Fun Day marked the first public show of the season, and the first road trip. Many of the team were suffering from a mix of nerves and excitement, especially the new members of the team. On arriving at the show ground early on the Saturday morning even some of the more experienced members of the team started to have doubts as to how well the show might go. Our designated arena couldn't have been much worse. The arena sloped quite severely from the bottom right corner to the top left corner. This would mean the bikes would struggle to carry some of the heavier tricks out of the pits and find it difficult to stop on the way back in. If we could put on a good show here then we shouldn't have a problem with better arenas over the rest of the season.

We had two shows to perform, a morning show and an afternoon show. Those members of the team who have family in the north had invited them along which added to the anxiety of some. Fortunately the first show went reasonably well with only a few minor problems due to the team getting used to the way the bikes were running on the difficult ground. **Sig Marcus Fiddes** made his debut car jump during the first show but injured his back slightly and was unable to repeat the jump for the second show. The second show went much smoother with the team adjusting to the conditions after finding their feet (or wheels) during the first show. Once the show was over it was some time before the team could concentrate on getting the bikes loaded due to autograph hunters, reporters and admiring girls. This was certainly something that the new members of the team had never experienced before and was perhaps an insight into one of the many aspects of life with the White Helmets.

The Yorkshire Truck Spectacular at Driffield being on the Sunday and Bank Holiday gave the team a chance to sample York's night life on the Saturday night due to the team having to be near the show ground the day before. A good night was had by all, the beer being cheap and the locals friendly. The Truck Festival itself was a fairly large event with appearances by the actress who plays 'Kelly Windsor' in Emmerdale Farm (who now sports a White Helmets baseball cap), and the actor who plays 'Boycie' in *Only Fools and Horses* (who agreed kindly to a photograph with the team).

The show itself was a little shorter than usual, as the organisers didn't want us to scorch the arena with the fire jump. Both shows went well and the team enjoyed watching the many other events that were taking place in the main arena. At one point the team had to help clear the arena prior to the second show, due to it being littered with debris from two caravans that had been squashed by a monster truck. Again the weather had been kind and was enjoyed by team and public alike.

TRADESMEN IN THE TEAM - THEIR OWN PERSPECTIVES

Telecommunications Operator (Spec)

by Cpl Adam Malin

People always seem surprised when they find out that there are Telecommunication Operators (Special) in the White Helmets. Some people that have talked to me have been under the impression that only certain trade-groups can apply for Team selection. So, to finally dispel such rumours - Yes the team is open to any trade within the Royal Signals and Yes I am one of three 'Spec Ops' currently attached to the White Helmets. I started life as a Tele Op (Spec) in 1988 with my first posting to 13 Sig Regt in Birgelen, Germany. Eleven years, four postings and five tours of Northern Ireland later I am a Class One Cpl and have been to 15 Sig Regt (Lisburn), Communications and Security Group U.K. (Loughborough) and 223 Sig Sqn (JSSU) Digby) before coming down to sunny Blandford. I began my attachment to the White Helmets in January 1998 after completing the November 1997 selection course.

My first year with the team was a little bit of a culture shock, having previously been quite sheltered as a Tele Op (Spec). In the past I had rarely come into contact with people from the other trade groups within the Royal Signals and initially the thought of leaving a work atmosphere, that I had become very used to and comfortable with over the last eleven years, was a bit daunting. It didn't take long to get into the swing of things and before I knew what had hit me, it was April and I was standing in front of a crowd of people, including my parents, being presented one of the very coveted White Helmets alongside my new work colleagues. Now, halfway through my second year and after two training seasons with an amazing learning curve, I probably now feel as comfortable with my new job as I did in a communications set room sat in front of a computer or on an isolated hill top detachment in Northern Ireland.

I still get a lot of questions from people, especially old friends from previous posting, who are probably itching to have a crack at Team selection themselves but like me worry what will happen if they make the move. Well it's simple....nothing! You won't forget your morse Code, computers won't suddenly become alien to you and you won't be left behind. I have been with the team for 18 months and have seen three Signallers promoted to LCpl and a LCpl to Cpl. So now, after over 150 public performances, 'What's it like to be a 'Spec-Op' in the White Helmets?' Well..initially probably just as daunting as being a Technician, Electrician or Radio Operator but really no different than being a Radio Relay Operator, Systems Operator or a Lineman.

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DRIVER LINEMAN - *by Sig Tony Annetts*

I joined in 1988, postings include 1 ADSR, Verden, Gulf, 1 Canadian Sig Regt (attached), HQ Britfor Sig Sqn (Op Grapple 1-2), 7 Sig Regt, and Royal Signals Public Duties Squadron (Buckingham Palace Detachment). I then volunteered for selection for the White Helmets in the November of 1995. I wasn't sure what to expect. I knew an ex-team member who just advised me that 'every time you fall off, you get up straight away (if you can) and get on with it.' So four years later, what's it been like? Well I thought the Palace Guard experience would take some beating, but this has proved to even better.

I originally joined up as a Combat Lineman, which soon after took on the role of Combat Driver and Combat Signalman, hence Driver Lineman. The first posting to a 'Div' did me well, learning the trade for real didn't take long. As people are aware a Div main set up requires plenty of cable. Then there was a small matter of Saddam Hussain to deal with - ruined my Xmas leave in 1990! Bosnia came along, which was an excellent tour, if not a little hairy at times. 1993 was a volatile year out there. I came back to a posting to 7 Sig Regt. I was fortunate to spend a good bit of time with the Rugby team. That went on to achieve the Army Cup in 94 under the guidance and the outstanding coaching of **Maj Andy Hickling**. Volunteering for the Palace Guard was really, I thought a once in a lifetime chance. It proved to be a superb tour, different to normal chores of BAOR. This is what spurred me into joining the Team. Being in the public eye did something to flick my switch - this was a superb opportunity. Four years down the line, performing to over 2 million people, Royalty, Heads of State, all of which exceeds superlatives. Something that people don't realise as well as being a display rider we all have other roles in the team to maintain the slickness, smoothness and effectiveness of the team. I for one drive the team coach and deal with First Aid matters. The team is 73 years old now. It is without doubt the best of its kind. So if you'd like to be part of a real team, have the courage and the heart of a Lion. Join us.

TEAM FOCUS - THE MECHANICS

Chief Mechanic	**LCpl Tonka Richardson**
Mechanics	**LCpls** 'Fozzy' **Forster**
	Baz Fullerton
	Ricky Ross
	Sig Malcolm Cooper

The 1999 season started at full speed for the mechanics. We returned from our annual Christmas leave on 11 January 1999 fully refreshed from our well deserved break, ready to tackle a fleet of 20 Army Harley Davidson motorcycles which had been used for the 1998 selection course, and had been left to rot over the leave period. After overcoming several admin problems i.e. no spares, we gave up on the Harleys and started training season preparations on the Teams Triumph Tigers. The preparation includes a service, replacement seals and clearances as required, however some bikes need some special attention by the mechs. Such as front end replacement and engine rebuilds because of their leaking and smoking abilities. At present **LCpl** 'Fozzy' **Forster** is on his third engine rebuild in as many months.

Now its time to pack the mechs bay onto the truck in preparation for our annual camp at Chester. The MT flight at RAF Sealand thankfully provide us with ample garage space, which is gratefully appreciated. The lads there are very helpful and willing to provide us with any service that we are unable to perform ourselves such as welding. During the month long training camp, we were expected to not only train ready for the coming show season, but also do daily maintenance and overcome any unforeseen mechanical problems that arise. This resulted in **Tonka** and **Baz** not seeing the airfield for the first two weeks except for when they wanted a brew.

Eventually a very wet (which is normal for Blandford) Opening Show went off without a hitch, due to the smooth and efficient running of the Triumphs. A very big pat on the back to all of us mechanics. This was further endorsed by the fact that the Chief mechanic, **Tonka** received the 'Elson Trophy' for the biggest contribution to the Team in the last year and asked all the mechs to join him in receiving it, as it is a team effort. A big thank you goes out to all of them for all their efforts.

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JUNE1999

Name and Rank	*Unit to which posted*
Brig C. J. Burton OBE	HQ R. SIGNALS
Lt Col B. Hewitt	NATO C3 Agency (BAE)
Lt Col A. W. Russ	AD Info Assurance
Maj C. Dowie BSc	HQ DCSA
Maj J. H. Fraser	39 Signal Regiment (Volunteers)
Maj G. Hearn	30 Signal Regiment
Maj D. H. Jepson	Defence School of Transport
Maj I. G. Standen	20 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (200)
Capt M. J. Campbell	Training Team Brunei
Capt P. J. Day MBE	Joint Communications Unit (NI)
Capt A. Greenfield	RHQ Royal Signals
Capt G. F. Manning	1 Military Intelligence Battalion
Capt J. J. Smith	HQ ARRC
Capt D. A. Whitaker	21 Signal Regiment (Air Support)
Capt L. A. Wookey	21 Signal Regiment (Air Support)

JULY 1999

Name and Rank	*Unit to which posted*
Lt Col R. M. Crombie	RHQ R. SIGNALS
Maj N. R. N. Caleb	15 Signal Regiment
Maj P. S. Cubbin	HQ LAND G6 CIS
Maj D. R. Davey	SANGCOM
Maj M. Davis	Army Foundation College
Maj N. M. Davis	DERA (Weapons Sys Sect) Malvern
Maj B. P. Gardner	DISC Support Unit
Maj S. J. Smith	RTMC
Maj P. J. Welch	38 Signal Regiment (Volunteers)
Maj S. M. Williamson	Unit Computing (UNICOM) Team
Capt P. G. M. Atkinson	HQ LAND G6 CIS
Capt D. C. Ball	Joint Communications Unit (FI)
Capt K. E. Emmerson	Joint Communications Unit (FI)
Capt R. S. F Gibson	ATACCS DCIS (A)
Capt L. W. Hendricks	5 AB Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (216 Para)
Capt J. A. Honeyman	5 Communications Company (V)
Capt C. Kell	HQNI & 15 Signal Regiment
Capt M. C. Milne	CPD
Capt R. Nicol	238 Signal Squadron
Capt E. R. Warren	3 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt
Lt J. C. Fraser	21 Signal Regiment (Air Support)
Lt L. Neill	7 Sig Regt (Corps Main HQ)
Lt N. M. P. Pritchett	3 (UK) Div HQ & Signal Regiment
Lt A. M. Taylor	39 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (213)
Lt C. Thomson-Smith	ATR Bassingbourn

WOs & SNCOs
JUNE 1999

Name and Rank	*Unit to which posted*
WO1 N. R. Henly	14 Signal Regiment (EW)
WO1 I. P. Toft	30 Signal Regiment
WO2 A. P. Glover	33 Signal Regiment (Volunteers)
WO2 C. B. Hamilton	9 Signal Regiment (Radio)
WO2 P. A. Holland	36 Signal Regiment (Volunteers)
WO2 I. M. Matthews	ATSA
WO2 A.W. Sheppard	264 (SAS) Signal Squadron
WO2 S. Young	34 Signal Regiment (Volunteers)
A/WO2 RD A. M. Keen	30 Signal Regiment
SSgt YofS N. Donahue	FMRT
SSgt YofS J. M. Ewart	3 Inf Bde & Signal Squadron (203)
SSgt J. Ainsworth	1 (UK) Div Signal Regiment
SSgt D. E. Cox	1 (UK) Div Signal Regiment
SSgt A. J. Crawford	ATR Bassingbourn
SSgt P. R. Curtis	2 Signal Regiment
SSgt C. Dawson	2 Signal Regiment
SSgt M. D. Epps	HQ RSA
SSgt L. Jarvis	HQ NI & Signal Regiment
SSgt M. D. Lambert	3 (UK) Div Signal Regiment
SSgt I. J. Lee	11 Signal Regiment
SSgt R. Messenger	2 Signal Regiment
SSgt M. Openshaw	11 Signal Regiment
SSgt K. Read	16 Air Assault Bde & Sig Sqn
SSgt A. J. Robertson	7 Signal Regiment
SSgt R. J. Winckle	259 Signal Squadron
A/SSgt S. M. D. Fairfield	3 (UK) Div Signal Regiment
A/SSgt A. J. M. Hewson	ATACCS
A/SSgt C. Hindson	3 Inf Bde & Signal Squadron (203)
A/SSgt P. J. Holmes	The Royal School of Signals
A/SSgt E. V. Jacobs	HQ NI & Signal Regiment
A/SSgt D. B. Kleppang	1 (UK) Div Signal Regiment
A/SSgt J. L. Smithhurst	19 Mech Bde & Sig Sqn (209)
Sgt T. R. J. Austin	6 Battalion REME
Sgt G. Beswick	2 Signal Regiment
Sgt M. W. Emmerson	34 Signal Regiment (Volunteers)
Sgt A. J. Harris	604 Signal Troop
Sgt S. Littlewood	3 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt
Sgt W. P. D. Quinn	38 Signal Regiment (Volunteers)
Sgt M. D. Scanlon	HQ NI & Signal Regiment
Sgt M. Stein	1 Mech Bde & Sig Sqn (215)
Sgt C. M. Williams	HQ NI & Signal Regiment
Sgt D. Wood	280 (UK) Signal Squadron
A/Sgt M. C. Jackson	249 Signal Squadron (AMF(L))
A/Sgt A. McGibbon	19 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (209)
A/Sgt M. R. Plested	12 Regiment RA
A/Sgt M. J. Pryme	ATACCS

JULY 1999

Name and Rank	*Unit to which posted*
WO1 B. A. Knight	21 Signal Regiment
WO2 D. Briers	4 Armd Bde & Sig Sqn (204)
WO2 A. J. Groves	SHAPE ACE COMMSEC
WO2 J. B. Harper	31 Signal Regiment (Volunteers)
WO2 A. H. Phillips	14 Signal Regiment (EW)
WO2 K. Sturman	24 Airmob Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (210)
A/WO2 RD S. J. Harriott	The Royal School of Signals
SSgt R. Breheney	34 Signal Regiment (Volunteers)
SSgt S. K. Cook	7 Signal Regiment
SSgt S. A. Croft	7 Armd Bde & Sig Sqn (207)
SSgt M. C. Duff	16 Signal Regiment
SSgt M. A. Ginty	1 (UK) Div Signal Regiment
SSgt P. R. Howson	3 (UK) Div Signal Regiment
SSgt P. McDonald	HQ AFCENT
SSgt N. G. McKenzie	1 (UK) Div Signal Regiment
SSgt E. M. O'Halloran	ATACCS
SSgt G. Pendrich	2 (CofD) Sig Sqn (Volunteers)
SSgt G. Shipman	SHAPE ACE COMMSEC
A/SSgt S. E. Littlefield	3 (UK) Div Signal Regiment
A/SSgt D. W. Oliver	3 (UK) Div Signal Regiment
A/SSgt N. J. Pollitt	1 (UK) Div Signal Regiment
A/SSgt G. E. Tuff	2 Signal Regiment
A/SSgt P. A. Yates	249 Signal Squadron (AMF(L))
Sgt M. W. Brown	60 Signal Squadron
Sgt C. S. Budding	21 Signal Regiment
Sgt C. Calabrese	9 Signal Regiment (R)
Sgt A. M. Chester	8 Inf Bde & Signal Squadron (218)
Sgt P. Colburn	2 Signal Regiment
Sgt R. Kirby	7 Signal Regiment
Sgt B. A. McAuley	21 Signal Regiment
Sgt A. J. Roberts	14 Signal Regiment (EW)
Sgt P. Rogers	HQ DFTS
Sgt A. J. Rooney	Balado Bridge
Sgt S. R. White	SHAPE
A/Sgt M. D. Rutherford	5 Battalion REME

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NEWS FROM HEADQUARTERS

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS ROYAL SIGNALS

SIGNAL OFFICER IN CHIEF (ARMY)'S RECRUITING AND LIAISON STAFF – EXERCISE LIGHTNING STRIKE 1999

Ex Lightning Strike is an annual Royal Signals Competition run by the SOinC (A)'s Recruiting and Liaison Staff (SORLS) for the nineteen University Officer Training Corps (UOTC) around the country. The aim is to introduce the Officer Cadets to the many facets of signalling in the Corps and hopefully to have some fun at the same time. The format involves the teams doing a round robin of nine Unit stands, finishing off with a final race. This year, eighteen teams competed over the weekend 26 - 28 March 1999 at West Down Camp on Salisbury Plain. Visitors to the Exercise included **Brig Verey,** the Brigadier TA, and several UOTC Commanding Officers.

264 (SAS) Sig Sqn's Survival Stand required teams to provide their Team Captain with basic survival clothing, made from materials at hand, and to build a one man shelter. The final test was for this newly tailored individual to compete a mini obstacle course. Marks were then awarded for how much clothing was still in place. 264 (SAS) Sig Sqn provided an impressive display of shelters and survival aids as a backdrop to the stand. The OCdts enjoyed a light snack of roasted pig's head and a cup of dandelion tea before leaving the stand.



Cambridge UOTC attempt to rig a parachute
'The rabbit comes out of the hole around the tree and.....damn!!'

216 (Para) Sig Sqn's stand was based on the theme of 'Airborne Signalling.' This year, **2Lt Tom Day** replaced the normal log shaped, wooden 'antenna' with a quick Bergen race culminating in a competition to kit up in complete parachuting gear. The result was a lot of sweaty people practising bondage on each other. Some UOTCs are clearly physically fitter than others and we know that the PSIs will be trying to remedy this for next year.

39 Inf Bde HQ and Sig Sqn, headed up by **Lt John Fraser**, assisted by **2Lt Forbes Guthrie** of 3 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (203), gave the students a chance to see and use Cougar radios, before using them to deal with a terrorist incident. The casualty simulation was extremely realistic and led to a lot of running about and confusion. Good command and control of the incident was essential.

The students had a chance to use satellite communications in the form of Inmarsat terminals, run by **Lt Dhan Gurung** and the Gurkhas from 30 Sig Regt. The teams had to work out how to use the terminals, get a lock onto the satellite and establish a call to another station. The stand demonstrated how easy the establishment of a satellite communications link can be.

No 43 Troop Commander's Course from the Royal School of Signals ran the traditional 'It's a Knockout' stand. This is normally very competitive as the stand prize is a crate of lager. This year's event involved a race under, across and around obstacles and crash mats after retrieving objects from a bucket of flour with their teeth, while being squirted with water pistols. **2Lt Phil Waddell** came a cropper when his old UOTC from Birmingham took revenge and attacked him with water and flour.



Cambridge UOTC at the 30 Signal Regiment Stand
'But my mobile phone is smaller than that.'



How many Officer Cadets does it take to make a telephone call?
30 Signal Regiment's Stand

24 Airmobile Bde Sig Sqn's Stand, led by **Lt Dan Ashton**, required the teams to rig up a Landrover and trailer ready for underslinging from a helicopter. The students were given the chains and sticky tape and a set of instructions and told to crack on. Some of the UOTCs produced quite workable results whilst those who used the tape as Landrover graffiti fared less well.

14 Sig Regt's stand, led by **Lt Hervey Scott**, required the teams to intercept and analyse 'enemy' transmissions. The stand demonstrated the other face of the Corps and was very educational for the OCdts.

Royal Signals Leadership Troop from the Royal School of Signals provided a novel and rather difficult command task for the teams. All blindfolded bar one, the teams had to be guided through a course by the power of voice. This was an especially entertaining event for spectators and left many of the students without a voice for the rest of the day. **Capt Richard** 'Toddy' **Todd** and **Sgt** 'Sid' **Barrass** spent most of the time disentangling blind, groping students from each other. Situation normal!

The Royal School of Signals, headed up by **2Lt Ally Lawson** from the Troop Commanders' Course, challenged the teams to a line race. Teams had to set up a pole-crossing according to the model provided, in a straight head to head with each other. The links had to be proved by a quick field phone call. Part of the course went under a large tarpaulin, beneath which the rivalry often broke out into hand-to-hand combat.

The Final Race, run by the new Royal Signals Mobile Presentation Team, commanded by **Capt Jack Jennings**, required five teams at a time to collect a trailer each and race it uphill, through a slalom course. Easy, apart from everyone but the team captain being blindfolded. Even the Team Captain was handicapped by having to shout through a respirator and over the top of Frankie Goes To Hollywood singing 'Two Tribes' on the PA system. The smoke grenades and thunder-flashes provided additional excitement and confusion. **Capt Sophie Davis** and **Caroline Moore**, our video camerawoman, particularly enjoyed the sight of the kilted Tayforth and Edinburgh hordes gaily bounding down the hill towards them. It was good to see that the chaps were all true Scotsmen.

All the teams competed strongly thoughout a very hot and dusty day on Salisbury Plain. In the end there could only be one winner and this year, the kilted Tayforth UOTC took the top honour. The Lightning Strike trophy was presented to them by **Col Cliff Walters**, the Regimental Colonel. Later the same day, the teams emerged scrubbed and black-tied for the evening function in Blandford. After a fine spread, and entertainment provided by the Corps Band, the UOTCs danced the night away. Several of the PSIs, particularly **WO2 (SSM) Maxted**, impressed the younger OCdts with their 'unique' dancing syles. Much better were the two young ladies from Cambridge UOTC (who shall remain nameless) who impressed everyone with their table dancing. Peter Stringfellow will be in touch. Not everyone caught the bus back to West Down Camp that night. **OCdt Karl Franks**, who nose-dived the dance floor early on, spent the rest of the evening in casualty getting his jaw stitched and reset.

Once again, Ex Lightning Strike's unique combination of competition, military (Royal Signals) education and sheer enjoyment made it one of the highlights of the year, for both SORLS and the UOTCs. It brought together UOTCs from across the United Kingdom and would not have been possible without the support and enthusiasm of the units who provided stands and administrative support.

HEADQUARTERS 2ND (NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS) SIGNAL BRIGADE & COTSWOLD GARRISON

NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

by Roland Manning, Comms Offr 1

HQ 2nd (NC) Sig Bde has been working in conjunction with the Communications Officer Grades Head of Profession, **Mr S. Slade**, and his Professional Qualifications Office, on a scheme to implement NVQs for CO Grades. This venture began in 1997 and by February 1998, the registration of the first candidates for NVQ Operating Telecommunications Equipment at Level 3 (OTE3) was complete. This included the establishment of a team of qualified assessors from the CO Grades themselves. At the forefront were staff from Army Communications Information Systems Group (ACISG), part of HQ 2nd (NC) Sig Bde. Candidates were assessed against national standards set by the TVSC by providing evidence of workplace activities to their respective assessor. May 1999 saw the first awards to ACISG personnel. They were **Mrs Tina Brudenall** (COMMCEN Corsham) and **Mrs Nichole Rennie** (COMMCEN Bulford) who, working with their assessor, **Mr Barry Lister**, of 243 Sig Sqn, completed their assessments between February and September 1998.

The presentation of the individual's NVQ certificate along with a bound copy of their respective work assessment was made by **Brig S. G. Hughes CBE**, Commander HQ 2nd (NC) Sig Bde & Cotswold Garrison, at a recent ceremony at Brigade HQ in Corsham. The photograph shows the Brigadier (2nd left) with (L-R) **Nichole Rennie**, **Barry Lister** and **Tina Brudenall**. **Mrs Rennie** and **Mrs Brudenall** are seen holding certificates and bound copies of their NVQ assessment workbooks. Photography courtesy of MOD CS (Photography), Foxhill, Bath. (Crown copyright).



HEADQUARTERS 11 SIGNAL BRIGADE

EXERCISE SUMMER EAGLE.

In April, Venning Barracks, Donnington saw elements from all units of the Brigade assemble for Ex Summer Eagle. This was a CPX that formed part of the preparation for the annual FTX, Ex Able Condor. The Exercise utilised the barrack square for most of the players who were vehicle based and the Robert Cook Building for those who were not; along with EXCON, HICON and LOCON. The Exercise was split into three three-hour slots of real time each representing 12 hours of Exercise time. Fast moving, interesting and dare I say enjoyable, the Exercise was a great success. It is the type of total training that everyone, at all levels, who missed it this year should ensure they attend next year as it is a 'must'. It was the culmination of many long days for the Brigade staff and especially our civilian typist **Mrs Robbie Bragg** whose normal busy day got longer and fuller as the weekend drew nearer. One could write a book covering the way some of the scenarios developed, especially toward the end of the third phase during a period of free play, as confidence and experience amongst the control staff increased and enterprise took over!

The first day culminated in a most welcome and enjoyable Smoker exceptionally well organised by 33 Sig Regt; who now have the richest PRI in the Corps. Just joking, I know that you were giving the beer away at £1 a can even if they were marked 69p! They also organised the entertainment which took the form of a Karaoke and I would like to report that:

The Brigade Commander led the way (as always) with, 'I did (do) it my way' - by Sinatra followed by:

Maj Phil Daisey SO2 LOG singing - 'Portaloo' - by ABBA

Maj Paul Hudson COS - 'Its all over now baby blue'

Maj Mike Wise DCOS - 'I've got to get out of this place' - by the Animals while not to be out done;

The Ops Room staff joined together to sing -Bohemian Rhapsody by Queen - all very, very frightening. and:

Flt Lt Farid Khan having had three ice cubes in his orange juice let loose with - ' I'd like to fly right up to the sky' - by Orville. It was a nice touch to wear the white scarf and flying helmet but painting himself green and wearing a nappy in that company was pure commitment to his art! but I can't report this - because it did not happen!

On the Sunday morning the Commander's 'O' Group for Ex Able Condor kept the 'head-shed' away while the remaining 200 plus enjoyed a static equipment display of the Brigade's communications equipment with BATES and ADCIS courtesy of the Royal Artillery. The morning finished with a short parade, an address by the Commander and the presentation of the Greenhill Trophy. Most will be aware that this trophy was presented by the late **Col Greenhill** and awarded to the officer ajudged to have made the greatest contribution to the TA in general and his or her Regiment in particular. This year against strong opposition it was won by **Lt Ruth Middleton-Powell** of 34 Sig Regt (V). The photograph shows the Deputy Commander, **Col Douglas McLay**, congratulating **Lt Middleton-Powell** on her award.



The week-end was a baptism of fire for our new SO1(V) **Lt Col Steve Potter** who joins us from 37 Sig Regt (V) on promotion. We welcome him and wish him an enjoyable, rewarding and busy tour.

BRIGADE AWAY DAY - 19 MAY 1999

A report on the Brigade staff day out from our Chief Clerk, **WO2 Kath** 'Why should I write for another Corps magazine' **Fenlon** AGC. This outing, meant as an informal break for Military and civilian staff, took several weeks of planning before the destination could be agreed upon. The final selection was an exploratory visit to the Montgomery Canal system followed by a visit to a stately home. Surprise, surprise it was left to the Chief Clerk and her merry band, namely **Sgt Nigel Jones** and **Mrs Robbie Bragg** to organise. Three vehicles left Donnington for Welshpool on 19 May; Powys Castle was to be invaded by members of HQ 11 Sig Bde.



The group at passport control
Back row (L-R): Maj Graham Addley SO2 Ops/CIS,
Maj Paul Hudson COS the Commander,
Cpl Simon Emmett Commander's Driver,
Mrs Jean Vince Commander's PA, Mrs Robbie Bragg typist,
WO2 Kath Fenlon Chief Clerk, Flt Lt Farid Khan SO3 Ops/CIS,
Cpl Nigel Weir Crypto NCO, Capt Jim Sykes SO3 COMSEC,
Maj Peter Williams SO2 Projects
Front row kneeling (L-R): Sgt Nigel Jones Clerk,
Maj (Retd) Rollo Rumford G1/MS,
WO1 YofS Graham Pardew Bde Yeoman

The day started with a leisurely stroll along the steep inclines of the Montgomery canal, the Brigadier with much foresight brought a loaf to feed the bird life - **Cpl Nigel Weir** thought his share was elevenses and proceeded to demolish it with gusto. Cobwebs removed - coffee was next on the agenda. **Nigel** and I discreetly left the coffee drinkers in order to check that the Curator of the Powys Museum had actually remembered to open up for our party. After trying to remain calm at the locked entrance I frantically found a side door and reminded the Curator of the Brigade invasion. Brigadier approaching, door just opening - phew! I can live to tell another tale. The museum is a display of the history and development of life in Montgomeryshire from the earliest prehistoric settlers to the 20th Century Population, so you can imagine the shock as an exhibition of football memorabilia was the introduction to it. The Brigadier was fascinated by the notices and descriptions given for stolen sheep and **Robbie** was chagrined to find that kitchen items she remembers using are now museum pieces - I might add most of the staff remembered using them but would not admit to it. Lunch was at the Old Station restaurant which was situated amongst some quaint little shops. Shopping was a must for some members and I recall golf clubs and clothing to name a few items being loaded discreetly onto the vehicles. The Brigadier and his faithful driver **Cpl Simon Emmett** had to depart after lunch which left the rest of us to invade Powys castle (which has strong connections to Clive of India) and its lovely gardens for a few hours. A gentle and relaxing day away from the office; a good time was had by all.

FAREWELLS

At the end of April **Maj Steve Bellerby** RLC reverted to full TA status after having been a full time staff officer in the Headquarters for two years. Although strictly speaking he does not leave the Headquarters, his change in status is well worth a mention. His unending humour, helpfulness and ability to produce the goods while suffering constant harassment from the uninformed, will be greatly missed. He goes back to part time soldiering in order to devote time to his new business venture, in which we all wish him the best of good fortune. Another *'Wire Notes'* period is over and so we begin the frantic preparation for the deployment on Ex Able Condor, maybe we can even deploy further afield .....Kosovo sounds good!



LSC GROUP

LSC Group is a dynamic IT/Logistics company based in the Midlands. The company has contracts with a number of Blue Chip Organisations throughout the UK and abroad. Due to ongoing business success LSC is expanding and looking to recruit a number of consultants with varying skills to work at various locations throughout the UK. The positions will suit people seeking a long term career with opportunities for involvement in leading edge projects.

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TRAINING

THE ROYAL SCHOOL OF SIGNALS

DATA AND SECURITY WING
INTEGRATED SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT GROUP

COMMAND DIVISION
EPILOGUE – TELE OP (DATA) RIP 12 MAY 1999
FROM TELEPRINTER OPERATOR TO TELE OP (DATA)
by Sgt Maughan, Tele Op (Data) - still/just

Another historic moment occurred on Tuesday 12 May 1999 when the final Tele Op (Data) Class 1 Upgrading Course graduated at Blandford. Course ODUR 0298, were gathered together, before they returned to their Units, and photographed with the Chief Instructor Trade Training Division, **Lt Col Peter Richards**, OC Data Wing - **Maj Andy Stokoe**, Course Co-ordinator - **Mr Mick Altham** and instructors from Procedures Section.

The Tele Op (Data) trade, as we know it, evolved before the 2nd World War from the General Post Office (GPO) clerk/typist and was split into two types of operator: the Teleprinter Operator and the Signal Centre Clerk. At the end of the war these two trades were combined into one, which was called the Signal Centre Operator (Sig Cen Op), who had the job of transmitting and receiving formal signal messages and also the manning of large telephone exchanges. These were the days of COMCAN, 7B teleprinters, perforators, chad and chadless tape and Class 3 typing skills of 40 wpm plus.

Sig Cen Ops kept that name until around the end of 1961, which coincided with the run-down of National Service and the changeover from COMCAN to DCN. To move with the times the trade was re-named Communications Centre Operator (COMMCEN Op); also the job specification broadened with the introduction of new systems. Some of the first of the new professional 'soldiers of the 60's' who found themselves in this trade would have been delighted to find that they were working on the Siemens T100 teleprinter and the Electronic Perforator, both of which were capable of producing punched paper tapes at the previously unobtainable speed of 75 bauds!



The Final Tele Op Data Class 1 Course
(Rear) LCpl Sheath, LCpl Bateman, LCpl Brennan, LCpl Glen, LCpl Rawlings, LCpl Phillips
(Centre) Mr Altham, Sgt Lewis, Sgt Calabrese, LCpl Morley, Cpl Knowler, LCpl Roberts, LCpl Cooper, Mr Ledger, Sgt Musgrave, Mr Luckman, Sgt Maughan
(Front) LCpl Oakes, Maj Stokoe, Lt Col Richards, LCpl Roberts, LCpl Cooper



Siemens T100R - known and loved by many

During training, many COMMCEN Ops were creamed-off to become Cypher Operators (referred to affectionately as 'Queenies' – or not as the case may be). One of the major attractions to becoming a Queenie was that on completion of basic trade training, the successful trainee was automatically promoted to full corporal (technicians, eat your hearts out!)

By 1972, with the increasing introduction of on-line crypto systems and one of the periodic declines in recruiting, a trade review took place and it was decided to revamp the image with another change of trade-name to Data Telegraphist, (DTG), 'data' being the catchword to attract people to the cutting edge of electronic communications techniques. The Cypher Operator as a separate trade was phased out. The DTG's main role was the running of the Communications Centre (COMMCEN), but as the word 'data' suggests, they were also being employed in an increasing way outside the COMMCEN in areas covering the handling of 'data', eg Satcom in the Falklands conflict, new computer systems, particularly in Northern Ireland, and also in the introduction of the Ptarmigan system, including in the early days, Wavell.



Diversity in employment
(Spot the D11 and the RY's on the test tape)

In the mid 80s, it was again necessary to review and update the employment roles of the trades in the Corps and a major career employment review took place, which resulted amongst other in the 'birth' of the Systems Op and another name-change for existing trades. The DTG was renamed Telecommunications Operator (Data) (Tele Op (Data)). The Tele Op (Sys) took over the main responsibilities for message centre operating and switching within the Ptarmigan system, whilst the Tele Op (Data) returned to their original role of predominantly static COMMCEN work – although any Tele Op (Data) posted to 30 Sig Regt in the last ten years or so might well disagree. Also during this time period, the Switchboard Operator ceased to exist as a separate trade and the vast majority of girls in this trade were absorbed into the Data family.

With the electronic revolution during the 90's and the onset of digitisation, it became feasible to pass secure message traffic from desktop to desktop via computer; the traditional COMMCEN was rapidly becoming obsolete, even more so when first of all fax machines and then Email as a daily routine became commonplace. As a result of progress, and the latest R Signals trade review (TRITT), the Tele Op (Data) trade has been consigned to the history books.

THE BRITISH ARMY COMBAT SHOOTING TEAM (B.A.C.S.T)
EXERCISE WALTZING MATILDA - AUSTRALIA 1999
Some notes from a wandering correspondent
licensed to shoot and happy to travel.

This team was selected from the 12 best firers in the British Army from achievements of the Army 100 Queens Medal competition held in July 1998, which all Regiments, Units and Battalions can shoot pending the high standard required and achieving a consistent level of marksmanship.

Capt N. B. Navindra, the Officer Commanding Cable Systems Section and **Sgt D. Copley,** a Line Sgt Instructor with Cable Systems Section, both serving with the Royal School of Signals based in Blandford Garrison were selected for the BACST as members of the International Team shooting for Great Britain. The team were deployed to Australia from 7-29 May 1999. A tremendous achievement in service rifle competition shooting by the Royal Signals and the Queens Gurkha Signals, one that demonstrates that the Corps can fight on equal terms at close quarters with the best, with little or less time on training than their infantry counterparts. The training started whilst at Bisley by shooting in newly fitted barrels and partnering both the LSW and Pistol teams prior to deployment to Belmont and Greenbank ranges, Brisbane, Queensland. On arrival, the first day involved administration and the start of acclimatisation, which varied from monsoon season to climates that differed immensely compared to UK weather. At this stage the 'cool dude glasses' were donned by all with temperatures of 35°C +. This differed around our tented living accommodation area that was constantly muddy and Goretex was a must.

Too soon the competition was under way. There were several matches ranging from all distances and varied marksmanship principles, which involved many types of obstacles. The Australian Army applied some tactics throughout the competition that hindered the British Army Team, this was the disqualification or score penalties for those individuals that rested the magazines at any stage whilst in practices. After a little coercion from the team coach all firers adapted their positions to satisfy the Australian Range staff. The first event was the Pistol and LSW matches followed by a 6km Biathlon in extreme conditions with full kit. Four members were entered for this arduous match that proved to be a challenge. The following results were achieved out of 387 entries:

Match 5 'Director of Infantry'	**Capt Navindra**	5th place 189/200
Match 11 'inc Matches 1-10' (Australian Army 100)	**Capt Navindra**	20th Place 310/400
	Sgt Copley	25th Place 308/400
Match 28 'Team Snapshooting'	**Sgt Copley**	2nd Place 153.8/170 (Bronze Medallions)
Match 70x 'Applied Marksmanship 250/300 Practice'	**Sgt Copley**	8th Place 281/300
	Capt Navindra	52nd Place
Match 71x 'United States Chief Of The Army Reserve'	**Sgt Copley**	2nd Place 113/1500 (Silver Medals)
Match 76 'Military Biathalon' (6km inc six shooting stands)	**Sgt Copley**	6th Place 49.15min
Match 80x 'Section Match' (2 miles - 18 min)	**Maj Dowell** (R Irish)	541/570 1st Place (Trophy, Pennants & Silver Medallions)
	SSgt Yam Kumar (QG Signals)	
	CSgt Gourley (R Irish)	
	Sgt Copley (R Signals)	
	Cpl Cousins (R Irish)	
	Cpl Doak (R Irish)	
	Cpl Mombahadur RGR)	
	LCpl Bharat (QG Signals)	
Match 85 'International' (Great Britain Team)	**Maj Dowell** (R Irish)	2160/2500 1st Place (Trophy, Miniature, Trophy, Pennant, Centrepiece, & Miniature)
	SSgt Yam Kumar (QG Signals)	
	Sgt Copley (R Signals)	
	Cpl Doak (R Irish)	
	Capt Navindra (QG Signals)	
	LCpl Bharat (QG Signals)	
	RFN Dipesh (RGR)	
Match 87 'Vicors Trophy' (Inc. all matches)	**Capt Navindra**	830/1000
	Sgt Copley	852/1000

All four non-infantry represented the British Army Combat Team to a successful result winning the highest of honours. Thereafter the selection from the team of 12 firers to compete in Match 85 as the Great Britain Team of eight firers, was a competition second to none which developed great pride and a successful win.

Once the awards were over arrangements were made for the two days R & R period which consisted of various visits throughout the geographical scope of Australia, thus the Gurkhas took advantage by travelling 12 hours to Sydney spending little time sleeping, only sight seeing was on their agenda. Overall a memorable occasion, even the tuition on surfing (which became painful), but the whole tour was a success for the British Army Combat Shooting Team and those selected to represent the Great Britain Team. There remains no doubt - top level sport is still alive and well in the Royal Corps Signals and Queens Gurkha Signals.



THE ARMY SERVICE PISTOL CHAMPIONSHIPS
BISLEY SATURDAY 5 JUNE 1999

The following individuals were selected from within the Corps to represent the Royal Corps of Signals, this involved firing the Service Pistol in Matches 11 (Practices 1 - 5) and Match 12. The scores and results were as follows:

Lt Col Hoole	Stage 1 – 265/300		1st place
	Stage 2 - 256/300		3rd place
	Total 521/600	overall	2nd place
SSgt Johnston	Stage 1 - 201/300	Not Qualified for Stage 2 (Pistol 30)	
Sgt Copley	Stage 1 - 226/300		16th place
	Stage 2 - 227/300		9th place
	Total453/600	overall	10th place
Sgt Nirmal	Stage 1 - 176/300	Not Qualified for Stage 2 (Pistol 30)	

Changed your Address?
Write and let us know!

11 SIGNAL REGIMENT

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS

CO	**Lt Col T. W. Canham**
RSM	**WO1 (RSM) S. J. Stonier**

ARMY HOCKEY CUP WINNERS

Well, yet again there we were, 11 Sig Regt in the last four of the Army Hockey Cup, this time though along with two other Signals teams…and some fellas from the Royal Artillery. No mean achievement for the Corps.

Although we had beaten 3(UK) Div and Sig Regt already this season there were several cautionary tales going around the minibus on the way to the game. Apart from anything else, we were missing three players from the regular team, **Lt** 'Splitter!' **Simpson**, **Sgt Gary Duffy** and **Sgt** 'Pieman' **Sanderson**. Nonetheless spirits remained high as we started the game. It soon became apparent that space in the midfield would be at a premium, with at least 75% of the central midfielders closing space down quickly and our own **Maj John** 'Steadying midfield influence' **Stuart** playing more of a holding/static role.

Regardless of this, it was 11 Sig Regt who made the brighter start and threatened with some nice passing and movement off the ball. Unfortunately after about 15 minutes we lost our way a little and let 3 Div back into the game. Although the back four were not unduly worried by what the opposition could throw at them, there was little anyone could do about the first goal. 3 Div had possession, about two yards from the goal line in the corner of our 'D'. Now there is no immediate danger in that, unfortunately a desperate shot took a cruel deflection of **Sean** 'They'll never score from a short corner!' **Sutton** flew over **Sig** 'I'm never late for a meet' **Daniel** and into the side of the net. Controversy strikes! The umpire immediately disallowed the goal for dangerous play, as 3 Div were celebrating. However several seconds later, after some thought, he reversed the decision and awarded the goal!!! Not surprisingly, we were not happy, but there was not a lot we could do about it and just had to get on with it which we did.

The game flowed from end to end with both sides creating chances, and some notable contributions from **Sean** 'Defensive Rock', **Sutton**, **Sig John** 'Hero in waiting' **Edge**, **SSgt (SQMS)** 'Where *did* I put that ball?' **Moore**, and **Cpl Steve** 'You're a big lad, now use it!' **White**. Unfortunately during the course of the second half **Maj John** 'TWANG!' **Stuart** pulled his hamstring, probably bending down to tie his shoelace, and was forced to move out of midfield and worry 3 Div from up front. In the end this may have been something of a blessing in disguise.

Half way through the second half we broke from midfield, moving the ball wide left and then as **Maj Stuart** turned, he played the ball into the 'D', where it fell to **2Lt John** 'Admin King' **Lyons**, coming through from midfield, and onto the penalty spot. Stopping the ball, just long enough to control it and have a small heart attack, he slipped the ball low and to the keeper's left, rounding off a lovely flowing move. Following this both sides had chances to win the game but it was not to be, and extra time beckoned. As fatigue set in, the game opened up and more chances came and went until at the end both sides were spent and it came to the dreaded Penalty Flicks!! The five ~~un~~fortunates stepped forward: **2Lt John** 'Has anyone got a stick?' **Lyons** put the ball past the keeper; **Maj John** 'Keep it low boys' **Stuart** put his over the keeper…and the crossbar...and the car park beyond!!; **Sig John** 'Tiff's anyone?' **Edge** and **SSgt (SQMS)** 'Blinding haircut!' **Moore** dispatched theirs. Leaving only **Sean** 'The Icemen cometh' **Sutton** to seal the victory.

This left us with the none-too-easy task of beating 16 Sig Regt in the finals. Having seen them in the other semi-final, they looked a pretty slick outfit. As happened the day before it was a game full of chances and some sustained periods of pressure for both sides, thanks to some committed and intelligent play. Again our game plan was to stretch the opposition, by moving the ball quickly through the midfield, then wide and to the forwards. Looking for support arriving late from the midfield, to unlock a compact and experienced defence.

However, at the other end 16 Sig Regt had their chances, notably when they had a good flick at goal denied by the shoulder of **Sean** 'Maradonna taught me everything I know' **Sutton**. As the game went on, the adrenaline flowed and tempers began to fray. Although to be fair one or two interesting umpiring decisions made life difficult, and unfortunately **Cpl Paul** 'I'm on first name terms with the General Staff' **Evans** was 'sin-binned' for sportingly passing the ball back to the opposition! Following this **WO2 (SSM) Neil** 'Do as I say, not as I do' **Fisher** was seen to be telling **2Lt Lyons** to calm down, as we could not afford to have another player sin-binned for dissent. The young officer took the advice to heart; although not because of the Sergeant Major's years of experience, but because **WO2 Fisher** had just returned to the field after committing the same offence!

Although we felt we had done enough to win it in normal time, it was not to be and extra time was on the way again. Yet again it was 11 Sig Regt who led they way, using fitness and teamwork to produce the more attractive hockey. However the spectre of flicks came upon us again. The same five team members came forward for the slaughter one more time.

The officers, leading from the front, stepped forward and promptly missed both of them! This left us 2-0 down, as **Sig John** 'Cool as you like' **Edge** stepped up to make it 2-1. Then **Sig** 'Big man' **Daniel** faced their third penalty, having narrowly failed to save the first two, and made a great save. Following this the scores remained 2-1 as **Sig Daniel** moved into the goal and made a second save. It was now down to **Sean** 'No pressure!' **Sutton** to keep us in the match, which he duly did. Then following more heroics from **Sig Daniel** it was down to sudden death. The pressure was really on and as some could not watch it was **Sigs Edge** and **Daniel** who earned their money. 16 Sig Regt selected to go first and the experienced, Ex Army and Corps playing CO stepped forward to take the flick, **Sig** 'I'm not at all nervous' **Daniel** dived low and to the right saving a solid flick (then danced all the way back to the team bench). **Sig Edge** walked to the spot with confidence and with a well taken flick easily beat the keeper to win the Cup for us.

There were naturally some serious celebrations and the night was long, but distinguished – just like the pit stop we had on the way home, for details you should see the two heroes of the piece, after they've cleaned the minibus.



Back Row (L-R): Cpl 'Chalky' White, Sig John Edge, 2Lt John Lyons, Sgt Andy Crabtree, Lt Col T. W. Canham, Maj Graham McNeil, WO2 (FofS) Neil Taylor, WO2 (SSM) Neil Fisher, WO2 (YofS) Shaun Sutton
Front Row (L-R): Maj John Stuart, Sig 'Reg' Perrin, Sgt 'Sandy' Sanderson, Sig 'Dan' Daniel, Sgt Al Rooney, SSgt (SQMS) Monty Moore, Cpl Paul Evans

ARMY WOMENS VOLLEYBALL CHAMPIONS

by Sig Hampton

After qualifying for the ARMY volleyball championships, the Regimental female volleyball team put in a lot of hard training on Tuesday evenings with the Regimental male team. The championships were held in Larkhill on 4 February 1999. Unsure of what to expect the team consisted of **SSgt Lindsey** 'Lets Go' **Manktelow**, **Sigs Emma** 'Rab C' **Brown**, **Lisa** 'Who said white girls can't jump?' **Lawton**, **Sophie** 'Farmer' **Giles**, 'I don't talk much but can hit' **Yule**, and **Steph** 'Legs' **Jackson**. We were quite nervous especially when arriving at Larkhill the three other teams were warming up and looking very professional. Once the games got under way it was apparent the Cooks were quite good but not unbeatable. We fought to the end and eventually went on to win the ARMY championships. **SSgt Manktelow**, **Sig Brown** and myself were all selected to play for the Army in the Crown and Inter-Services tournament which was to be held over two weeks.

CROWN AND INTER-SERVICES VOLLEYBALL

The Crown Services is a competition between The Army, Navy, RAF and HM Prison Service. We commenced training with The Army men's team on Tuesday 4 May at Grantham. The team worked very hard between 0900 and 1600 daily and after only a short time improved beyond recognition. We all played well and enjoyed the games especially as some of the quirky on-court calls like '747 WHOOSH' helped to motivate the



The Team

Army 'VIXENS' team. The Inter-Services competition was held on 14 May 1999 at Larkhill and although we had already played the Navy and RAF in the Crown Services we gave them both good games. We managed to take a set off the RAF, who play together on a regular basis in a civilian national league, which was a great morale boost for the team. As a beginner at the Inter-Services Championships I thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience. Next year expect the Army to be Inter-Service Champions!!

BLANDFORD SUPPORT SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj M. E. Pawlak**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) N. Fisher**

TECHNICAL MAINTENANCE TROOP

The Troop recently said goodbye to **Maj Dick Offord** on his retirement after 39 years service. **Dick** was OC TM Tp for three years and his farewell took up most of the day, starting with a bowling competition for all members of TM and Support Workshop. **Dick** donated a trophy to be awarded to the individual scoring the most points in a single game. A battle royal between **Mr Percy Burgess** and **Sgt Duncan Shaw** ensued, with **Percy** taking the Trophy with his last bowl. A Dining out was held that evening in The Langton Arms, where **SSgt (FofS) Steve Davis** 'dished out the dirt' on the Boss, and **Dick** let us all in to some previously unknown secrets that even his wife was unaware of!! An excellent evening was had by all, in a fitting tribute to a very popular OC. The Troop wish both **Dick** and his wife **Marilyn** all the very best for the future - we'll all be up for the barbecue soon!!

The Troop is now commanded by **FofS Steve Davis** and **Mr Colin McIntosh** moves up to be Workshop PTO. A major thrust on Specification testing has led to some very busy times for the Troop, though we have also managed to fit in some sport. **Cpl Ady Worsdall** has picked up yet another golfing trophy while **Sgt Duncan Shaw** hasn't - yet again! **Cpl** 'JR' **Whitmey** made the mistake of finishing second in his 110m hurdles heat at the Inter-Squadron Athletics competition - congratulations on being selected for the Regimental team! **SSgt (FofS) Steve Davis** is enjoying a successful start to the Sea Angling league, currently lying in fifth place in the District league - as well as providing a supply of fresh fish for the Troop! Finally, a warm welcome is extended to **Mr Brian Mower** (ex-Corps) and **Mr Ted Pounds** who have recently joined us.

1 SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj J. D. J. Drummond CD**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) A. J. Sartorius**

WHITESPEAR TROOP

Tp Comd	**WO1 G. Waters**

EXERCISE GRID IRON 2 16-21 MAY 99

by Sig Rees

Sunday – The group assembled to the discordant tones of **Sig John Parry** and **Sig Jim Rees. Sig Gail Evans** parted with her stick insects ('Jodie' and 'Kate'), and then we were off to Capel Curig for a week's adventurous training. We arrived, were briefed on what was happening for the week and proceeded to organise our equipment for the following day.

Monday – We set out on our two-day expedition in the Snowdonian Mountains with **Sig Barry White** navigating the first leg. After carefully analyzing the map we took the path, upwards. The climb was long with a breathtaking view from the summit, unfortunately we had none left to give. Our joys were short-lived as **Cpl Tony Brown** pointed out the two other mountains, which stood between our chosen hilltop campsite and us. Points of interest were grass, boulders and dead sheep, all glazed over by **Cpl Kerr Laye**'s trivia of the local surroundings. At the top of the final mountain we found that 36 German tourists had already laid out their towels on the summit and claimed their place. After some quality photographs we made our way down, **Cpl Tony Brown** ensuring we avoided all the gentle slopes on the way. The day was finished off with an in-depth lesson on ropes, climbing and safety.

Tuesday – Upon wakening up to a swipe from the fresh air cricket bat we emerged from our tents to a marvellous view of the foot of the mountain and wondered why we couldn't see the top! All was to become clear as we started up TRY FAN. Halfway up we were enthralled by **Cpl Dave** 'Eco-I am the Spider-Warrior' **Allen**'s explanation of the formation of the surrounding area. At the top there were mixed feelings of joy and fear, not so much of falling but of landing. By the time we got to the bottom the mountain was 3km high (and I caught a fish this big)!

Wednesday - Today is rock-climbing day and as we emerge from the mini-bus the rock-face loomed like a big looming thing that has just come first in a looming competition. After a quick lesson on technique and safety **Cpl Dave** 'I am The Spider' **Allen** let us get on with it. It's amazing how some people can change when on a rock. **Cpl Allen** turns into a spider, **Sig Morley** takes so long he gets sunburned and turns into a lobster and **Sig Parry** turned into a limpet, getting half way, stating his personal definition of scared had changed and becoming at one with the rock. **Cpl Kerr Laye** did some impressive leading and **Sig Gail Evans** put us to shame when she went on to attempt bigger and steeper rocks.

Thursday – To canoe or not to canoe, that was the question posed by **Sig Gail Evans** as she was not too keen about water. **Cpl Tony Brown** explained some key features of the canoe, techniques and safety before letting us loose on the water. **Sig Jim Rees** was the first to go in, not happy with this he turned **Sig Barry White**'s canoe into a submarine. In the meantime **Sig Gail Evans** got to grips with her canoe and conquered most of her fears about water.

2 SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj L. V. Tomkins**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Thomas**

WELCOMES AND FAREWELLS

There have been a few comings and goings in recent weeks with the Squadron saying farewell to **WO1 Dave Clarke** and his wife **Tessa** to civvy street, **WO2 Phil Christie** and **Denise**, to life on the beat in Worcester and **Cpl Steve Riley** who has gone around the corner to Military Training Squadron. We wish you all the best for the future. We welcome into the fold **Capt David Kenyon** and **Elizabeth, WO1 Mark Elliot** and **Carole, WO2** 'Taff' **Thomas** and **Sheila** and **Cpl** 'Alfie' **Alford.** We hope your stay in Blandford is a pleasant one.

BEAUFIGHTER TROOP

Tp Comd	**WO1 M. D. Elliot**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt G. Cole**

INTER-SQUADRON FIVE-A-SIDE FOOTBALL

Thursday 13 May 1999 was the date given for the 1st round matches in the Inter Squadron five-a-side football competition. So with a few days to go it was time to organise some training and select teams to represent each Troop. **WO1 Mark Elliot** took on this task, ably assisted by **Cpl** 'Alfie' **Alford**. After a training session in the gym and two on the all-weather sports pitch two teams of similar ability were chosen. The first game of the evening was between Beaufighter Tp and Ulster Tp from 3 Sqn. A bout of early pressure saw Beaufighter Tp go into an early three-goal lead. This had the desired effect and Ulster Tp never recovered. By half time it was 4-0. The second half was a lot more even and Ulster Tp restricted the opposition to only two goals to make the full-time score a resounding 6-0 to Beaufighter Tp.

Next was a thrilling encounter between Iron Tp and Kohima Tp (organisers) from 1 Squadron. The first half saw some excellent attacking football from both teams countered by some even better goal-keeping. The half-time 0-0 score-line was a fair reflection on the amount of possession enjoyed by both teams. The second half started where the first had left off, with both teams playing open attacking football and trying to get that all-important first goal. As the match progressed mistakes started to creep in through sheer exhaustion and opportunities to clinch the tie came and went. The final whistle brought relief to the players and a well-deserved ovation from the watching supporters. A 0-0 draw was a fair result after such a fine exhibition of guts and determination.

Beaufighter Tp were back on again, this time against Rhino Tp from 1 Squadron. The previous match would be hard to live up to but this turned out to be just as exciting, and frustrating as the last. The award of a penalty to Beaufighter Tp failed to break the deadlock as the keeper managed to smother the ball. The first half was a well-fought contest and the teams were only separated by a wickedly deflected goal from Rhino Tp. All attempts to close the deficit in the second half were either superbly saved or agonizingly close. Rhino Tp defended their lead admirably and managed to hang on until the final whistle. Having won one match and lost the second Beaufighter Tp had to hope that Ulster Tp could win against Rhino Tp and rely on their goals scored in the first match.

To complete the involvement of both Squadron teams in the league phase of the competition Iron Tp were next on against Lightning Tp from 3 Squadron. After drawing their first match they knew that anything less than a convincing win would see them come runners-up in their league. The game got off to an excellent start with two early goals to settle the Iron Tp nerves. Lightning Tp managed to close the deficit to 2-1 with a well-taken goal, despite the enthusiastic support of OC Iron Tp **WO1 Keith Fisher MBE.** A settling down period followed and the game flowed from end-to-end. Iron Tp finally took hold of the game and put it beyond doubt with a further two goals to complete an excellent 4-1 win.

Once again the fate of a Squadron team would rest with the outcome of the match between the other two teams in the league. Iron Tp had to hope that Kohima Tp and Lightening Tp would either draw or one team would win by the odd goal. As it turned out Ulster Tp did Beaufighter Tp a favour and defeated Rhino Tp by 2-1 thereby leaving Beaufighter Tp top of their league and in the final the following week. The hopes for Iron Tp faded when Kohima Tp took a 3-0 lead against Lightning Tp in the final match in their league. That turned out to be the final score and Iron Tp won their league on goals scored! An all-2 Squadron final was just reward for the time and effort put in by all concerned.



With maximum points secured towards the Harrogate Cup it just remained to decide which team were to be winners and which to be runners-up. The game started at a furious pace as each team tried to impose their superiority over the other. Beaufighter Tp had a chance to take the lead when awarded a penalty early in the first half. A superbly taken kick unluckily rebounded off the post and Iron Tp were let off the hook. They took heed of this warning and after some excellent passing slotted the ball home to take a 1-0 lead. Half time gave the players and the crowd a chance to get their breath back. No sooner had the second half started than Iron Tp increased their lead to 2-0. A comeback of Manchester United proportions would be required if Beaufighter Tp were to recover. A well-worked goal half way through the second half saw Iron Tp's lead cut to 2-1. This meant the final five minutes would see Iron Tp trying to kill the game off by getting a third goal and Beaufighter Tp trying to get an equalizer and take the game to penalties. The equalizer came with two minutes left on the clock and while everyone was looking forward to penalties Beaufighter Tp had other ideas and won the game 3-2 with almost the last kick of the match. Thanks go to Kohima Tp for organising the event and **Sgt Mark Meadows** (RMP) for refereeing **ALL** the matches.

IRON TROOP

Tp Comd	**WO1 K. A. Fisher MBE**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt F. Graham**

2 SQUADRON SPONSORED BOWLATHON

by Sig Lucking

Q. How do you raise money for charity and enjoy yourself at the same time?

A. Have a sponsored bowlathon of course!

Tuesday 27 April 1999 saw 2 Sqn hold a sponsored bowlathon at the Denbury Bowl on Blandford Camp in aid of Breast Cancer Awareness (Scotland). **WO1 Keith Fisher MBE** and **Cpl Steve Riley** had carefully organised the event to ensure there was always someone bowling and no one missed any trade training. Both Iron and Beaufighter Tps were heavily involved and various 'personalities' took part throughout the day. Bowling shoes definitely brighten up a uniform although the RSM may not agree. The idea was to get sponsorship for taking part or for the number of strikes and then bowl until you drop. **Sig Crooks** had the top number of strikes with 47 and **Sig King** raised the most amount of money £145 – Well Done!

The day was split into two periods, morning and afternoon, with various courses and individuals putting their skills on display. In the evening anyone could take part for a small charitable donation and a lot of the daytime bowlers returned for more 'finger torture'. This also had the added bonus of 'the bar' which made the competition a little more interesting as with 'Lager guided' sights the bowls didn't always go in the intended direction. Thanks go to everyone who helped organise the event and those that took part, a great time was had by all. With £2500 raised for the charity the day was a tremendous success.



3 SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj A. J. Duncan**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Tasker**

EXERCISE LIGHTNING FOLLY 1999

On the weekend of 16-18 April 1999 the Squadron embarked on another series of annual exercises. These run in conjunction with Ex Lightning Warrior and Ex Lightning Challenge, confusing enough for the staff who run them, so obviously totally confusing for the trainees! This particular series (Lightning Folly) are run over a weekend period on Salisbury Plain Training Area. They enable the trainees to get out of the classroom and hopefully enhance some of the skills taught in Phase 1 training.

After the initial move out and Friday night sorting out their admin, Saturday is spent rotating around various stands. Whilst most of the stands are intended as revision ie: First Aid and Map Reading others introduce variety like self-defence and clay pigeon shooting (invariably these are well received by the trainees). Saturday night is taken over by the night Navex enabling those who paid attention during the Map Reading lecture to get a good night's sleep as it only takes them a couple of hours to complete the course. For others, well isn't it frustrating going through the same checkpoint two or three times wishing you had paid attention or even asked questions!

Sunday usually involves a day on the ranges before returning to Blandford. The problem with this is that we have to rely on a civilian bus company turning up at the right time in the right location (that would be a novelty). After some frantic communications on those forbidden mobile phones the transport did eventually turn up on time to return everyone to camp. Roll on Ex Lightning Folly 2/99!

THE LIGHTNING TROPHY

In late 1997 14 Signal Regiment (EW) presented The Lightning Trophy to 3 (Harrogate) Sqn. It is to be awarded to any Telecommunications Technician (Radio) Basic who achieves an 'Outstanding' result on completion of their course. **Sig Bartrip** received his award on 14 May 1999.



Sig Bartrip

11 SIGNAL REGIMENT FEMALE TEAM LANYARD TROPHY WINNERS

by Sig Gough

The team: **Capt Sophie** 'Boss' **Davies, SSgt Tina** '2nd time loony' **Edwards, 2 Lt Lindsay** 'fancy a stroll' **Calderhead, 2Lt Mogs** 'anyone for hockey' **Southern, LCpl Sarah** 'Mad Medic' **Jordan, Sig Jackie** 'Look at Me' **Davies, Sig Tammy** 'Don't mess with me coz I'm hard,' **Whalley, Sig Carol** 'fitness freak' **Barrett, Sig Liz** 'Oh Lovely' **Burley** and **Sig V** 'Follow that bum' **Gough**.

Admin Team: **Cpl Ian** 'Dr Death' **Bibby, Cpl Elaine** 'Admin Star' **Ralf** and **Cpl Mac** 'I'll tape your feet' **McArthur**.

The training had been long and hard, but the day had finally arrived. Nerves soared and bladders weakened. Our brilliant blue T shirts almost glowed in the early morning sunlight as we tried the impossible not to be seen squatting behind bushes.

'30 seconds to start.' The teams sped off all fighting to get ahead. The start pace was hard and fast but that was nothing compared to what lay ahead of us.

'Just jog it down the hills girls,' shouts Capt D.

'That's not a hill, its a slight slope downwards - are you trying to kill us?'

Over stiles, through fields and woods, narrow paths, wide tracks, roads, up and downhill, windy and straight. You name it we walked it.

'Don't follow them they have gone the wrong way!'

'But it's downhill that way, I'm sure no one will notice'

'No, up the hill we go. Dig in girls!'

Check point 1 - 'Drink, eat, we're not stopping' The sweat streamed down the reddened faces as quick water refills and grabbing of food bags took place. The heat rose in our boots as blisters began to form. At this stage we were right on the heels of 30 Sig Regt trying to 'psyche' them out. We had, however, seen no sign of the female team from 15 Sig Regt.

The feeding station- '**Sig Jackie Davies** is yelling for a water refill and decides to do a quick camera interview, **Sig Carol Barrett** is shouting for scissors with her boots off and **Cpl McArthur**'s magic hands set to work



retaping them, whilst she is holding food in one hand, a fag in the other and trying to drink at the same time. **Sig Tammy** 'No shame' **Whalley** blatantly pulls down her trousers and rubs deep heat into her legs whilst staring at the video camera. **Captain D** is yelling in one word sentences for everyone to eat and drink. **LCpl** 'Mad medic' **Jordan** skillfully dishes out enough painkillers to numb the aches and pains and in a flash the team once again were off. The route from the Feeding Station to Checkpoint 2 was one of the longest and dullest legs and we were very glad to see that 30 Sig Regt were still only just ahead of us at Checkpoint 2.

Our team was now down to eight and we were all determined to finish. Our spirits rose as we were told at a crossing point that 30 Sig Regt now had only seven people in their team. At least we'd be runners up! Just as we approached the last checkpoint knowing that we only had just over an hour to go, **Cpl Ralf** came running down the hill shouting that both 15 Sig Regt and 30 Sig Regt had only got seven people in their teams. Our spirits soared - we could win this! After 12 hours, 16 minutes and 40 miles of sheer hell, 11 Signal Regiment were the winners. 'We came, We saw, We conquered' What a feeling!

263 (HARROGATE) SIGNAL SQUADRON ARMY APPRENTICES COLLEGE, ARBORFIELD

263 (HARROGATE) SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj Steven France**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Mick Senior**

The new term kicked off on 3 May, a Bank Holiday Monday (such is College life!), with the seniors continuing with their education and the arrival of the new intake, 99B. This term, the College adopted a policy of a 'soft' introduction into the Army for the new intake to reduce injuries at the early stages, with the first week (induction week) consisting mostly of lectures and theory lessons, and the Apprentice Tradesmen (ATs) wearing trainers. Also this term we warmly welcomed **Lt Sarah Pedder** from 259 Sig Sqn, Cyprus who took over as OC Penney Tp from **Capt Kyra McAnulty**. She is still trying to get used to the weather back home, having spent an 18-month tour in Cyprus, even though it is summer here!

NEWS FROM SCOTT TROOP

Tp Comd	**Capt Jeffries**
Tp Sgt	**Sgt Wagstaff**

THE VIEW SO FAR FROM INTAKE 99B OF SCOTT TROOP

Six weeks have passed since the day we all arrived, for some probably the scariest day of their lives. We were greeted at the Military Training Wing with a mass of smiling faces from the instructors and less smiling faces from the new recruits. We signed loads of paper work and received £20 for actually turning up! The next week which was called induction was filled with loads of sitting around and listening to lectures, oh .... and yet more paperwork. On Wednesday of the induction week we were introduced to our military kit which would be our only source of clothing for the next six weeks. We tried it on, we tried our boots on, we tried to come to terms with it, all our efforts failed and we were stuck with it!

We think that the first time any of us began to miss our mothers was when we were taught how to iron and look after our kit. How many times did we see tramlines representing the M6 running up our lightweights, or white sleeves where we had over starched them to death? If we weren't in our green kit, we were in our Corps tracksuit and Silver Shadow trainers. We don't think one person had a tracksuit that fitted properly.

The next four weeks went really slowly and were mainly days full of lessons and lectures; Education, Skill at Arms, Health & Hygiene, Security and loads more. It was really only in the fifth week when you could notice a real team being formed from the ranks of Scott Tp and this was clearly demonstrated on our OC Squadron's inspection and 'Passing off the Square', at which we all performed really well. Now we have our civvys back and are allowed to go into Reading. The next question is, when does it all get taken off us and they take us back to Week One again! The staff would do it!

EXERCISE SPRING SPLASH (TIGER) 99 – 16-25 APRIL 1999

by Capt Tom Jeffries

This was a Sub-Aqua Diving Adventurous Training Expedition for Apprentice Tradesmen (ATs) from the Army Apprentices College (AA Coll), Arborfield to Estartit, Spain. Estartit is a well known diving resort on the Costa Brava featuring the 'Illes Medes', a group of unpopulated offshore islands designated as a marine reserve. Dive sites range from 5metre plateaus to 30metre plus drop offs and a wide variety of locations in between. Fish-life is plentiful and varied with several large species, visibility is 8-10metres and water temperatures are reasonable. Following the new training programme for the BSAC Club Diver course, 12 senior term ATs and six members of staff were ready to go diving in the week following the end of term. Easier said than done, just a minor thing of the Pass Off Parade to complete first. Somehow we all made it!

Friday morning we assembled and loaded the minibuses for the long haul to Spain. It was through the Channel Tunnel and miraculously out the other side on the 'wrong' but correct side of the road! Whilst the non-drivers squirmed and burrowed their way into ever more contorted sleeping positions around the seats and luggage, the drivers 'stagged on' for 2 - 3 hour stints of driving, navigating and sleeping in rotation.

Saturday we at last reached Estartit, checked in with our dive charter company and the apartments. The afternoon was spent resting, admin and briefings. Also the novel experience for the majority of being issued with their CILOR money and going shopping for food to live on. No Mum, Army Cookhouse or even a 24hr compo pack – Help, what do we do? Does it really cost that much! How much do we need?!

One day's diving is very much like the rest but with two outings a day we were all kept busy. As the week progressed the diving skills improved and more challenging dives were undertaken. **Sig** 'Tour de France' **Burr** finally stopped peddling underwater, whilst **Cpl** 'Lawrie' **Askin** went hunting for his two REME underwater Leopard crawling specialists! Meanwhile **SSgt** 'Adie' **West** (JSIO Chicksands) was still trying to coach his REME students in the art of rescue techniques on the surface, resulting in more real drownings and green floating bits than rescues! Underwater as the confidence grew so did the encounters with the fish-life and the tales - 'It was this big!!' Octopus and Sea Cucumbers for some reason seemed to be of most interest especially to **Huw Richards** (L & IT Wing)! By Wednesday the pace of the week was beginning to tell and **Sig** 'Pte Benjamin' **Thornton** was suffering with 'sea sickness', again! **Sig** 'H' **Harrington** became an expert in maintaining the dive slate and snorkelling. The final day's diving featured a cave swim through rock arches and a wreck dive. So good experience was gained by all and at last we were all getting used to the fish-life demanding food from us and not being so panicked when they were constantly in our face.

All that was left to do was get home following the last night party. All that 'Block Job' training paid off; all apartments cleaned, bags packed and Pigs ready to fly by 1000hrs. Well nearly! As usual the minibuses seemed even more cramped on the way home but everyone managed to squeeze into a space somewhere and settled into the long haul home. The trip was relatively uneventful except that there seemed to be no end to France.

NEWS FROM BRADLEY TROOP

by AT Brennan

Tp Comd	**Capt Holloway AGC (ETS)**
Tp Sgt	**Sgt Wigmore**

EXERCISE SARAH SANDS SECTION ATTACK

As we patrolled through the sand track and got further away from our friendly forces, the realisation that I had been given the position of Section 2IC finally came to mind. Everything I had been taught passed through my mind and before I had time to piece together the information, we came under fire. I flashed back through our practices and used them as a model basis for what I was about to do. Within seconds I had emptied a magazine before I remembered it was wiser to conserve ammunition. ' Stop!!' came the order from the Section Comd and the next thing I knew Charlie fire team were about to peel off to the right. As Delta fire team commander, I was shouting orders so as to facilitate the best possible covering fire for the attack. The assault team began to crawl towards the enemy and as they charged forward, weapons switched to automatic, screaming war cries with their best war faces, I had to remember to switch fire left to avoid a 'blue on blue'. The Section Comd gave the command to 'RE-ORG!!' and we all ran up the hill, sweating but excited, to join our section. As we reached the back of the destroyed enemy position we came under fire again! We were already rushing with adrenaline and soon saw the next pestering foe dealt with. A quick search of the enemy dead and we were left with the jubilation of success.

EXERCISE SARAH SANDS - OBSERVATION PATROLS (OPS)

by AT Hardy

After a briefing from our Tp OC, **Capt Holloway**, we set off on our Operation led by **Cpl Cullen**. We drew close to the enemy position using the wind to cover our noise and allow us to move faster through the undergrowth, which was quite thick. After bumbling too fast and making too much noise we decided to pull back and advance again from the right flank.

We established our first RV and it was decided that I, **AT Hughes** and **AT Haddock** were to wait in all-round defence while **ATs Harrison** and **Handley** went in closer for the Forward Observation Point. They quietly moved away on their hands and knees. It seemed about an hour before they came back. They had observed two people in DPM clothing, armed with SA80s and sat around a fire eating rations. The conversation was kept to a minimum although later OPs claimed they had French accents and addressed each other as 'French Fry and Rost Bif'.

We thought we had enough information so we tactically withdrew back to our harbour to report our findings to the Troop Commander.

1 TRAINING SQUADRON
ROYAL SIGNALS ARMY TRAINING REGIMENT
BASSINGBOURN

Sqn Comd **Maj J. M. Norris**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) A. V. Slaney**

The Squadron has been quiet on a sporting front over the last two months but is about to start the next round of competitions. Already members of the training teams are being urged to try their hand at a number of sports. What is quiet on the sporting front is made up for on the administration of the Squadron. If it seems like there are a lot of changes in the ORBAT there are. If you lose track you should try working here! As ever the Troops are continuing to cope with full Troops of up to 50 soldiers at any one time. With a pass out every two week the pace is as hectic as ever. The 2IC Sqn, **Capt Mick Boyle,** still manages to find time to keep up his creditable performance at triathlon and has recently returned from the Army Triathlon Training camp in America. He also took part in the Army Sprint Distance Triathlon Championships held at Bassingbourn. The team from Bassingbourn won the minor unit competition an improvement on their second place last year. He also took part in the Army Olympic distance Triathlon held in Bournemouth and was part of the minor unit winning team.

ALPHA TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt J. Balfour**
Tp Sgt **Sgt B. Clark**

The Troop would like to say goodbye to **Sgt B. Turner** who has moved across camp to Echo Tp and welcome **Sgt** 'Where's my lunchbox' **Clark** posted in from 7 Sig Regt. The Troop would also like to say goodbye to **Cpl** 'Geordie' **McBean** who is off to 249 Sig Sqn AMF (L) at the end of July. The Troop has recently climbed the height of Snowdon on the indoor climbing wall in aid of The Princes's Trust. They are hoping to beat their previous total of £1600 raised for the Army Benevolent fund.

BRAVO TROOP
Tp Comd **Capt C. D. Roberts**
Tp Sgt **Sgt P. Matheson**

The Troop would like to say goodbye to **Cpl** 'Ritchie' **Richardson** and **Cpl Young** who have moved on an inter Coy/Sqn transfer to C Coy the Queens Division and 28 Engr Sqn respectively. Many thanks for all your hard work during the time you have been with the Troop and good luck setting the example at your new Coy/Sqn. **Cpl Young** in addition has continued to perform well as the Cpls Mess PEC. Not an easy task with the diverse number of Cap badges at an ATR. We look forward to welcoming into the Troop; **Cpl Ramsden** and **Cpl Payne** on their arrival in the near future. **Cpl Henry** our exchange Corporal from New Zealand has been travelling the length and breadth of the UK visiting units and getting to know most of the train stations the country has to offer. In particular she has watched the Trooping of the Colour and almost met the Queen, but not quite. **Capt Roberts** continues to linger in his office and plan his next sailing trip and looks forward to a posting order in the near future (hint, hint MCM Div). **Sgt Paula Matheson** is down at Pirbright learning the finer points of a good right turn at the halt on her drill course. We look forward to her return and the subsequent drill lesson that will follow just in time for pass off. **Cpl** 'Take two extras ' **Mackenzie** is particularly looking forward to her return so that he can hand over the reins of Troop Sergeant to her.

CHARLIE TROOP
Tp Comd **Capt L. Allan**
Tp Sgt **Sgt D. Honeyman**

Congratulations to **Capt Liz Allan** on her promotion from Lt. She was presented with her Captains rank slides by CO ATR Bassingbourn **Lt Col I. A. J. Condie** Royal Signals on the 14 June 1999. In true fashion the sound of popping champagne corks followed shortly.

DELTA TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt Bates**
Tp Sgt **Sgt Park**

The Troop says a fond farewell to **Sgt Smithurst** who has departed for 19 Mech Bde and welcome to his replacement **Sgt Parke** from 3 Inf Bde N.I. Internal Regimental moves are, **Cpl Kelson** who has moved upstairs to Bravo Troop for a short time before her posting to MCTC (not as an inmate). Her replacement is **Cpl Perry** R Anglian from C Coy The Queen's Division. The Troop has recently raised £1200 for Leukemia research.

ECHO TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt A. Flay** PWRR
Tp Sgt **Sgt B. Turner**

Welcome to a new Troop OC, **Lt Andy Flay** PWRR who has moved across from C Coy the Queen Division. **Lt Simmonds** has moved across to 28 Engr Sqn and will no doubt settle in quickly with her quiet, unobtrusive manner. Other moves are **Sgt Carter** who has now moved to Wray Coy and been replaced by **Sgt Turner** from Alpha Tp, **Cpl Cleworth** has moved to C Coy and been replaced by **Cpl Kidd** from Charlie Tp. Congratulations go to **Lt Simmonds** on her passing flight grading and good luck with the course.

FOXTROT TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt S. Coeshott**
Tp Sgt **Sgt Graham**

Foxtrot Tp welcome **Cpl Rob Usher**, his wife **Sharon** and nipper **Krystal** into the Troop after posting from 28 Engr Sqn. Goodbye to **Cpl Gav Wilson** and his family who are moving to Wray Coy. Also a goodbye to **Cpl Brain Sheard** who after passing 'P' Coy and Jumps, getting the tattoo and shaving his head is taking himself and his wife **Nikki** to 216 Para Sig Sqn in Aldershot. This should be a welcome break from all the hard work he used to do. They will both be missed. Congratulations to **Cpl Steve Stoker**'s wife **Michelle**, on the birth of their son **Kieran**. Hopefully **Steve** will be able to find his way back to work after such a hard time.

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The Editor is always pleased to receive interesting articles

NEWS FROM THE BALKANS

1 (UNITED KINGDOM) ARMOURED DIVISION HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL REGIMENT

A missed (our fault) entry from 1 Div in Bosnia which is worthy of inclusion!

Being based in the Banja Luka Metal Factory is not much fun as anyone who has been there will know, and the opportunity to leave the complex is very limited, but when the opportunity to pick up a project, that was started by our predecessors, arose it was grabbed with both hands. The school at Kulijana, just a few kilometres from the HQ, was in a sorry state of repair. There were no useable toilets, no water and other than the decorating work done in the classroom, little effort had gone into the upkeep of the school for many years. It was in grave danger of closing, as the local education director could not fund the repairs, and the prospect of a 10km round walk for the first grade pupils was fast becoming a reality.

The effort started with a Christmas Day visit to the school with toys and presents for everyone and a year's supply of stationery kindly donated by Dudley Stationery and shipped out with the help of **RSM** 'Blod' **Godwin** of 71 Signal Regiment. The QM, **Maj** 'Butch' **Maycock,** took his team to spend the morning with the kids who put on a great show and sang Christmas songs, (even though the Orthodox Christmas was some days away). **Cpl** 'Taff' **Phillips** and **LCpl Eddie Law** tried to join in but their Serbo Croat left the kids mystified, After the celebrations they were bombarded with snow along with **LCpl Jules Cope** who was to later blame this on him getting stuck in a ditch for two hours on the way back. The next day the QM's team organised a Free Jumble Sale for the villagers who went away with clothes, shoes and toiletries - but true to form, no Combat 95 was given out! **Sig Louisa Rodriguez** became very broody handling the baby clothes but at the time of writing is still without child.

The task to make good the repairs on the school was taken up by **RSM Mark Schofield.** He and his helpers, **Sigs Trev Reilly, Mark Neelings** and **Cfn Phil Jerwood** scraped, filled and painted everything in sight. Assisted by **Turners' Geordie the Plumber**, European toilets were fitted and local 'Chippie' **Morno** made and fitted new double glazed windows and frames. Fund raising for the project went on apace thanks to the efforts of **SSgt** 'Ginge' **Morgan** and his Sgts Mess quizzes and the Charity Football Auction run by **Cpl Daz Chantler** ACC. Practising his best Serbo Croat, the QM mobilised the teacher, **Gordana Erceg** and the villagers to dig the trench and fabricate the manhole so that the water company could connect the mains supply. The QM staff raised funds to buy and present a new TV set to complete the Educational Aids package for the school and on the final farewell visit the news that funds had been raised for the start of the refurbishment of the second classroom was met with great delight.

Dragocaj Psychiatric Hospital for geriatric patients also benefited a great deal from the Regiment's G5 work. Hundreds of clothes and blankets were delivered by the CIS Sqn and **SSgts Jina Hook** and **John Leach** each led teams to decorate and refurbish benches for the summer. Deliveries of food, wood and other goods were made on a regular basis and a great many soldiers volunteered to help and talk with the patients. Medical facilities at the Banja Luka Central Hospital are scarce and the delivery of Volumetric Infusion Pumps, Pulse Oxometers and a great many boxes containing thousands of syringes, pipework and other medical paraphernalia was effected by the QM and **Sig Trev Reilly**. All the equipment was donated by UK hospitals and the staff at the Banja Luka hospital were very grateful,



The QM Dept with the teacher and kids of Kulijana School (L-R): Sgt Alec Dack, Sig 'Chad' Chadwick, Sandra Arsenic, Cpl 'Alfie' Garnett, LCpl Jules Cope, Sig 'Rodders' Rodriguez, Sig 'Rat' McLean, Cpl 'Taff' Phillips, Gordana Erceg (Teacher), Maj 'Butch' Maycock

The day before departure and hand-over to 1 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn left time for one more final run into town to see the Herceg family of six young kids and one more soon to arrive. **Cpl Alfie Garnett** managed to keep his hands off all the chocolate but we couldn't stop **Sgt Alec Dack** from playing with the cuddly toys. After delivering the clothes, toys and shoes the convoy returned, separately, much to the annoyance of the CO 1 QRI, who wanted the drivers hung, drawn and quartered after being split up by a Serb policeman with a weird sense of humour. Despite **Sig** 'Chad' **Chadwick** bringing the city's traffic to a standstill the two Rovers could not make the journey back together and this called on the very suspect map reading skills of **Cpl Garnett** to find the way back - or was it **Angie**, the interpreter, who showed him the way? A great deal of thanks must go to the many soldiers who helped in the projects both practically and by fundraising. The people of Bad Salzuflen gave most generously to the fund raising and the children of Kulijana will now keep their school as a result.



Inspecting the trench for the water connection for the school. (L-R): Maj Butch Maycock, Gordana and Sinis, WO1 RSM (now Capt) Mark Schofield, Sig Trev Reilly, Cpl Brad Swinton (kneeling), Miss Erceg



Maj 'Butch' Maycock and the kids of Kulijana School, the maths isn't correct but the drawings are good!

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3 DIVISION *WIRE* NOTES FROM BRUDA, ALBANIA AND BEYOND! – ENJOY

by Capt Fennell

ON TOUR WITH 7 SIGNAL REGIMENT
THE INTREPID ADVENTURES OF 3 (UK) DIV HQ & SIG REGT

The first of April saw the second deployment of troops from the Regiment out to Macedonia. Of course, we all hoped (incorrectly) that it was an April Fool's joke. Many hours later and after a near miss with a Tornado we were stood in a huddle at Petrovac waiting for someone to come and tell us what was going on. In fact no-one from the Regiment came out to meet us as they were all eating donuts at the American base (more from **Lt Dave** 'Pass me the fried chicken' **Jackson**'s San to follow) but someone else duly arrived and shortly we were at CP7 at Skopje.

After a day spent testing kit our San (The glorious Fourth, shortly renamed 678) had to deploy to the refugee handling centre at Brazda, just 5kms from the Kosovo border. The deployment was of course at midnight and just to make things complete it was raining. As dawn came we were able to see the camp we would be calling home for the next two weeks. As the days progressed the camp steadily grew in size and at it's peak over 30,000 refugees were living there. Members of the San crew often helped out during the distribution of food, in particular such unlikely Samaritans as **LCpl Andy** 'I do it for the kids' **Bennett, LCpl Stevie** 'The body' **Joyce** and **Sig** 'Really new' **Melia.** As would be expected the service provided by the San was first class and **LCpl Andy** 'Why do I have to be in charge?' **Wright** was soon a familiar figure in the HQ. Everyone else spent their time wisely, playing Goldeneye on the N64 until we completed it just days before we packed up. A quirk about 7 Sigs is that the Squadron we worked for (232 Sqn) has a tradition of playing music during early morning conference calls. Full marks to Radcon's **Cpl Danny** 'Marmite King' **Adams**, playing 'We've got to get out of this place' by the Animals.

As soon as the two week jaunt at Brazda finished it was time for 3 Div to save the day again with an immediate deployment to Albania to help AFOR by providing some immediate communications capability. Leading the composite 3 Div/7 Sigs team was **Capt Alex** 'OC SCS' **Fennell**, accompanied by **Sgt Jim** 'I want action' **Watt, Cpl Mick** 'Liaison Officer' **Preece, Cpl Danny** 'Get me out of CP7' **Adams, LCpl Andy** 'Love Machine' **Bennett** and **Sig Bob** 'I get lots of mail' **Rankin**. Even with the distraction of being filmed by a Polish News crew, for most or the trip, the OC didn't get lost on the ten hour drive and we arrived at our destination to discover that the HQ was not set up and we were the first people there. In true Corps style we grabbed the best rooms, set up a Tacsat link back to Macedonia and hit the bar. More people began to arrive and by the second night nearly half of the team (now calling itself Independent (UK) Radio Troop) deployed to locations round Albania to help deal with a major Refugee problem. As this is written we have moved locations twice (we are now by the beach) and we are still the only Unit here to provide a secure theatre-wide comms system. The Americans are now feeding us and this is miles better than the Italian camp next door, we have just about got our accommodation sorted and we will have met the Secretary of State for Defence by the time this is printed. No doubt the detachments at Kukes (led by **Sgt Watt** and including **LCpl Bennett** and **Sig Rankin**) have already been on TV. In short, the sun is shining and life's a beach man.

4 ARMOURED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (204)

OC — **Maj A. H. Campbell-Black**
RSM — **WO1 D. (RSM) Craig**

OSCAR TROOP
Tp Comd — **2Lt P. McTurk**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt Johnson**

Life in sunny Macedonia is improving slowly. Day by day more people arrive and although catering for such a large headquarters is placing a large strain on the Troop, the staff have shown their appreciation by laying on an impromptu barbecue for the Squadron. Appreciation was also shown after a short CPX during which the Troop went back to their roots and moved the basic armoured complex very quickly, several times simulating one of the contingency plans for the move North. After the Exercise **Sgt** 'Titch' **McGiffen** organised another barbecue with Leprechaun racing and an Irish Band care of the Irish Guards Battle Group. It was an excellent night even though **Sig** 'pot-bellied' **Dinsdale**'s version of Riverdance left a lot to be desired.

May has been particularly busy with loads of visitors, in addition to the high ranking military and political visitors which included the PM, we were visited by children from Petrovac school who spent the day climbing all over the various armoured vehicles and operating a Foden to recover a bag of sweets from a minefield – decidedly more interesting than a helicopter when you are 10. When their transport arrived to take them home they practically refused to leave. Overall a good day enjoyed by the lads almost as much as the children and with coverage on national TV which all helps relationships with the Macedonians.

Brig Baxter, made an informal visit to speak to all the Signallers. He covered future plans for the Corps and took away numerous suggestions about how to improve the lot of a Brigade Signal Squadron. We have been very grateful for the help of the augmentees from 1 and 3 Div as well as some new members to the Squadron from training. We hope the occasional supersonic booms and other strange noises don't worry them too much.

The temperatures are now reaching into the thirties every day and frequent, violent thunderstorms make life interesting for the RRBs. Despite the rising temperatures we are fast approaching the half way point of our tour and everyone is now looking forward to getting the job done.

PAPA TROOP
Tp Comd — **2Lt Dave Hill**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt Norm Finnegan**

On deployment to Macedonia on Op Agricola, Papa Tp was spread to the four winds to do a variety of different tasks, however we still have a few hellos and goodbyes to say. Firstly we would like to say goodbye to **Sgt Tim Hopkins** who leaves us for 7 Sigs, **Cpl Mick Preston** and **LCpl Del McCallion** who both leave the Army this summer and **LCpl** 'SS' **Smale-Saunders** who heads off for CAFTC (G). On a happier note we welcome **Sgt** 'Swany' **Swanston, Cpl Scott Day, LCpl** 'Mac' **McKenna** and **Sigs Fraiser Anderson, Dan Tooke**, 'Dinger' **Bell** and 'Taff' **Evans**.

RADIO TROOP

Another day another dollar or Troop depending on where you are standing. As we're currently in Macedonia this means that the Squadron needs a Troop of rebros so here we are. The Troop is comprised of the Squadron's three armoured rebros and four others, kindly lent to us by 3 Div. So here we go with the largest of all welcomes to, **Cpls Nav Elliott, Phil Oulton** and **Shean Richardson, LCpls Jim Kemp** and **Glen Shepard** and **Sigs Steph Catney, Charlotte Driscoll, Dave Durward, Sam Hall, Steve Keogh, Iain Johnson** and **Matt Scott**. We are also lucky to have a helping hand from 1 Div so we also say hello to **Sigs Simon Burns** and **Jim Freear**. We hope you will all enjoy your time with the Black Rats!

WHAT A START!
by Sig 'Taff' Evans

On arrival in Macedonia on 20 May, we (**Sigs Tooke** and **Bell**) received our first impressions of the Balkans. After a detailed brief at the Theatre Reception Cell we were ushered into the waiting transport and sent on our way to meet the Squadron for the first time.

After becoming acquainted with the local mosquito population during the night, the first task was to 'acquire' some mozzie nets before an introduction to the Squadron and being sent off to our first jobs. Having just arrived from Phase 2 Training in Blandford we quickly found out we were actually called Sprog, NIG and Novice instead of **Bell, Tooke** and **Evans**. We were soon given a slot in the squadron working under the watchful eye of **Cpl Jim Pearsall** who introduced us to the new disease of 'panzer rash' and the Alternate Headquarters vehicles that had just arrived from Germany.

After our initial introduction to 43 vehicle maintenance life picked up pace with a two day FTX and the post exercise turn around in the Macedonian heat, 35 degrees C! I'd better get back to work before I get roped into another pack lift!

REAR PARTY
OC — **SSgt Tony Waite**

The valiant few 'Rear Party', who were left behind to administer the needs of the Headquarters and Signal Squadron's families whilst their spouses are away on duty, have been extremely busy ensuring that the Squadron is in good order when the troops return, hopefully in September. The social scene has picked up to such a degree; **HRH The Duke of York** came to check out the local NAAFI Bar 'Munroes'.

The ladies of the Squadron were in good humour and took the opportunity to voice their concerns over back to back tours and other contentious issues. The GOC, **Maj Gen Watt**, visited the families in 'Munroes', where he held open and frank discussions with the ladies of the Squadron; over commitments being the main talking point, with **Sgt Stu Leadbeater** hovering in the background. The month finished off with a visit to the Squadron Families Centre by the Deputy Garrison Commander for a meet and greet coffee morning. Judging by the visitors it is obvious



HRH The Duke of York visits the Wives Club

that Osnabruck is the place to be as I am sure the Lads and Lasses on operations would agree.

ATTER SCHUETZENFEST 1999 - *by Sig Simon 'Lost and' Found*

The day started with **SSgt Tony Waite, Sgt Stu Leadbeater, Cpl Kev** 'Where's my wrestling pants?' **Swallow, LCpl's Rueben White, Dougie Douglas** and myself. Firstly a little history about Schuetzenfest. A few years ago the Sqn 2IC became a member of the Atter Shooting Club and every year at the crowning of the King and Queen he invited a few members of the Squadron along and the tradition has carried on ever since.

It all started on a Sunday morning when, after a little improvised map reading via mobile phones (we are signals after all) we found ourselves in a field in Atter. There were a few closed stalls and a Warsteiner beer wagon, so that seemed a good place to meet up. We met **Frau Gudrub Mulder** who welcomed us to the Schuetzenfest and proceeded to buy us a round. At 12 o'clock some bearded guy with a great big sword started to shout something in German and people were running around forming into line, we were then ushered into the file. With **Sgt Stu Leadbeater** whispering the translations to the drill commands, we found ourselves setting off to a band. The march itself only lasted around 20 minutes and we found ourselves outside the King and Queen's house. After a bit of ceremony everyone moved into the backyard and started to mingle, there was a very good spread put on (apart from the raw mince on bread – yuk!!) and people walking past with trays of beer to pass out. A second group turned up and we thought 'we are off', but then we noticed the old boys in the corner taking off their jackets, placing them on chairs, a trick they developed from beach towels.

Outside the bearded bloke with the sharp sword started to shout again and everyone once again moved into file, the ceremony started again, then everyone moved back into the garden, all I can say is there weren't enough chairs (remember the old boys, a lesson learnt here). After about another hour the bearded bloke started shouting, we found ourselves marching off around the estate. At every mile a woman turned up with a schnapps bottle and forced us to drink it and definitely boosted morale while we were marching (RSM's take note). On return to the field all the stalls were now open. We paraded in front of a stage area so that the president of the shooting club could make a speech. Speeches over, it was back to drinking German style. About 6pm the duty driver came to pick us up and take us home. I was in bed for about 1830 and that was me until 7am the next morning. Well that's not bad for my second day in Germany, roll on next year.

BACK TO BACK IN THE BALKANS - *by Capt Paul Buck*

I was on Exercise within 48hrs of arriving in the Squadron in March, and the pace of life doesn't seem to have let up at all since then. Everybody in the Squadron has been working exceptionally hard and there isn't much that we don't know about erecting or moving tents. Eventually we have settled into some semblance of routine as we await for the latest news of a move North. Things are becoming easier as more augmentees are assigned to help us out – it almost seems like old days for myself and the 2IC, **Capt Sue Barnard** as so many of 1ADSR have 'volunteered' to join us here. Finally, we wait! Will we or won't we? The one consolation in recent days has been the arrival of 216 Sig Sqn and 5 Airborne Bde. Instead of dashing into Kosovo within hours of arriving and stealing our glory, they now have to sit in the same field as us and watch the view. We now have some friends to sit and wait with. Welcome boys!

1 MECHANIZED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (215)

COMMS TROOP
Tp Comd — **Capt A. J. R. Stead**
SSgt — **SSgt D. Gosney**

The Troop like birthday candles are now firmly in place and burning brightly on the hill tops and in COMMCENS throughout our slice of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The move in was a complex operation of crew swapping, handovers, and route finding. With the 1 Mech personnel in place the summer refurbishment started and has not stopped with more inspections than weeks in the tour. When our predecessors departed they left the snow behind leaving Sjertokosic and Vitarog inaccessible until June. The Resup Team has been on the go since day one with routine re-supply and the odd bizarre request. The altitude has obviously effected some more than others, **LCpl Campbell** and **LCpl Appleby** to name a few. The COMMCENs in the foreign camps are having some interesting experiences especially with the food, mixed showers and the inevitable language barrier. COMMCEN Ljubja speak more Czech than English now and entertain themselves at night with guess the meat for dinner. **Cpl** 'Gaz' **Williams** and **LCpl** 'Wills' **Williams** have persuaded **Sig** 'Penfold' **Andrews** to join the brotherhood and he is changing his name over R&R. Congratulations to **LCpl** 'How many minors?' **Miners** on the birth of his son, **Patrick**. With a shortened tour everyone is staying on the same site for the duration so the great escape is R&R. Those that get a couple of days in Banja Luka Metal Factory, see how much fun it is and realise why they are better off out of the way.

MOBILE TROOP
by LCpl Lawrence 'Loz' Clegg
Tp Comd — **Lt P. R. D. Muir**
SSgt — **SSgt P. Storey**

On 15 March, Sabre Troop reformed as Mobile Troop and with the rest of the Squadron deployed to the Balkans on Op Palatine. The movement from Split to Banja Luka was an eye opener for those driving for the first time in theatre, **Sig Sean** 'Cheesy' **Knight** managed to use more than just the road on the journey. During our short time in theatre the Troop have been tasked with many details and two Exercises. Two of the Troop require map reading courses when we get back to Tidworth. **Lt Frank** 'Magellan' **Muir** who took a bearing whilst stood on top of an AFV436 and got two completely different readings and **LCpl Tim** 'Pathfinder' **Cooper** who was pleased to return back to Banja Luka after a day driving the CO around Zagreb City Centre. We also have two new SFOR radio DJs, **Cpl Aidan** 'Smashie' **Williams** and **Cpl Austin** 'Nicey' **Gambles,** who are helping Media Ops blast the air waves with their renditions of Aqua and the Spice Girls. Keep up the good work fellas.

The Troop would like to welcome **Cpl Phil** 'Pip' **Crowther** from 20 Armd Bde, **Cpl Sean** 'The mouse' **Kelly** from 14 Sig Regt, **Cpl Charles** 'Gadget' **Smith** from JCUNI and finally **LCpl Scott** 'Slimboy' **Devenay** from 7 Armd Bde. Congratulations to **SSgt Paul** 'Maggott' **Storey** and his wife on the birth of their newly born son and to **Sgt Neil Pollitt** on being promoted on posting to 1ADSR. Finally a special thanks to **Sgt** 'The love doctor' **Pollitt** for writing to various Newspapers in the South of England for pen-pals, I wish we could put some of the photo's in *The Wire*, but we wouldn't want to offend.

HEADQUARTERS TROOP
Tp Comd — **2Lt P. Brunton**
SSgt — **SSgt B. Watson**

After nearly three months in theatre life is calming down enough to take stock of what we have done so far. As **2Lt Pete** 'The slightly built ginger officer' **Brunton** was assured by our predecessors that 'nothing ever happens in Bosnia' the NATO air strikes began. 1(UK) Div were last seen giggling on the bus to Split as it disappeared out of the camp gates. Since then **SSgt Bob Watson** has been attempting to break the NATO free style chain smoking record. The alert state rose steadily with the temperature and the workshop was kept busy deploying FRTs. **Sgt Ian Kingsbury** did his bit for local relations by taking a wrong turn and driving through a riot. After 4 FRTs, 2 Engineer taskings and a helquest **Sgt Arun** discovered that the lack of SCR coverage in Razrvje was due to 3 (UK) Div removing the repeater a year ago. **Sgt** 'Scott' **Margison** continues to challenge the Child Support Agency's monopoly by writing to a vast collection of middle aged single mothers with 'bubbly personalities'.

The shift workers continue to develop huge eyes and pallid skin from spending too much time in Div HQ. **Cpl** 'Kev' **Tharby** and his RADCON team provide the shop front for the Regiment with the daily conference call, with back room support from **Sgt** 'Bernie' **Steadman** and the SYSCON crew. **Sgt Sean Meadows** maintains his reign of terror in the COMCEN ensuring a constant flow of both signals and coffee whilst

cultivating his yeti-like haircut. The ISM team, under the watchful guidance of **SSgt Steve Owen**, have been building their own empire to the rear of the workshops, as the various organisations in theatre offer anything they have to get their computers fixed. Equally in demand were **Cpl** 'John' **Kelly** and **LCpl** 'Matt' **White**'s Line and Telemech det who haven't had a spare moment in-between installing phone lines and fibre-optic lays throughout the AOR.

SPLIT AO TROOP

Tp Comd — **Capt R. Sellwood**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt McNeill**

The 14 strong Split AO Tp, 'The Dirty Dozen', was formed for the tour from 3 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt and 30 Sig Regt. All have settled in well, gaining modest sun tans and a taste for barbecues. All are finding the workload demanding compared to our normal working environments. The Troop has had the odd chance to get out, flying with 7 Sqn RAF produced a photo opportunity as **LCpl Phill** 'Mr Wobbly Guts' **Browne** lost his last three meals. Congratulations to **Capt Rick Sellwood** on his marriage, **Sig Ed** 'Old School TG' **Brown** on the birth of his daughter, **Franchesca**.



(L-R): Sigs Davies, Potter, Brown, LCpl Browne, Sig Vingoe, LCpls Local and Davies

226 SIGNAL SQUADRON GROUP HEADQUARTERS 4 ARMOURED BRIGADE

OPERATION AGRICOLA

Sqn Comd — **Maj Rob Meinertzhagen**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) Al Jenkins**

The Sqn Op finally managed to deploy in late March with the help of the RAF, LUFTWAFFE, Civ Air and a favourable head wind. Like all great military plans, our deployment did not last first contact with the enemy. The enemy in this case being the RLC movers. This resulted in vehicles deploying in the wrong order and half of the Squadron being flown to Greece. On arrival at Thessaloniki the move to join the rest of the Squadron Group can only be described as the 'convoy from hell' as we charged through Greece at break-neck speed in the company of the Greek Civil Police, Greek Military Police and two DROPS wagons carrying ammo, the briefing given, 'Stay close, go as fast as you can and don't stop for anything.' However, we arrived unscathed and following the normal Gateaux and posterior social event, all elements of the Squadron are now deployed, with dets in the British, French, Italian and German AOR.

Notable events so far have included **Sgt Andy** 'McNab' **Davies** deploying his dets to the top of a mountain and not being able to get down without the RE building a track, **SSgt (SQMS) Glen** 'What do you want that for' **Kitchen** and his blossoming romance with the BOWO, **Sgt Jez Ward's** det learning the difference between Alpha, Bravo and Zulu time and **LCpl Davie Kerr** getting a brick to the back of the head while driving - the locals are so friendly!

HEADQUARTERS 4 ARMOURED BRIGADE

by SSgt Mark Wilson

Personnel: Ops: **WO2 (Yeoman of Signals) Dick Rutherford**
Int: **SSgt Nobby** 'Full Mooney Looney' **Clark**
SSgt Al 'Joe Sociable' **Grundy**
SSgt Mark 'Smut King' **Wilson**
Tech support: **Cpl Paddy** 'Duty Driver' **Garvey**
Comms det: **LCpl Davie** 'Wan' **Kerr**
Sig Richie 'Smokin tabs an' drinkin beer' **Cranswick**
Sig Graham 'Junior' **Ludditt**

The Squadron has several personnel employed within HQ 4 Armd Bde, which is in a field at a secret location in Macedonia. Only known to 12000 NATO troops, the population of Macedonia, the entire British press corps and a chap called **Bernard**. Although, its location still eludes the SQMS. Within Headquarters, the Squadron Cell is housed under canvas donated by Billy Smart which contains all the G2 assets (all those Int types). This is connected to the Headquarters elements, canvas by Chipperfields, where all the important things happen. The Cell responsibilities include liaising with KFOR, the BDE and various foreign Liaison Officers on the deployment of our assets and replying to as many pen pals as the postal system will allow. In our short time here we have managed to move four times, always at least six inches to the left, by the end of the tour we should be on the Kosovo border.



HQ 4 Armd Bde Cell
Back Row (L-R): LCpl Dave Kerr, Sig Richie Cranswick, Cpl 'Paddy' Garvey
Front Row (L-R): SSgt 'Nobby' Clark, SSgt Al Grundy, WO2 (YofS) Dick Rutherford, SSgt Mark Wilson

POSTINGS IN AND OUT

Posting in: none, but anyone is welcome. Postings out: we would all like to wish **Sig** 'Junior' **Ludditt** all the best on his posting to the Admin Support Element, after cutting his teeth on his first operational tour at this location. We must also mention the earlier departure of the OC, **WOI Thirsk** and **WO2** 'Squirrel' **Jordan**, who after a few days of comfort here, decided it was best to 'rough it' at ARRC, oh, those slippers really hurt!

On the sporting front a start has been made on the silverware collection. **LCpl Kerr,** organised a Squadron team to play in the Brigade five-a-side football tournament, he was unable to witness their magnificent victory, as he was spammed for pan bash moments before kick off.

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280 (UNITED KINGDOM) SIGNAL SQUADRON (LANDCENT)

Sqn Comd — **Maj Hutchinson**
RSM — **WO1 (RSM) McKenna**

Life continues apace in the Squadron. Our commitment to Bosnia has increased once more – the irony that we held our Bosnia End of Mission Parade last November has not been lost on many. With the exception of one individual, we have not as yet been sucked into the commitments of Albania/Macedonia, although there have been rumblings of deployments from our NATO lords and masters.

ALPHA TROOP

It's been all change for Alpha Tp recently with the OC, **Lt** 'Queeny' **Todd** being replaced by new arrival **2Lt Higgs**, who we would like to welcome and wish all the best. The Troop has also managed to lose **SSgt Tony Barker** to the Training Wing, he'll be greatly missed for all the work he has done for the Troop over the last two years. **SSgt Roberts** has just arrived at 280 and taken over the Troop, we would also like to welcome him and hope that he settles in quickly.

Inter-Troop Athletics took place at the end of April, with winning performances from **Sgt** 'Trev' **McSween** and **LCpl** 'Jez' **Greenlee**, giving us second place on the day and keeping the Troop on top of the Commanders Cup. The majority of the Troop have been involved in Ex Combined Endeavour 99 during May, which was held down at Lager Aulenbach, near Baumholder. The remainder have stayed on camp preparing the Troop's fleet of vehicles for their annual TUV inspection.

Congratulations to **Sig Thompson** for passing his PTI course and becoming the latest 'gym queen' in the Squadron. Congratulations also to **Cpl Steve Slaughter** on getting married at the end of May, the Troop would like to wish them all the best for the future.

EXERCISE COMBINED ENDEAVOUR 99

by LCpl Neil Wright

Members of 280 (UK) Sig Sqn have recently returned from Ex Combined Endeavour 99, held at Lager Aulenbach between 6-20 May. Combined Endeavour is a CIS interoperability workshop, under the United States European Command (USEUCOM) Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme. The aim of the workshop is to identify and document Communication Information Systems interoperability between NATO and PfP nations from Europe and Asia. The objective is to gain a greater understanding of the equipment used by these nations in order to allow the future deployment of a joint or coalition headquarters with complete CIS interoperability. 280 (UK) Sig Sqn under LANDCENT deployed two switches and associated personnel to Lager Aulenbach, home of the German 345 Artillery Battalion, where it joined the thirty other nations, each with their own communications equipment.



Cpl Caban, 280 (UK) Signal Squadron, performing the daily ritual of 'FLYING THE FLAG'

Senior members of 280 played a key role in making the Exercise a success, **Capt Dave Stewart** was Chairman of Switch interoperability testing, while **WO2 (FofS) Martin Flather** was OSC for one of the four multi-national divisions. The remainder were split between operating our own switch and working for the Joint Interoperability Test Command (JITC), which involved testing switches, transmission systems, LAN/WAN, VTC and also assessing Network Management procedures. Away from the rigours of the Exercise, several social events were organised, including a day trip to Trier, a river cruise along the Rhine and Bavarian theme evenings which were especially enjoyed by everyone. A 30km speed march also took place that was well supported by 280, with **Cpl Ian Wells** finishing third and **Sig Lesley Ryall** striding into first place in a time of 2hrs 35mins.

BRAVO TROOP

Tp Comd — **Capt Richard Craig**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt Graham Weavers**

The last couple of months have been a busy time for the Troop preparing for the annual TUV inspection. On the sports front, the Troop has also been busy, storming to victory in the Inter Troop Athletics Competition with notable performances from **Cpl** 'Barnie' **Barnett** in the 100m, **Cpl** 'Ronnie' **Radford** in the 400m and the Troop Captain, **Cpl** 'Stu' **Wilkinson** in the long-jump and 4 x 100m. The whole event was decided in the final race, with the Troop winning the 4 x 100m, claiming full points and beating Alpha Tp into second place. Staying on the physical theme, six members of the Troop took part in the Sqn's entry in the Lanyard Trophy, the R. Signals annual 40 mile march. Everyone enjoyed the event, despite some terrible blisters. The team achieved a very good result, finishing 13th place out of 30 teams who entered.

On a sad note, the Troop said a fond farewell to **Sgt** 'Baz' **Eglington**, who has moved to become Families NCO at Colchester, goodbye and good luck in your new job. The Troop is presently busy preparing for deployment to various areas of the FRY, such as Banja Luka, Mostar, Macedonia, Albania and in Greece, where **Sgt Chris Read** is living it up in a hotel, trying to blend in with the local population (**Chris** get those side burns up).

CHARLIE TROOP

Tp Comd — **Lt Emma Rae**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt Heath Baker**

TROOP HELLOS AND GOODBYES

Firstly, welcome to the new members of our Troop: just arrived from Blandford **LCpl** 'I'm writing the notes so I won't give myself a nickname' **Drummond** (advise from Tp Ed – it's always better to choose your own name, or else!); and from 30 Signal Regiment **Cpl Crawford** 'Sammy' **Samuel** and his wife **Lisa.**

Sadly, we have to say goodbye to two older members of the Troop: **Sig** 'Jurgen – I must apologise' **Richens**, who after getting married on 5 June 99 will join 14 Sig Regt in Brawdy. The Troop wish you both the best for the big day and Pad's Ville and we will all miss your laugh! Also, farewell to **Sig** 'Cat Killing' **Wild** who is joining 15 Sig Regt. Their leaving do took us to the 'Lukvllus' Greek restaurant; a night with plenty of beer and ouzo, followed by plenty more beer. The drive home was quite profitable (Wasn't it **Sig** 'Memorabilia' **Wildridge?**) Good luck to you both.

DEPLOYMENT

The past month has seen a change round of personnel out in Bosnia; returning from Mostar **Sig Matt Wild** and **Sig** 'Nobby' **Styles**; and from Banja Luka **Sig Si Richens** and **LCpl** 'Interesting' **Theobald**, along with a brief visit from **Sgt** 'Short Tour' **Dunbar** for the Morrison Cup. And, out to replace them went **LCpl** 'Swampy' **Rickard** and **LCpl** 'Cookie' **Cook** to Mostar, and **Cpl Crawford** 'Sammy' **Samuel** to sunny ol' Banja Luka. Anyway, let's hear what they have to say:

CHARLIE TROOP FORWARD

BANJA LUKA KA KA KA: Detachment personalities are as follows: **Sgt Wayne** 'Lord Lucan' **Dunbar, Cpl Andy** 'Admin Vortex' **Hunter, Cpl Featherstone** 'Year cheers for that!' **Haugh, Cpl Sammie** 'Where's the bar?' **Samuel, Sig Phill** 'Pokeman' **Clarke** and goodbye to **Sig Simon** 'Penpig' **Richens**. Well, summer has started here in sunny Banja Luka and the Det is now getting proficient in the fine art of sunbathing and the delicacies of fobbing off Staff Officers. After many welcome trips to the re-opened CD stand and viewing the local sites, morale remains high. Of course, this has nothing to do with the fact the Det is going home in about 20 days!

Life, as always, remains extremely busy; and the amount of graft that the Det members are putting in due to computer illiterate 'customers' is on an all-time-high. The following crew (yep, our replacements from B Tp!) can look forward to installing the new exciting system which we are sure will give the SOs something to chew on in the not-so-distant future. The famous 'Two Can Rule' is still strictly enforced in this location, but there was some entertainment recently – a local band, 'Balkans Express', provided much needed musical distraction in the Tent, oops, I mean Bar, no Tent..... Well, life goes on as slowly/quickly as one can take it and we are all looking forward to returning home in the disguise of bronze gods!

MOSTAR: In April the Troop's commitment to Operation Joint Forge doubled with the re-introduction of the Mostar Det. The HO/TO was swift and sure - not surprising considering it was the team we trained and handed over to 6 months ago!! The Operations and Maintenance team in MND (SE) currently consists of the following personalities: **Sgt** 'Baby Oil' **Rigby, Cpl** 'Gimp Trek' **Simmonds, LCpl** 'Milk Bottle' **Rickard, LCpl** 'Chicken Legs' **Cook** and **Sig** 'There goes the Teddy – again' **Anderson.** Recently relieved and sent homeward were **Sig** 'Not so' **Wild** and **Sig** 'Nobby' **Styles** after completing a mere fleeting visit to theatre! And further changes will occur when **Sgt Rigby** gets his new posting to 3 'Civ' Div in July.

Although the week days seem long with all this hot weather, the weekend soon comes around and we enjoy a barbecue with our American and German friends. Unfortunately, once the barbecue is lit the British weather turns up without invite. The team also enjoys the weekly trip to Sarajevo on the Admin run and this is also a chance for decent food. Who started the rumour the French are good chefs? Despite being in Bosnia with the dangers of Ops, the Det still takes part in regular activities such as wholesome running and training in the French and German gyms. However, the team are perplexed as to how **LCpl Cook** achieves unaided movement with those legs! Anyway, enough of legs (and the lack of them) and onto arms: all members have to perform 50 press ups when coming on shift – although **Cpl** 'Hercules' **Simmonds** breaks his down to manageable five rep packets. Unfortunately, the almighty Charlie Tp will be handing the Det over to Bravo Tp in a few weeks time – let's hope the standards and comms don't drop TOO much – eh lads!

INTER TROOP ATHLETICS

28 April and who could have picked a hotter day for the Inter Troop Athletics. By the end of the day the Squadron was a Squadron of sunburned faces (and heads for the balding members) and aching bodies. With six 'Troops'/Departments entering in the event it was a close contest from the start to the finish. Unfortunately Charlie Tp did not do as well as we should have done (actually achieving sixth place) but with only five people in the Troop who were able to enter (the rigours of being deployed) we put up a good fight. **Sig** 'Sunny' **Lowe** was our Troop champion, entering in almost every event there was to enter. **Sig** 'Heed' **MacDonald**, our muscle man, did a great job in all our throwing events: Hammer, Javelin, Shot Put etc. **LCpl** 'Kurt' **Molden** entered all of the Jumping events (failing miserably) and a few running events, but watched everyone pass the finish line before him. **Sgt** 'Christoff' **Porter** did a great job in all of his events, especially the final dash to the finish line in the 4 x 400m relay, which was a close event. Finally, **Lt** 'Emma' **Rae** did her bit too. As the day came to an end and the trophies were all handed out, it was back to the barracks for a Squadron barbecue where everyone got stuffed, sociably happy and listened to a few tunes from the Squadron band 'The Happy Flowers'.

AND FINALLY

A special goodbye to one of the happiest members of our Troop, **LCpl Kurt Molden** – 'lover of women, leader of men' (his chosen words) who took everything with a smile, never bothering to moan when things got him down. Good luck at 1 (UK) Div.

BERLIN HALF MARATHON 26 – 29 MARCH 1999

The Squadron took a team comprising of **Capt Richard Craig, WO1 (RSM) Mick McKenna, SSgt Tony Barker** and his wife **Clare, Sgt Ned Kelly, Cpl Danny Bailes** (now at Blandford on his T1) **Cpl Kev Butler, Cpl Matt Baber, LCpl Kurt Molden, LCpl Geoff Johnson, Sig Ross Phillips, Sig** 'Scouse' **Brennan, Sig** 'Tommo' **Thompson, Sig** 'Do you wanna fight?' **Wildridge** and **Pte Mick Lamb** (on loan from AGC SPS). We arrived on the Friday at around 1700hrs and went straight out sightseeing. The Euro Centre sounded like a good place to go, so we found the nearest Irish Bar. Later on a small group, comprising of **Cpl Matt Baber, Sig** 'Tommo' **Thompson, Sig Steve Wildridge** and **Pte Mick Lamb**, decided to do some sightseeing of their own.

SUNDAY – THE RACE

We were all up early, as we had to commute across the city for a race start of 1000hrs. Not too hot for the beginning of the race, and everybody felt good (apparently). First over the line from 200 was **Sgt Ned Kelly**, closely followed by **Cpl Matt Baber** and **SSgt Tony Barker**. Potential PTI **Sig** 'Tommo' **Thompson** came in with a time of 2hrs 8mins and very bad food poisoning. After the race we went back to get changed. From there it was all out for an Italian meal, everybody that was apart from **Sig** 'Tommo' **Thompson** who still complained from a dodgy stomach. A big thanks to **WO1 (RSM) Mick McKenna** for organising the event, which was a great success.



The Participants before the race
Back Row (L-R): Sig 'Tommo' Thompson, Cpl Matt Barber, Sig Steve Wildridge, Cpl Danny Bailes, Capt Richard Craig, SSgt Tony Barker, Mrs Clare Barker, Cpl Kev Butler, LCpl Kurt Molden, Pte Mick Lamb
Front Row (L-R): WO1 (RSM) Mick McKenna, LCpl Geoff Johnson, Sig Ross Phillips, Sig 'Scouser' Brennan. Sgt 'Ned' Kelly

MECHANICAL TRANSPORT TROOP

MTO **Capt Kev Jones**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Rick Nolan**

MT Tp would like to say a few farewells, to **LCpl**, now **Cpl Dave Lewis**, off to sunny 14 Sig Regt, **Sig** 'Taff' **Brown** to 3 Inf Bde Sig Sqn, keep your head down mate, and to **Sig Charlie Lister** off to 15 Sig Regt slipper city. Hello's go out to **LCpls Steve Gator, Mack McGennity, Sig's Rick Sinclair** and **Scott Johnson**. Best wishes to everyone. Congratulations go out to **SSgt Rick Nolan** and **Janine** on the birth of their baby daughter **Leah**. Now that the football season has finally finished, and the MTO and **Cpl Keith Betts** are now on speaking terms, the final score on the crate chart is 12 crates to nil. *(The boss being a Man United fan and Cpl Betts an Arsenal fan).* Never mind, Chelsea will be top next season up the blues. Well done to all the lads in the Troop for coming first in the Inter-Troop Orienteering Competition, who says we can only read road maps. The Troop has a very busy two months with TUV, the German inspection of all vehicles within the Squadron, and setting up for the Morrison Cup, we are now looking forward to our summer leave.

NEWS FROM NORTHERN IRELAND

XV HEADQUARTERS NORTHERN IRELAND & 15 SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO **Lt G. J. T. Rafferty**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) A. Balsdon**

The last couple of months have seen the work rate increase within the Province with the annual panic to complete visits and such prior to the marching season. Many projects are now nearing completion but yet more seem to suffer delays. Amidst all the chaos the Regiment has just won the Birtwistle Pennant for Sporting Achievement which just shows that it pays to enter all sporting events.

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj (QM) J. Mullender**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) S. Russell**

IVCP COURSE 5-7 MAY 1999

DIRECTING STAFF
OIC **SSgt** 'Dobbo' **Dobbins**
WO2 (SSM) Steve Russell
Sgt 'Merms' **Carter**
Cpl 'Ash' **Ingham**
Cpl Andy Temple RLC

HQ Sqn conducted an Illegal Vehicle Checkpoint Drills (IVCP) course 5-7 May 99 in Thiepval Barracks and at Ballykinler Training Centre. The aim of the course was to revise members of the Regiment on IVCP Drills and pistol fire and manoeuvre, and to promote confidence in working in pairs with live ammunition. Students were drawn from 225 Sig Sqn, 233 Sig Sqn and 39 Bde Sig Sqn, all of which undertook pistol weapon handling tests, competence shoots, APWT (NI) and the NI Advanced shoot prior to the live firing exercise. **Cpl** 'Ash' **Ingham** then undertook to blow their minds with an afternoon of Tactical driving theory and a map reading from vehicles exercise.

Day Two saw the course discovering the delights of IVCP theory, with the move to Ballykinler for practical demonstrations and practice. **WO2 (SSM) Russell** and **Sgt Carter** then demonstrated practical car drills while the students looked on and pondered on their ability to suppress the enemy with fire power. Suffice to say we will not be using 9mm BFA's again! With enemy deployed on the training area, it was now the turn of the students to find out just how difficult it really is to drive, react, manoeuvre, fire and extract. Congratulations go out to **LCpl Hamilton** of 233 for his outstanding driving during the course and **Sgt** 'Ginge' **Davey** of 225 who discovered that his car had five gears, all of which worked in reverse! During the afternoon, confidence and drills improved dramatically, and joined by **Cpl Temple** and the MTO, **Capt Howell-Walmsley,** scenarios were increased to include the most varied of 'actions - on', which in one instance, left **LCpl Wade** of 39 Bde Sig Sqn hanging upside down from his seat belt.

Day Three saw students taking part in the live firing battle exercise conducted by **WO2 (SSM) Russell.** This was a great success, both students and DS agreed that more live firing should be incorporated into the next course. Our thanks to the enemy that assisted us on the day, and the students, who's hard work and commitment, led to a successful conclusion to what was a very important and worthwhile course.



LCpl Marshall 225 Sig Sqn 'Extract Left'

233 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj R. P. Giles**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Day**

Another busy month goes by in the Province with new systems coming on line and going live with the Squadron heading up most of the projects installation and training. Preparations for the Marching Season go on with evaluation of training and testing of all equipment's and personnel in case we need to deploy to assist the Troops on the ground. **Capt Jules Walster** tied the knot with **Maj Ewan McColl**, Army Dental Corps on 4 May 99. **Capt McColl** we wish you and **Ewan** the best for your future together. There have been too many new arrivals and departures to mention but **Maj Giles** thanks all those departing for their hard work and loyalty during their time with the Squadron and welcomes those who arrive in the Province during an ever changing and challenging time.

TM TROOP

Tp Comd **SSgt (FofS)**'Taff' **Maul**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Shaun Cook**

Once again we start with welcomes, goodbye's and congratulations to several members of the Troop. Welcome to **Sgt Kev Wood, LCpl**'s **Rachel Jacklin** and **Chris Renshaw** on arrival to the Province we all hope that you have a safe tour. Congratulations go to **Sgt**'s **Billy Belshaw, Lee Norman, Cpl**'s **Chris Holt** and **Amanda Verrall** on promotion, and a well done and pat on the back to **Sgt**'s 'Selly' **Selkirk, Paul Cleet** and their wives **Jackie** and **Suze** on producing two new members of the Corps. (One way of reducing the manning problems in the Corps!)

With the major changes going on within the Province this is a very busy period for the Troop this in turn has led to **SSgt** 'Bod' **McDonald** losing more than his fair share of hair, juggling ongoing projects with the normal fast balls and then trying to fit in Rugby, Athletics and leave, well this has taken its toll on the poor lad. **Sgt** 'De De' **Watts** is doing his best to prepare for life with child by trying to tunnel his way out of camp (last seen heading west) and taking with him our entire H&S kit (white helmet). Perhaps this is also to do with the personnel he has to work with as you can see many in his section have their own cross to bear and **Sig Steve Allan** has a bigger one than most as the photograph bears testimony.

Despite the normal work commitments the Troop has also organised a very successful Charity Car Boot sale in aid of the Station Riding for the Disabled Branch of the saddle club (no way was the sale organised so that **SSgt Cook** could see off his dodgy gear!). A very successful day was had mainly due to **Sgt Micky** 'I can sell sand to Arabs' **Mann** and his committee of **LCpls Paul Harris, Rachel Jacklin Sigs Daz Mugford** and **Kev Orr**. A total of 250 English Pounds was raised, and those who had stalls also managed to off-load some tat to unsuspecting members of the public.



Sig Steve Allan doing his impression of 'Dangerous Brian'



Sig Orr – down a hole

The inter Unit Athletics competition held on 29th of April was held during a day of bright sunshine (yep the Met Lads get it wrong at times) and all our aspiring Seb Coe's were wheeled out. There were some notable performances but I will not steal the thunder of the person who will write the notes for the Squadron, suffice to say WHERE WERE YOU 225?

COMMCEN TROOP - HORSE RACING EVENING

In order to boost inter troop relations the Squadron holds a function/ competition night every month. **Staff** 'Jacko' **Jackson** asked for volunteers to organise the event and **Cpl** 'Taff' **Davies** (having had some small experience in the past) volunteered. The time was mid February and Taff thought that there was plenty of time to sort out the function and decided to go for a 'Horse Racing' night. The Squadron 2IC, **Capt Jules McColl (Nee Walster)** had set the date for Thursday 22 April and it was now mid March. Time was slowly running out for Taff! Finally, with two days to go, **Cpl Davies** is still waiting for the other Troops to give their numbers for who is attending and how much food they require. With some help from **Sgt Phil** 'The Horse Man' **Robson** the finer details of the event were soon completed.

On the night of the big event, it seemed as if there was going to be a pretty poor turnout but soon all of the Seniors came flooding in from a mess meeting and there were soon fifty or so members of the Squadron in attendance. Each race started off with the horses being sold to the prospective owners. Once all of the horses had been sold, people were allowed to place their bets and the starting prices were then worked out (we didn't want to lose any money!!) The event soon turned into an Inter Troop competition, with a Trophy to be won (and a more important crate of lager) by the Troop that owned the most winners. It was an eventual draw between SHQ and India Troop. **Capt McColl** generously decided that India Troop could take the Trophy as SHQ had won most of the cash. The prize giving finished just before closing time, allowing some celebrations and many people drowning their sorrows over the 'Donkeys' that they had backed.

NORTHERN IRELAND SKILL AT ARMS MEETING (NISAAM) 1999

Over the period 12-16 Apr 99, the Regiment entered a team into the NISAAM competition, held at Ballykinler Training Camp near the Mourne mountains in the south of the Province. The Regiment had to provide a team of ten 'crack shots' to compete in the NISAAM, but unfortunately had a team of ten willing volunteers instead. Starting in early March and leading up to the event, a number of training days were held at Magilligan Ranges and on the Lisburn indoor range under the expert eyes of team coach **Sgt Dave Scanlon**.

The NISAAM started on the evening of the 12th, with a brief in Ballykinler from the Team Captain, **Capt Gareth Oliver.** After encouragement from both the Captain and the Coach to shoot well throughout the week, the remainder of the team then set off to find our beds and 'recce' the limited NAAFI facilities.

The first day of shooting was a practice and zeroing shoot and proved to be a thorough introduction to the different weather patterns that Ballykinler could throw at us. Between the hail, snow, rain, high winds and periods of bright sunshine we practised all of the competition shoots, including FIBUA, Moving Target and Pistol. On the Wednesday, the competition began in earnest. We were competing against 2 RMP, 25 Engr Regt and 21 Log Sp Regt in the Major Units (Iron Sights) category. Within minutes three of the teams had decided that they had to beat a certain other team (the odd one out wore Red Berets). Between each shoot there was ample time for NAAFI breaks (and for **Sig Hannam** to eat yet another grease burger) and luckily we were finished by mid afternoon.

Thursday proved to be a more productive day, with a positive start provided by the emergence of hot water from the taps for the first time. The team had four shoots to complete throughout the day. The best (but non-scoring shoot) was the Clay Pigeon stand where we all tried mostly without success to hit the strange breed of Day-Glo orange birds. The CO **Lt Col Rafferty** and the new RSM, **WO1 Balsdon** visited us in the morning. In the vastly improved weather, subtle remarks from **SSgt Rob Allen** about RHQ issue raincoats and the X-files were almost ignored by the wearers. The final day meant an early start and a two mile march and shoot with a 0730 report time. The finale of the week was the falling plates competition, with the CO, RSM and OC 233 **(Maj Giles)** amongst the spectators. Our hopes were high with potential snipers in the form of **LCpl Wayne Meeds, Sig** 'Simmo' **Simpson** and **Sig Andy Pennock** competing for us. Everyone tried their hardest but unfortunately both our A and B squads were knocked out in the semi-finals. Soon it was time to return to Lisburn. We had achieved a credible third out of the four teams, but, more importantly, everyone had had an enjoyable time and had improved their shooting - which we all admit, was in need of improvement.



Back Row - Sig Simpson, Sig Pennock, LCpl Garry, Sig Hannam, LCpl Carter, LCpl Meeds
Front Row - Sig McFarlane, Cpl Howe, Sgt Scanlon (Coach), Capt Oliver (Team Captain), SSgt Allen, Cpl Ashley

ARMY SEVEN-A-SIDE RUGBY COMPETITION

by WO2 (SSM) Doz Day

The Regimental Rugby team received an invite to the annual Army seven-a-side tournament, sponsored by Primary Management, which was held in Aldershot on 19 May 1999. On a dull and wet Northern Ireland day the ageing but experienced team left to pit our skills and know how against the best in the Army. This included teams from each Division and Germany. The team got off to a flying start with a win against 1 RRW, from Germany, with excellent work from **Capt Guy Bennett, WO1 (SMI) Ian Shaw** and the constant threat of our speed man **Capt Nick Yardley**. We came unstuck against seven Fijian soldiers who made up the team from ITC Catterick who tackled like bulldozers and showed dazzling skills and superb support play to run out winners 24-12, although **Capt Nick Taylor** and **LCpl Chris Renshaw** took the game to them head on. The next game was a decisive win for the team beating 6 Bn REME 33-12 with strong tackling and running from **Capt Nick Massey** and **Cpl George Sutherland**. Both ITC Catterick and 1 RRW had also won two games a piece so this meant it all went down to tries scored with the Regimental team going forward to the Plate Competition. Disappointed but determined we breezed our way to the final with convincing wins over 1 PWO and Troops Hereford leaving us a game in the final, once again, with 6 Bn REME who we had earlier beaten. We went into the final with high expectations but where slightly surprised by the resolve and determination of the REME side. With some strong running and good distribution from **WO2 (SSM) Doz Day** and **Sgt Brian Hands** we got a pattern going and slowly broke down their defence. With good all round team play points began to appear on the board. **WO2 (SSM) Doz Day** scored a solo try from within his 22yd line, throwing two horrendous dummies, that even fooled the crowd, before dotting the ball over the try line completing the 33-7 win over 6 Bn REME and taking the Plate Trophy, not bad considering the average age of the team is 30.

BRITISH ARMY REFEREE OF THE YEAR 1999

by Cpl Steele

Ten years ago **Maj A. Dobson,** the Army FA Secretary, donated a trophy to the Army Football Association, on the understanding that it was to be awarded every year to the referee who has contributed the most to the game of football within the Army – ie: commitment to the game, encouraging junior referees and potential referees etc. Every district - from NI to Cyprus - puts forward one nomination.

When I began refereeing in September 1997, I never thought I would be the Regional nomination for NI, never mind the overall winner of such a prestigious award. My refereeing stemmed from a life-long love of football, and in my two years I have progressed to being a Class 2 Referee (the higher the class of Referee, the higher the standard of games which you can officiate). The Northern Ireland Referees' Committee advised me in March this year that I had been put forward as their nomination for the trophy, but even then I didn't really expect to win - I was up against some pretty experienced competition.

The Dobson Trophy was the last thing on my mind when I was marched in to the CO's office. Yet the unbelievable had happened - I had won! The presentation of the trophy was in Aldershot. I was to referee a match - 3 Div Referees v 4 Div Referees (believe it or not, referees can play dirty from time to time), followed by the chance to watch the Army Challenge Cup Final - 1st Bn Cheshires v 3 Bn REME at Aldershot Military Stadium. That evening, the Referees' Annual Dinner took place at St Omer Bks. It was following a delicious meal that I was presented with the Dobson Trophy.

Picture the scene, if you can, the next day at Heathrow Airport. I'm sure they have had some strange hand luggage, but the box containing my trophy must surely have been the strangest seen that day! Unfortunately, I have to hand the trophy back next year but I will get to keep a replica and to have some wonderful memories of my year 'at the top'.



Cpl Steele receives the Dobson Trophy

LANYARD TROPHY

It all started in January after Christmas leave, with a rather touching phone call from the Troop Commander:

Capt Walster: Hello Sgt Mundy. Did you have a good leave?

Me: Well.....

Capt Walster: Good, good. And..... you're OK are you, health wise? No problems at all?

Me: I.....

Capt Walster: Excellent, excellent. Just checking, you know. Like to make sure my senior NCO's are all right.

Me: But.....

Capt Walster: Not at all. Speak to you later then. Oh.... and... I'll put you down for Lanyard Trophy training shall I?

Me: What?

Capt Walster: Good, good. Knew I could rely on you. Just see if you can jack up a few more female soldiers from the troop. Well done. Carry on.

It was the beginning of four memorable months for the twenty poor, misguided souls who found themselves on the Mourne Mountain Training Programme from Hell, enthusiastically led by **Capt Jules** 'It's just over the next hill' **Walster** for the female team and **Capt Guy** 'I'm just nipping up this mountain, back in a minute' **Benson** for the male team. Did I say training? Anyone who has any experience at all of the Mourne Mountains will realise immediately that I use the term loosely. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that we stumbled blindly along behind our leaders once or twice a week, for six or seven hours, usually in a blizzard or a gale, with aching hearts and feet, desperately trying to remember why we had agreed to take part. It has to be said it was a comprehensive programme. There was no particular type of terrain that we aimed for - as long as it was wet, steep and likely to break your ankle it was deemed suitable, and we were helped along by the cheerful advice of those experienced. members of the team who had done it before. advice like - 'try to jog down the hills, it's easier than walking' - was particularly useful, always assuming of course that the downhill does not consist of huge boulders strewn across the side of a mountain and the soles of your feet do not feel like they have just been treated with one of those hot air paint strippers.

To be fair, though, mountain training is definitely the way to approach this competition and we arrived at Shorncliffe Training Camp in Folkestone on Wednesday 5 May, brimming with enthusiasm and armed with enough zinc oxide tape to mummify the whole Regiment, confident and that we would be able to achieve a respectable result. Even a 0300 hours reveille on Thursday morning to be force-fed greasy eggs and bacon did not dampen the spirits of the teams. At 0530 hours, twenty eight teams, of which four were female, set off from the Kent County show-ground to cover the forty gruelling miles to St Martin's Plain Camp in Folkestone, carrying 40lbs for the male teams and 25lbs for the female teams. The terrain was quite hard on the feet, being mainly tracks and tarmac, and by the 20 mile point most people were already enduring a blister or two under the zinc tape but by 30 miles nobody cared about blisters any more, since knees, hips, shins, ankles and every known muscle in the body had diverted their attention somewhat. By the last checkpoint, at about 37 miles, all that mattered was getting to the finish point. Here I should mention our long-suffering and seriously compassionate admin teams led by **SSgt** 'Jacko' **Jackson** and **Sgt Abbey Hilton.** It is no mean task to deal simultaneously with twenty calorie-crazed team members staggering into the checkpoints screaming wild instructions like - 'Plug my bottle in', 'Where's my Nutri-grain'? and 'I need bananas! Give me bananas!' Without the admin teams not even the mountain training would have been enough for any of us to finish the course. And finish it we did - with the male team achieving fifth place in a time of 10 hours 58 minutes, while the female team came in twelfth overall and first out of the females teams with a time of 11 hours 37 minutes (sadly having to take second prize because they finished with only seven team members instead of the required eight).



A round of thanks and congratulations is in order - first to **Capt Benson** and **Capt Walster** for coaxing, enthusing and deceiving where necessary and, more importantly, for providing the excellent training. Thanks also to the admin teams - **SSgt** 'Jacko' **Jackson, Sig** 'Mac' **Macfarlane, Sgt Abbey Hilton** and **Sig Claire Lydon** for their endless patience and totally convincing sympathy. Finally, well done to the teams themselves: Male team: **Capt Guy Benson, Capt Guy Bennett, Capt Ritchie Newhouse, SSgt Jim Duncan, SSgt** 'Q' **Rose, Cpl** 'Hutch' **Hutchinson, Cpl Nichols, Cpl Wardle, Sig** 'Huggy' **Huggett, Sig** 'Rodders' **Rodwell.** Female Team: **Capt Jules Walster, Capt Liz Dallyn, Sgt Steph Geeson, Sgt Daisy Mundy, Cpl** 'Sunny' **Hardy, LCpl Glo Fagan, Sig Pippa Henderson, Sig Linda Shields, Sig Jenny Read, Sig Tracey Walker.** Extra congratulations go to **Capt Walster** for remaining reasonably calm throughout, despite **Sig** 'Are we there yet?' **Walker,** and for risking serious blisters two weeks before her wedding.

EXERCISE CRYSTAL FINN 26 MARCH - 11 APRIL 1999

by Lt N. Baker

Ex Crystal Finn was a 15 Sig Regt adventure training skiing trip organised by **Lt Nat Baker** to the French Alps resort of Morzine. The elite squad who volunteered to partake in this trip consisted of nine 225 Sig Sqn personnel, these being **Capt Robin Carpenter, SSgt Fiona Fielder, Sgt Michelle Watkins, Cpl Roy Venables, Cpl Tony Cecil, Cpl Jay Aldred, LCpl Billy Kirkwood** and **LCpl Andy Liddle.** After a bit of last minute sorting out, ie: **Cpl Cecil** only joining the trip the day before, we were ready for the off and so we set out from the Squadron lines on Friday 26 March in a reliable 15-seater MT minibus with no roof rack. We were about to ensure an overnight trip from hell with conditions you would expect on a two week exercise rather than a 10 hour journey down the motorway to Gatwick. With two officers in the front seat armed with a map our only hope was that we could navigate by fast food joints from the 'cheap seats' in the back. Apparently it was the most 'cost effective' way to travel and we are all for saving the Army a few quid.

When we arrived at Gatwick things went smoothly with everyone getting through check-in eager to jump on the plane to Geneva. After touching down in Geneva we were soon to realise that being first on the plane does not mean that you are going to get your bags first. As the terminal was emptying and the cleaners were doing their rounds they decided to unload our baggage. Still, unperturbed we headed out to the coach only to be given the wrong number and direction by the tour rep so we took 15 minutes to find it, (sounding more and more like an army exercise all the time). Eventually we were heading off through the beautiful French countryside towards Morzine and after only an hour and a half we were pulling into the resort to see snow, snow and more snow. The best snow they had had in the resort for 20 years. Lucky us! Better was to come though, and after our welcome meeting with the rep in the Bowling Bar we sampled some of the local delights. The sensible ones in the group went for a meal about 9pm but three stalwarts (names withheld) stayed until the bitter end before finding the most expensive eating establishment in France. Three pizza and chip family meals and £105 later, need I say more.

Next day once we had sorted out our skiing gear it was a quick ride up in the 'telecabin' onto the nearest mountain to assess our skiing standard, (or lack or it!). There were plenty of green faces and snowplough was the style of the day for many of the group, however **Cpl Venables** won the trophy for the 'Plough King' a record which he held for many, many days to follow. **Cpl Cecil** was the only person on the slopes who managed to snowplough with 205cm racing skis. After surviving day one with barely any style, we spent most of the night in the apartment talking of imaginary parallel turns and jumps that we thought we had made.

Day two was much of the same, **LCpl Kirkwood** and **Cpl Aldred** spent the mornings at ski school while the rest of us finely tuned our skills. Whilst negotiating a particularly tricky blue run the 'Plough King' (With the stopping circle of the QE2) somehow managed to find the only man in France who was walking his dog around the piste. He couldn't turn in time, and managed to pioneer the new technique of the wipe out stop and the remainder of the group were so jealous that we tried to out-bid him for the, 'most spectacular fall' competition for the rest of the Exercise.

The rest of the week was spent enjoying the glorious sunshine and fantastic skiing, in fact the ski area was so big that we barely skied the same run twice, the runs varied from long easy blues and greens to some challenging reds and suicidal black mogul fields. One run in particular which straddled the border between France and Switzerland was called the 'Wall of Death' for the simple reason that 13 people had died on it the season before, we enjoyed doing this run from the safety of the chairlift. The skiing was fantastic, as was the resort. On the Wednesday night we were invited to a Savoyarde night at a local eatery, free wine and plenty of meat were the order of the night. Saturday night was a different occasion when we all trooped down to the sports centre to watch the Morzine Penguins take on the Brussels Ice Cubes at ice hockey, Morzine lost but the highlight of the night was when we bumped into 'Serge' in a local club. Serge being the Penguins shotstopper who didn't manage to stop many shots that night but we still treated him as a hero.

Week two was spent mainly in the mountain resort of Avoriaz, only a cable car ride away from Morzine and we were in sight of the Swiss border. It made it a more interesting week being able to 'do' lunch in Switzerland one day and then stay in France the next day. **Cpl Kirkwood** and **Cpl Aldred** stayed on at ski kindergarten for another week and managed to come away with some bronze and silver stars and ribbons. The rest of us turned into Franz Klammers and skied around the piste 'tut tutting' at all the novice skiers. Unfortunately, like all good things the trip had to come to an end, so on Sat 11 April we embarked on our 24 hour journey back to sunny Northern Ireland. Once again an uneventful flight back to Gatwick after stocking up on some well earned duty frees and a short wait (2 hours) for the MT transport before once again climbing into a foetal position for the 10 hours drive back up the motorway, the only highlight being a stop off in Carlisle for an Indian meal, oh to be back to English food! Then followed a comfy night's sleep in the back of the minibus before getting the first ferry back in the morning.

The Exercise was a resounding success as everyone's skiing had improved dramatically in preparation for the next Corps Championships. We returned back to Lisburn with great suntans and a host of PXR points for future Expeditions. The most important of which was never stop for a curry on the way home if you still have four hours left in a very cramped minibus!

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please advise the Subscriptions Clerk,
at RHQ, IN WRITING, of any change of address.
This information should not be telephoned.

40 (ULSTER) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO **Lt Col A. P. R. Roberts MBE**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) C. G. McGinley**

Congratulations to **Sgt Herridge** on her recent promotion into the Sergeants' Mess and to **WO2 Linda Whitley** on her recent promotion to WO2 to be the new SSM Support Squadron.

WEDDING

Congratulations go to **Cpl Campbell** on the occasion of his wedding. Good luck and best wishes.

INVESTING IN PEOPLE

The Regiment was assessed as a unit of 107 (Ulster) Brigade on 23 May. So far all looks good, and our thanks go to all personnel who were involved in the interview process.

66 (CITY OF BELFAST) SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj R. G. Butler**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Irvine**

SQUADRON DINNER NIGHT

The annual Squadron Formal this year took place on Friday 30 April and the occasion was used to show our appreciation and make farewell presentations to **Sgt Maurice Moates** and **LCpl Lesley Harbinson**. **Sgt Moates** served with the Squadron for 19 years and **LCpl Harbinson** for 13 years during this time they made many friends in the Squadron and it was sad to see them go but we wish them both well for the future.

EXERCISE GLOBAL WARRIOR I

It was off to Ballykinlar for Ex Global Warrior 1, which took place during 14-16 May. With demonstrations on Site Recce and Clearance, EAN Deployment, NBC Recce, Duties of a Sentry and Clansman Radio, it was a busy time with a lot to take in but the hard work was still to come. Putting these lessons into practise during an enemy attack was where **Capt Robin** 'Rambo' **Finlay** and **SSgt Tommy** 'Trigger Finger' **Johnston** showed their true natures firing at anyone who stood in their way. For **Capt Finlay** this included the SVWO **WO1 Barry** 'Running Shoes' **Skinner**, who would be hard to miss anyway, and for **SSgt Johnston** it included two of his own QRF! The Exercise was enjoyed by everyone who attended and indeed was most beneficial to the Regiment in preparation for Annual Camp, which is almost upon us.

69 (NORTH IRISH HORSE) SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj W. B. Houston**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) McKnight**

PRE CAMP TRAINING

Over the weekend 16-18 April 1999 the Squadron took part in 11 Sig Bde's Ex Summer Eagle. The Squadron deployed to the Ballykinlar area and established CNR and RATT nets with a RATT link to 11 Bde at Donnington via 94(BY) Sig Sqn. 14-16 May again found us in Ballykinlar with 5 FFR RATT dets, participating in the regimental Ex Global Warrior conducting more intensive tactical training in preparation for annual camp.

COMBINED CAVALRY

The pre-camp build up was interspersed with periods of ceremony and celebration when on the 8-9 May **Pipe Maj Taylor** accompanied members of the Squadron along with members of D Sqn NIH and the Old Comrades Association to London to take part in the NIH OCA England Branch dinner. They paraded in Hyde Park at the Combined Cavalry 'Old Comrades' parade and memorial service. This year the salute was taken by **HRH The Prince of Wales**.

HITLER LINE PARADE

The busiest weekend in the Squadron's social calendar is the 21-23 May when the annual Battle of the Hitler Line Parade is held. The parade commemorates the occasion the North Irish Horse led the Canadians into battle in Italy in 1944. It was celebrated on Friday at the Officer's dinner night and on Saturday at the Regimental Association dinner and on Sunday the Guidon of the North Irish Horse was paraded through the ranks of the Squadron and old comrades by members of D Sqn NIH from Belfast.

Members of the Squadron also found time to participate in Ex Executive Stretch in Kirkcudbright, Scotland with 107(U) Bde turning young executives into soldiers to give them a brief insight into what their employees do at the weekends.

EXERCISE PIED PIPER

Ex Pied Piper, which took place over the 7-9 May, is a military skills competition involving all the sub-units of 107 (U) Bde. This year 40 Signal Regiment (V) entered two teams, one from 66 Sqn led by **Lt David Wilson** and one from 69 Sqn led by **2Lt Deirdre Caldwell.**

After much preparation and training the 69 Sqn team set off for a challenging weekend. During the first day we completed six stands. We were a bit taken aback at the first stand, a simulated medical emergency. A screaming woman appeared and insisted on throwing her baby at us however we quickly regained control of the situation and treated all the casualties. **SSgt Cammack** found a new use for a stretcher discovering that it could double up as a splint. The NBC stand went very well with the team conducting a chemical recce and survey. Then we had a real team effort in the chamber when we carried out decontamination drills. Competition rules insist on the inclusion of a less experienced team member and as they had never been through the chamber before it was something similar to 'The Generation Game'. Other stands on day one included command tasks, military knowledge, weapon handling and map reading.

On the Saturday evening the exercise became a little more demanding. At dusk groups of four set off from the peak of Binevenagh on a night navigation course. The terrain was heavy underfoot and teams were ready for a night's sleep when they finished.

This left only one part of the competition left to go, the march and shoot. Teams were paired to run against each other in the four mile march. We could hardly believe it when one of the leading teams in the competition mistimed their arrival and were fifteen minutes late for their run. The team were in high spirits throughout this event and they really worked together. I knew that the team had given their best when they vomited in unison once they crossed the finish line. After the Roupell shoot there was long wait while the organisers worked out the final results. We achieved two second places for the NBC and March and Shoot finishing seventh overall.

CORPS ORIENTEERING CHAMPIONSHIPS 28-30 MAY

Sgt Daz Welch thought that orienteering required a bit of a boost within the Regiment. So what better way to start than by entering teams in the Royal Signals Orienteering Championships. The first challenge was to get the team over the water and to 14 Sig Regt by 2000hrs on the Friday to register. We only just missed it by five hours - 0115hrs Saturday. Day 1 and it's the Team Individual event getting off to a good start. Four members of the Regiment at the start all about to go on a different course starting at the same time and, YES! We are on time. Things are looking up. **Cpl Heather Moore** decides when having been just given her map that this is a good time to ask **Daz**, 'Where are we?' We had some good points to discuss over a well-earned refreshing drink at the end of Day 1. One of them being that we were already acclimatised to the South Wales weather and another was **Sig Ian** 'I talk in my sleep' **McKeown** proving that we don't always require a compass. Day 2 and we all feel so much better after that early night. However, no rain today, and wet trainers from Day 1 are not going to put us off. **Sgt Paul** 'It's here somewhere' **Brannon** decided to take a back seat on this one and the other lads have a go. What's this? 40 not disqualified after Day 1, and running in third place in both the Male and Female events. Things really were looking up. **Sig Mark Taylor** took over from **Sgt Daz** 'I'm getting too old for this' **Welch** with a sprint on the relay event. Then a voice appeared from the background 'I bet he won't keep that up on the way round'. I must admit that the only thing in the back of our minds on Day 2 was did we have enough time to fit in the relay, have a shower, visit Burger King and make our return flight. I'm glad to say that we were successful overall and accomplished the following results.

Third TA Female Team
Third TA Male Team
Runner Up TA Female W21 **2Lt** Deirdre **Caldwell**
Runner Up TA Female W35 **Cpl** Roz **Colhoun**
Overall Runner Up TA Female **2Lt** Deirdre **Caldwell**
Overall Third TA Female **Cpl** Roz **Colhoun**



2Lt Deirdre Caldwell receives her Runner Up medal at the Corps Orienteering

85 (ULSTER & ANTRIM ARTILLERY) SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj C. R. Sutherland R SIGNALS (V)**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Brotherston**

SQUADRON ANNUAL DINNER

The Squadron held it's Annual Dinner in April. This event was particularly special as it was the last dinner to be held in the TAC in Newtownards. The Squadron is due to move to a new location in Bangor where we shall have the luxury of occupying our very own TAC.

The Squadron said farewell and congratulations to **SSgt** (SQMS) **Linda Whitley** as she moves to Sp Sqn to take up the SSM appointment. We thank her for all her service to the Squadron and wish her every success in the future.

As part of our departure from Newtownards the TAC Officers' Mess held a farewell lunch on Sunday 9 May to mark the end of our links with Crawfordsburn Road TAC. OC 85 Sig Sqn **Maj Cathy Sutherland** presented the Mess with a Regimental print and received a farewell gift from the TAC Mess to the Officers of the Squadron. It was an enjoyable occasion, which was attended by the previous OC of the Squadron and the previous BC of the resident Battery RA (V).

SDR

With the effects of SDR upon us we have emerged from it in good order. We have a number of Royal Engineers transferring to us when their unit disbands. We started training them as Royal Signals tradespersons in April. They will go to camp with us where they will complete a Royal Signals trade course. We extend a very warm welcome to them all as they join the Corps, Regiment and Squadron.

SQUADRON MOVE TO BANGOR

Sunday 23 May saw the start of our move to Bangor TAC 'Exodus Day'. This was marked by the OC presenting a cheque for £1000 to **Mr Bill Haddick** of Killard House Special School. The event had press coverage from the local paper on our departure and also by the local Bangor paper on our arrival at the TAC. Praise must go to all the Squadron for their hard work during this phase of the move. We arrived without a hitch.

EXERCISE SCOTTIE MACFINN IV

The Squadron ventured to the Cairngorms at the end of February for our Annual Winter skiing Weekend. This time we were accommodated in the stopover hostel in Granton-on-Spey some 12 miles North of Aviemore. Lady luck was on our side as the snow had been ordered. Many of the Squadron's failed skiers tried their luck at snowboarding. **LCpl Clarke**, **Sigs Spoerri** and **Elliott** even walked all the way up the Cairngorms with their boards (the T-bar proved a bit of a problem). All three said they had a fantastic time and cannot wait for next year. **Cpl Anderson** and **LCpl McQuillan** eventually mastered the art of the T-bar much to the delight of **SSgt Linda Whitley** and had the bruises to prove it. They eventually made it as far as the middle station. **Cpl** 'I will, I will, I will' **Campbell** and **LCpl Dickson** had their own interpretation of downhill skiing, just aim the skis down the slope and go for it! Now at least they have perfected getting up.



L-R: LCpl McQuillan, Cpl Campbell, LCpl Dickson, Sgt Charlie Rigg (being carried again), SSgt Watson

OFF PISTE NEWS

The Squadron visited the local British Legion and helped out with the entertainment. **LCpl** 'Monty' **Montgomery** singing at the top of his form, entertained the members. Okay, so he's not Frank Sinatra but at least the Legion didn't have to pay him.

3 INFANTRY BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (203)

Sqn Comd **Maj S. K. MacRostie MBE**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) S. Cheslett**

COMMUNICATIONS TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt F. D. Guthrie**
Tp SSgt **SSgt R. Wallace**

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION - 'THE SENDERS'

Work is starting to liven up for the COMMCEN, Syscon and Crypto alike with the ever approaching 'Marching Season'. There has been plenty of movement within the Troop, as we say a farewell to **Sgt Sam Parke** and his family on their move to ATR Bassingbourn and **LCpl Mick Leet** and his family as they go to 241 Sig Sqn, Donnington. Also off to pastures new is **SSgt John Ainsworth** who, with **Kate** and family leave us for 1 Armd Div in Germany. Fortunately we've had several new members into the Troop recently. **Sgt Robin McCorkell** who joins us as our new Troop Sergeant from Aborfield and **SSgt Carl Hindson** and family from 220 Sig Sqn as the BTLO. Straight in fresh from 'sunny Blandford' we have **Sig Lee** 'Babyface' **Shaw** and **Sig Kerry O'Connor,** just in time. We also welcome **Sig Bruce Morrisson** and family from 20 Armd Bde and **Sig Tim** 'Tiny' **Sluman** from 1 Armd Div.

Comms Tp were well represented in a recent Brigade 'friendly' Triathlon, which involved each Unit within the camp from Brigade HQ to the Royal Ulster Constabulary and of course, the Signal Squadron. We fielded three teams in all, two male and one female team, the only female team in the competition. **Capt Helen Bosley, 2Lt Sonia Hughes, Cpl Sarah Staff** and **LCpl Kerry Davis** made up the female team. Unfortunately, though, due to injury we were unable to finish with a full team. For the Mens' we had an 'Oldsters' team and a 'Youngsters' team. Both fought valiantly against the 8km cycle, 2km row and 4.5km run, but the oldsters held it together well with **WO2 (Fofs) Mick** 'Thigh' **Cowie, SSgt Andy Lothian, SSgt Bob Wallace** and **Cpl Paul** 'Sally' **Webster** storming into a victorious first place overall in the competition. The youngsters also had a good race not far behind, with **Lt Forbes Guthrie, Sgt Rob McCorkell, LCpl Gaz Jennings** and **LCpl** 'Nelly' **Nelson** who all finished in a good time.

The Belfast Marathon was also another event that we managed to persuade ten lucky individuals to participate in. Fortunately it was only the relay, although some of the team members felt the urge to run more than one leg of the race. We had one male team and one female team, so there was a bit of competition as to who would finish first. **Sgt Billy Boston** stepped in at the last minute to make up the team, which saved **Sig Albert Finney** and **Sig Chris Moore** deciding who would run that extra five miles at the end. The weather was absolutely scorching, which would have been fine if **LCpl** 'Nelly' **Nelson** had remembered his 'Factor Duffle Coat' sunscreen. In the end the boys' team beat the girls' team in by three minutes, although we nearly had to send out a search party for **Sig Emma Jones.** She was lost somewhere at checkpoint three (we still say she was hiding from us!) so our second runner, **LCpl Karen Glenister,** just kept going. The Troop had a party in June and it was enjoyed by all. The night started off with free punch on the table, which disappeared really quickly. The Elvis impersonator was excellent, the karaoke went well and the barbecue was fantastic. **Lt Guthrie** decided to share his barbecue with everyone on the minibus. The night ended up with a free for all on the dance floor and everyone just about resisting the temptation to take their clothes off to the 'Full Monty'.

TECHNICAL MAINTENANCE SECTION – 'THE MENDERS'

TM Section has been very busy over the last few months with preparation for the move to Mahon Road Barracks, Portadown. This has finally started after many delays and a move by the beginning of July is hoped for, just in time for the marching season. There have been a lot of changes within the Section, with **Cpl** 'Brummie' **Baker** going on his re-trade to Driver Electrician. **LCpl Iain Pearce** has seen the light and retraded from Driver Lineman to Telemech. Joining the Section recently has been **Sig Gordon** 'Gee' **Pyrah** and **Sig Jim Wright** both from 220 Sig Sqn and for there sins they were both selected to attend the Province Cadre Course, which was held in the Isle of Wight. More recently **Sig Steve Brown** joined the Section for a fortnight and then beat a hasty retreat to the MT Section, all of this before his arrivals sheet was dry.

In May the chosen few of the Section, **Sgt Gary Mathieson** and **LCpl** 'Moggsy' **Morris** went on an Adventure Training Exercise to the Lake District which consisted of walking up large hills during the day and then socialising in the local villages at night. The main thrust occurred on the Thursday when a gruelling 20km walk took in the scenic view from the top of Scaffel Pike.

Congratulations to **Cpl Paul** 'Sally' **Webster** for his achievements in the inter-services Karate Championship and a credible attempt at the Lanyard Trophy; better luck next year. A big well done to the Squadron Orienteering Team which was led by **WO2 Mick Cowie** to win the team event in the UK Championships. **Mick** was accompanied by his able team members **Sgt Lee** 'Billy' **Boston** and as usual **Cpl Paul** 'Sally' **Webster.** Finally, a sorry loss to the Section will be **Cpl Cec Mason** who leaves us for Civvy Street at the end of June.

SUPPORT TROOP

QM	**Capt F. S. Payet**
RSM	**WO2 (RSM) A. Strudwick**

The Troop has been busy lately completing its ITD's during a long weekend at Ballykinler Training Centre. Along with some clerks from SHQ and Brigade HQ we were put through the new ITD training including, the BPFA and AM 1. With that all done, we were treated to a 'Texas Scramble' golf competition and a barbecue. Thanks go to **Sgt Paul** 'Admin' **Coates** for organising the weekend and everyone who instructed or organised the other activities. A mention must go to **Pte** 'You talking to me' **Frazier** for her excellent results in the Moral Understanding lecture. The Troop bids a fond farewell to **Cpl Craig Turner, LCpl** 'Scouse' **Latham** and **LCpl Ian Pearce** (Re-trade) - We wish you and your families all the very best for the future. Welcomes go to **Cpl Chris Dee, Sig Shaun Brock** and **Sig Andy Hall.** And finally congratulations go out to **LCpl Latham** and **LCpl Gordon Stewart** on their promotions.

SUPPORT TROOP - WATERSPORTS DAY

The Troop had an excellent day on the lake, jet biking and being hurled off the banana by the RQMS, **WO2 Andy Strudwick.** The 'Banana Team' led by the SQMS, **SSgt** 'Taff' **Drew** still think they can hang on, the gauntlet is down so standby! Thanks to the QM, **Capt Fred Payet,** for a great day and to **Cpl Si Ferrer** for the barbecue. And finally a welcome is extended to our attached officer, **2Lt Sofia Hughes**, we hope you have enjoyed your time with the Troop and good luck for your Troop Commanders Course.

NORTHERN IRELAND ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIP
by Cpl Nelson

The month of May saw the Northern Ireland Athletics Championship descend upon us once again. As always, the Gentlemen of the Squadron were set the task of gaining a place in the semi-finals at Aldershot. We all knew it would be a close heat in the Minor Units Competition with worthy opposition from MU, JCU and Depot Royal Irish. The team was off to a good start with victory for **Sgt Billy Boston** in the 1,500m, closely followed by overall second in the hammer competition for **LCpl** 'Nelly' **Nelson**. This was closely followed by **Cpl Billy Bremner**'s second place in the high jump. All eyes were on the scores as Depot edged into the lead with JCU and 3 Bde snapping at their heels. A stunning performance was demanded of **Sgt Chris** 'Shergar' **Bailey** in the 110 high hurdles. However, he was to become another victim of beechers brook. Good effort anyway. Respectable performances were seen from **Cpl** 'Chuck' **Henson** in the shot, **Maj Mannings** in the discus, **LCpl Gaz Jennings** in the 200m and **Cpl Sally Webster** in the 5000m. With the spot for second and a trip to Aldershot, hanging finely in the balance, all eyes were on **Cpl Si Ferrer** in the javelin competition. He did not let us down and gained second place. With just the relay races to go, depot were the were the clear leaders and a lot hung on the final races. The team performed well and we were left in suspense as to the result until the final prize giving. Luckily, we pipped JCU to the post and once again, gained a place in the semi-finals.

LANYARD TROPHY 1999 - *by SSgt Wallace*

The 'Old boys' team with an average age of 39 consisted of one Officer, seven Seniors and two Corporals. The team started off at a rip roaring pace and got to the first checkpoint much quicker than the admin team expected. They arrived and grabbed water bottles, bananas, had mars bars shoved into their mouths and headed straight off. Everyone started in good humour and it was amazing how **SSgt** 'Call me Bob in the bar' **Wallace** managed to sneak to the front every time the cameraman appeared.



Banana Power

As the forced march progressed the humour disappeared. even **SSgt Andy** 'Beavis' **Lothian** and **Sgt Paul** 'Butthead' **Coates** stopped sniggering. **2Lt** 'Soapy' **Hughes** tried to encourage the team by informing them that the team in front was only a short distance away but realised that she was on to a loser when **SSgt** 'Taff' **Drew** gave her a look that would kill a lesser mortal. The RSM, **WO1 Chesletts** map reading skills were called in to question when he stated that there were only 9km left to go and 10 miles later they crossed the finishing line. At the end everyone was vowing never to do it again, however, after tending to their wounds and screaming as the hot water hit the bergan rash and blisters some of the boys started planning next year's campaign. The evening was spent with us all going out for a curry when **Cpl** 'Sally' **Webster** showed just how alert he could remain, even after 40 miles, when he fell asleep in his beer.

NORTHERN IRELAND SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIP
by Cpl Staff

3 Infantry Brigade Headquarters and Signal Squadron finally, at the very last minute, managed to gather a full female swimming team together for the Northern Ireland Swimming Championships being held at Lisburn Station on Monday 24 May. After a few last minute changes to the team, our first two to go were **Capt Bosley** in the 50m Breast-Stroke and then **2Lt Hughes** in the 50m Back-Stroke. Both managed to finish second in their respective races. **LCpl Michelle Cochrane** had a good race in the 50m Freestyle and **Cpl Staff** in the 4 x 25m Individual Medley; yet again they were just beaten into Second Place. **LCpl Kerry Davis** and **Pte Lisa Wilkinson** made up the final two places of the team, and after some nail biting relays, we finally managed a third place overall, missing out on second place by just four points.

EXERCISE JERSEY FINN *by Sig Frost*

39 Bde's Cadre Course lived up to all the stories I had been told back in the Squadron bar, from day one to the end it was both physically and mentally gruelling. We turned up at Marchwood, got changed, got on a landing craft and began to attack the Isle of Wight. Trouble began the moment we left, as the boat didn't seem to want to float. Five days of Exercise later, the well-deserved Adventure Training Phase began which included water-sports, mountain biking and sailing. The best bit was the Karaoke one evening, in which we showed the locals exactly how much a group of highly training Signallers could hold a tune. Naturally we won the Karaoke Competition rounding off an excellent week.

EXERCISE KESWICK FINN 1999

Ex Keswick Finn was an Adventure Training Exercise comprising hill walking, mountain biking and orienteering undertaken by eleven soldiers from 3 Inf Bde HQ and Sig Sqn (203). The Exercise took place in the Lake District and all personnel were accommodated in Warcop Military Training Centre.

DAY 1 FELL SIDE - PETER'S HOUSE FARM *by Sig Shaw*

Lt 'Donnie Osmond' **Guthrie** had briefed the group the previous evening on the walk, which we would be doing. We were told that we would be hiking for 20km over the hills and peaks of Cumbria. I did not think that I would enjoy myself, as my motto has always been, why walk when you can drive. I was greatly mistaken as it turned out. I had a thoroughly enjoyable day. We set off with our packed lunches and bottles of water to see us through the day. The walk began at Fell Side and within the first half an hour the instructors were asking us where we were on our maps. Most of us had not followed our maps to begin with and ended up having to work out exactly where we were. After that moment we followed our route cards and maps diligently. One of the aims of the walk was to practise our map reading and we certainly did. The first spot height we climbed up to was spot height 627 and from there we climbed up to Coombe Height. The climbs were not too difficult but we knew that today was the first day. We went through fields, over fences and into some boggy ground. As the day went on the weather began to pick up and it started to blow a gale. This did not worry us too much as everyone stayed close together and we were all enjoying the walk. We had our lunch in a small bothy to escape the wind. The most memorable moment of the day was when **Lt Guthrie** nearly lost his right arm to the shelter door by trying to open it slowly in the gale. After lunch we carried on walking and made our way over to Skiddaw House. At this point **Capt Bosley** and **2Lt Hughes** wanted the challenge of running up Skiddaw peak, no one else wanted to go so they took off their fleeces and shot up the mountain. The rest of us led by **Lt Guthrie** carried on the planned route. We eventually finished the walk at Peters House Farm. As a new soldier in the unit it was a good opportunity for me to get to know the people I would be working with, so on the walk I found out a lot about my job and the various things people had done with their lives.

DAY 2 - MOUNTAIN BIKING AND ORIENTEERING COMPETITION *by Sig Marshall*

Day Two started off early with a hearty breakfast prepared by our jolly chef. We loaded our mountain bikes into the back of the van and minibus. It took an hour to reach the Country Park where we were going to do our mountain biking and orienteering. We seemed to have brought the good weather from Northern Ireland with us. After some fiddling and tinkering with the bikes we finally set off. **2Lt Hughes** chose the steepest way to the top and within minutes sweat was pouring off all of us. In fact at one point the track was so steep that many of us had to get off our bikes and push them up the last little bit. Then came the fun part because what goes up must come down. I won the first prize for not using my brakes and **Capt Bosley** and **2Lt Hughes** won joint last prize for riding their bikes up the hills then pushing them down some of the steeper parts. After some off track proper mountain biking it was time to head back to Whinlatter Forest Park Centre to eat our lunch and prepare for an afternoon of orienteering.

It was decided that for the Orienteering Competition it would only be fair to pick names out of a hat. It had already been established who had used Orienteering maps before and who had not. The teams were then formed. We were given a set time to run or walk around the course and collect as many points as possible. It was a good map reading exercise and we were able to practise all the skills like pacing, taking bearings and following a map. When all the points had been added up the winners of the competition were **Sig** 'Shoulders' **Moore** and **2Lt Hughes** (obviously **Sig Moore** had done the map reading in that team).

DAY 3 BROTHERITKELD - SCAFELL PIKE *by Sig Moor*

The Group had an incredibly early start today, as the drive to the start point was a long one. **Sgt McCorkill** had arrived the night before to join us for a few days. We started the hike at Brotheritkeld and instantly found ourselves climbing up. The climb was gentle to start with then all of a sudden it became more difficult as we headed up to the Three Tarns. After the climb we sat down for a hearty lunch. After lunch we made our way up to Bow Fell then over to Esk Pike then up again to Great End, it was at this point that we could see the highest peak in England. The climb up to the top was a steep one and several breaks were taken on the way up to appreciate the beautiful scenery. The stepping stone rocks made our journey up to the top somewhat harder but more enjoyable. When we reached the top the view was fantastic. We had group photos taken and sat down for a well-deserved break.



Scafell Pike
(L-R) Sig Marshall, LCpl Jennings, Lt Guthrie, LCpl Morris, Sgt Mathieson, Sig Moore, Sgt McCorkell, Sig Shaw, 2Lt Hughes, Capt Bosley

On the way down the group split up, as **Capt Bosley** needed to go and catch her flight so **Lt Guthrie, Cpl** 'Mr Enthusiasm' **Jennings** and **Capt Bosley** ran down the mountainside leaving the rest of us to enjoy the walk down to the bottom with **2Lt Hughes.** When we reached the end of the walk there was a fantastic little pub which welcomed us all in.

DAY 4 COMB CRAGS - HELVELLYN *by 2Lt Hughes*

Once again we had an early start so that we could fit in everything that we had planned for the day. Today's walk was relatively short compared with the other walks. The weather had been kind to us all week however that was to change once we hit the top of Helvellyn. We started the walk and headed up to Comb Crags, the climb was a gradual one. Once we got to the top of Helvellyn we did not hang around as the weather was closing in and we had a date with a Brewery Tour. When we arrived back at our minibus we jumped in and headed off to Keswick scoffing our sandwiches on the way. We made it to the Jennings Brewery mid afternoon, just in time to go on the Tour. It was a fascinating tour and everyone enjoyed the trip around. We were shocked at the hospitality of the Brewery who encouraged us to sit and drink the various brews free of charge. The entire group except the chef (driving) took full advantage of the free beer. That evening was spent carrying on the motion in Penrith and brought an end to a very enjoyable and worthwhile week.

GOOD NEWS TRAVELS FAST!
Publish it in The Wire
The Editor is always pleased to receive interesting articles

39 INFANTRY BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (213)

Sqn Comd	**Maj N. J. Borrill**
RSM	**WO1 (RSM) S. F. M. Lawes**

OPERATIONS TEAM

This is the Ops Team debut in *The WIRE* and the reason why it's taken this long can only be put down to the hectic workload borne by this fine body of men. The nucleus of the team is fronted by **Capt Gareth Marsh** ably aided by **YofS Dave Brudenall** and **FofS** 'Aidy' **Glover**. The whole team runs on the ethos of 'Work Hard, Play Hard', but it has to be said 'some are playing a little more than others' (no names). As ever on the work front its fast and furious, with the whole Team now masters at prioritising and dealing with that all too often fast ball, but being professionals let's not linger on the negatives but concentrate on the positives. On the plus side of life it has to be said that the majority of the Ops Team has been involved in some kind of extra curricular activity, whether it is on the sports field or adventure training, and some are worth a mention.

FofS 'Aidy' **Glover** has just about been on every adventure training exercise going with the excuse he needs it for his log book to get his JSMEL qualification ('Top Blag'). Also **SSgt Si Jones** organised a very successful skiing trip to Bavaria and to his surprise didn't use his RMA 3 qualification once. At a more grass routes level **Capt Marsh**, the YofS and **SSgt** 'Rennie' **Renshaw** formed the backbone of the Squadron Rugby Sevens team which reached the semi-finals of the Brigade Rugby Competition. The last mentioned has to go to **Capt Gareth Marsh** and **Cpl Nigel Rogan** who have been putting in endless hours of Tabbing in preparation for the Lanyard Trophy ('Good Luck').

FAREWELLS AND HELLO'S

A sad farewell goes to **FofS** 'Aidy' **Glover** who is leaving the Squadron for 33 Signal Regiment (V), a definite loss to the Team, give it two weeks you will wish you were back. A big hello to **FofS** 'Sid' **Sideras** who has joined us from 15 Signal Regiment, beers for the lads.

TM TROOP - *by Cpl Wedge*

As always we start off with our farewells and welcomes, all we have to announce is two welcomes. These are to **LCpl Temple** and **LCpl Davies** who have both come from Germany to strengthen the Rigging Section. The Troop would also like to offer our condolences to **LCpl Beedon** and **LCpl Tonks** who have both taken the plunge and got married. The Troop would like to wish them and their wives all the best for the future. Well done to **Sgt Lougher** on passing his RSSC course and **Sgt Avery** on passing his RMQ 1 to 3 now that he has recovered from the coma he incurred while on his Sgt's course. However, we must say unlucky to **Sig** 'Salty Sea Dog' **Lawrence** who has to go back and pass his Competent



No that's not two microwave dishes on the mast its the YofS' ears

Crew. Finally the whole Troop is celebrating the delayed signing off of **Cpl** 'Leo Sayer' **Dupree** as he chooses to live his life as a Karaoke King in the Province.

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

Tp Comd	**Lt Fraser**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Robinson**

HELLO'S AND GOODBYE'S

It has been a very busy period with new arrivals in all departments. Firstly, we would like to welcome **Sgt Paul Parkes** who has travelled all the way from BRB to join us, **Pte** 'Val' **Vallentino** from 522 Sqn Bicester, **LCpl Charlie Wood** also from Bicester and finally but not least **Cpl** 'Gaz' **Howe** who has moved to Rover Group. Obviously there are a few 'characters' leaving 'THE GROUP' namely, **LCpl** 'Geordie' **Owens** who is posted to 4GS Abingdon, **LCpl** 'Ribs' **Watkinson** to the mainland, posting dependant on the local magistrate, Rover Group **Sgt** 'Scottie' **Cain** who somehow manages to get a second posting to Cyprus and **LCpl** 'Fergie' **Ferguson** who now becomes a 'Mr', Good Luck to them all!

After all that we finally have our own farewells from upstairs in Syscon/COMMCEN **LCpl** 'Charlie' **Walledge** who has seen sense to join the AGC and LCpl, now **Cpl** 'Lester' **Richardson** who has moved 200m up the road to 15 Signals. We welcome **Cpl Sam Lee-Davis** who has joined our Crypto Team from 15 Signals and **Sigs** 'John' **Bell** and 'Jamie' **Buyers** straight from Blandford. What talent they release from the School of Signals now! Just to finish we would all like to welcome **Andy Aitchison** back to Rover Group.

REGIMENTAL QUARTERMASTER'S DEPARTMENT

by Sig Kev Pack

With the trauma of the LSA1 and PRE Inspection over and done with now, there was an air of tranquillity drifting through the Department, but not for very long though. No sooner had we started to pat ourselves on the back, than people started to disappear to tournaments, adventure training, the zoo and other less fortunate Regiments. As the saying goes 'lead by example' well if that's the case we would all be sitting upstairs and calling ourselves RSM because unfortunately we seem to have lost **WO2 (RQMS) Lawes,** fortunately we have found a **WO1 (RSM) Lawes** wandering around upstairs, congratulations boss.

In the last couple of months **Sgt** 'Seanie' **Hyland** has brought himself out of a long retirement to coach the Brigade Rugby 7's Tournament and allegedly he took his hands out of his pockets to shout at his team in the Brigade SAAM and the NISAAM as well. A big congratulations to **Cpl** 'No snow, No go' **McGuinness** on his promotion and now, according to **Cpl** 'ain't no mountain high enough' **Selby**, he is operationally important. While at the working end of the scale, **Sig** 'Long-haired General' **Edwards** had a rather enjoyable day at Belfast Zoo with the Youth Activities Group, (**Faye** later said 'I liked the funny monkeys the bestest'). As for myself, nothing but work, apart from the constitutional week in the Lake District, where sights were seen, mountains were conquered and blisters were popped.

Finally, a huge farewell to our RLC contingency **LCpl** 'Jerimiah' **Binney** and **Paula** who has returned to driving for a less stressful life and **Cpl Paul Selby** and **Mitch**, who is also off to 21 Signals for a nice quiet rest!!

NISAAM 1999 - BALLYKINLER

NISAAM 99 and it was back down to Ballykinler Ranges. Team Captain for this excursion was **Sgt Sean Hyland** who accepted the task as soon as it was offered, followed up by **LCpls Kev Brown** and 'Charlie Henry' **Wood, Sig Hilton** and finally **Pte** 'Richie Stavros' **Vallentino**.

We arrived at Ballykinler on the Wednesday all up for the ranges ahead. The competition we attended was the 'Roupell Cup' where all the lads managed to obtain reasonable scores apart from, **LCpl Kev Brown** who found out that someone had tampered with his weapon, then it was back to where we were to spend most of the week SANDIES. The next shoot was the FIBUA Shoot and that was the last of day one.

Day Two saw us back down in SANDIES bright eyed and bushy tailed early on Thursday for the 9mm Pistol Match, a few nice double taps later and it was back to the above for another 10 brews and a sleep, the rest of the day was made up of a Snap Shoot, Moving Target and a Pistol Tile Match where the team made it to the quarter finals.

Deja Vu starting to kick in now and it's Friday and its off to 'Tin City' for the March and Shoot, with **Sgt Sean Hyland** making a command decision and sitting this one out. The team started well but **Sig Hilton**'s fence jumping skills at the end of the tab left a lot to be desired and we had to unplug his barrel before advancing to contact down the range where some good scores were collected. The final shoot of the day was the Falling Plate where the team again got to the quarter finals, we were put out by some Fusiliers from Derry, it was now time to make one fast trip to SANDIES and then head back to Lisburn for a few well earned beers; no doubt we'll be back next year for another crack with Rover Group making up most of the team, with a little help from Syscon and the Team Captain from RQ's Dept

TOUGH GUY '99 - *by Sig 'Jase' Manton*

On 30 January 1999, **Lt John Fraser, Capt Liz Dallyn** and myself set out for a journey into the unknown. All started very well until that is, the pilot decided to land at West Midlands Airport, instead of the intended Birmingham International. Although this put an extra two hours on our journey time, our spirits were not too dampened. On arriving at Wolverhampton the ever handy mobile phone came out and got us to our final destination.

Several Tough Guy '99 competitors were staying at our hotel, so needless to say some came out with horror stories of previous Tough Guy encounters, others were full of encouragement for the unknowing first timers. As we were to find out, a hot curry the night before is not exactly the best preparation you can have for an eight mile cross country run followed by a two mile obstacle course. An early start on a brisk January morning and we were off to book in. As we arrived all we could see were thousands of people and cars. The ground was already churning up (which, really, should have been an indication of what was to come).

At around 12 o'clock, we eventually got under way. With so many people taking part (around ten thousand), you couldn't go at your own pace, you had to go with the flow. The first part of the course was mainly running up and down steep hills, but after a mile and a half, we encountered marshes/bogs. This was to prove a greater inconvenience to myself, due to the very first bog claiming my left trainer. The rest of the course was to prove very painful. After plenty of hills/marshes/bogs/swill swamps/streams and lots and lots of mud we finally hit the obstacle course. This took around one and a half hours to complete due to everyone waiting on the obstacles at the same time. However, this was an obstacle course to remember. The cargo nets were approximately 30ft high (there were two of them, one after the other), then it was through bogs that came up to your chest if you are six feet tall. God help you if you were 5ft 4ins. Across more cargo nets, ducking under logs and crates (kindly put on top of the bogs), then onto the leopard crawl, a run through blazing hay bails, wade through some streams, and a final run up yet another hill to the finish, for medals and tea (that is, if you can actually stop shivering enough to drink the tea).

All in all it was a taxing course which also had a mental aspect to it, with the freezing water (ice cream headaches wot!) really getting at you. However, all who took part did enjoy it.

EXERCISE BRAEMAR FINN - *Sig Jamie Buyers*

Ex Braemar Finn took place in the highlands of Scotland and was used as a training exercise for the 39 Bde Lanyard Trophy team. The team deployed from the ferry and made the four hour drive to a small Scottish town called Ballater, where we were accommodated in the local barracks. The town itself was close to Balmoral Castle and also not far from the Glenshee Ski Centre. The kit lay out, all that we took was military and there were a few added essentials to make life easier on the bills

The Exercise itself consisted of five days of hill walking over various long arduous terrain. The training was run by **Lt John** 'Let's go this way and get out of the wind' **Fraser**. Day one was a 20km route that was designed to gently lead us into the swing of things. We covered the said distance, but our legs felt like we had covered about 50km, due to the fact that most of the walk had been through knee deep snow! That's Scotland for you. Day two was much the same distance except we had a 2½hr climb, firstly up a waterfall, then onto a rather steep ridge. After we stopped for lunch we were navigated back down by **Sig Billy** 'Dangerous Brian' **Ellam**, which I can only describe as 'an experience in itself'. Then it was back to the beautiful sight of the minibus and an excellent dinner by **Chef Jason** 'Chocolate Salted Balls' **Webb**. After these first two days we all were very stiff and agreed that more preparation should be taken in the future when training in such arduous and cold conditions. That night we all took a trip down town for a swift pint or seven, and were back in bed before eleven. (well some of us were). Day three was our longest route, going on for just over 30km, but there was a lot less snow this time, so the going was not as difficult on the legs as the previous two days. However, the wind made up for that, and there was no escaping it either, as the OC found out when he tried to get us out of it, but thanks to **LCpl** 'are we nearly there yet?' **Gallagher**'s navigating we ended up walking face first into a howling gale, and knee deep in snow again lucky us.

The end of the route was finished, with the last 9km being on flat road and as I was leading the group at the time I decided to pick up the pace, bad idea as I was to discover the next day. The last day was a long route but it was mainly over land rover tracks, and people were suffering from various injuries, so the pace was quite steady. But the main point about the last route was that it was more closely allied to the actual course on the day. That night was Karaoke Night at the local bar in Ballater, the night sparked off by a stunning duet from **SSgt** 'Get those headphones off' **Robinson** and **LCpl Kev** 'Longshanks' **Board**, of the Tom Jones hit Delilah. The show was stolen by **Cpl Tony** 'Daydream Believer' **King** when he sung the line 'Home Coming Queen', the two officers walked in the pub door perfect timing gents. As the night wore on it was announced over the microphone that breakfast was put back until ten the following morning for obvious reasons. The final day was just a stretch off day and everybody's mind was on the last nights shindig in Aberdeen. But you know what they say what happens on tour stays on tour.

The Exercise was a great success and enjoyed by all, but it was also very beneficial training as the competition is arriving soon, and we hope to do better than last year but we will wait and see.

If you're visiting Bournemouth or Poole,
why not combine it with a visit to
The Royal Signals Museum, Blandford Camp
01258 482248 for opening times



Sig Jamie Buyers – Ex Braemar Finn
'They can't make me do it if I eat the map'



Lt John Fraser, SSgt Paul Robinson and Sig Jase Manton
'Spare some change for a cuppa tea Mister?'

8 INFANTRY BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNALS SQUADRON (218)

Sqn Comd	**Maj Jake Thackray**
RSM	**WO1 (RSM) Paul Flemming**

MERCURY CUP ATHLETICS - APRIL 1999

by SSgt Jim Coupland

The Team was selected in a similar way to that of most of the Squadron's sporting competitions, in a concise, careful and methodical manner. 'If you are not on shift, BART, Maint, driving detail, duty, course or leave then you are in the team!' Due to the pressure of operations and the severe lack of females our overall position was never going to be representative of our raw talent. The Male Team enjoyed an excellent day of sport in weather that amazed me. Since I arrived in the Squadron eight months ago I have lived under a shield of Goretex and welly boots, so it took me by surprise to get sunburnt, especially in April!

All team members put in a great deal of effort in their events for which they should be congratulated. However, the following deserve special mention: **Cpl Glen Ruscoe** - 5000m slog, **Pte Richard Street** - Shot Putt, **Sig Craig Buckingham** - Javelin and Discus, **Sig David King** - Long Jump winner, **LCpl Nick** 'Noo Noo' **Mier** - Last leg of 4 x 100m relay - Fantastic effort! The Squadron 2IC **Capt David Seymour** said that in achieving the same result as last year proved beyond doubt that the following equation is true: 'The final points tally is inversely proportional to the square of the sum of the amount of recreational facilities combined with the amount of work done per head of men or women!'

QUARTERMASTER'S DEPARTMENT - *by LCpl Sam Shillto*

RQMS	**WO2 (RQMS) Kev Tunstall**

Members of the QM Dept took part in Ex Richmond Challenge the bi-annual ITD training week at a local training area. The juniors hoped it would be a peaceful few days away from certain members of the RQMS staff, but how wrong they were as all the senior ranks attended. No peace and quiet! The department was well represented in the Squadron Competition. The competition was run over six weeks and included a BPFA, Saxon driving and commanding, ranges, games night and a quiz night. Our own entry into the final was **Sgt Eddie Porter** who after a well-fought final round came in 4th. The RQMS pulled out just to make everyone else look good. **Maj Jake Thackray** won the competition however he gave the prize to a needy charity, namely **LCpl James Bond** who finished in second place. The next few weeks will be busy with the upcoming adventure training and PRE.

We say goodbye to **Cpl Jase Steen** who leaves the QM Dept to go to ATR Pirbright. Also **Cpl Mike Harvey** who leaves us to retrade to photographer. He is posted to the Joint School of Photography at RAF Cosford. We wish them and their families all the best for the future.

THE LANYARD TROPHY - *by Cpl Glen Ruscoe*

LANYARD TROPHY TEAM

Lt Jo Stewart	**LCpl Gavin Welch**
Sgt Pete Mills	**Sig David King**
Cpl Glen Ruscoe	**Sig Steve Baxter**
LCpl Ronnie Cuthbert	**Sig David Bateman**
LCpl Eddie Stojanovic	**Sig Craig Buckingham**

The Lanyard Trophy race is organised annually. It covers on average 40 miles over arduous terrain and requires fitness, stamina, navigational skills and a sense of humour. This year the North Downs Way was selected. The teams consist of ten individuals who must carry a certain weight, males 40lb and females 25lbs. The team was led **Lt Jo Stewart** who was chosen from a cast of thousands (1) and the team 2IC, **Sgt Pete Mills** who was also chosen from a cast of thousands (2). The route was relatively simple with the majority on tracks or roads. There were three check points and a feeding station along the route. At each check point teams have to check in, replen food and water and report casualties. To successfully complete the teams must start with ten members and end with eight one of which has to be the team captain or 2IC. The team started training in February tabbing round camp and up to local training areas for longer distance sessions. A week in Scotland was organised for some longer and more intensive training. From the initial 19 volunteers the team was whittled down to a stalwart squad of 13, with the final team picked a few days before the race. On Thursday 6 May at 0430hrs 290 people congregated for weighing in and the massed start.



The Lanyard Trophy Team

Our team set off and were quickly in their stride. As the miles rolled by the physical effort began to show. Most suffered from blisters on the feet and back. By the 20 mile point the team were going well and were well within the first ten teams. At the 28 mile point we had dropped two team members which meant that we could not afford to lose any more. Although beginning to tire we pressed on and concentrated on the next few miles. By the 30 mile point and the third check point we had chipped away and overtaken 3 Brigade Signal Squadron, our arch rivals from the south. The support team **LCpl Nick Mier**, **LCpl Dave Healy** and **Sig Allen Oliver** did an excellent job providing food, water and motivation. **Cpl** 'Ma'am offered to carry my Bergen' **Ruscoe** and **LCpl** 'Stoggy' **Stojanovic** also kept spirits high with jokes and banter. We approached the final check point feeling strong so we decided to push the pace all the way to the finish. We marched up the last hill, blisters popping, backpacks rubbing and most of us promising never to compete in this gruelling event ever again.

We crossed the finish line in seventh place overall and fifth out of the regular units. The greatest achievement for the team was finishing before the two other Brigade Signal Squadrons in Northern Ireland and being the first mixed team across the line in an impressive time of 10hrs 49mins. An excellent effort all round and a promise by all of the team to try harder next year. **Any volunteers?**

NISAAM

by Sgt Eddie Porter

On 12 April 1999 the Signal Squadron's NISAAM shooting team travelled to Ballykinler to take on the provinces finest and to show them how it should be done. The team consisted of: team manager **MTWO (WO2) Tom Hair**, team coach **Sgt Scott Pringle**, Team Captain **Sgt Eddie Porter**, and team members **Cpl Al MacDonald**, **LCpl Dave Healy**, **Sig** 'Geordie' **Harrison**, and team loud boy **Sig** 'Don Juan' **King**. On arrival we met the manager and coach playing table tennis and drinking tea in the NAAFI, in fact that is where they spent most of the week and they still can not play it to a decent standard.

The first shoot was FIBUA. However not being the brightest of teams we forgot what it consisted of. The competition organisers being good eggs allowed us another shoot later in the week. We also had a go at Clay Pigeon shooting where **Sig David King** proved he was an excellent shot. We were more than a match for major units in the pistol shoot. Well done **Cpl Al MacDonald**. We managed to get to the semi-final but were unfortunately beaten by 4 R Irish. One of the hardest parts of the week was the march and shoot, even the MTWO ran faster than me!

To round off an interesting week we competed in the falling plate shoot. Unluckily we were narrowly beaten by RGJ, but we did manage to beat 2 Para!



The NISAAM Team
(L-R): Sgt Porter, Cpl MacDonald, LCpl Healy and Sig King

COMMUNICATIONS TROOP
by LCpl Gavin Welch

Tp Comd	**Lt Jo Stewart**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Tony Taylor**

Comms Tp, the back bone of the Squadron would like to say a few warm welcomes and some sad goodbyes. Starting with **LCpl Marcus Bartrip**, who swapped stockbroking in London for a tour in Londonderry and **LCpl Duncan Gourlay**. They have just arrived from the Royal School of Signals and are looking forward to a rewarding first tour. Welcome also to **Sig Daniel** 'Smudge' **Smith**, **Sig** 'Geordie' **Fearon**, **Sig Mary Anderson**, **Sig Danny Critchlow**. But unfortunately we have to say goodbye to **Sgt Tim** 'Mouse, I'm so covert' **Lever** who is posted to CIS at Blandford to play with computers and to **Cpl Mark** 'Guido' **Benson** who is off to 24 Air Mobile. Good luck to **Sig Graham** 'Wingnut' **Lafferty** who is posted to 15 Sig Regt on promotion. Congratulations to **Sig Andy Herd** and **Sig Dave Dowson** who depart on promotion .

EXERCISE RICHMOND CHALLENGE 1/99 APRIL 99
by Sgt Scott Pringle

Ex Dtr	**Maj Jake Thackray**
Ex Ctler	**WO2 (RQMS) Tunstall**

Ex Richmond Challenge 1/99 started a new era of training for the Brigade Headquarters and Signal Squadron with the start of the new ITDs. The new training objectives that have been introduced Army wide were successfully completed during the exercise. The majority of instructors were from the Signal Squadron with the exception of **Rev Robbins** who provided an excellent lesson covering ITD 11, Moral Understanding. Some volatile debate followed thank goodness the debates were held inside the classroom and not a boxing ring. Cheers Padre!!! We hope you have a good cheery posting to the mainland.

One of the major changes that has been introduced with the ITDs is the new battlefield first aid training, which was covered by **Sgt Kev Cooney**, **Sgt Pete Mills** and **LCpl Andy Green**. It did not take long for the students to get used to the new Battlefield First Aid Aide Memoire. However if a soldier was faced with a fellow member of his section injured on the battlefield would he really say, 'Hang on a mo while I whip out my Aide Memoire and cover drills 1 to 10!'

As well as the ITDs some theatre specific training was incorporated. **WO2 MTWO Tom Hair**, **Sgt** 'Stan' **Stanley** and **Cpl Mark Guest** provided an excellent stand on CMV drills. **Sgt Stanley**'s informative introduction set the scene for some hands on experience. All students participated in the scenario, testing their reactions to IVCPs. Some pertinent questions were raised during the lesson, the most amusing but frightening for the DS was from someone who will remain nameless. 'Is it really safe to use live rounds on a live enemy!?' She/he will be sent on an ammo recognition course. We now look forward to exercise Richmond Challenge 2/99 where the remainder of the Brigade HQ and Signal Squadron will participate.

The Training Wing would like to welcome **Cpl** 'Brum' **Flute** who since arriving has announced the birth of his new baby boy **Alan**. Many congratulations! Also congratulations go to **Sgt Scott Pringle** and his wife **Tina** on the birth of their little girl, **Ashton**.



Exercise Richmond Challenge
The Good Guys alias Cpl Harvey, Cpl Mark Guest and LCpl Shillito

MOTOR TRANSPORT TROOP - *by LCpl Stuart Palmer*

Tp Comd	**WO2 (MTWO) Tom Hair**
Tp Sgt	**Sgt** 'Stan' **Stanley**

We have had a busy couple of months especially getting all the vehicles ready for the PRE inspection. A special congratulations to **LCpl Andy** 'Claude' **Green** on coming top of his driving instructors course at DST Leconfield. Welcome to **Cpl** 'Johno' **Johnson**, **LCpl Amanda Rowlands** and **LCpl** 'Brummie' **Reed**. Farewell to **LCpl** 'Gaz' **O'Hara** who has left us and joined the big outside world of civvy street. Finally, congratulations to **LCpl Paul Lawler** and **LCpl Nathan Reed** on their well deserved promotions.

NEWS FROM THE REGIMENTS

1 (UNITED KINGDOM) ARMOURED DIVISION HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL REGIMENT

201 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj Colin Lawrence**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Kev Simmons**

On 1 April (bad choice of date) the Regiment amalgamated 201 and 208 Sig Sqns into a single Trunk Squadron. The new 201 Sig Sqn, capable of deploying four Ptarmigan Trunk Nodes, is now the largest Trunk Squadron in the Corps. The OC, **Maj Colin Lawrence**, totally overwhelmed by his new command, immediately disappeared off to Kuwait for three weeks leaving his new 2IC, **Capt Jo Evans**, to get on with sorting out the Squadron. Despite over 40% of the manpower only joining the Squadron on 3 May, we have already deployed all four trunk nodes on a very successful Squadron Exercise, have a Squadron Battle Camp planned and have 50% of the Squadron deployed on, or warned for, operational deployments. To all the new members of the Squadron, welcome and the OC will give you your initial interview when you return from operations at the end of the year!

FALCON TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt Chris Biddulph**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt A. J. Robertson**

April saw the soldier's of 'Mighty Panther' Troop paying homage to what was and looking forward to a new beginning. From the embers of the old Panther, rising like a phoenix from the ashes came the 'Fighting Falcon'. The herald of a new beginning, a more efficient, capable and robust fighting force than has ever been seen before, man and machine working in perfect harmony, the start of a new era in military excellence. 'Why, these boys and girls are mad for it!'

Best wishes and regards from the Troop are sent to **Sig** 'Crash Test Dummy' **Keers** and **Sig** 'Penfold' **Brown**, both serving in Macedonia, hope you're enjoying yourselves.

Now for a sad moment, the Troop is saying goodbye to **SSgt** 'LS and GC, 17 years a Royal Signals Stormtrooper' **Robertson** after three years of exemplary service with 201 Sig Sqn. During his time with 1 (UK) ADSR, **SSgt Robertson** has completed operational tours to the Falklands with JCUFI and to Bosnia as part of KFOR. The Troop bids you a fond farewell and extends best wishes for a happy and successful time in Krefeld to your wife **Agi** and children **Ben** and **Sam**.

ARMY BASKETBALL TEAM TOUR 1999 - *by Sig Hogarth*

The Army Basketball Tour 1999 took place at Fort Hood, Texas (260km South of Dallas). Whilst it was an enjoyable and relaxing time, temperatures of 36 degrees every day took some getting used too. The team's aim was to develop a strong athletic and professional bond between the two organisations, and I think we were successful in doing so. The hospitality of the Red Coats and members of the 27 Main Support Battalion was amazing, anything we needed, they got. Before each game, Army colours were presented and handshakes given, we were even presented with individual certificates and trophies upon our departure from Fort Hood. The tour maintained a busy schedule including time to play the home nation sports of Football and Softball. The team managed to win one Basketball match, however, each game was played with intense, yet sporting professionalism, making every one enjoyable and rewarding.

The Americans seemed to have spent a long time preparing for our visit which showed in the fantastic welcome we received on our arrival. In addition to our sporting activities, we spent a lot of time touring the Fort Hood campus. This included visits to the Simulation centre, vehicle parks and museums. An afternoon was spent relaxing at a barbecue hosted by the Commanding Officer and his wife.

Several days were spent in the cities of Dallas, San Antonio and New Orleans towards the end of the tour. On our departure, the Americans accepted our invitation to repay the compliment and play us on our own soil. In summary, the trip was highly enjoyable and a great success. We left on excellent terms with our American counterparts, and we certainly gained some new skills, however, the Credit Cards did take a battering.

KESTREL TROOP

Tp Comd	**2Lt Alan Foote**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt** 'China' **Cooper**

It has been a hectic couple of weeks in TN 071 with the Troop taking part in Ex Premier Link, its first as a new Troop. The Troop was under the superb direction of **2Lt** 'Subbies Friend' **Foote** who got things off to a flyer by missing two tac signs on arrival into location. Everybody in the Troop was sparking especially in cluster 407 who were breaking records when it came to camming up (two days, well done lads!) It was a learning exercise for all including **Sig** 'Abbo' **Abbott** who learnt the skill of driving with a trailer jockey wheel up next time 'Abbo'. **Sig Lizzy Brown** had an eventful exercise getting to grips with the concept of comms Kestrel which left **Sigs Thompson** and **Exall** feeling a bit left out. The Exercise was a success, Kestrel Tp providing by far the best comms and everybody enjoyed it especially the end-ex debrief.

Finally, welcome to our new Staffy 'China' **Cooper** and family, congratulations to **Sig** 'Goon' **Southwood** on his first stripe, God help us and good bye to **Sig** 'Seth' **Howarth** who is sadly leaving us but will be coming to a Medical Centre near you soon.

HAWK TROOP

Tp Comd	**2Lt Angela Aylward**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Kev German**

The last few months have been a busy time with the forming of the new troop, not to mention the new Squadron. However life has now begun to settle down to a frantic pace. Ex Premier Link was an excellent opportunity for the Troop to get to know each other and to shake out a few cobwebs. Looking to the future many of the Troop will soon be deploying on Op Agricola in support of 3 Div. Good byes go to **Cpl Nigel Howard** and **Sig Michael Richards** who have been moved to other Troops within the Regiment.

EXERCISE PREMIER LINK - *by Sig Hosking*

Ex Premier Link was our first Exercise as the newly formed super Trunk Squadron. It was also the first Exercise for us all since returning from both Bosnia and the Falklands. The Exercise was split into two phases, phase one was 201 Sig Sqn deploying and exercising its four trunk nodes. The trunk assets were then joined by the headquarters elements during phase two. As this was our first exercise in ten months problems inevitably arose but over all the exercise was a great success. The first week was an unique opportunity for us to practice and learn new skills. TN 041, to all our amusement took this a bit too far, while every other node was up and radiating and practising our comms skills 041 were digging in, stagging on and honing their infantry skills. 15 hours later after every one else had established comms 041 were finally setting up. After that slow start the Exercise ran smoothly. Following the Exercise we all returned to camp for a few drinks to celebrate.

SUPPORT TROOP

Tp Comd	**Capt Jo Evans**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Ian Lee**

After returning to sunny Herford from various destinations around the globe, Sp Tp were straight back into the old Ptarmigan way of life supporting two extra Trunk Nodes to make the new style Trunk Squadron. The Techs and EDs flew into action on the first Exercise motivated by the mystery of where they will be in a few months time. A fresh intake of Sys Ops appeared in the Troop to take over both OSCs and SCCs under the control of **LCpl Chris Doe** with several EDs to take on the mammoth task of looking after all the generators in 'Surplus Equipment'.

Good bye to **SSgt** 'Chippy' **Chapman** and **SSgt Ian Lee** who are both off to Blandford and welcome to **Sgt Ian Conlan** in to the Troop. Congratulations to **Cpl** 'I love monkeys' **Parkinson** on her promotion and most of the Troop who are either engaged, getting married or having babies!

211 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj Julian Bunce**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Angus Palmer**

RADIO REBROADCAST TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt A. D. Shakespeare**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt D. Cox**

Well, the Troop is back after a temporary absence due to Bosnia and you would never have known we have only just reformed. The hefty task of building new RRBs out of our new Wolf fleet has gone well and just in time for the Regimental Ex Premier Link. The Exercise went well with our new recruits getting to grips with the intricacies of a Radio Rebroadcast Vehicle.

We must unfortunately say good bye to **SSgt Graeme Wharton** once we can find a way of cutting the umbilical cord! I believe a Tp Comd originally signed for him back in 1960! He is going off to a part time job as OIC Fishing Tp somewhere in Nottingham… A younger **SSgt Dean Cox** is taking the helm just in time to take the fine 'volunteers' of the Troop to Kosovo. I am sure he will end up enjoying his new position. As always, a sad farewell must also be mentioned… **Cpl Andy Allen** who is off to 7 Bde in July along with his wife **Karen**. The chuckle brothers will never be the same without you and **LCpl Blackmore** is off to sneakier things….

Congratulations must go to **Sig McCormack** who is to be a father of twins in December. My advice is best start getting some sleep and congratulations must also go to **LCpl Blackmore** and **LCpl** 'Del' **Spry** on their recent promotion to LCpl.

COMMAND TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt Karl Jeeves**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Kev Innes**

The Troop have now returned from Bosnia in various states of health and waistlines vary after an extended leave, all ready for action and the prospect of new adventures to lands yet uncharted and civilisations yet to have a MacDonalds. Instead we might just re-sign for all our old vehicles and prepare for Ex Premier Link, the Regimental Reconstitution Exercise. During the Exercise, we were honoured with a visit from the Chief of the General Staff, **Sir Roger Wheeler,** who found time to chat with all the boys in Diamond 1 and 2, the message essentially one of praise for the hard work of the Regiment. The rest of the Exercise was conducted without staff involvement and was a real chance for the Troop to shake out and practice our own SOP's under the guidance of the new Troop OC, **Lt Karl Jeeves** and new **SSgt Kev Innes**, who is the first Tele Op RR to hold the post. A welcome is also due to a number of other new faces who have joined the international Armour Fraternity.

Since the exercise the majority of the Troop have moved to 72hrs NTM for the big K and are now frantically trying to remember when they last had a dental inspection and where they put their mess tins. The feeling within the Troop is one of excitement, but also apprehension at the necessity to deploy again straight after a tour. Congratulations to **Sig Sharon McMurray** who was due to marry on the 11 June.

212 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj M. W. G. Adams**
SSM	**SSgt (SSM) Harry Kemp**

Welcome Back! Seems to be the theme for the majority of the Regiment, and holds true for the Squadron too. Finally the two halves of the Squadron met once again, in April this year, after some well earned leave. This gave an opportunity for the recent Bosnia Warriors to invite those new members of the Squadron (of the Late Harewood Ops Group) to 'pull up a sandbag'…This was great (for 15 minutes…)

Welcomes must go to the new 2IC, **Capt Jase Nichols** and the new SSM, **Harry Kemp** who have joined us over the past few months. Hi to **Sig Beazley** who joins us from the good School - he had a birthday on exercise and had an interesting experience with his cake ingredients… Good luck should be given to **SSgt (SQMS)** 'Chalky' **White** and **SSgt Mark Bentley** who have just departed for several weeks of EFP2, missing some of the most crucial time in the Squadron (and the time when all the hard work is needed!) A sad farewell and good luck must go to **Cpl** 'Gazza' **Dine**, who, after much pleading and bribing has managed to get posted to the UK, and the area he really wanted to go (Blandford…god knows why…but that's another story!). Farewell also to **SSgt Breheyney**, who after a short stint as SQMS of the new sparkling Computer Tp (oops, sorry, IS Tp…!) leaves us for pastures greener…

The Squadron now faces collapse again, as we are launched into operations once again. The Squadrons major focus is heading up JCUFI once more, and also supplementing Bosnia and Kosovo - this may be the only 212 entry this year….

SPECIAL TASKS TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt Lou Henderson**
Tp Sgts	**Sgt** 'String Bean' **Sims**
	Sgt Shaun Arundel

Once again reconstitution is upon 1 Div, all change and a new troop is born. Special Tasks Troop, 212 Sig Sqn rose from the ashes like a dodo. After trying (and mostly failing) every scam in the book, the dets were finally signed over, courtesy of our trusty storemen **Sigs Baz Harvey** and **Dave Vakalala.**

The Troop then deployed independently on a shake out exercise. This seemed to go well until the night move when **Sgts** 'Honestly, we did recce it' **Sims** and **Arundel** directed one of the vehicles into a quagmire! After a speedy self-recovery, thanks to **Sig** 'Jugs' **Wilson's** glow in the dark tow-rope, it was time for Soft Tac's first set up after it's aesthetic overhaul. All looked good in the dark but it's amazing what a bit of daylight can do. During the second week of Ex Premier Link the dets were spread to the four winds, with Soft Tac initially deploying with Alt HQ. On moving and setting up in 211 Sig Sqn location **Sig** 'Dead arm' **Harvey** had a nasty experience involving a Landrover, a trailer and his arm. Thinking it was broken he was dispatched to the Medical Centre looking very green. On arriving he suddenly declared 'Oh, I can feel it now!' so he returned, not with the expected cast but with a mere blue Elastoplast.

Ex Premier Link was Spec Tasks Troop's first and last Exercise of the year. The Troop are now separating to Kosovo, Falklands and Bosnia; only to do it all again next spring! We would like to say a sad farewell to **LCpl's Law** and **Lamb** who are both posted. Recent update; due to recent commitments, Spec Tasks Tp now no longer has enough people to exist alone – it was a fair ship and she sailed well…

COMMUNICATIONS TROOP

Tp Comd	**2Lt S. Gunson**
Tp Sgt	**Sgt L. Balmforth**

We would like to welcome all the new faces into the Troop and are glad to see some of the old ones back again. To begin with we would like to congratulate **LCpl** 'Scouse' **Wilson** on his recent and well earned promotion. There has been a lot of hard work done since the Troop reformed followed by some well deserved playtime. The maintenance of the vehicles, after months in LCP, has taken up most of the Troop's work schedule, but after some hard work and a few late nights they have been brought back up to their usual high standard. Just in time to put them back into mothballs for the JCUFI and Balkans deployments. **Sgt** 'Barney' **Balmforth's** famous barbecue made an occasion for the Troop to get to know each other. A great night was has by all and we look forward to the next such get together.

With little time to do anything but work, we started prepping the wagons for Ex Premier Link. This was a Squadron level Exercise to test out all the equipment on the vehicles and give some experience to the newer members of the Squadron. It got off to a roaring start when **Sig** 'Geordie' **Ayre's** 439 burst into flames and the unlucky 'Geordie' was taken off the Exercise with minor burns, all recovered now. It seems everyone in the Troop was trying to get on the morale bandwagon when on his first Exercise **Sig Wayne Hobbs** left his bergen behind on the first move. Not wanting him to feel down for too long, **Lt** 'Gunny' **Gunson** thought that he would wear everybody else's webbing apart from his own. Apart from the usual glitches the Exercise went very well for all involved and all members of the Troop gained valuable experience.

The Troop had an impressive string of results at the Inter-Squadron Athletics with our very own running machine **Sig Martin Potter** winning the 800m and the 1500m easily. **LCpl** 'Windy' **Millar** won the Javelin and **Sig** 'Jimbo' **Callendar** coming second in the shot. Especially well done to **Sig** 'Red' **Stables** winning the Ladies Javelin and continuing to represent BA(G) in the Army Championships.

As you can see it has been quite a busy time for us and we are looking forward to when things get back to 'normal'. Or is this becoming normal now? Finally farewells, I would like to wish all the best to **LCpl Chamberlain** and wish him all the best at 24, thanks for your help in your whole week with the Troop!

INFORMATION SYSTEMS TROOP – *by LCpl Si Vickers*

Tp Comd	**Capt Purves**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Breheney**

With the implementation of the COs Fourth directive, computers, the new Information Systems Troop was formed on the 5 May 1999. The Troop consisted of personnel from all three Field Squadrons, Tele Op Sys from 201, Tele Tech Sys from 212, and the finest operators from 211. The Troop set about it's primary role of ATacCS LAN Management, with **Sgt Tony** 'Commander LAN' **Rosen** leading the way, having recently completed his LAN Managers Course. The first task for the newly formed Troop was to prepare for Ex Premier Link, a Regimental Exercise designed to teach detachment level drills. The Troop was divided into two teams to cover both Oscar and Papa HQs.

Team one was deployed with Oscar HQ for the duration of the Exercise. Led by **Sgt Rosen** with his merry men **Cpl** 'Porky' **George, Cpl** 'Inch' **Harper-Ronald** and **LCpl** 'Mad Dog' **Barker.** After the initial deployment to Sennelager the Team's first mission was to deploy a LAN in divisional Oscar HQ. Laying fibre optic cables in temperatures above 28°C it was a welcome relief to get back to the box body and switch on the ACU. Due to man power problems within the Squadrons **Cpl George** and **LCpl Barker** had to move to PAPA HQ to command 436s, leaving **Sgt Rosen** and **Cpl H-R** to fend for themselves, which they managed with ease. The next phase of the Exercise saw us move to Blomberg and the now 2-man Det setup the LAN. Our thanks go out to the lads of 211 for lending a hand when needed.

Team Two was deployed with 212 Papa HQ, led by **Sgt Mark Smith** with **Cpl Daz Holman, LCpl Si Vickers** and our only Signalman, **Matt Rees**. Their task was to deploy a LAN at Papa HQ. The format of the Exercise was the same as 211 Oscar HQ, except the team was boosted to eight with the arrival of the Troop OC, The Yeoman and the two 436 commanders. Needless to say the Papa HQs LAN was deployed much faster. The Exercise acted as a valuable learning experience, with all members of the Troop gaining valuable experience for the future. On our return from the field, the Troop was again split in to two teams. The first team concentrating on our primary role ATacCS management. The second team taking care of Regimental IS support and Millennium bug issues.

Sadly **Sgt** 'Stretch' **Barnes** could not attend the Exercise due to his well-timed fibre optic course, looking forward to seeing his new skills on the next Exercise! We would like to take the opportunity to say farewell to **SSgt Bob Breheney** who is sadly leaving us and we wish him luck at 34 Sig Regt (V).

2 SIGNAL REGIMENT YORK

CO	**Lt Col C. Wakerley MBE**
RSM	**WO1 (RSM) S. C. Keilty**

HEADQUARTER SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj John Walker MBE**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Terry**

During the last 10 weeks we have seen the Squadron swell from 130 personnel to over 170. With the rest of the Regiment on or about to deploy on operations, HQ Sqn have been thrown into a frenzy of growth and re-organisation receiving personnel from all trades who would normally serve in the field. We have been kept extremely busy with 'Race the Sun', Adventure Training and ITDs.

On 14 May 99, the Regiment gathered on Kohima Square to say a very fond farewell to **WO1 (RSM) D. Whitaker** who is off to 21 Sig Regt on commissioning. Keeping with his tradition of being a 'courses man' he recently qualified as a Demolitions Safety Officer, an extremely useful course for a Families Officer! Best wishes for the future to you, **Sue** and the boys from 2 Sig Regt. A very warm welcome to the new RSM, **WO1 (RSM) S. D. Keilty** who arrived just in time to see the Regiment deploy on Op Agricola. We hope you have a very sucessful tour with the Regiment and welcome you, **Ella** and family to York.

We also welcome **Capt R. Anderton-Brown** as the Adjt, **Capt** 'Beanie' **Lloyd** as the new 2IC, and **Lt Julie Richardson**, AGC Det Comd.

MT

MTO	**Capt Hitman Gurung**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Swan**

The last couple of months have been busy with **Sigs Wilkinson** and **Amar** away to JCUFI for six months and **Cpls Man, Amrit** and **Findlay** on standby to deploy on Operation Agricola since February. Despite this,



Pictured above the RSM on his dining out.
He is executing his famous saying - 'You coke drinking La La'

members from HQMT participated in Ex Key Baseline to up date ITDs at Warcop. Arrivals within the department include **LCpl Davison** from 9 Mech Bde, **LCpl Adams** from 3 Div, **Sig Jarusek** and **Sig Johnstone** from 11 Sigs and **Sig Coburn** from 1 UK Div. Departures include **SSgt Chadwick** and **Sig Pybus** who has gone to Civvy Street, and **LCpl Evans** who was posted to 15 Sigs. Finally congratulations go to **LCpl Amrit** and **Man** on promotion to Cpl.

RACE THE SUN

Saved from cancellation an abridged version of the annual Charity Event Race the Sun went ahead on 20 May 1999. The event organiser **WO2 (SSM) McGarry** was put through his paces organising the event with limited manpower and resources. However, in spite of operational commitments he managed to successfully organise a scaled down version from 16 to 8 legs, and everyone who attended commented that they were pleased that the event went ahead. In its 11 years 'Race the Sun' has raised over £80,000 most of which is donated to local children's charities. Once again the event was kindly sponsored by Nestlé UK Ltd.

Teams travelled from as far afield as Welbeck College, who entered four teams, to DST Leconfield, totalling 16 teams. The event covered 110 km and involved running, tabbing and biking over some demanding sections of the North Yorkshire countryside, culminating in a 900 metre swim across the Great Lake at Castle Howard. Thank you to all the 166 competitors who took part and congratulations to 30 Sig Regt who won the competition for the second year running. The Best Effort Trophy was awarded to Welbeck College 'A' Team with a time of 8:11:49 and the Trophy for most money raised went to 2 Sig Regt. Sponsor money is still being collected and is estimated at over £4000 this year. The results of the competition were:

First place	30 Sig Regt	7:24:38
Second place	DST Leconfield	7:49:51
Third place	2 Sig Regt (HQ Sqn)	7:57:44



HQ Squadron Team, taking third place

EXERCISE MIKE EBOR

The Lake District may recover one day from 'The HQ Sqn Experience' - future generations depend on it. Those not sunning themselves in France were treated to Ex Mike Ebor; rockclimbing, abseiling, gill scrambling, mountain biking and lashings of Quality Mountain Days in the Keswick area for two weeks. Home was a campsite nestled in the shadow of Skiddaw; accommodation was 12x12s to prevent homesickness. Moral fibre was put to the test as peaks were 'bagged' in weather conditions ranging from arctic winds to scorching sun, which broke the monotony of rain. Log Books return brimming with Scafell - Great Gable - Van Halen (aka Helvellyn) and the Langdale Pikes. There was plenty of 'good chat' in the evenings in Keswick and a few Men of the Match emerged over the two weeks. In Week One Son of 'Geordie' (aka **Sig Sworowski**) was almost blown away, he was only saved by the weight of his Bergen, which kept him on the ground. In Week Two duo **Sgt** 'Bog hopping' **Hutchinson** and **Cpl** 'Flash' **Carter** were almost swallowed up by the Langdales. They were pipped to the post by two 'Players of the Year; **Sig** 'Otter Trainer' **Cleghorn** and **SSgt** 'That's expensive for steak' **Ratcliffe** who both contributed some classic quotes (unprintable). A big hand to **SSgt Keen, SSgt** 'Calculator' **Wood**, the 'Super chefs', **Sig Manby** the motor-cross minibus driver, the school girls, the Kings, the pet hamster and all the others who made the whole thing possible...



Fashion victims SSgt Keen and WO2 (SSM) McGarry sporting the latest in practical Adventurous Training Wear for Summer '99

EXERCISE KEY BASELINE

by Cpl Longworth

In April, those of us not deploying to Kosovo were whisked off to Warcop Training Area to brush up individual military skills and pass annual ITDs. It was a punishing schedule, day one started with a quick refresher on section attacks followed by a CFT. A quick word to the PTI before the start confirmed my fears, the landrover used to recce the route was struggling up some of the hills! After the CFT, one section was down one man, **LCpl Gaz Evans** now reduced to a slow hobble in trainers, thanks to his blisters.

Day two started with everyone zeroing for their APWT, however, the weather may have been partly to blame for some of the scores; at one point we all stopped firing and crouched in the fire trenches to let the snowstorm pass. Anyway that's what **Sig** 'Jonah' **Jones** will tell his grandchildren one day. However in contrast the following morning the sun came out to play so much so that I needed sunglasses on the Section in defence range, well, that's my excuse for not seeing the targets. That evening **Sgt Shane Carnell** had to re-shuffle the sections due to the number of dropouts and we welcomed **Cpl** 'Jobbo' **Jobson, LCpl Bri Wallace** and **Sig Emma Clayton** to the Section. Then it was straight off to attack the skills house which was heavily defended by all the injured and sick. Section 1 led the assault armed with ladders and ropes looking like a gang of angry window cleaners after our money! First in the window was **Sig** 'Spice' **Cinnamon** followed by **Sig** 'Scouse' **Salter**, it was all going well until 2 Section came on the scene and were promptly wiped out whilst trying to take the stairs.



Next was the CQB, command tasks, and then pairs fire and manoeuvre, just where did the RQ get all this ammo? Finally Friday arrived and with it the snow, all that remained were two final section attacks and then back to York for well earned tea and medals.

214 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj D. Somerville**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Foreshaw**

VIKING TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt Peter Hale**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Terry Shiels**

The Squadron remains on 72 hours notice to move and Viking Tp anticipate the call to arms, as we watch the unfolding events in Kosovo and the terrible scenes emerging from the media. Whilst we wait we have not been idle. With a new training year comes a new round of ITDs to complete, all with the added emphasis and the realities of an impending deployment. In addition the Inter-Troop Competition provided more physical, military, trade and driving tests. With our title to defend the pressure was really on, but once again the Troop did exceedingly well. The scores were all very close and we waited with bated breath as the Commander 11 Bde, on a recent visit, announced the results. Viking Tp had once again won this section of the competition.

There has been very little movement within the Troop. However, it was with great sadness that the Squadron had to bid a fond farewell to **Cpl Carl Crofts**. After serving nearly 22 years in the army, he had a deserved send off with a Corporal's Mess dinner involving good food and drink with the entertainment being provided by a very funny Hypnotist. Needless to say most finished the night with a firm wish of never again wanting to be hypnotised in front of a large crowd. For some members of the Squadron and 'their fairies', they found it hard to believe what all the fuss was about.

P.S. The next instalment of *Wire* notes will be reported from the Balkans, the Squadron deployed as this goes to Press.

RACE THE SUN - *by Sig O'Connor*

Armed with zinc oxide tape and plenty of water, our elite 214 Sig Sqn team turned up early to check the competition out and at a glance knew it was going to be a tough day with all 16 teams being of a very high standard.

The first leg got under way at precisely 9 am, a 12km tab with 35 pounds along winding roads and over killer hills. It was a disappointing start for the team with **LCpl Kynaston** coming in thirteenth after sustaining an injury. Over the next few legs and with sheer determination we clawed our way through the rest of the day gaining time with every leg. The fell run and half marathon were extremely tough going, leaving **Sig Pember** and **Sig O'Connor** footsore and dehydrated. The cross-country

bike race severely tested **Sig Mackay**, but despite being bogged down at one point he still managed to finish with an excellent time. In the full heat of the day **Sig Jeynes** made up time across the Yorkshire moors and **Lt Hale** completed the forest run in a good time. With superb map reading and gigantic thighs **LCpl Hinchliffe** breezed through the cycle orienteering race gaining the best time of the day. The final leg of the day was a dreaded 900m swim across the lake of Castle Howard. Dressed to thrill in his wetsuit **Sig Glass** took the plunge and when he did finally surface the look on his face said it all - 'Thank God that is over with'.

By the end of the day the team had managed to fight their way back from thirteenth to a very respectable ninth place. More importantly everybody had enjoyed themselves and had survived a very challenging day.

TORNADO TROOP

Tp Comd **2Lt Graham Wills**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Neil AC Cooper**

The Troop has recently said their goodbyes to **Sig Graham Rennie** on promotion and **Sig Kenny Waring** on posting. The Troop will soon be losing on promotion **Sgt** 'Cass' **Cassidy** and it is expected that the Troop will have a few hellos shortly, as we still anticipate the deployment on Operation Agricola.

The beginning of April brought some bad news to the Troop. One of our soldiers was badly injured in a road traffic accident. She was taken to Pinderfield Burns Unit, Wakefield Hospital, West Yorkshire for treatment. The Troop decided to help this extremely useful unit with a sponsored charity. The fund-raising was a fete with an 'It's a Knockout' competition. One of the local teams had dropped out and our services were required to fill the slot. **Sgt Dave Uttley, Cpl Billy Morrison, LCpl David Morris** (Team Captain), **Cpl Gaz Taylor** (REME), **Sgt Bev Lumb** (AGC), **Mrs Kara Uttley** (Sgt RE Cadets Instructor), **Sig Sarah Elliot** and **Mrs Cerys Bragger** (RHQ CR Clerk) formed the 2 Signal Regiment 'Imphalmaniacs'. Unfortunately, an ankle injury did not allow **SSgt Neil Cooper** to take part but he did manage to have a good laugh at the team's expense. **Sig Sara Elliot** was volunteered to get into a spherical cage to be rolled up and down a field. The rest of the team did not tell her that they had already seen this ball in action and the occupant steps out of the sphere and immediately reveal their breakfast. **Sgt Dave Uttley** and his wife represented the team at the 'Bar Bungee', luckily, they both have had some practice at some of the other Bars in York and this gave the team a winning run. **Cpl Morrison** was put to the test in the 'Sumo Wrestling' as he has trained for years to mature his fine tuned physique. He managed to gain points by falling over as the opposing team member ran at him. The team had a great chance in winning when the 'Joker' was played on the 'Tug of War'. Luckily the team were wearing boots which gave an added advantage, there were complaints, but the organisers just asked 'What else would the Army be expected to wear'. **Mrs Cerys Bragger** was entered into the fun bikes competition the team made a consolidated effort and pushed her all the way up the hill, unfortunately the bike wheels were off centre giving a very bumpy ride, but she seemed to be enjoying it! **LCpl David Morris** who brought the team together put himself in for the 'Welly Throwing'. He hurled the wellington outside the end of the marking area, obviously having had a lot of practice in rubber! The day's events were won by another team, not because they were any better, but they managed to 'cheat' better than us!

Another fund raising event was to run thirteen miles as part of the Leeds City Half Marathon for sponsorship. The event took part on Sunday 16 May and fifteen members of 214 Signal Squadron stepped out with an air of confidence in their stride. The race organiser was **Sig** 'Geordie' **Mitchell** who thought it would be a good idea to run in combat trousers and military boots, after all it was only a little bit of pain! **Cpls** 'Slacky' **Slack,** 'Billy' **Morris** and **Sig** 'Griff' **Griffiths** were not content with this handicap so they decided to take it a little further by running with Bergen's. All fifteen runners finished in under two hours thirty minutes, with the fastest time of one hour thirty nine going to the combined effort of **Sgt Paul Richards** and **Capt** 'Scottie' **Scott**. The whole day was, if not a little painful, a complete success. We are now in the process of collecting all of the monies and anticipate raising around a thousand pounds.



214 Sig Sqn prepare for the Leeds City Half Marathon to raise money for Pinderfield Burns Unit, Wakefield

ROMAN TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt Adam Honor**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Chris Symonds**

Roman Tp has continued in its preparation for its imminent deployment to the Balkans region. This has been through a series of range packages and information briefs that have further enhanced the readiness of the Squadron. Morale has been kept high with a number of non related comms tasks and social events. The most enjoyable of these tasks was the presentation of a £1200 cheque to Northfield School. The school provides for disabled children and those who suffer from learning difficulties. The Troop deployed to the school with a number of vehicles, expecting to run a mini comms exercise for the kids. On our arrival it became very clear the children were more interested in the vehicles themselves than the comms link that was established across their playground. For three hours the children rotated through the seats of the vehicles, all having a good press of the Bedford horn. **Lt Honor** presented the cheque to the headmaster, **Mr Bill Ford**, in the school assembly and the entire school sang a song they had written about **Lt Honor** and for the first time the Tp Comd was seen to be upstaged and he actually blushed. It was a fantastic morning spent with the school, for the children and the soldiers.

A fond farewell to **SSgt** 'we are all doomed' **Morrison** who is moving to HQ Sqn as SQMS. He has long been a 'Roman' and served the cause well. We wish him all the best for the future. The Troop welcomes **SSgt** 'drill master' **Symonds** to the fold, he recently arrived from 1 (UK) Armd Div. Our best wishes go to **Cpl** 'getting his knee down' **Leek**, who is now the proud father of a bouncing baby girl **Charlie**. Apparently **Charlie** is already destined for the England rugby back row. In anticipation of the future the Troop sticks by its motto, 'Shields Up Romans!'

3 (UNITED KINGDOM) DIVISION HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL REGIMENT

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS

CO **Lt Col N. D. Couch**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) G. J. Stoker MBE**

Heartfelt congratulations go to the Technical Adjutant, **Capt Nigel Cullen** on his recent award of the Joint Commander's Commendation for Op Palatine which was announced in May. At the time of writing the CO and about 40 Regimental personnel are deployed at FYROM with the GOC at HQ COMBRITFOR. The grouping which is based on 206 Sig Sqn, provides the forward planning headquarters deployed at spectacularly short notice and seems to be constantly being reinforced. The rear party, led by the Second in Command, **Maj Adam** 'Bulford' **Ewell** as usual, remains poised to deploy whichever of options 1 to 10 is required, today it is Option 3.

202 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj R. J. Quinlan**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) S. G. Jackson**

The Squadron has been in a state of flux for the last two months. Following a busy period of communications exercises in direct support of 3 (UK) Div HQ, the Troops launched into an optimistic period of post exercise season turnaround. No sooner had we managed to drain all the hulls and consolidate our exercise losses than Op Agricola was upon us. The Squadron surrendered a large amount of manpower in support of this operation and, in line with contingency planning being conducted by the Regiment, prepared the vehicles for any subsequent deployment. The Squadron is not solely immersed in operational preparation. We still hope to be able to deploy on Ex Lion Sun 9/99 next month and there remains a certain amount of work to be done if we are to deploy to Cyprus. Although the work rate in the Squadron remains stratospheric, so to does morale. **SSM** 'Steve' **Jackson** has compiled a comprehensive training programme for any eventuality that Squadron personnel may face during the year. The result has been a number of sweaty bodies, smiling faces and bionic Signallers.

OVERLOON TROOP

Tp Comd **2Lt K. J. Grice**
Tp SSgt **SSgt A. J. Crawford**

To say that Overloon Tp has undergone a metamorphosis over the last two months would be an understatement. The old OC Troop, **Capt** 'Jimmy' **Hendricks** has stepped up to become the Squadron 2IC. **2Lt Kelvin** 'Don't you throw those spears at me' **Grice** has taken over as Troop Commander. There have been several new faces arriving since

March. **LCpl Fielding** and his family arrived from Germany. The Royal School of Signals has sent us a plethora of new trades persons: **Sig Allen, Sig** 'Pingu' **Bryant, Sig** 'Pocahontas' **Greenhalgh, Sig Simpson, Sig Fowler** and **Sig** 'Tommo' **Thompson**. Those currently without nicknames will not escape the wit of the Troop jesters for too long. Any personnel named in this month's *Wire* will pay the usual forfeit.

Congratulations must go to **LBdr** 'Manners' **Manley** who has recently passed his Regular Commissioning Board. He has been fortunate enough to be selected to attend RMAS and complete Basic Training all over again. We all wish you luck in the future and hope you see your way to applying for a commission in the Royal Corps of Signals. The Troop also says farewell to its long-suffering Troop SSgt, **SSgt Andy Crawford** who is posted to ATR Bassingbourn next month as a CQMS. Go placidly; you deserve the rest! **Sig** 'Richie' **Richardson** also leaves us to go to 39 Inf Bde. Good luck 'Richie'!

The Overloon Tp Div Main experts proved their worth in April during Ex Lion Sword. The Artillery Detachment, however, showed that they could be effective jokers even in the most trying conditions. **Bdrs** 'Gladys' **Fayers** and 'Larry' **Loates** were both successful in plunging the complex into complete darkness for several minutes. The truth surrounding the incident is highly classified. For a small price **Bdr Fayers** may agree to tell you, but then he'll have to shred you.

BUSSACO TROOP

Tp Comd **2Lt P. Simpson**
Tp Sgt **Sgt M. Brown**

The Troop remains relatively unchanged since April. We say a warm hello to our new Troop Commander, **2Lt** 'Bart' **Simpson**, or we would do if he weren't always off playing hockey. We also congratulate the newly promoted **Cpl** 'Max' **Maxwell**.

The Troop has recently returned from the fast moving and extremely tiring Ex Lion Sword at Ludgershall. Viewing the Wiltshire countryside from Ludgershall on a warm, sunny spring day made you forget that you were on exercise. You had to listen very closely to hear the steady pulse of generators, frantic activity in the complex and sudden alarms announcing changes in the NBC state. We deployed to Ludgershall in direct support of 3 (UK) Div HQ to test our capabilities and revise trade skills. During the exercise, the Troop's Linemen were tested to the limit, laying cable from hangar to hangar throughout BVD Ludgershall. **Cpl** 'Windy' **Millar** was adamant that the job would be done correctly; the cable lays were the smartest we'd all seen since Blandford. The EDs worked continually to repair faults that were created to test them by the considerate operators of Overloon Tp. Thanks for all their help in the development of our trade knowledge.

Approximately 30 Troop members managed to secure a helicopter ride in one of the Lynxes that were used during the exercise. Despite the pilots' best attempts at reintroducing us to our last meal, which by the way was superb thanks to the efforts of **Sgt Daniels'** Chefs, we managed to hold onto our lunch.

206 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj Carol Rankin**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Stu Archer**

MONS TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt Gardner**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Bell**

May began with **LCpl Dai Mundy**'s return from FYROM! It was a brief yet educational visit to the Americans. The accommodation wasn't exactly five star but the food was. Personnel took part in cross-training with all types of American equipment and introduced the Americans to the finer aspects of Ptarmigan! The Troop also took part in a demonstration of the newly acquired SAN APs to a representative from the Sultan of Oman's forces. The Troop also made a visit to Normandy in June for the D-Day Remembrance Services. This month the Troop would like to officially welcome **Lt Gardner** as Tp OC and also welcome back **Sgt John Batts**, who comes to us after a long awaited promotion and we also warmly welcome **Sigs Pollard, Kerridge** and **Smith**. We also bid a sad farewell to **SSgt** 'Richie' **Bell** and we hope he enjoys himself in his new part-time job, suitable for a man of his age – sorry calibre!

RADIO TROOP

Tp Comd **Capt A. Fennel**
Tp SSgt **SSgt S. Bartleet**

The Troop was formed in February 1999 when elements of the Regiment were put on 72 hrs Notice To Move (and still were in May) on Op Agricola. Personnel were drafted in from 202 and 222 Sig Sqns to join the members of 206 Sig Sqn. By mid Easter approximately 46 members of the Troop had left us for warmer climates under the leadership of **Capt Alex Fennel** taking with them their detachments to join the forward elements of 7 Sig Regt and 4 Armd Bde Sig Sqn. The remaining members of the Troop are left behind under **SSgt Steve Bartleet** awaiting our call up papers to join the sunshine tour in the Balkans. As well as the usual vehicle maintenance and preparation the Troop has been kept busy with military training. 222 Sig Sqn were joined for two weeks of FIBUA training, this ended with a military skills patrol competition. Congratulations **Cpl Ben Rigby** and his team on winning this event, hard luck to **Cpl Chris** 'I've been beaten by a tech again' **Jones** for coming a close second. An excellent time was had by all.

Trying to keep everyone's mind focused on the job in hand is hard especially as the vehicles have been ready to deploy for three months. More varied training is planned thanks to **Cpl** 'Gunny' **Russell**. We also have Summer Camp and the Dunk Tank at RNAS Yeovilton to look forward to if we are still here by then. Since being put on standby the escape committee have the pleasure to report the following successful escapes from sunny Bulford on posting, **LCpl** 'Smudge' **Smith, LCpl** 'Lucky' **Stewart, LCpl** 'Shacks' **Shackleton, Sig Fox** and soon to leave us **Capt Alex Fennel** who was replaced in theatre by **Capt Phil Newton**. Finally congratulations to **LCpl Shaun Thomas** on passing his Class 1, NBC instructor and Detachment Commander's Courses back to back.



206 Sig Sqn detachment in Brazda, FYROM
(L-R): LCpl Bennett, Sig Shirkey, Cpl Pope, Sig Rankin, Sig Parvin, LCpl Joyce, Sig Melia, LCpl Wright and Capt Fennell

222 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj M. Billingham**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) F. Roberts**

Elements of the Troop have been preparing for the 'is it on/off' Kosovo deployment. The Troop had a night out in Bournemouth where **Cpl** 'the tramp' **Anderson** spent the night outside the night-club due to his bonehead hairdo. Trainspotters **Sgt Simons, Cpl O'Hara , Sigs Holland** and **Warner** all deployed to Swanage for a bit of 'steam training' with **WO2 (SSM)** 'toot toot' **Roberts**.

Congratulations go to **SSgt (YofS)** 'Eddy' **Yates** and **SSgt (FofS) Rick Gorman** on their promotions to WO2. **Sgt Neil** 'Oohaarr' **Sorley** on his well deserved promotion to SSgt. **SSgt Pete** 'Who's the new boy' **Curtis** who played rugby (as usual) for the Army at Twickenham against the RAF and Navy, and in his own words 'what an outstanding performance it was too'. Congratulations also go to **Cpl Grant** 'Have I told you lately' **Duncan** for being selected to play golf for the Army.

Farewells go to **SSgt (FofS) Rick Gorman** and his wife **Sharyn**, posted to Ireland, **SSgt (YofS)** 'Eddy' **Yates** and family also off to Ireland. **Sgt Neil** 'Oohaarr' **Sorley** is off to the darkest depths of sunny Wales, **SSgt Pete** 'Didn't know he had arrived' **Curtis** and his fiancée **Catherine** back to York, **Cpl Andy Carnegie** and family, **Cpl** 'Angry' **Anderson** and **LCpl Nick Adams** and family. Hellos and welcomes go to **SSgt (FofS) Rick Dickinson** and fiancée, **SSgt Jase Meek** on his move from SHQ fwd and **Cpl Martin Warner** and family. The Troop has also seen an influx of new baby technicians, welcome to **LCpls Gudonis, Perrin** and **Prowse**.

OMAN TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt I. Hemy**
Tp SSgt **Sgt Hayler**

Another exciting time for the fighting Oman Tp. Firstly another reshuffle, involving **SSgt Bru** 'An operational tour, me?' **Baker** next door (to replace the noisy one!). **Lt** 'Guess What' **Hemy** stayed put, with **Sgt** 'H & S' **Hayler** coming in from the former Aden cadre. The Cpls remain intact – **Cpl** 'Escape to Swanage' **Hoggart, Cpl** 'Fireman Sam' **White** and **Cpl** 'I'm an IT guru now' **Catney** still with us. The Lance Corporals are busy, too – **LCpls** 'Central Expert' **Burgess, LCpl** 'Johnno' **Johnson** and **LCpl** 'Herbie' **Hyde** in fine form. Not forgetting those whom we do not see, **LCpl** 'Gym, say no more' **Wilson-Cochrane**, also **LCpl** 'Not too busy to send blueys' **Appleby** in Bosnia.

What has the Troop been up to? **Sig** 'Fitness Animal' **Jackson** putting in an excellent performance on the Lanyard Trophy, **Sig** 'Water-Bowser Genius' **Lewis** (Geordie) considering the potential of Wings in his next posting, **Sig** 'Just having a General round the house for tea' **Brewer** entertaining the hoi-polloi and **Sig** 'Keys' **Alcock** providing the accent. Goodbye to **Sig** 'HQ' **Swailes** and welcome to **Sig** 'Father' **Abrams**, fresh from darkest Blandford.

A healthy number of the Troop has been busy train-spotting with the **SSM, WO2 Frank** 'Toot Toot' **Roberts** down at Swanage Railway, even daring to return with smiles and tans. The visit of a Colonel from Oman prompted interest – if our Troop vehicles had been on show, he would have been impressed with our palm tree. However, he did get the Troop history, thanks to **Sig Jackson**'s excellent research! Speaking of vehicles, yes we've still got the lot, anything you want – offers on a vintage four-tonner?



Sig Scrafton researches what is behind the Divisional Emblem

MASIRAH TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt E.J. Fawcett**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Baker**

Back from Easter Leave with no casualties the Troop threw themselves into more Kosovo training, together with other personnel in the Regiment on 72hrs notice, in the form of Ex Arabian Defender. A week of fun and frolics at Copehill Down FIBUA village with many a war story, particularly **Cpl** 'D*m that barbed wire' **Ireland** sustaining an interesting injury. The FIBUA (or FIPAD - Fighting in Pubs and Discos) phase of the exercise was followed by a comms exercise where **Cpl** 'Baz - I can get comms in 30 minutes' **Cadman** had slightly lost the plot. Obviously, we just couldn't leave without being beasted around the confidence course, though it was a tough course everyone enjoyed it!! The second week comprised of ITDs and culminated in a patrol competition and of course a final get together in the Sportsmans Bar to give out prizes to the winning section, sadly not from the Troop.

Some individuals of the Troop enjoyed a different type of 'work' while on Ex Topham Hat in Swanage courtesy of **SSM** 'Choo Choo' **Roberts**. Despite this busy time the Troop, as always, managed to make time for a Troop 'do', this was in the form of a barbecue and some amateur volleyball, though not according to **Sig** 'Fish' **Salmon** and **Sig** 'Iron-man' **Robb** who took the game far too seriously. The function was also a way for us to say 'See ya wouldn't wanna be ya' to the infamous **Sgt** 'Small but outrageously noisy' **Emmerson** as he leaves to join 34 Sig Sqn as a SSgt, we wish him all the best. We also say a goodbye, but only to across the corridor, to **Sig** 'Dusty' **Miller** and **Cpl** 'Serious war wound' **Ireland**. Newcomers to the troop are **SSgt** 'Do they have hockey pitches out there' **Baker**, **LCpl** 'Do I get to stay this time' **Morris** and **Sig** 'Crazy Mike' **Buttery**.



Sgt Howes proves that he can meet the height restriction imposed on members of Masirah Troop

SHARJAH TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt Adrian Johnson**
Tp SSgt **SSgt R. Lang**

Easter leave was uneventful for Sharjah Tp and on return we were in much the same order of battle as when we left. Welcomes and farewells are, like the rest of us, on standby until a more solid state of affairs is reached on the manning front. I will say cheerio to **Sgt Steve** 'the peoples poet' **Pickering** who has gone into SHQ after being with us for such a short time. 'It is better to have loved and lost than to have never loved at all'.

Most of April was spent on Ex Red Tricorn 2/Lion Sword which saw us as a Trunk Node plus extra Switches and minus a relay deploy to Ludgershall camp for two weeks. It was to be a static exercise in which we established comms and then had to move. We moved because a member of the public who had purchased a house next door to an Army Camp complained about the noise! After our long and arduous move some 900 metres away we got comms established and solid very smoothly. Well done. **Lt Johnson** had and interesting discussion about batteries with **LCpl** 'I bet you a slab' **Morris** regarding how long his Switch would last on batteries. **LCpl Morris** was subsequently found to be bluffing or he must have been asleep on his Class 1! (possibly both). **Sig** 'Clark Kent' **Searle** had broken his hand. He says he was going flat out on his mountain bike and bailed out. I have it from a reliable source that he was flat out on his back in his pit watching Baywatch!

3 (UNITED KINGDOM) DIVISION HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL REGIMENT'S FORT BOYARD EXPERIENCE

by Lt Hemy, 222 Sig Sqn

Promised ten days in France, Dirty Den and Melinda the noble 'Fort Boyard' Team was formed. Rumour had it that they were more likely to be in for two days in a fort in the Southampton channel, with spiders, crystals and Lycra (well, there have to be some perks). Notwithstanding the fact that **Lt** 'You'll love it' **Hemy** might have stretched the truth, **SQMS Dave** 'A Corps leotard, please' **Allan**, **Sgt** 'Physical Challenge' **Thompson**, **Cpl** 'Windy' **Gale**, **Cpl** 'I'd be delighted to move the panzer another inch' **Hoffman**, **LCpl** '60 reverse dips OK?' **Burgess** and **LCpl** 'Pressganged by the office' **Kidd** filled in the forms, willing volunteers for TV stardom

As if declaring your darkest phobias on paper wasn't enough (and thereby guaranteeing an encounter), they were required to attend an audition soonest and no chance of a make-up artist first. Friday 14 May 1999 started with our willing team posing in front of one of 202's panzers (whose idea was that?). The photographer, in pursuit of excellence, took several shots but no one could quite disguise the vehicle, even using the Unit's flags. Then a swift move to Bristol, where the team were number 91 (?) amongst 90 hopefuls who had been selected from a cast of four thousand. A quick bit of phys (those civvies didn't stand a chance!), some mental work (on a Friday afternoon?) then it was time for a Lycra fitting!. As it transpired, the gentlemen were more suited to shorts and T-shirts, and the girls the gear. At least the television company staff had some useful advice as regards underwear, tightfitting and secure for males, slight and uplifting for females – not the sort of thing usually seen on the CO's Run anyway.

The Unit's team came in the top 30, but was unfortunately not selected for this series. Better luck next time, fame and fortune still beckons (they are keeping your details on file). Thanks to those who supported the effort, but especially to the Team itself, all volunteers who unselfishly committed time and effort. Just too good for Channel 5!



Fort Boyard Team
SSgt Dave Allen finds it hard to contain his excitement at the thought of Lycra and armour in the same day!

EXERCISE TOPHAM HATT - MAY 1999

by Sgt Steve 'Piccasso' Pickering

The exercise started with a white knuckle ride provided by **Andy** 'Schumacher' **Carvin**, who assured us that he wasn't speeding because the speedo was reading only 5mph. The off coming chain gang had warned of ferocious rain storms, however all was looking good so far. After the welcome brief and **Paddy** 'Egon Romeo' **Poole**'s Pie Chips and Gravy, it was time to hit the sack, all the long term inmates went out to taste the local ales, and try the local talent.

Day One proper and we were given our tasks, to say that Rome wasn't built in a day is a slight understatement, **Frank**'s Job List started on page one, and never really found a last page, it probably never will. His key phrase for every day was 'And when you've finished that I've got another LITTLE JOB for you.' Everyone got stuck in to their own tasks with great gusto, this was day one after all. **Ray** 'Stay out of MY corner' **Lang** was busy building the railways answer to a pelican crossing, all who went within the three yard exclusion zone had to have a good reason or feel the wrath of Ray. **Mark** 'Chain Gang Leader' **Eades** spent all his time watching me walk up and down the platform and shimphing about it, 'He'd make someone a good mother-in-law'. The Bungee Twins 'Scraff' and **Mark** spent the day demolishing weeds, they were told to leave the Techs alone but they just wouldn't listen! Herston Station changed shape rapidly over the next few days and the boys were getting visibly more tired as the days went on, whether this was from the work, the amount of beer drunk or **John Simons'** express train like snoring, is open to debate.

The signs that I 'Piccasso' **Pickering** had to produce were coming along although a bit slower than **Frank** would have liked, he just doesn't understand that we artists have to feel the vibe in the work before it can truly be produced. This however was not the case with the Squadron 2IC who took his painting classes on the same course as the play school presenters and failed miserably! It also didn't help that the list was being added to before the first signs were even dry, with the comment 'I've just thought of a few more signs that I'd like **Steve**.' That's the way it is down at Swanage, never a dull moment. Key moments were, **Adam** 'Emergency Bells' **Burman** finally getting the right ringing sound which gave him and the station operators great delight, Geordie 'Smokestack' **Jenning** finishing the Taj Mahal Chimney (Just as well he wasn't a brickie on the great wall of China!). Self Catering for breakfast due to Romeo 'I'll bin her tomorrow Honest' **Poole** not making it back in time.

The finishing of the Platform at Herston Bank, a feat of engineering that even Brunell would have been proud of! The weather held out for the whole time that we were down there even though the weather man predicted rain every day, this made for an excellent week where a lot of the 'Little Jobs' on **Frank**'s never ending list were completed, and a good time was had by all. Well the 'Gang' that I went down with had an excellent time and an enormous amount of work got done, well done to all those involved.

INTER-CORPS HOCKEY TOURNAMENT 1999

by Sgt 'Goalie' Walton

INTER-CORPS LADIES FINAL RESULT
ROYAL SIGNALS 2 - AGC 0

The week started with the Corps team congregating on 1 May at 'stupid o'clock' - yes the Bank Holiday weekend! **Cpl Tracey Hoffman, LCpls Cathy Burgess, Tracey Prowse** and **LCpl Laura Smith** turned up late as they had a prior engagement at MacDonalds and also to make flash cards for the team. The rules included offences such as swearing on the pitch, being a dirty stop-out and any other offence team members deemed to be finable, hence the total money raised was a staggering £84. **LCpl Cathy Burgess** (whose idea it was to make the cards) seemed to be the one who actually paid the most fines. **Sgt** 'Cozzie' **Calabreze** was the social secretary for the week, and organised the spending of it.

On a blistering hot Saturday we ran around like headless chickens under the superb coaching of **SSgt** 'Bru' **Baker**! Only stopping for lunch and then back to the hard work for another couple of hours. Which is not too bad if your wearing shorts and T-shirts but the poor goalkeepers were somewhat uncomfortable in the full goalies kit - kickers and all. The stripey suntan on the back of the legs was extremely attractive though! That evening **Sgt** 'Cozzie' **Calabreze** had organised a team meet-and-greet in the NAAFI only to discover that, as it was a Bank Holiday, it was in fact closed. A quick change of venue was required and where better but the local pub for a few sociable ones. Sunday followed the same routine as Saturday; training, training and yet more training. Monday was classed as a sort of rest day, we only ran around for half a day with the evening given over to bowling. **LCpl Julie Portlock** reverted back to her childhood-she decided to crawl up the stairs on all fours rather than walk up them (either that or she had had one too many lemonades!). Our 'official' rest day saw us travelling to Sandhurst to play against the RMA who didn't have a full team and had to use several of ours.

The actual tournament started on Wednesday 5 May but we were now into our fifth day of continuous hockey. We won our matches (R Sigs vs AMS 4-0, R Sigs vs RLC 5-2)-.fortunately someone wrote it down, otherwise it would have been forgotten in the haze of continuous hockey (or socialising). We were now guaranteed to go through to the semi-final but we still had one more game to play the following day. Again a triumph, R Sigs 4 - RA 1. We finished top of our group, which meant we had an excellent starting position for the semi-finals. This all proved to be too much for the team captain, **Lt Caroline Woodbridge,** who fell asleep at the edge of the astro-turf. Either that or she had had one too many late nights. After winning the semi (R Sigs 7 - REME 1), we then returned the following day for the final. The final was a coup, the team winning 2-0 against the unfortunate AGC. The Corps Ladies team was victorious!.

Our hat-trick heroes were **Cpl Tracey Hoffman** and **Capt Jane Dart**, the team awarding the Best player of the tournament to **Cpl Tracey Hoffman**. Best newcomer was **Kelly Johnson** and most improved player went to **Tina Whalen**. Although it was hard work a very enjoyable week was had by all. A special thanks to **Jo Evans** for bringing over the girls from 1 ADSR just for the training. Unfortunately they had to return to Germany and were unable to stay for the competition itself. Dedication to the Corps or what!!



The successful Inter-Corps Ladies winning Team Captain's recipe for success!

EXERCISE KIWI IRON COOK - *by Capt F. E. Hargreaves*

Ex Kiwi Iron Cook was a 3 (UK) Div Sig Regt Level 3 adventure training expedition based in the South Island of New Zealand between 9 March and 1 April 1999. It's aim was to qualify nine novices on both Summer Mountaineering Proficiency and Rock Climbing Proficiency. These qualifications give a basic overview of the skills necessary to walk and climb with other personnel of the same experience before attempting the entry qualification course of Mountain Leader Training and Rock Leader Training. The Exercise began with the longest journey in the world: two hours to Heathrow, arriving the requisite three hours early, a 22-hour flight via Singapore to Christchurch, NZ and finally a 45 minute coach ride to Burnham Military Camp - the home of 3 (NZ) Sig Sqn. The following day (or is it night?) we set off for Arthur's Pass National Park for the hill walking phase. On arrival we pitched tents and went to sample the local nightlife of one cafe and a petrol station. Not much different from Bulford really!!

The culmination of this phase was an arduous four day 'expedition' through the most unspoilt, remote, picturesque scenery ever encountered. During the 60km journey we met maybe another ten people, crossed over twenty rivers - by foot, rope bridge and 'self propelled cable cars', climbed tremendously steep hills and enjoyed every minute of it (now it's over). On completion of this trek, we invaded the lone café and entertained the locals with our singing and beer drinking capacity. Fortunately we all escaped unscathed and unmolested, ready for a ten hour drive to Queenstown for the next instalment of our adventure. Queenstown is the outdoor enthusiasts dream city. It is the focal point for all travellers to New Zealand and as such is one of the best and most cosmopolitan party towns in the world. But we were there for the climbing... Staying in a YMCA style 'backpackers' hostel, we spent the next five days being taught basic rope techniques, climbing and safety throughout the days, sharing a lovingly prepared meal (thanks Q), and exploring every watering hole in town. After passing our assessments it was time for the R&R phase.

Every outdoor activity you can think of was on offer in Queenstown. We chose only three: bungy jumping, white water rafting and jet boating. The bungy jump was on a purpose built bridge over a river 105m below - 'The Pipeline', and is the highest in New Zealand. Most of the group were bungy 'virgins' and were quite nervous; one even wore his heart rate monitor which rose to 160 beats per minute as he stood on the ledge. The same evening we did a bungy jump overlooking Queenstown just as the sun was setting over the mountains - one of the most amazing sights we encountered and a perfect end to the day. The white water rafting and even the jet boating, whilst a good laugh, did not come close to the adrenaline rushes of the first day. After this it was back in the bus to return to Christchurch, via Mount Cook, to finalise our admin and attempt a quick 'panic tan'. The New Zealand Signals were brilliant hosts, laying on two barbecues and plenty of cold beer. It was with a fair amount of regret that we boarded our bus for the journey to the airport for another marathon travel session. Every member of the group returned home with the most fantastic memories, a store of exaggerated stories and to a much smaller bank balance.

If responding to any advertisements in *The Wire* please mention that you saw it in your Corps magazine

7 SIGNAL REGIMENT

EXERCISE REDCOAT STAMPEDE

Ex Redcoat Stampede was the British Army Triathlon Associations 1999, Spring Training Camp which took place in North Carolina USA from 22 April - 8 May 1999. The aim of the Exercise was to train individual and Army team tri-athletes for competition and to broaden the appeal of the sport within the Army. Of the 50 Athletes who participated in the Exercise, six were from the Royal Signals, they were:-

Maj Bert Appleton (ATA Coach)	-	MOD
Maj Paul Robertshaw	-	HQ 5 Div
Capt Mick Boyle	-	ATR Bassingbourn
SSgt Andy.Iones	-	1 (UK) ADSR
Sgt Mark Chivers	-	7 Sig Regt
Sgt Daphne Clash	-	251 Sig Sqn
Cpl Angie Richardson	-	15 Sig Regt

The Exercise started with an overnight stay at Browning Barracks, Aldershot to finalise all administrative details before boarding an American Airlines plane from Gatwick to Raleigh Durham in North Carolina. On arrival in the USA we were greeted with very sticky, warm temperatures (which weren't to last) and the advance party who drove us to our accommodation at Fort Bragg. The first full day in the States started with an early morning coaching session in the indoor pool before breakfast. We were then on our way to Camp Leynne on the Atlantic Coast to compete in the Surf and Turf Triathlon at Surf City, North Carolina. A five o'clock start reminded us all that we really were on Exercise as the convoy of eight minibuses and cargo vans drove towards the coast and the race start area. Unfortunately as daylight appeared it soon became apparent that the sun would not. Heavy winds and dark clouds were the order of the day.

On arrival in Surf City everyone unloaded their bikes and race gear and began to mentally and physically prepare for the 750m open water sea swim, 20kms bike ride and the 5kms run. Having racked the bikes in the triathlon area the brave - or foolish - went to recce the beach and the swim route. The waves crashing onto the beach and the high sea swell was enough to put the more experienced athletes off the sport never mind the novice, who had never taken part in a triathlon let alone swam in open water! The race eventually got under way and all competitors survived the conditions. The 'British Army' team collected more than half of the trophies on offer and more notably **Paul Robertshaw** was placed first in his age category (by a long way). The day after the race started with a pre-breakfast swim session coached by **Bert Appleton** followed by a three hour drive back to Fort Bragg. The 150 athletes were then separated into three groups depending on ability (elite, intermediate or novice) and had an easy bike ride to recce routes for the week ahead.



(L-R): Maj Paul Robertshaw, SSgt Andy Jones, Capt Mick Boyle, Cpl Angie Richardson, Maj Bert Appleton, Sgt Mark Chivers at the finish of the Surf and Turf Triathalon, Surf City North Carolina

The next five days were spent training in and around Fort Bragg with two physical sessions a day and a lecture which typically covered subjects such as nutrition, hydro dynamics, swim theory, sports psychology, use of heart rate monitors, focusing and attention control. On Saturday 1 May the day began with a pre-breakfast swim session before all three groups drove the five hour journey to Lake Lure which is at the foot of the Appalachian Mountains. This time the advance party met the groups with the keys to five lake side holiday homes instead of the 26 man transit rooms. The holiday homes ranged from very nice to millionaire status and with them having their own private jetties into the lake they made a perfect setting for the next five days of training. The next morning we had the short sharp shock treatment forcing us back into the real world with the convoy departing at 0500hrs for the University town of Clemson in South Carolina for our second sprint distance race of the training camp.



Back Row (L-R): Capt Mick Boyle, Maj Paul Robertshaw, Maj Bert Appleton, Sgt Mark Chivers
Front Row (L-R): Sgt: Daphne Clash, Col Angie Richardson, SSgt Andy Jones

This time the sun came up and the lake was like a mirror. Not surprisingly most athletes bettered their time over this course from the week before due to the better conditions plus the week of expert coaching and training. **Angie Richardson** collected a first place as part of the British Army ladies relay team. The next couple of days had the athletes swimming in Lake Lure every day and cycling around the 'undulating' (hilly) roads around the Blue Ridge Parkway. It was common for groups to cycle for four hours during a session but the panoramic views and tremendous scenery made the rides even more enjoyable. The highlight of the week was the 'Assault on Mount Mitchell' which is the highest peak in the Eastern USA rising to over 6800 feet above sea level. Athletes were dropped off at different start points depending on choice and rode either 26 miles, 18 or 14 miles uphill to the summit. Fortunately it was an overcast day with the occasional light rain flurry which made the cycling more pleasurable. After 2hrs 10minutes the summit was reached followed by the compulsory photo shoot and seventeen cups of hot chocolate, six double cheeseburgers and anything else the restaurant had to aid our recovery.



Capt Mick Boyle at the summit of Mount Mitchell - 6800ft

The final day was spent getting last minutes shopping from the PX and entertaining our American hosts at a Lakeside Barbecue. The Exercise was a huge success for all athletes who attended and hopefully the results of all the hard work and effort put in by the triathletes and the coaches alike will be rewarded by some fine results in the season ahead. The six athletes from the Corps would like to thank their units for releasing them for the exercise and would like to thank the Corps for the financial assistance given.

14 SIGNAL REGIMENT (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)

ROYAL SIGNALS ORIENTEERING CHAMPIONSHIPS 1999

This year the event was hosted by 14 Sig Regt (EW) in its delightful South West Wales location. As well as putting on two days of top class Orienteering we hoped to introduce the rest of the Corps to where we are, and try to dispel some of the Brawdy horror stories. Certainly most competitors found the reception location most welcoming (Brawdy Lanes - the Regiment's bar and bowling alley) and made the most of the provided facilities.

Day 1 was initially bright and clear, however, it lasted only long enough to lull most competitors into lowering their guard and into not taking their waterproofs. **WO2 Flather**, of 280 (UK) Sig Sqn, was the only runner to come in before the downpour started, and was heard to be less than sympathetic to those competitors yet to depart. A succession of sodden competitors and papier-mâché control cards followed making the stats team job particularly awkward. Many teams sampled the delights of Haverfordwest that night, and were no doubt well impressed by the numerous hostelries and night-spots.

Day 2, however, soon brought more unsettled (although dry!) weather for the relay event. The Minor Units competition was particularly close after the first day, eventually being narrowly won by 3 Inf Bde HQ and Sig Sqn. The 14 Sig Regt team had good runs on both days aided by **SSgt (FofS)** 'Ski' **Sharp** (who won both events and was awarded the Corps Open Champion Trophy) and **SSgt (Supvr R)** 'Jacko' **Jacklin** who was second on the C course. **WO2 (Supvr R) Andy Jensen** when not organising and running the event, had time for a head to head duel with **Sgt James Hunt** to settle a matter of honour over who should represent the Regiment on the 'A' Course. **Sgt Hunt** gracefully gave way to his elder and let 'Q' **Jensen** win. **SSgt** 'Olly Magellan' **Campbell** failed to impress on the first day, but after receiving some navigation hints and tips from **JT** 'First Event' **Westley** did considerably better on the second day (viz. not every TA Female competitor beat him). **LCpl Bobs Ennis** did exceptionally well on both days and received the Female Champion Medal. **Sgt Paul Taylor** excelled on the relay event and was first on his course, while **LCpl Burton** had less luck on hers.

A rather confused prize giving ended the weekend with the President of Corps Orienteering, **Lt Col Richards**, presenting the prizes (including one to himself. Our thanks must go to all the Units who made the long trek to Brawdy on their Bank Holiday (especially 216 Sig Sqn who decided to commute from Aldershot each day) who made the event such a success. The Regiment's success in the Major Unit Championships made the hard work more than worthwhile.

237 SIGNAL SQUADRON
KILO TROOP

Tp Comd — **Lt Fraser Reid**
Tp WO — **WO2 (Supvr R) Speirs**

After only two years of Kilo Tp's formation in Brawdy, we find ourselves handing vehicles and manpower to the four winds of the Regiment. The reason for this is the Troop is disbanding and our manpower is being shared with the recently formed light care and preservation Troop, and the remaining Troops of 237 Sig Sqn. Due to the hard work that has gone into getting the vehicles to their best condition, all members of the Troop deserve much credit for their work, which has meant many a missed NAAFI break!

Lt Fraser 'Mac' **Reid** has settled in and completed a week long bread making course in the field; he is very reluctant to return to the signals environment and is considering a transfer to a bakery troop in the RLC. Congratulations on promotion **WO2 Jim Speirs**, you must be able to afford some biscuits now. The remainder of the Troop is either in Macedonia, Bosnia, training for Bosnia or if we are lucky in the garages here in Brawdy. The Troop for some time has been short for manning and we wait apprehensively for the return of our borrowed personnel from their six month tour of Bosnia, we cannot wait to hear the same old war stories! Also manning has helped with the return of **LCpl**'s **Clubb** and **Parsons** from their successful class one course at Blandford.

From the MT side of the Troop we have mixed results! **Sig** 'Richie' **Richardson** decided to take his own NAAFI break and came back to us a few days later. It is nice to see you return safely. Congratulations to **LCpl Camphell** on passing his Driving Instructors course, we all hope to be legally driving every possible vehicle under the sun soon. As normal we can't prise **Sgt Keenan** from his desk, even when on leave. There have been rumours that he's been sleeping there. Farewell to **Sig** 'Alright mate' **Russell** as he ventures to Macedonia to steal as much off the refugees as possible being a 'Scouse'. So Kilo Tp will no longer exist, but the last two years have been extremely rewarding and there has rarely been a Troop with such character. Within the next few weeks, everyone should know where they are off too. The remaining vehicles are to join Tango Tp with at least it seems some of the guys to operate them. So final goodbyes from all members of Kilo Tp as we plan our disbandment drinks down that kicking town Haverfordwest. Good luck to all the guys

LEWT
SNCO IC — **SSgt** 'Happy' **Campbell**

It has been a relatively quiet period for the Troop. We say a sad farewell to **Cpl Martin** 'Gadgets' **South** off to brush his SCROAT skills tip at Beaconsfield. We welcome to the Troop **Cpl** 'Chris' **Doud** and soon **Cpl** 'I live for running Richie' **Bretherick.** The LEWT cadre is to be run in the summer and is open to DISI trades. Preparations are underway to ensure all conscripts (or should that be volunteers) enjoy themselves to the maximum!

VICTOR TROOP
Tp Comd — **WO Matthews**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt (Supvr R) Watters**

It has been a hectic time operationally for Victor Tp over the last four months, seeing **Sgt** 'Rob' **Tones, Sgt** 'Taff' **Willlumsen, LCpl Zoe Wainwright, LCpl Danny Wilkins** and **Sig Willie Hayes** deployed in Bosnia to fulfil the Troops commitment there. The events in Kosovo have also meant that **Sgt Andy Davies, Cpl** 'Tommy' **Tucker, LCpl** 'Paddy' **Neill** and **LCpl Dave Orme** are at the moment in Macedonia to aid the NATO operations. **Cpl** 'Foxy' **Slater** has recently returned from detachment with HMS *Westminster* and it's humanitarian efforts in Sierra Leone.

The Troop has been active in the local area with **Cpl Tracey Dean, Cpl Gareth Davies, Cpl Nicky Collins** aiding other members of the Squadron and the local community to paint Roch Primary School before the Easter holidays were over.

Victor Tp said farewell and congratulations on promotion to the OC **Capt Rob Smith** who was posted to Cyprus, also farewell to **SSgt** 'Dags' **Dagnall, Sgt** 'Kit' **Clements** and **Sig Purves**. A special farewell was said to **Mr Gavin Sutton** on his leaving the Army. The Troop briefly welcomed **Sgt Rob Tones** and **Sgt** 'Taff **Willumsen** before they went to Bosnia. Finally Congratulations to **LCpl Wilkins, LCpl Wainwright** and **Cpl Wright** for being selected on this year's Lance Corporal to Corporal promotion board.

TANGO TROOP
Tp Comd — **Lt Thornson-Swilth**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt Kitchen**

With the operational commitment of 14 Sig Regt the Troop is down to a skeleton staff, however, **Lt Thomson-Smith** still found time to go adventure training in Jordan and was having such a good time he forgot to book his flight back. He did say the travel agent was at fault but which one do you believe? The Troop would like to wish its members the best of luck on Op Agricola and Op Palatine. On that note we would like to welcome our members back from Op Palatine and hope they enjoy their four weeks' leave so they can come back and start training again to re-deploy for the Millennium, only joking I think! Farewell and good luck to **Cpl Andy Staff** and his family who has been posted to Arborfield, training will never be the same again. Farewell and good luck also to **Cpl S. Mulvaney** and family who is off to R.A.F Digby for a two year posting in the gym, (jammy sod). The Troop would like to welcome **Sig Danny** 'I don't want to do that' **Watson** and **Sig Julie** 'I got lost' **Parry.**

245 SIGNAL SQUADRON (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)
Sqn Comd — **Maj Owen**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) Fisher**

Life continues at a hectic pace at the sharp end. The beat up to the trials for the new kit continue with frequent displays, demos and exercises. The Squadron welcomes the new Second in Command, **Capt Graham** 'Boggy' **Ingram** who immediately upset the delicate balance of politeness, decorum and stability in SHQ. In an afternoon of complete mayhem, the RAF cell was kicked out of their office and into W Troop's so the new 21C could get closer to the coffee machine.

WHISKEY TROOP
Tp Comd — **Lt Stewart**
Tp SSgt — **SSgt Clarke**

March saw the long awaited arrival of Odette and within no time the new equipment and vehicles were being tested on Ex Moullon Spring. A valuable lesson in navigation was learnt by **Sgt Pete** 'New Boy' **Farrel,** who decided to use his own initiative when locating his intercept platform. **WO1 Phil** 'Bulldog' **Ashworth** kindly pointed out to him that it would be better if he went to the grids he was given. Nevertheless a thoroughly good time was had by all those not quick enough to get a leave pass in from Chicksands. A huge welcome back to the lads and lasses from Op Palatine and Op Agricola.

ZULU TROOP
Tp Comd — **SSgt** 'Welfare' **Donnelly**
Tp SSgt — **Sgt** 'Pies' **Turner**

Since the last *Wire* the Troop has been busy keeping the Armour on the road and juggling of manpower for inspections, operational tours and the Out Of Use Troop. The Troop would like to welcome into the 'fold' **Sig** New Boy' **Crooks**. We would like to say farewell to the following: **Cpl**

'Jas' **Quilter** off to sunny Cyprus, **Sig** 'Handsome' **Young** and **Sig** 'Tel' **Bacon** both off to Colchester.

226 SIGNAL SQUADRON
640 SIGNAL TROOP (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)

Tp Comd	**Lt Ben White**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Frank Flaherty**

HELLOS

Hello to **Cpl Andy Nicholls, Cpl Russ Ryin, LCpl** 'Fluff' **Foyle, Sig Chris Lloyd.**

GOODBYES

Bye-bye to **Cpl** 'Touchy Feely' **Miles, Cpl Si Dent,** soon to go **LCpl** 'River' **Johnston.**

A FEW WORDS BY CPL RUSS RYAN (NEW BOY)

Well what a place! A first glance at the Troop and one might think that its not real, but it is. Antique kit, no people, and a really big garage, but other than that it¶s a really nice place!

TROON DRIVER TRAINING

'A nice day out to Sennybridge,' that's what they said. It turned out to be knee deep in snow, nice weather for polar bears. **LCpl** 'The drive' **Wright** showed off his skills as a Driving Instructor, or should that be a U-boat commander, by driving in to the deepest puddle you have ever seen. A few splutters from the landrover and some wet feet later he found the steepest slope (or should that be cliff?) and told **Sig** 'Sore Wrist' **Higgins** to drive or fall off it. So with a bit of persuasion he did. **Cpl Russ Ryan**, however, was at the time in the back of the falling Rover. The rover landed with **Cpl Ryan** right on top of **LCpl Wright**. In the meantime **Sig** 'Bacon' **Rolls**, who is incidentally a professional driver showed of his amazing driving skills by getting stuck up to the axle, after all of the younger members of the Troop had gone before him with no problems whatsoever, including **Sig** 'But, But' **Taylor**. The day ended with no serious injuries but a few embarrassed individuals. The whole idea of the driver training was to get the newer members of the Troop ready for the conversion to our new vehicles. The all singing all dancing Pinz-Gauers which will soon be fitted with the best part of our EW kit. Replacing the series three landrovers at last! The Troop is as busy as ever with all that the move from vehicle to vehicle brings.

ROMEO TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt Scott**
Tp SSgt/OpsWO	**SSgt Jacklin**

The Troop's manning continues to resemble a roller coaster, as we received a slack handful of operators following the demise of Hotel Tp, only to lose all our EDs to the newly formed SHQ Tp. Impending goodbyes are due to **SSgt** 'Jacko' **Jacklin,** who leaves us for an equally rainy climate, in July (after spending less than a year in the Unit), and **LCpl Davies**, who is off to 30 Sig Regt. Newly arrived from Hotel Tp are **Sgt Andy Ball**, who brings with him his Boy Racer car, and **Sgt Chris Dunn,** who is due to attend his Army Pilot's course at the end of the year. He can often be heard muttering about 'soaring with the eagles'. Also from Hotel Tp are **Cpl Nicky Dawson** and her crossed swords, **Cpl Di Mulvaney** who is posted to JSSU Digby, and **Cpl**'s **John Pankhurst** and **Lee Holmes,** who promptly left us, temporarily, for the bright lights of London. **SSgt Burke**'s escape tunnel is also progressing well, while **Lt Scott** is telling anybody who will listen, that he is available for detachment. The Troop participated in Ex Whale Splash in Folkestone, earlier this month. This was a rigorous Exercise, designed primarily to provide trade training and detachment familiarisation. The secondary aim, to encourage team spirit and bonding, was carried out with much gusto.

QMT - KARTING GRAND PRIX
by Sig 'Scouse Git' Caine

Cpl Coward arranged an afternoon trip out Go-Karting. On 24 May the QMT Department set out to Letterston for the afternoon. When we arrived we all got kitted out with coveralls and helmets ready to start racing. The first race was a warm up to get us all used to the track. With everyone adjusted to their race-karts the qualifying heats were ready to start. The first race passed with no major problems, but the second race saw the real fun begin, because up stepped **LCpl John** 'The Head' **Blowes**. He managed to crash spectacularly in every heat that he competed in, rearranging the track each time. Next it was **Sgt Tony** 'Say Again Over' **Bland**'s turn to wreak havoc. He decided that because he was in first place no-one was getting past, which ended in disaster when **Sig** 'Scouse' **Caine** attempted to pass. **Sgt Bland** managed to hook his rear bumper around **Sig Caine**'s front bumper and sent them both hurtling into the trees. Meanwhile, **RQMS** 'Daz' **Newton** decided to take his chances over the grass to avoid the carnage.



QM(T) Karting Grand Prix

Things calmed down in the next couple of heats, until, from the bottom end of the track came a terrible crashing noise followed by tyres flying in every direction. **Cpl** 'cowy' **Coward** had spun across the track causing **Dave** 'Porno Tash' **George** to lock up his wheels and assume the crash position. At was at this point that **Sig** 'Simply the Best' **Brennan** came around the bend like a Japanese Kamikaze and added to the already moaning pile of bodies and flying tyres. After minor mechanical work and first aid the race was ready to proceed again, with the strictest of warnings! With all the cars safely back into the pits we all stood, waiting with anticipation for the results. With seventeen racers and only sixteen positions in the semi-final **RQMS** 'There's no necessity for this speed' **Newton** had to sit out the finals. The semis passed without any major problems and four racers qualified for the Grand Final. These included **Sig** 'Caz' **Baddeley** who qualified even after spending most her time on the grass and other cheats. Unfortunately they didn't include **Sig** 'not so hot now are we?' **Brennan** who even after many protests was told to go away in not such polite words. With **Dave** 'where's my sea canoes' **Thorn** sitting in pole position and driving the fastest car one can only wonder how he pulled away so slowly. **Sig** 'scouse' **Caine** started second but quickly took the lead passing 'Chuggin' **Dave.** The fight for Third and Last position was **Sgt** 'Denise Van' **Haughton** and **Sig** 'Caz' **Baddeley** which ended in tears for 'Caz' spinning off onto the grass once again. After a nail biting, action packed, thrill a minute final the scouse git emerged the champion and was duly presented with his Trophy and Sparkling Wine. The day was rounded off by a visit to the Letterston Chip shop. reputed to be the best in Britain. If you want to keep that reputation boys you want to stop using frozen chips and drop the massive prices!

16 SIGNAL REGIMENT

CORPSAAM 1999 - *by LCpl Fatchett*

Despite the deployment of most of 16 Sig Regt's personnel, two teams were put forward to represent the Regiment at the annual CORPSAAM.

The teams were - 'A' Team Capt	**LCpl Fatchett**
	SSgt Dixon
	Cpl Turnbull
	LCpl Atkin
	Sig McGrouther
'B' Team Capt	**Cpl Durrant**
	Lt Hutchinson
	Sig Pearce
	Sig Cole
	Sig Williams

SSgt 'I have lovely blue eyes' **Dixon** put together a gruelling training package prior to the competition. After two days of zeroing at Arsbeck Ranges in Germany, the teams departed for the UK for serious training. The journey across the Channel did not prove as smooth as expected: When arriving at customs, we were challenged with the usual question 'Anything to declare monsieur ?' The reply was, 'Yes, twelve rifles, four LSWs and five pistols!' We were then swiftly ushered into a searching bay where thankfully, the relevant paperwork was produced, before the cavity searches began!



The 'A' Team
(L-R): Cpl Turnbull, SSgt Dixon, LCpl Fatchett, Sig McGrouther, LCpl Atkin

The arrival at 'Stalag' Folkestone was not a welcome one and the camp accommodation could hardly have been described as first class. The catering staff could not find a smile between them, but we settled in and made the most of what we had. The training at Hythe and Lydd was a combination of the application of fire and Tom Berenger. **SSgt** 'Andy' **Dixon's** training strategy was two fold. On the ranges by day and an 'occasional' beer at night. It was mainly due to his influence, that the whole Team was dragged out on an evening. He would then confront the Team at the end of the night with the immortal statement, 'You'll all be sorry in the morning,' and he was right. The 'gun run' in combination with the 100m dash in respirator for the 'Roupell Cup' soon took its toll, as **Sig** 'Pavement Pizza' **Pearce** demonstrated. After one 'heavy' night **SSgt** 'Andy' **Dixon** sacrificed his own shooting time, so he could coach the lads. The fact that he did not feel very well, had nothing to do with it of course! On the same day, **Lt Steve Hutchinson** demonstrated his skill at drill by saluting with the wrong arm. Apparently he has applied for his all arms drill course!

Lt Steve Hutchinson also had problems. Apart from trying to fill his magazines from the bottom, his shooting ability did not make him a candidate for 'Sharpe's Rifles'. Now we know why Officers are issued swords! Admin King **Cpl** 'Rev' **Counter** who entered as an individual, kept our spirits up with both his 'banter' and his shooting skills. By the end of week one he could not hit a barn door. By week two he could hit the barn. The only female on the team was **Sig Cathy Williams**. She found shooting harder than expected. Remembering the format of the shoots was even harder! **Cpl Mick Durrant** heard her saying, 'All these shoots and I'm confused!' It has been said that she regarded every range day like a wedding, so chose to be late! **Cpl** 'Golden Blanket' **Turnbull**, showed that apart from his devotion to his bed, his enthusiasm for shooting was just as great. While dosing off during a 'relaxed' evening brief, he suddenly woke shouting 'Figure twelve targets at two hundred metres, phwoor!' Then continued 'Only five seconds, cor!' 'Go back to sleep Richy', and he did! **LCpl** 'Skinflint' **Fatchett**, showed how much of a scrooge he was by constantly asking for all the cheap drinks when out in Folkestone and also insisting he got his 'free' packed meal from the cookhouse.

After two weeks of intense training, the teams were ready for the CORPSAAM. Despite the present operational commitments, the competition was tough. Obviously no Gurkhas had yet deployed! All members of the team managed to achieve positions in the top fifty. The competition proved good experience for 'young blood' and 'old sweats' alike, giving a good basis for a future 16 Sig Regt team for the coming UKSC(G) competition and next year's CORPSAAM. For the coming competitions in the year 2000, the Gurkhas had better watch out!

SALTASH SOLDIER RECEIVES ROYAL WARRANT FROM HRH THE DUKE OF KENT

Pictured receiving his Royal Warrant direct from **HRH The Duke of Kent** is Saltash soldier **Alan Churchward** (36). **Alan**, whose parents, **Ernest** and **Mary** still live in Cornwall, gained his Royal Warrant on promotion from Staff Sergeant to Warrant Officer Class 2. He serves with 16 Signal Regiment at Rheindahlen in Germany. **The Duke of Kent** was paying a flying visit to meet the soldiers and families of British Army units involved in the NATO operation in Macedonia.



WO2 Alan Churchward receiving the Royal Warrant

DONATION TO ARMY BENEVOLENT FUND

Maintaining the Regiment's links with the City of Leicester (born from the twinning with Krefeld, when the Regiment was stationed there) the 2IC, **Maj Jonathan Turner** attended the annual East Midlands Branch of the Army Benevolent Fund luncheon, in the presence of the Right Worshipful, Lord Mayor of Leicester, **Cllr Phil Swift**. This year, the function was held in the grounds of Thorpe Lubenham Hall, near Market Harborough. At this function, **Maj Jonathan Turner** took the opportunity to present a cheque for £200.00 to the ABF from the Regiment. Accepting the cheque, the Regional organiser, **Col (Rtd) David Ronald**, asked that his thanks on behalf of the Fund were passed on to all ranks of 16 Sig Regt.

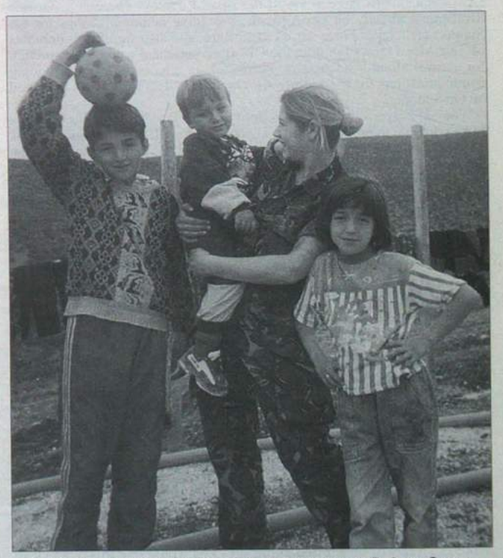
SAN 872 OPERATION AGRICOLA

The SAN group is currently deployed on Op Agricola in Tetovo, 'sunny' Macedonia. The group consisting of 22 young warriors, including a 501 detachment from 30 Sig Regt, are ably providing communications to 12 German Panzer Brigade. International relations so far are going well but the language at times has proved problematic. **LCpl Nat Kemp** found this out to her embarrassment whilst trying to purchase some dental floss in front of a crowd of German onlookers, only to be presented with a packet of three condoms instead! The SAN group established itself well with its host nation, with the only gripe being food. With bread, ham and cheese for breakfast and supper (only slightly more stale) one can understand why! Consequently many pounds and ounces have been shed and several belt loops tightened. A distressed **LCpl** 'Biff' **Fisher** declared he could feel his ribs for the first time in years and subsequently indented for an Exercise Loss..... for three of his chins!

On a more serious note, several members of the detachment have been involved in the preparation of refugee camps at Brazda and Bojane, this was an incredibly humbling but thoroughly rewarding experience. Tasks included the erection of tents, the distribution of bread, the digging of latrines and the collection of rubbish. During their time at the camps each soldier also made time to play with the children and listen to the accounts of the adults. Despite the ordeal most of the refugees have endured, they were in amazing high spirits and constantly thanking the soldiers for their efforts.



Sig Russel entertaining the children with her juggling skills



Lt Bruce playing with the refugee children at Bojane Camp



Sig Russel and Lt Bruce handing out sweets to the children



Sig McKechnie playing with the children at Bojane Camp

21 SIGNAL REGIMENT (AIR SUPPORT)



CO **Lt Col John Terrington**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) John Williams**

STOP PRESS

The 40th anniversary of the formation of the Regiment was celebrated during our annual Regimental Open Day on 10th July 1999. The Open Day was a huge success, and congratulations go to **Maj Chas Dale** and **WO2 Mead-Male** RLC who did make a sterling effort to keep the event alive, despite the large deployment of troops from the Regiment to the Balkans and elsewhere. The White Helmets, as ever, gave an outstanding performance and the all arms military display, recruiting and youth teams were extremely popular. No photos yet, but a full write up in the next *Wire*.

OPERATIONS AGRICOLA/PALATINE/SPOONER/BELL et al

The Regiment now has personnel deployed on three operations and on short notice standby for deployment to a fourth (unless the volcano on Monserrat has erupted since preparing these notes in which case they've now deployed)! There are also significant numbers of both regular and TA personnel working on tasks in the Falkland Islands and on Ascension, proving the capability of this unique unit to integrate the capabilities of full and part-time soldiers.

Clearly, however, the focus is now on the Balkans, where 21 Sig Regt (AS) detachments were amongst the first to deploy. There is a sizeable detachment already on Op Agricola, providing communications for the Support Helicopter Force across the theatre, and also significant numbers of Tele Mech crews building the CIS fibre optic and cable infrastructure for various allied headquarters. Personnel are also in Albania, providing communications for the Mobile Air Operations Team (MAOT) deployed on Op Spooner.

The SH Force Signal Troop in Split and the Tele Mech crews in Banja Luka continue to provide sterling support to Op Palatine, and this remains a significant long term contribution to UK forces in Bosnia and Croatia. For those on the Rear Party, life will remain hectic providing the home end of the long logistic tail supporting the deployed troops. Most are already warned for roulement and those who aren't, are likely to be soon! It is not, and never has been, an easy option being stuck on rear details, and there is a hectic sequence of activity planned, including a battle camp in September. With over half of the regulars deployed from the Regiment, the TA element will be at the forefront of Battle-camp, so start training now!

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj Chas Dale**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Nick Organ**

Another period of frantic activity is drawing to a close with yet another change in squadron personalities. **Capt Guy** 'Wanna buy some ski's' **Richards** has left us and exchanged his beret for a brighter coloured one. I know I speak for both the soldiers and the families here in Colerne when I wish him and his family all the best for the future, his sense of humour, bad ankle and dedication to welfare were a credit to him. Best wishes to **Guy** and **Fran** and stay in touch!

TECHNICAL MAINTENANCE TROOP

TM Tp's personnel have stayed much the same over the last few months with the only new Troop member being **Sgt Mick Heasman** who has been internally transferred from 244 Sig Sqn. The troop is now preparing for the departure of **WO1 Martin Drake** who leaves us in the near future having served 22 years of undetected crime, all of us would like to say goodbye and good luck in the future to both him and his family. Arriving in time to allow **WO1 Drake** to partake in the maximum resettlement package is **WO1 Ady Knight,** welcome. As usual the technicians have lived up to their reputation with **LCpl Dave Bentham** forgetting to take his boots on the Lanyard Trophy competition and **LCpl Jim Harrison** going on leave with the workshop keys. A special mention to **Cpl Shaun Allsopp** with best wishes for his forthcoming driving test (I'm sure he could drive??). Finally congratulations to **Sgt Chris Gearing** and **Cpl Dave Clayton-Batty** on the recent addition to their families and to **LCpl Ed Chwieseni** on the 'B' grade achieved on a recent PTI Course.

MOTOR TRANSPORT TROOP

If the current hectic pace of life could be increased then, what do you need but everyone's favourite event, the PRE inspection. Preparations had been frantic and **Cpl Andy** 'Forget me not' **Doyle** the designated AD88 Register Holder was heard to say 'AD88 what's that?' This seemed to set the theme for the day. The vehicle chosen was 'Steptoe and Son's' SQMS wagon, the oldest in the fleet and as usual the troops were tasked elsewhere. Still life goes on and our thanks go the LAD and in particular **WO2 Wallace** for his invaluable guidance and suggestions. Despite the fast pace various personalities have completed courses and congratulations go to **SSgt Mark Sala** (EFP course) **Sgt** 'Mac' **Macdonald** (RSSC) and **Cpl** 'Esky' **Eskdale** (DI, god help the students). Our best wishes go to **Cpl** (now Sgt) **Pat Howie** on his promotion and posting to Catterick and **Sig Sharon Loftus** on her first operational tour.

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON (V) (TROWBRIDGE)

PSAO **Capt Billy Miles**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Trev Beeley**



WO2 (SSM) Trev Beeley in his squeaky clean new Wolf just signed it out of stores!

HQ and FAC Troop Volunteers have had a very busy start to the training year. A successful Regimental exercise in January formed the stepping stone for some positive joint training with both the regular elements of the Regiment and 43 (Wx) Sig Sqn (V). The first bounty qualification training of the year took place on Dartmoor National Park, a very well attended venture by both Squadrons and a high pass rate from the first attempt at the new ITD training. Trade training is a key feature for this year's training programme. We will be qualifying Radio Operator Class 3 during two courses organised for the second half of the year. Tech, Line and ED training are also meeting with increased success.

Congratulations go to the HQ Tp Shooting Team who were placed second overall at the RSAAM with the team taking a large handful of match trophies. Excellent performances by **Sgt Paul Morse** and **LCpl Damein Black,** and **Damien** also went on to take the best overall B Class shot at the Corps SAAM. Pipped at the Butts Eh! Paul! We look forward to some well deserved adventure training in August prior to deploying onto the Regimental Battle Camp in September.

43 (WESSEX) SIGNAL SQUADRON (Bridgwater)

SSM **WO2 (SSM) Gerry Ward**

Congratulations to **SSgt Mick** 'Old Man' **Franks, Sgt Jeff Scott, Cpl James Jackson** and **LCpls Phil** 'Mafia' **Edis** and **Laura Watson** on their promotions. Congratulations also to **Sig** 'Fozzie' **Foster** on Best Field Soldier and **Sig Andrew Miller** for Best Academic on their recent recruits course at Blandford.

ROLEX 1/99

43 (Wx) Sig Sqn (V) and HQ Sqn (V) were mobilised in the SW of England on ROLEX 1/99 in May. The scenario for the Exercise incorporated both Squadrons supporting the RAF Support Helicopter Force in a UN peacekeeping mission - of course - and the following are some of their stories.

Visit of CNN Reporters (by **Capt David Sleigh**). In line with the scenario the SH Force HQ had a visit from CNN reporters, giving **Capt David Sleigh** and **WO2 (SSM) Gerry Ward** and opportunity to be grilled. A well briefed CNY team went to town with some very awkward questions and showed an inate ability to split the briefing team and visit areas not programmed on the visit. We kept them away from the sensitive areas, but gave them access to various areas of the complex and to personnel who were specifically selected and briefed! They did, however, manage to find and question **LCpl Straniski,** who was not briefed, but he responded superbly, giving them a well reasoned and informative brief without, really, telling them anything!

VISIT OF GENERAL (I WAS A 2LT ONLY YESTERDAY)
MARTIN WILLIS - *by Capt David Sleigh*

RADCON received a fleeting visit from a rapidly promoted **2Lt Gen Martin Willis** (promoted and later stripped of his rank by **SSgt (YofS) Paul White).** He was treated to a VIP briefing on the operation of the Squadron by **Capt David Sleigh** and **Capt Dick Atterbury,** leaving him in no doubt over who the aforementioned Captains believed was the premier Squadron in the Unit - at least at weekends, they said!

REMOTE ACCESS/RECIPE FOR DISASTER
by Cpl John Brennan

Any detachment commander not familiar with the VRC 353 Secure Remotes may wish to take heed of the following advice: it may save you looking like an idiot and then save you from being obliged to write *Wire* Notes about it! 'Oh, the indignity!!'

First, check you have packed all remoting kit before you deploy, thus saving a journey to another location to collect it or another one. Second, remember to tell someone you've actually sent someone to this other, said, location so that they won't feel the need to send a second vehicle, to the same location, for the same kit. Third, when you get your one-way interview, without coffee, and then another one from someone else, remember, they're only doing it twice to get their own back! Still, at least once you've got the kit, it's easy to assemble and the staff and especially the YofS suddenly seems to be much happier.

81 SIGNAL SQUADRON (V) (COLERNE AND NATIONWIDE)

Sqn Comd **Maj Craig Tillotson**
PSAO **Capt John Harris**

No *Wire* Notes **Captain Harris**!!

'What dya mean you're all busy - just how many soldiers are away in Ascension et al at the moment? Really! Wow!

OK then, but we want some good photos from the tuna fishing trips for the next edition!!

STOP PRESS: OCdt Andy Kennedy has completed his commissioning course and was awarded the Top Student Cane - very many congratulations.

220 SIGNAL SQUADRON (LAARBRUCH AND BRUGGEN)

Sqn Comd **Capt (TOT) N. E. Baugh MBE**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Ged Robinson**

The past two months have witnessed a frenzy of activity in the Squadrons' three locations of Laarbruch, Bruggen and Rheindahlen. Work to draw down Lima Tp and SHQ from its RAF Laarbruch location continues apace, while the continued requirement for Tele-Mech manpower in support of numerous operations gives our soldiers a varied and challenging (albeit rather hectic!) lifestyle. If the current climate is a taste of things to come then the Communications Installation Technicians and the deployable Troops forming from the remnants of this Squadron will be in high demand for the foreseeable future.

Notwithstanding our operational commitments, which presently see the Squadrons' manpower working in up to ten different locations world-wide, those of us here in Germany continue to support a range of sporting and military activities. The Squadrons' scratch team for the Morrison Cup came a very creditable third, behind 280 Sig Sqn (and their ringers) and the mighty 7 Sig Regt. (Where was 16 Sig Regt?). Many thanks to the Team Manager, **Sgt** 'Scouse' **Deegan** for doing the donkey work and to **Sgt Andy** 'Akabusi' **Draper** whose grossly over exaggerated athletic prowess kept the team amused all day. Socially we stay very active in no small part due to the efforts of the SQMS, **SSgt John** 'Disco' **Williams** and his family.

ASCENSION ISLAND COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT

Throughout the period 12 April to 28 July 1999 members of 220 Sig Sqn and 81 Sig Sqn (V) have undertaken major projects to replace and enhance the communication infrastructure on RAF Ascension. The existing network of approximately twenty five kilometres of surface laid armoured cable has weathered and degraded rapidly in recent years, to the extent that the entire network now requires replacing. In order to complete this extensive rebuild a cable and duct system linking RAF Ascension and the Travellers Hill complex has been constructed.

SSgt Jonah 'Suntan' **Jones** has supervised the project from conception to completion with input from CPD in Blandford. It has been divided into six consecutive stages, each two to three weeks in duration. The first three stages involved the installation of Telegraph poles and support stays around the Travellers Hill accommodation Areas, the construction of an aerial network to feed these accommodation sites and the installation of a poled aerial route to feed further accommodation areas. The fourth stage of the project saw the laying of both copper and fibre optic cables in the ducted route between the Airhead and Travellers Hill. The final stage has been the connection of two new GPT Realitis exchanges, (installed with CPD to replace the islands' ageing Monarch exchanges) and bringing on line the new copper and fibre cable infrastructure.



SSgt 'Taff 'here's one someone prepared for me earlier' Bryant imparts his knowledge of trip-flares to the Mechs, while Sig Johnny 'Interested' Miller concentrates so hard he can't keep his eyes open

In total this project has seen the installation of nineteen kilometres of underground cable, three kilometres of aerial cable, five kilometres of dropline and eight kilometres of fibre optic cabling. Throughout the project twenty-seven personnel from 220 Sig Sqn, one driver lineman from 7 Sig Regt and ten TA Telemechs from 81 Sig Sqn (V) have rouled through Ascension. Once the work is complete the new infrastructure will continue to be maintained by Ascensions' two resident Telemechs from 220 Sig Sqn.

1999 WELSH 1000 METRE PEAKS RACE

The Welsh 1000 Metre Peaks Race is a demanding 31km fell race organised annually by the Gorsphwysfa Fell Runners Club, and is open to both military and civilian competitors. The route begins at Aber on the North Wales coast and takes in three of Snowdonia's highest peaks (Llewellyn, Carnedd Dafydd, Crib-y-Ddysgl) before finishing at the summit of Snowdon. This year was the 29th time the race had been run, and was also the second consecutive year that 220 Sig Sqn had entered a team. Our team consisted of **Lt Jim Lambeth, Cpl Dave Heath** and **LCpl Martin Ferguson.**

Having only seen the route drawn on a map, and thus not quite fully appreciating the enormity of the task ahead of him, **Cpl Heath** was somewhat taken aback to see a rather large set of mountains stretching out into the distance ahead of him. **Lt Lambeth** and **LCpl Ferguson** were less fazed having entered the event the previous year. The start bell rang at 07.30am, and off we ran. Our tight knit three-man team stayed within sight of the eventual winners, a team from the Royal Ghurka Rifles, for a good 300 metres, and remained together for all of five minutes, which was about the time we hit the first hill. The 2IC, **Lt Jim** 'The Rake' **Lambeth,** disappeared over the horizon not to be seen again until the end of the race, leaving **Cpl Dave** 'Mountains aren't my bag Baby!' **Heath** and **LCpl**

Martin 'Red Ring' **Ferguson** plodding along together at the back. Several hours and two mountains later the team had all passed through the Pen-y-Pass half way checkpoint in varying states of disrepair. Our Admin Support/Photographer, **Sig Dave** 'Dangerous Driving' **Butler** greeted us here with a much needed water replen.

The second half of the race was as strenuous as the first, particularly for **Cpls Ferguson** and **Heath** who decided that the whole thing was just not difficult enough, and immersed themselves waist deep in a bog to increase the challenge. The team regrouped at the finish point, the cafe on top of Snowdon, where tea and medals all round were the order of the day. Looking back over the route there was much cursing of **Lt Lambeth** for having entered the team, but nonetheless a real sense of achievement that three 'airfield-dwellers' from the very flat Dutch-German border had completed it using muscles which had previously been mothballed from basic training. The 2IC (who had clearly become deranged with all this fresh air and the opportunity to escape from his office) voiced the opinion that it would be a marvellous idea to enter a team again next year. Fortunately for Germany's Tele-Mech Troops he's posted in August and won't be able to volunteer them for any more of this stupidity!

Finally the team wish to extend their thanks to **Cpl Dave** 'Fat Guts' **Cascarino** and **SSgt Mark** 'Yeah Right' **Sherwood** for volunteering **LCpl Ferguson**'s services, and to **SSgt** 'Taff' **Bryant** for helping **Cpl Heath** make up his mind to take part.



220's 1999 Welsh 1000 Team
(L-R): Lt Jim 'this is great' Lambeth,
LCpl Martin 'No Sir, it's not that great' Ferguson and
Cpl Dave 'This looks like being anything but great' Heath
at Aber, North Wales, just prior to the off

UKSC(G) SKILL AT ARMS MEETING 11-12 MAY 1999
by Cpl Gaz Place

As seems to be the way with many military competitions, the 1999 UKSC(G) SAAM crept up on us rather sooner than had been expected, leaving only two weeks to select, prepare and nurture the Squadron's crack shots into a competition winning team…that was the dream anyway. The reality was a two-day shoot down at Arsbeck Ranges with whoever could be spared from Bruggen and Laarbruch to determine which of the Squadron's soldiers were most familiar with the difference between the sharp and blunt ends of a rifle. Despite a serious outbreak of poor shooting from those who had heard nasty rumours of a Fire-team Assessment, the SSM, **WO2 Ged Robinson** was able to assemble a team, ably managed by **Sgt** 'Scouse' **Deegan**.

On the morning of the first day's shooting **Sgt Deegan** had his heart set on a victorious return, laden with silverware. For a brief moment this dream looked as though it could become reality as our first firer, **LCpl Matt Pope**, chalked up a very credible score of forty-three. We were soon brought back down to earth though as **LCpls Ian** 'La La' **Lawson** and **Matt Stowell** scored slightly less impressive twenty-sevens and twenty-nines respectively. This was followed by **Sig Shaun Mitchell**, who despite having spent hours in the NAAFI developing the physique for a firm position and hold, only managed a paltry score of thirty. It was left to the LSW gunners, **SSM Ged** 'Sniper' **Robinson** and **Cpl Gaz** 'Targets to your front' **Place** to drag the teams overall score back to something verging on the respectable. The Fire-team Assessment proved less of a physical challenge than had been expected, but unfortunately our top rifle shot **LCpl Mat** 'Heavy-breather' **Pope** suffered from the fog of war as his respirator steamed up, rendering him virtually useless for this shoot.

Day Two of the SAAM saw our erstwhile team manager with his mindlessly optimistic sights firmly re-aligned on victory in the falling plate competition. Regrettably these hopes were dashed as well, but all was not lost. **Cpl Gaz** 'Tin Can Alley' **Place** was lying third in the LSW shoot, and despite very generously firing his first ten rounds into his neighbours target still managed to win the individual LSW event.

The teams' final results were a third in the LSW match, sixth in the Fire-team Assessment and overall seventh. Despite being knocked out of the falling plate competition by the eventual runners-up, **Sgt** 'Bounty Hunter' **Deegan** caught a glimpse of the winners trophy and has already declared his intention to return next year to secure it for pride of place in the Bruggen trophy cabinet…Now now 'Scouse'…, size isn't everything!!

L TROOP – SENSATION SEEKERS - A Brief Résumé
by Cpl Dave Cascarino

Life is becoming quieter despite remaining busy as always at sunny RAF Laarbruch. As with the rest of the Corps, most of the Troop are on deployment, scattered to the four corners of the globe. The ongoing project on Ascension Island is to blame for the mid-spring suntans currently sported by numerous members of the Troop. Former Yugoslavian Republics are currently one of the 'Happening' places for Royal Signals Telemechs to spend their summer holidays, along with the obligatory Big Fl Fun Factory, Greece, Asi and not to be forgotten, the Royal School of Signals. Laarbruch draw-down is now in full swing and postings are flying around twenty to the dozen. For those left here on the airfield ASM pits are the place to be seen, but we're still managing to get a few courses in as well.

Well done to **Sigs Geoff** 'Dumb' **Leather** and **Ronny** 'Dumber' **Warwick** on passing their FA Coaching Courses, pity they couldn't do the same with their three to two upgrading exam eh!!!! Further pats on the back are awarded to **Sigs Joey** 'Licker' **Dunlop, Dave** 'Calling Earth' **Butler** and **Jimmy** 'Grotbags' **Wilson** for achieving what **Geoff** and **Ronny** didn't. **LCpls Marc** 'Dump Truck' **Quinn** and **Chris** 'It's a relationship' **Bain** wait with baited breath for the results of their Q test. (At time of going to press news has just reached the Squadron that **Chris** passed and **Mark** failed on account of not being able to add up).

As part of our continual draw-down L Tp have said goodbye to a few more bods; **LCpl Matt** 'Immac' **White, Neil** 'Bambi' **Bamforth** and **Neil** 'Scouse' **Emmison** have moved down to H Tp in Bruggen, and last but not least, **Sig Brendon** 'Brother of Butler' **Quinn** is off to inflict himself on Civvy Street. Big hellos and welcome backs are extended to **Sig Sean** 'Terminator' **Peart,** who comes to us from trade training in Blandford (actually he only stayed a day, then went to Bruggen) and to **LCpl Martin Ferguson** and **Sig John** 'Jesse' **James** on their return from the Falklands. Finally the whole Troop would like to congratulate **Marc Quinn** and **Michelle** and **Chris Bain** and **Kate** on their recent, and wholly fictitious engagements – nothing like a bit of unsubstantiated rumour and a double wedding to boost morale!!

REGIMENTAL JNCO CADRE
EXERCISE YOUNG BEAUFIGHTER

On Monday 26 April the Regiment managed to assemble 29 from an original cast of 41 students, in the Training Wing, to receive their arrivals brief, prior to commencing the Regimental Junior NCO Cadre. This years Cadre would be conducted over two weeks, the first week in Colerne and the second on Sennybridge Training Area. During week one, students received an extensive session of lectures and training lessons, with the odd morsel of early morning PT thrown in by **WO2 (QMSI) Gary Pither** and his staff. All this was in preparation for the Field Firing and Final Exercise phases, which were to be conducted during week two. Also during week one, students were given the opportunity of testing their leadership skills during some taxing command tasks, with **Sig Liesa Howson** producing an excellent result, which proves it pays to have paid attention at Harrogate.

The Cadre also provided an excellent test bed for the Regiment to try out the new *genderfair* and *genderfree* physical tests. A storming performance by **Sig Neil** 'Forest' **Hunter** secured his position as the fittest student on the Cadre. Unfortunately for the others, it soon became apparent that the ACFT 1, is a very demanding test, with several students arriving outside the qualifying time. Another part of the test that all students found difficult, was the Jerry-can carry, again the time and distance proved too much for some people. The final assessment was Kit Inspection and Drill, which had **LCpl Jonny Nicol** finishing in first place, although **LCpl** 'Don't worry the RSM will just give me five again' 'Thruster' **Thurston,** held him at bay throughout the inspections. Before they knew it, the late nights and early mornings and no time to eat of week one, was behind them and it was time to start the gentler second week. **Sig** 'Budgie' **Burgess** had booked the usual appalling weather for Sennybridge, but he failed to deliver. Instead we had to put up with glorious sunshine. Throughout an excellent five-day Field Firing package, which was conducted by **Maj Chas Dale** and **WO2 (SSM) Steve Dickson,** the Cadre based itself in Farm 3, much to the delight of the students who enjoyed their 6'x 6' Section rooms. The limited sleeping arrangements were soon forgotten when the students realised the benefits of centralised cooking after a day's training.

Assisting on the range package were **Capt Dale** 'I've got a green beret' **Ikin,** who seemed glad to get out of the office and **SSgt (SQMS) Tony Lee**. They both showed the rest of the mere mortals what it was like to live on the edge, when you're Stage 4 - 5 trained. The best Battle Shot was again a closely fought competition, but the clear winner with some exceptional shooting was **Sig Ben** 'Sherman' **Smy,** who also came runner up to the best student. Prior to the test exercise the Cadre said farewell to two of the student's, due to their involvement in the Lanyard Trophy, **LCpl** 'Boots' **Bentharn** and **Sig** 'soft ankle' **Beal.**

During the final exercise, enthusiasm and team spirit were severely put to the test, especially during the casualty evacuation, where **Sig** 'Hulk' **Macalister** came off second best when he tried to wrestle with a tree branch (or was it a twig). Even the jovial **Sig** 'T' **Turner** was seen throwing his teddy in the corner just because the stew containers were full of cold water. However, everyone saw the funny side when **2Lt Sarah** 'Snow White' **Richards,** and her seven dwarfs walked straight through the dawn attack. This affected people so much that **Capts Steve Abram** and **Bill Holbrook,** decided to have a 'lets see how much I can carry in my bergen party'. After a final gruelling tab, the sections made their way to the car park which just happened to be next to the Assault Course. There to meet them, along with the CO, was the QMSI. Before we knew what had happened we had an inter-section competition. This called for a lot of people to dig deep into their reserves. For some, even this was not enough, demonstrated vividly at the Monkey Bars as they got the better of **Sig Andy** 'Little hands' **Day,** who eventually had to be helped across. After some very welcome hot soup and road side change, it was time to head back to Colerne for the pass-off parade and prize giving. This allowed the remainder of the Regiment to see **Sig** 'Sorted' **Seymour** collect a very well deserved prize for top student and **Sig Joey Deacon**, from 220 Sig Sqn collect the prize for most improved student. On speaking to the top student several students asked his advice on how they could be top, to which he replied 'just get yourself on a three month attachment at MCTC prior to the cadre starting'!!



Sig Leisa 'wet T-shirt' Howson' wish I were somewhere else



Sig Clare 'Hawk-eye' Blades 'Watch it mate, I'm trained to kill!'



Whose section is this!?? And who is on the stretcher?



Sig Tammy 'Combat Communications' Yates
is that Posh Pizza Deliveries?



Sig Ruth 'Batwoman' Mackenzie just loafin'!

RUGBY: ARMY MINOR UNITS CHAMPIONS 1999

A highly successful season for the Regiment rugby team was capped on Wed 12 May 1999 when **Sig Steff Gibbs** the Regimental rugby captain lifted the Army Minor Units Cup after beating 42 Survey Royal Engineers by 27 - 17. The cup run started in October (prior to a few of the 'stars' being posted), when the lads gained an excellent win against the Petroleum Company RLC. This game was won on pure spirit with a very young Regimental team pulling through against a larger and more experienced RLC side. December saw the side bolstered by new arrivals **Cpl Lee Francis** (Army & Combined Services) and **Cpl** 'Taff' **McTavish** (Corps) easily overcome HQ Land.

The quarter-final was played at Lynham against the defending champions and firm favourites 29 Regt RLC. In a dower, bad tempered game played in atrocious conditions the Regiment pulled through courtesy of a try from **Sgt Tim Tomkinson**. The semi-final was played at Hermitage home to our future co-finalists against 23 Para Field Ambulance, this was another game which was not for the spectator. The Regiment was unsettled by the commitment of the opposition (you only had to see **Cpl Lee Francis'** eye to see their commitment) and could not settle into our game plan. However, we just held on and managed to struggle on to the final,

So on 12 May 99 the whole squad made its way to Aldershot. The game plan for the final (as for every other round) heavily resolved around the forwards, how wrong could we get it. Although around the park our young forwards were far more mobile than the Engineers (less a few notable exceptions), we struggled to hold our own in the scrum. **LCpl** 'Rhino' **Richardson** had a bit of a baptism of fire soon realising that the transition



Happy and Victorious - Army Minor Unit Rugby Champions 1999

from back row to prop takes a few years. However after going down in the first half we managed to regroup and two tries from **LCpl Dave Benthani** (a winger !!!) helped us to a workmanlike victory. As with all team sports it is the team performance which wins the day however special mention should go to **Cpl** 'Bobby' **Sands** and **Cpl** 'Taff' **McTavish** (courtesy of Regimental Ops via Macedonia), who both had outstanding games. Thanks should go primarily to **WO2 (SSM) Steve Dickson** who has managed, coached and played for the side for the past few years. In a Regiment heavily committed by both exercises and operations, **Steve** has managed to keep the spirit and commitment within the side even if he felt he was banging his head against a brick wall much of the time. From all the team thanks for all you have done for us **Steve** and the best of luck on your future posting as RSM of Birmingham UOTC. Finally thanks to all members of the Regiment and Corps who made their way to Aldershot, your support undoubtedly raised the spirits and helped the team gain the victory.

MORRISON CUP

The team left Colerne in the rain and arrived at Blandford, also in the rain - oh no! Not a repeat of last years competition?! Despite the extremely busy activity relating to Op Agricola, the team had been able to complete at least some limited training and arrived in buoyant mood looking forward to a good days competition, weather permitting. The day got off to an excellent start - the rain stopped and **Sgt Tim Tomkinson** had a resounding will in the 400m hurdles event. The team continued this excellent performance throughout the day, the lowest position of any team member during the day being third. Of course, with only three teams taking part in the Minor Units' competition, bronze medal position was not going to be too difficult! Special mention must go to **Sig Wezley Vegh, Sig Neill Hunter** and **Cpl Lee Francis** for their excellent personal performances.

The competition was close all day, with only one or two points separating first and third positions. The final event of the day was the 4 x 400m relay race, the team comprising both youth and experience - experience in the name of **WO2 (QMSI) Gary Pither.** From the pop of the starting gun it was a one horse race, with our team racing home to an emphatic victory over 216 (AB) Sig Sqn and 210 Sig Sqn. Sadly, it was not enough, with victory going to 216 (AB) Sig Sqn overall. The 21 Sig Regt banner remains held high, however, congratulations to the winners and also to 21 Sig Regt - be proud of ending the day in an excellent second place - and the rain held off!

FOOTBALL: 3 (UK) DIV MINOR UNIT LEAGUE AND CUP CHAMPIONS 1999 – 1ST XI END OF SEASON REPORT

The football season is over and it is time to reflect on another highly successful season for the 21 Sig Regt (AS) 1st Xl. The Team won the 3 (UK) Div First Division and 3 (UK) Div Minor Units Cup Competition and reached the Quarter Finals of the Army Minor Units Cup.

True to his word the Boss **Capt Paul Smith** organised a pre season tour on his home territory, Edinburgh. The fact that the five-day tour coincided with the Edinburgh Festival and the Military Tattoo was a mystery to most of the team but not to the team's other two Jocks, **LCpl**'s **Stuart Johnson** and **Andy Miller** who were completing their fourth and fifth Edinburgh tours respectively. The tour began with a convincing 5-1 win against our hosts 1 KOSB and the standard of football went downhill thereafter. A combination of liquid refreshments and late nights took its toll and on the following two days we were beaten 2-1 by ATR Glencorse and narrowly lost 4-3 to 1 A and SH. A big thanks go to 1 KOSB for looking after us so well and the Boss for organising a fantastic tour.

Having been promoted into the 3 (UK) Div First Division it was anticipated that it would be a hard season. It proved to be, as operational commitments impacted upon the availability of key players at critical times, namely, **LCpl Andy Miller** and **Sigs Kevin Mason, Ben Scott** and 'Geordie' **Singlewood** who deployed on Ops Agricola and Palatine. Highlights of the League programme included a 1-0 win over RSS B team and 6-1 win against WTC within three days and the season ended with two matches against Army School of Avn and 3 (UK.) Div Sig Regt B Team on the same day. We kicked off at Middle Wallop at 2pm, won 5-1, drove to Bulford and kicked off at 5pm, losing 4-1 mainly due to tiredness. It was, however, enough to clinch the League Title.

On the cup front it was again a busy season and the biggest disappointment was losing 4-3 away at ATR Winchester in the Quarter Final of the Army Minor Units Cup. We did however win the 3 (UK) Div Cup scoring 24 goals and conceding only three over four matches, beating CATC BG LAD 2-1 in the final at Warminster. The season ended with the 3 (UK) Div League Winners Cup Final against 14 Regt RA, the Premier League winners. Notable additions to the team are **Sgt Dean Morgan** RLC, **LCpl**'s **Joe Collins, Johnny Nicol, Sigs Neil Coyle, Murray Hunter** and **Mick Young.** We said farewell to **Cpl Cooper** RLC and **Sig John Marlborough** and the management staff of **Capt Paul Smith** and **SSgt** 'Groucho' **Marks,** both departing on posting and unlikely to hang up their boots just yet!



21 Sig Regt (AS) Footballers winners of 'The Double 1999' 3 (UK) Div Minor Unit League and Cup Champions 1999

On the representative front, **LCpls Collins** and **Johnson** have continued to represent the Army and Corps and **LCpl Miller** is the current Corps Goalkeeper. There have been some outstanding performances throughout the season and the players *Player of the Season* award was to **LCpl Al Taylor,** with **LCpl John Nicol** in second place. Well done to everyone involved with the 1st Xl.

LANYARD TROPHY COMPETITION 1999

During the month of May the Regimental Lanyard Trophy team was desperately trying to keep together a team that could compete in the Competition. Due to all the Regimental commitments which like a lot of other units included getting ready for Kosovo, the Regiment was also busy running a JNCO Cadre in Sennybridge at the same time. Both of these activities had members of the Lanyard team in, so it wasn't until the day we left for the competition that we knew who was in the team.

The team left for Napier Barracks with a support crew of **Sgt Jackie Herbert** and **Sgt Kim Castledine** who had us all organised for the event with our energy drinks and bananas to keep us going for the first part of the competition. The first night, after **Capt Matt Graham** had given the team brief, **LCpl Dave Bentharn** informed us that he had forgotten his boots! Relatively important with only 40 miles tab to complete!! Lucky for us we were in a position to bring in a reserve - step forward, boots 'n all, **Sig Skelhorn.**

OC 216 (AB) Sig Sqn started the race and everyone attempted to get a good position to cross the busy dual carriageway a short way from the mass start. After about six miles, **Sig Steve Beal** went over on his ankle, which immediately ballooned and looked very nasty. The choice: back to the start, or carry on to the next check point - anything else would be instant disqualification. Choosing the latter option, he was dropped off (gently, mind!) at the next check point. At Check Point 2, **LCpl Paul Richardson** was also lost due to a bad ankle, but the remaining eight Team members continued, hoping not to lose any more. The Team eventually arrived at the finish point, in seventh place, which was a great achievement considering the problems encountered during the race. Next year, next year!

30 SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO **Lt Col Mike Lithgow MBE**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) Al Higgins**

Firstly proof that the Regimental Ops Team do know what the outside world looks like



The Tech Adjt, Capt James Langley, in action coming second in the Lake Swim on Race the Sun

Capt James Langley was part of the successful Regimental Team on Race the Sun. The Regiment retained the winner's trophy for a second year with a 25 minute winning margin. Once again sorry 2 Sig Regt, try harder next year!

30 SIGNAL REGIMENT ON OPERATIONS
OPERATION UPMINSTER/AGRICOLA
FROM RUMOUR TO AIRSTRIKES

All was quiet in the hangar and offices of 256 Sig Sqn come mid November 1998. The beginning of the silly season was almost upon the Squadron and seasonal parties were well into the final planning stages. The serene (ish) life was disturbed by word from Ops that the OC, **Maj Jules Swindells**, was to go to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) to carry out a SATCOM recce to support UK interests as part of the Multi-National Extraction Force (EF). Before we knew it the Boss was back and we were plugging up the largest DCISLI that we had ever seen including ISIS, NSTN, CUTG, ASMA, x2 Pt-Pt Fax, Patron lines and G2 systems.

On 15 December 1998 after several delays and the much hoped for possibility for Christmas and New Year at home the 18 strong team (2+16) plus VSC 501 (Jasper) left for Skopje and pastures new. On arrival the challenge was unique and very new for the whole crew. We had to get from the APOD to the Panorama Hotel (our home for the next three months) find a suitable location that would supply power, security and line of sight to our primary satellite. Luck and the extreme hard work of the crew were certainly on our side during the initial phase as few problems were experienced that effected the critical systems anchored by the 501. These first months were difficult for all members of the UK EF as everything was new and administration at all levels and in all ways was at times extremely complicated. An example was the provision of adequate accommodation, supply of petrol (the British Army is all Diesel except for some 30 Sig generators) and the provision of clean and safe kitchen facilities.

During this period 20 Fd Sqn RE were extremely busy constructing the UK EF HQ complex, located at Petrovec Airfield. At the same time a team of TeleMechs from 220 Sig Sqn under **SSgt Chapman** installed both Black and Red trunking throughout the HQ building. This would eventually allow the full Deployment of ISIS for the UK EF Staff and the correct Tempesting of all other secure systems throughout the HQ. However for this to happen the 501 and its associated tails had to be relocated from the Panorama to Petrovec. The whole move to Petrovec was controlled by the Sqn FofS, **WO2 Phil Court** and the Sqn YofS, **WO2** 'H' **Lloyd**, new arrivals from the UK to help carry out this critical task. Consequently the move went extremely smoothly and all major systems were available to the staff well within our own self-imposed time scale.



The Crew of VSC 501 Lime relax and contemplate life alongside 4 Armd Bde

Life, as the tour progressed, became a mix of high excitement and methodical routine. An example was the detainment of 21 KVM monitors in February. All went from a quiet afternoon one minute to the entire Coy Gp fully bombed up and ready to deploy, with our own **Capt Nick Peet** to Kumanovo as UKLO to the EF Bde HQ and **LCpl Mick Laughran** as INMARSAT Op in the OC Coy Gp Warrior. Another example was 22 unidentified Helicopters heading towards Petrovec Airfield just after the Airstrikes began (Heliborne Assault?). The Coy Gp was deployed in defensive positions around the perimeter and all other personnel, including the 501 crew who had sent an emergency evacuation signal to the UK, to the Hardened Aircraft Shelters (HAS) for cover. The whole episode turned out to be 18 UN helicopters without IFF transponders but the reality of potential Operational activity instead of Exercise play was brought home to all.

As the Airstrikes continue at the time of writing there remain some 100+ members of the Regiment with x10 VSC 501s in theatre, many of whom have been in theatre since the first deployment on 15 Dec 98. The best wishes of the Regiment go to all of these men and women as they continue on Operation Agricola.



The Crew of VSC 501 Purple relax and contemplate cold meat and weird bread alongside the German Bde at Tetovo

ROYAL SIGNALS SKILL AT ARMS MEETING 1999

This has been an excellent year for the Regiment on the shooting front, becoming the Champions at the Corps and Brigade SAAMs.



Regimental Shooting Team 143 Bde SAAM

The Royal Signals Skill At Arms Meeting was held during the period 12-16 April 1999 at Ash and Pirbright Ranges. The aim of this competition is to assess the standard of shooting skills within the Royal Corp of Signals. Despite the heavy commitment to Operation Agricola, in which all Royal Signals Units are involved, a total of 19 teams took part. Those units that were unable to form a team came as individuals.

30 Sig Regt entered two five men teams consisting of a Young Officer, soldier and three other shots, and was led by **Lt (QGO) Krishna Gurung**. The competition consisted of five rifle matches, a gun match and a pistol match. The 30 Sig Regt team yet again won most of the matches, becoming the Corps champions for the sixth consecutive year! **SSgt Yamkumar Gurung** had an excellent result; winning most of the individual prizes and becoming the Champion at all Arms. **Lt Alexander** had a successful start in shooting, becoming the Best Young Officer.

43(WEST MIDLANDS) BRIGADE SKILL AT ARMS MEETING 1999

The 143 (WM) Brigade SAAM was held between the period 15-16 May 1999 at Kingsbury Ranges. A total of 16 teams participated and there was a fierce battle with our opponents, mainly with 1 Staffords and ATR Lichfield. However, we won all of the matches except Match 4, and became the Brigade Champions for the third consecutive year!

In summary, we have had an excellent year in shooting. **SSgt Yamkumar** and **LCpl Bharat** have represented the Army in the International Shooting competition in Australia. The shooting team had the pleasure of our CO, GM and other Regimental Officers witnessing the event and providing support for the team. We are looking forward to upholding our reputation next year.

TOFFS vs TOMS RUGBY 21 APRIL 1999

'So Sir, you're the Rugby Officer, how do you fancy a good kicking from the boys?' spoke **Cpl Cox**. 'What?' replied **Capt Hill**. 'Seniors and Officers v the boys Rugby match' challenged the aggressive young fool, little realising the task he was about to accept. Half hour later, with clearance from the CO, 'but only with a proper ref', **Cpl Cox** was granted his wish. 'Alright, it's your idea, you organise it'. 'Oh*?*!' came the reply. So it came to pass that on a sunny Wednesday afternoon, ruined only by moments of arctic rainstorms, 30 of the Regiment's finest, of all ranks and ability, met on the field of battle to right wrongs and settle old scores in 80 minutes of hard but fair rugby. 'Cox, you!!?* We've both got the same colour strip on and no spare ball,' muttered various officers and SSMs. 'Yeah, but we do have a 9 x 9 and beer,' came the retort. The Regimental hockey strip (don't tell OC PR1) was rapidly fetched and the game eventually kicked off at around 1500 hours. The toms started with only 14 men and were facing a stiff breeze in the first 40 minutes allowing the seniors to apply the pressure direct from the kick off, but some resolute juniors defence kept them at bay. An early penalty was awarded against the tom's for killing the ball, but the kick was sent wide by **Sgt Mark Armstrong**. The juniors had managed to find the largest and strongest pack possible, which revelled in the rough and tumble of hard physical mauling. Unperturbed, the seniors calmly took control of the game. The definitely older, and maybe wiser, heads played for quick ball so as to unleash the back line.

The first half continued to be mainly pressure from the seniors. A couple of fine breaks by **Sig Andy Doughty** could have brought tries but **WO2 Andy Campbell** stopped him just short of the line. Then shortly before the half time whistle the seniors scored their first try but missed the resultant conversion. Next was **Capt Hill** with a short burst round the back of the scrum to score between the posts. Injuries were now starting to appear. **Capt Peet**'s right eye ballooned (the 'I don't care whose side you are on - just get away from the ball' Adjt's knee apparently to blame), SSM 256's nose was heard to go, and **Maj** 'I'm a teacher, please don't hurt me' **Patterson**'s ribs will never be the same again. Ed, is it just me, or are all these injuries a bit one sided? After the restart the Toms started to put the pressure on and after a quick penalty by **LCpl Lee Hepworth** and a barnstorming run down the centre managed to bring a short spell of pressure to the seniors line. A long kick over the top turned the game around and the seniors were again camped in the toms half. Shortly before half time the seniors scored their second try under the post when a kick through was not cleared and was chased down **by SSgt Jamie Alleyne**. The resultant conversion was stroked through.

The second half started and the juniors had a full team at last when **Cpl Dean Rawlings** made up the fifteenth man, and he made all the difference with a couple of crunching tackles, and excellent runs. But the toms came unstuck when **SSgt Jamie Alleyne** intercepted a stray pass by **LCpl M. J. Holt,** leaving the toms defence trailing and scoring under the posts. The Toms' moment did finally arrive when a lineout move led to **Cpl Greg Cox** crashing over in the corner. The final score was 3-5 in favour of the seniors. A very enjoyable day was had by all and hopefully this will be the start of an annual fixture.



All is forgotten with a beer after the match

Toms Team: **Cpl Greg Cox, Sig Rob Hall, LCpl M. J. Holt, Cpl Jase Curley, LCpl Fred Hazzard, Sig Baz Still, LCpl Lee Hepworth, Sig Oscar Phillips, LCpl Al Harris, Sig Andy Doughty, Cpl Wayne Heaton, Sig Sanj Sanjeev, Sig Steve Worthington, LCpl Phil Dransfield,** and eventually **Cpl Dean Rawlings.**

Seniors Team: Anyone who bothered to turn up.

LANYARD TROPHY

30 Sig Regt entered a male and female team for the Lanyard Trophy event which was held in the North Downs over the period of 5-7 May 1999. Training for the event started in February with the **WO2 (QMSI) John** 'Splinter' **Morton** planning a training programme for the months ahead. The training consisted of two sessions per day with the morning invariably being circuit training and a swim, followed by the evening session concentrating solely on running. The commitments for the Squadrons and soldiers during the lead up to the Lanyard event were quite considerable with each department losing manpower daily to the Balkans. Fresh faces continued to appear on training from different departments with soldiers being gently persuaded that this was undoubtedly the way forward. **WO2 (SSM) Miles** 'I am not leaving until you give me your soldiers' **Webb** cruised the camp pouncing on individuals who he felt could do the job.

LADIES TEAM

After having trained hard for a couple of months under the direction of **LCpl Kaz** 'tabbing queen' **Burrows**, 30 Signal Regiment female Ladies team led by **Lt Teri** 'determined to win' **Downes** recruited a few extras at the last minute, including **Cpl Sarah** 'gwa' **Falconbridge** and **LCpl Ingrid** 'Tech' **Toft**. We arrived at Folkestone and were mothered by our fantastic Admin team which comprised of **WO2 (QMSI)** 'Swahili' **Morton** and **Cpl** 'zinc foot tape expert' **Howe** and **Sig Faye Wood**. The food and drink was 'sorted', feet zinced up and the energy levels topped up all ready to rock 'n' roll. After an early start, **WO2 Mel** 'banana on toast for breakfast again' **Crowther** and **Cpl Tracey** 'happy smiley' **Main** were keen to get on with it. There was just enough time for a quick team pee stop behind some bush before the massed start - wish someone had had a camera.

With the massed start the idea was to get in front of the other female teams - this we managed, but only just, **Sig Ruth** 'second timer' **Phillips** was keeping a close eye on the opposition. The regular Ladies teams were

taking it in turns to follow each other and were neck and neck for the first third of the race. Unfortunately, we had to drop someone at the first and second checkpoint due to horrid, large blisters. The check point changeovers were professional and rrrrr - ap - eeeed, with **Sig Faye** 'admin' **Wood** running around with refilled water bottles and food. After 16 miles we were down to a robust and determined team of eight people, therefore the pressure was on everyone to finish. Everyone battled on, fighting the physical pain and aching limbs. All were insanely jealous of **2Lt Katy** 'Tigger' **Taylor**'s never ending supply of energy - was she ever going to tire? Unluckily for us, one team member began to suffer greatly from an old injury and had to drop out at checkpoint three - bugger - which was us out of the running for the Trophy. During the race nearly everyone had a quiet little whinge, except tough as old boots **Sig Cilla** 'hard as nails' **Black** who determinedly battled on throughout, albeit high on Brufen! We crossed the line in a credible time of 12 hours 10 minutes, with two Queen's Gurkha Signals pipers from the Regiment there to march us in and lift our spirits. Until that is the boots came off. Many thanks for the tasty Gurkha curry. Next time can we please have a vegetarian meal for our recently promoted member of the team who shall not be forgotten in the write up this time, **LCpl Kate** 'Congrats' **Deal**. As our team was incomplete (only seven finished) we were not considered in the overall results. This was most unfortunate as everyone in the team put in 110% effort, well done to everyone.

The winners of the Lanyard Trophy will always be the strongest overall team on the day. This year it was not us, but just wait till 2000 - revenge will be ours!!



The end at last! The Team
(L-R) Cpl Dhal (Piper), LCpl Kaz Burrows,
Cpl Sarah Faulconbridge, LCpl Kate Deal, Sig Cilla Black,
Sig Ruth Phillips, 2Lt Katy Taylor, SSgt Mel Crowther,
Cpl Tracey Main, Lt Teri Downes and LCpl Ingrid Toft

MALE TEAM

SSgt 'Doc 'Don't stop me now' **Halliday** and **Sgt Des** 'No distance is far enough' **Holroyd** both pulled the team together and continually worked to improve the team. **Cpl Rob** 'Work harder' **Howe** took the team away on training weeks to the Downs, Brecon Beacons and hills around Shrewsbury. All this training was progressive, starting with light bergens and progressing to no more than 30lbs. The Lanyard Team also decided that they needed to go away to compete in the Nijmegen qualifying marches at RAF Benson over the weekend of 24/25 April 1999. The 25 miles covered each day certainly hardened a few feet!! **Lt** 'Kangaroo Bruce' **Lee** arrived into 258 Sig Sqn only to be asked what his BFT time was. 20 mins later he was in the Gymnasium training for the Lanyard Trophy.

The Officer Corps were also substantially boosted by the team captain **Capt Rich** 'Ironman' **Carter** and **Capt Harvey** 'landed gentry' **Woods.** All three Officers not only helped towards the construction of the team but also provided the team with considerable morale (especially when **Capt Woods** brought his slippers to the RAF Benson marches weekend)!! **Sig** 'Calm and collected' **Mackay** and **Sig** 'Wobbly' **Lucas** won the record for training session attendance.

The administration team, consisting of **WO2 (SSM) Miles Webb, Sgt Phil** 'Smiler' **Joyce** and **Cpl** 'Taff' **Lean** bought two Tesco trolley loads of Energy foods and drinks for the event. Recces were carried out on three occasions before the race to time checkpoint-to-checkpoint routes and spot the best pitches for administration stalls. Eventually, all was in place and the team set off for Napier Barracks. That evening in the accommodation the atmosphere was tense with the whole team concentrating on the race ahead. Individual drinks were mixed and food stocks were filled into respective bergens and pouches. The three Gurkha soldiers, **Sig** 'smile forever' **Deepak, Sig** 'Guinness' **Ganesh** and **Sig** 'Sig' **Nal** showed their professionalism in remaining cool and preparing well. This preparation proved to be well worth it in the following hours. The start of the event took place NE of Maidstone in the Kent County Showground, finishing at St Martins Plain in Folkestone, a distance of 40 miles. Throughout the preparation, 216 (Para) Sig Sqn looked poised and confident with 249 Sig Sqn and 15 Sig Regt equally keen. The start was a mass race around the show-ground with 216 and 249 pushing forward. 30 Sig Regt wanted a fast start and managed to move out of the showground with these two units. From the start to the finish, 30 Sig Regt, along with 216 and 249 battled against each other, 216 and 249 keeping the lead with 30 Sigs following closely. The determination and guts produced during the event by the team was a privilege to watch. Each individual pushed their team members on when they themselves felt strong resulting in the team maintaining a lead with 216 and 249.



The final hill

30 Sig Regt forced marched up the hill to the sound of the two Gurkha Bagpipers who then led them through the finish, where a silver service lunch awaited. 30 Sig Regt finished in 3rd position with a time of 9hrs 20mins, approximately 30 mins behind the winning team. The next team to finish after 30 Sig Regt were over one hour behind. This was a fantastic result: Well done to all.



The Team
Rear Row (L-R): Sgt Des Holroyd, Lt Bruce Lea Aus Signals,
Capt Harvey Woods and Sig McKay
Front Row(L-R): Capt Rich Carter, Sig Deepak, SSgt Halliday,
Sig Ganesh and Sig Nal. Pipers Cpl Dhal (Left) and Sgt Mangal

RAF BENSON MARCHES 24-25 APRIL 1999

by WO2 (SSM) Miles Webb

Members of 30 Sig Regt entered a marching team for the RAF Benson marches. These marches were the qualifying marches for Nijmegen in July of this year. 14 soldiers travelled down on the weekend of the 24-25 April 1999 to take part. **WO2 (SSM)** 'Motivator' **Miles Webb** persuaded the Regiment that this would be a fun weekend, subsequently names came flooding in. The final briefing on the day before brought the reality home to one and all and the volunteers were left with no illusions about the event that they had to undertake. The Marches required 12 soldiers to march a marathon (25 Miles) each day carrying 10kg. The evening of our arrival saw everyone preparing their feet and sorting out their admin for the two days ahead. **Capt Harvey** 'Smoking Jacket' **Woods,** never one to be outdone, unpacked his slippers. Needless to say, **WO2 (SSM) Miles Webb** walked into the NAAFI towards the end of the evening and asked the whole NAAFI if someone had lost their slippers. Time for a sharp exit!! Both girls who took part, **LCpl Caz** 'Whippet' **Burrows** and **Sig Cilla** 'dont stop me now' **Black** marched both days without even a murmur of pain. **Cpl Jase** 'shorty' **Curley** and **Sgt Phil** 'Smooth' **Joyce** amused everyone each day cracking jokes until the 18 mile point when suddenly the blisters kicked in and the jokes stopped. **Sgt Des** 'Iron Man' **Holroyd** spent most of the day reminding us all every five miles that we had only 5kms to go; this went on each day even when the finish came into sight. The team put in an excellent two days marching, achieving the fastest time of any team on the second day. 30 Sig Regt have now qualified for Nijmegen and are looking forward to participating in the event itself in July 1999.

250 GURKHA SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Richard Wilson**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Chandra**

THE HIGH LIFE
A PERSONAL VIEW OF THE LONG NEPALI COURSE

by Lt Mark Davis

As a proud member of the Queens Gurkha Signals I am eligible for one of the most well located courses in the British Army. Namely the Nepali Long Language Course, run for young Officers in the tranquil surrounding of the British Gurkha Camp Pokhara, Nepal. The camp is a throwback

from the days of the Raj, with white clad orderlies bringing Mars bars on silver trays. Tea, in a small silver teapot, would appear by your bed each morning to welcome you into the new day. It took me slightly under two weeks to master enough of the language to explain that I didn't actually like tea. It was a further week before I was believed, as all members of the British Army must like tea as far as they were concerned.

The course was split into two parts; the main lesson based language part and the three week, unfortunately obligatory, welfare trek. The course was quite intensive with vocab, numbers and Nepali letters to be learnt each night. The written language was the most painful to learn, luckily our instructor was a firm believer in learning through suffering. Once we had passed the 'My name is' stage we progressed unevenly for two happy months in Pokhara. The nightlife was based around the local tourist area beside the lake. Once firmly ensconced with an ice cold beer, we would try to impress female tourists by chatting to the waiters and barmen in Nepali. They, the waiters and barmen, generally were very understanding in our attempts at their language, and happily taught us the rude slang our instructors seem to have omitted from the course.

After completing the course we were all dispatched to check on the spending of British Aid money about the country. I opted to go east, near Ilam, and having been issued three porters I set off for the best part of three weeks. I gained a great insight into the hill life, gaining a healthy respect for the farmers who hacked a living out of the steep 3,000m foothills. I also learnt to be highly wary of local buses and the few roads which wind into the hills. The roads fall away regularly and the buses generally seemed to rely more on prayer than maintenance. Three weeks of two meals of curry, a day later I returned to the capital Kathmandu for last minute shopping and impressing tourists before getting onto a plane for the UK. Needless to say it was bucketing it down when I landed, the first rain I had seen for three months, life can be hard!

THE 1999 SYDNEY TRAILWALKER

by Lt Dhanbahadur Gurung

Trailwalker began in Hong Kong in 1981 as a military exercise run by the Queen's Gurkha Signals, and was opened to the public in 1985 to raise money for charity. Eighteen years later Trailwalker has become a major international event that attracts thousands of participants each year. To date Trailwalker has raised over 10 million pounds for different charities and is held annually in Hong Kong and the UK. 1999 saw Australia's first Trailwalker held in Sydney from 28 - 30 May. Community Aid Abroad (CAA) Australia, with the support of the Australian Army organised the Sydney Trailwalker, and an estimated 100 teams of four people competed over a 100km trail, to be completed within 48 hours. The event took place along the Great North Walk in the northern suburbs of Sydney, traversing one of Sydney's most scenic and beautiful walking tracks.

On 22 May, on the invitation of the CAA, six soldiers from 250 Gurkha Sig Sqn flew to Sydney to compete in the first Australian Trailwalker. In it's eighteen years history, Trailwalker has been won by a team other than the teams from the Brigade of Gurkhas on only one occasion, so we were not surprised when the press and the TV media followed us before and during the race.



The Life of a Star – A Media Photo call
(L-R): Lt Dhan, LCpl Tirtha, Sig Hari, Sig Deepak, Sig Bharat and Sgt Ek

Our team strategy was to run everything - uphills, the downhills, the flats - and stop no longer than two minutes at each checkpoint, and it worked, as it has worked on many occasions in the past. Our team completed the 100km trail in 15hrs 5min, and finished 3hrs 51min ahead of the second team (The Berowra Bush Runners) winning the first Australian Trailwalker in great style.

The following day we found ourselves on the national TV, and suddenly we had become celebrities overnight. The team consisted of the following:

Lt Dhan Gurung	-	Team Officer/Reserve
Sgt Ek Pun	-	Team 2IC/Reserve
LCpl Tirtha Rai		
Sig Hari Limbu		
Sig Bharatmani Limbu		
Sig Deepak Rai		

A three days R&R followed next, so it was now to explore Sydney, and perhaps more than anything to take the time to have the few beers that we had so longed for before the race. A visit to the Darling Harbour, Bondi Beach, The Opera House, The Harbour Bridge, Toronga Zoo, and finally visits to the Exotic restaurants and clubs in King's Cross added extra



Sydney Trailwalker Start Point
(L-R): Sig Hari, Sig Bharat, LCpl Tirtha and Sig Deepak

flavour to our R&R. It was wonderful to win and achieve our aim, and it was also an opportunity of a lifetime to go and visit Sydney. As with all good things the end comes pretty quickly and with this there was no exception. So with proud feelings and overwhelming contentment we flew back to the UK on 2 June 1999.

VICTOR TROOP

As our imminent deployment to Macedonia approaches, V Tp is in a frenzy of courses, leave and preparation. With over half the troop on leave at any one time, the only time everyone comes together is for troop functions. That said, V Tp has had a good month on the whole, despite small numbers in the Squadron. The Tp OC has recently returned from three months in Nepal, and **LCpl Dhir** has successfully completed P-Company. The Tp OC, **Cpl Anjan** and **Sig Lalit** all took part in the Regimental Shooting Team, beating all comers at the Brigade SAAM. On the Exercise side V Tp ran its own Exercise to train our DE/DLs in the basics of CNR. Other Exercises in the pipeline are either aimed at deployment or for Trailwalker, another rapidly approaching Squadron responsibility. A V Tp barbecue on the wet evening of the 29 of May rounded off a generally hectic month.

256 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj Jules Swindells**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Steve Lockwood**

EXERCISE TOPHAM HATT

Ex Topham Hatt saw 11 members of the Regiment deploy to Swanage as part of the on going Corps support to the Swanage Steam Railway. 30 Sig Regt was the first Unit to undertake Ex Topham Hatt in 1984, and has been the last Unit to work on the Railway prior to the 15th Anniversary of Corps involvement, on 12 June 1999.



It's my train and I want to play with it

With the majority of the Sqn out in the Balkans the problem of keeping the rear party busy is a challenge. After a day of persuasion by **Cpl Steve** 'Red Head Metalsmith' **Nelson** and **WO2 Frank Roberts** (222 Sig Sqn, Topham Hatt Liaison Officer), **Capt Mike** 'Chippy' **Grierson** was convinced that the chance of deploying ten members of the Squadron to

Swanage was not to be taken lightly. As the Exercise has been running for 15 years the preparation and organisation need has been streamlined. With one minibus, one DAF and a Chef, the workers left the Barracks on Sunday 23 May 1999. The DAF driven by **Cpl** 'Mac' **McMullen** left some 2½ hours prior to the minibus. Under the careful navigation of **Pte** 'Blacky' **Blackmore**, the Chef, they arrived some 30 minutes after the minibus after sightseeing tours of Bath and Poole.

The group arrived to find a hard standing which would be home for the next week. The tents were erected next to a large warehouse that contained one shower, two toilets and three dismantled steam locomotives. With the Chef back at his trade setting up the kitchen, **Capt Grierson, Cpl Mandy Nolan** and **Cpl Tracy** 'No! I really am a Soldier' **Main**, were shown the tasks in hand. These were to strim a large area around Herston Halt (which is being dedicated to the Corps on 12 June), to rebuild the main fence around the main station in Swanage and build a new comms shed next to the warehouse. Monday morning saw the groups start working. **Cpl Pete** 'Man Utd forever' **Smedley, Sig Johnny Devine** and **Sig** 'Scotty' **Chamberlain** were put to work levelling the ground ready for the prefabricated shed. **Cpl** 'Mac' **McMullen** and **Sig** 'Robbo' **Robinson** set about strimming and the rest of us started to strip the existing fence. After a few hard days graft, the toll was beginning to show. Nearly all the group volunteered to remain in on Tuesday Night and guard the admin area. After the European Cup Final on Wednesday there was still a large amount of work left to be done. With a few sore heads and blurry eyes the work continued on Thursday. By the close of play we had finished the strimming and the Shed. The fence had been fully erected and only required the top coat of paint to be applied.



Cpl 'Mac' McMullen and Cpl Steve Nelson on panbash again

Friday saw the clean up and return to Barracks. The Exercise was a great success and everyone was pleased with their achievements. It proved to be an ideal opportunity for the JNCOs to practice leadership skills outside the normal military environment, whilst helping the local community.

258 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Capt Harvey Woods**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) M. A. Webb**

SQUADRON NEWS

258 Sig Sqn has been as hectic as ever in recent months, but who hasn't in this Corps of ours? If the Prime Minister is looking for proof that the Armed Forces are heavily committed, I suggest that he might want to begin by looking at the commitments being juggled around in the Squadron Operations room. Fortunately, **WO2 (YofS) Jim** 'Continuity Man' **Knight** has been on hand throughout to organise the multiple exercises and operations that have been thrown our way, while the Operations Officer, **Capt Richard Carter**, has been off swanning at Headquarters 11 Sig Bde. Progress with our new role as Joint Task Force Headquarters (JTFHQ) Signal Squadron has been slow but steady, with at least one major exercise with the Staff to confirm that things are definitely moving in the right direction. There are certain to be operations happening in the near future that will test us for real. In amongst all of this organised chaos, the Squadron has still had time to win most of the Regimental inter-Squadron competitions and get four students in the top five on the Commanding Officer's JNCO's Cadre Course. These are but a few of the impressive achievements that confirm 258 Sig Sqn's position as the self professed best in the Regiment.

A major event in SHQ had been the departure of **Maj George Odling** and **Louise**, off out of the Army and on to pastures new. The Squadron bid you a fond farewell and thank you for all of the groundwork that you have laid in getting the new-look JTFHQ Signal Squadron off the ground. Temporarily taking over as OC Sqn is **Capt Harvey Woods**, who should be able to bluff his way through to the autumn until the arrival of **Maj Joe Cooper**.

EXERCISE ZIRCONIUM MERCURY/JOCS ORE
15-21 May 1999

Mid-May was a typically busy time for the Squadron, with Ex Zirconium Mercury and a JOCs operational trial taking place simultaneously. Delta Tp thought that they had the best part of the deal and were all looking forward to running a Joint Task Force HQ (JTFHQ) exercise in South Africa. Closer to the time and plans started to change drastically, due to a lack of RAF aircraft. South Africa became France, which became Carlisle, which became....Longmoor Training Camp! Foxtrot Tp meanwhile were tasked with trialling JOCs, the very latest IT equipment, and making it work over everything from HF and Satcom to digital telephone lines and Ptarmigan. Unfortunately, Foxtrot Tp's location for the exercise was even less glamorous... Hangar 2, Bramcote!

Delta Tp's first challenge was to get to grips with the brand-spanking new tentage provided by MOD Plc. After an intensive two days tent training under the watchful eye of 'the civvy' from the tent company, the 'fleet' of trucks was packed and we were ready to go. Upon arriving at Longmoor, tentage was again the first priority. Thanks to the troop from 23 Pioneer Regiment, proudly led by **Sgt Langridge**, the tents did not present many problems. On the Sunday morning, the Troop were brought back to reality by a 'gentle jog' around Longmoor Training Area, directed by **WO2 (SSM) Miles** 'More PT' **Webb**. It was then back to the camp for final titivation and preparation before the JFHQ Staff Officers arrived.

It wasn't all tents, tents, and tents though and comms played its part too. The INMARSAT and TRC 522 crews did a good job, but the hardest workers of all were those involved in making the JOCs work in the HQ. **Cpl Voyse** in particular earned his pay over those few days. The exercise also gave us an opportunity to trial the latest 'Gucci' HF kit, the Racal Adaptive Communications Equipment (RACE). Two suited civvies turned up from Racal to show how it was done and **LCpl** 'big boy' **Hepworth** and his motley crew did the rest. Needless to say, we can't wait to get the kit for real and no-one was too happy about having to give it back at Endex.

Needless to say, the JFHQ Staff were very happy with what they had seen on the exercise and both us and them developed a better mutual understanding as the days went by. As is traditional, the exercise was rounded off with a barbecue and bar (guarded and served by **Sgt Jill MacKay** and **Sgt Pete Crawford**). Free beers and a brief pause in the rain made for an excellent evening. Meanwhile, back in Hangar 2, Foxtrot Tp had been hard at work getting to grips with the nitty-gritty of JOCs. The boffins from EDS achieved all that they were hoping for and all appeared to go smoothly under the expert direction of **SSgt Paul** 'Admin' **Boughey** and his team of top communicators, including **Sig** 'Bonnie' **Langford**. There must be more to say about the Exercise, but in the absence of any *Wire* notes, that'll have to do.

EXERCISE ARDUOUS CYGNET - 18-30 April 1999

by LCpls Kate Deal and Dave Kyle

Ex Arduous Cygnet was the Commanding Officer's JNCO's Cadre Course run at Beckingham Camp and Proteus Training Area between 18-30 April. After weeks of intense preparation (!) we arrived on the parade square, 23 of the most highly tuned and motivated soldiers that the Regiment could muster. The first week was mostly classroom work consisting of various lessons such as first aid, map reading, NBC, BITS (to name but a few) and, of course, PT. What would a cadre course be without an hour of PT at 0600 hrs every morning with an over enthusiastic PTI, **Sig** 'I don't know the meaning of heavy breathing' **Hari**.

After a week in the classroom honing our field-craft skills, we deployed to our field location to put it all into practice. The field exercise took place at Proteus Training Area near Mansfield and gave each of us the chance to put into practice our leadership skills. Each of the tasks we were given led us to the final assault. Things didn't go entirely according to plan due to a severe breakdown in communications, but then we are in the Royal Corps of Signals after all. Just when we thought it was all over we noticed the ominous figure of the **WO2 (QMSI) Morton** and his gym staff standing by three stretchers laden with full Jerry cans. We were promised that this would be the last exercise before returning to camp and enjoying a well earned beer. For once the DS were right.

The two week course tested everyone's abilities. It was certainly tough, especially when the sleep deprivations set in, but everyone successfully completed the course and two of us are now wearing tapes because of it, so it must have been worth it!!

DELTA TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt Teri Downes**
Tp Sgts	**Sgts Gill Mackay** and **Gaz Middleton**

Operations have taken their toll on Delta Tp with almost everyone being on Op Palatine, Spearhead R1, TFHQ R1, or whatever else they throw at us! So apart from Ex Zirconium Mercury, we haven't really had time for much else. There has however been time for a promotion recently, with congratulations going to **LCpl Dave Kyle**, who came equal top on the Regimental Cadre Course. Congratulations also to **Sig Bridger** on the birth of her baby - hope to see you back soon. The Troop has to make room for more beers as we say goodbye to **Sgt Ken Barker, Sigs Steve** 'Speedy' **O'Rourke** and **Justin** 'Horse' **Fortner** and 'Mrs' **Leach** (and James). We would also like to warn off the following: **Sigs** 'Midge' **Phillips**, 'Beaker' **Griffiths**, 'Courses' **Climpson** and **Richard Maybank**. Arrival's crates are now due.

ECHO TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt George Alexander**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt** 'Doc' **Halliday**

We would just like to say our usual hellos and goodbyes. Firstly, hello and goodbye to **Lt** 'Bruce' **Lee**, who has just joined us from Australia for four months on Ex Long Look and who will probably be back Down Under by the time this reaches print. Hello also to **Sgt Al Barker**, who has just been posted in from 94 Sig Sqn (Windsor), and to **Sig Paul Burns**, who joins us from Blandford. We also sadly say goodbye to **Sgt Mark Reeves, LCpl Roy Constable** and **Sig Lee Stuchbury**, who are all off to

civvy street. Congratulations to **Sig George Chandler** and **Emma** and also to **Sig Gav Williams** and **Sally**, who have been or are just about to be married. It has been a busy and active time for the troop recently, with most of us on duties or Spearhead R1 commitments. Life in the Troop is otherwise pretty normal, with everyone trying to get as much sport in as possible and some weirdoes even volunteering for Trailwalker. However, with a Birmingham UOTC Exercise and also a Troop adventure training week in Devon forthcoming, it shouldn't be all work and no play.

FOXTROT TROOP

Tp Comd	**2Lt Katy Taylor**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Paul Boughey**

We say farewell to the following: **Cpl Sarah Faulconbridge** to 15 Sig Regt, **Cpl Wayne Hunt** off to 35 Sig Regt, **LCpl Stevie Binks** to 8 Inf Bde, **LCpl John Wozniak** to 7 Armd Bde, and **Sigs Frankie Eversfield, William Ferguson and Robert Ward** off to Civvy street. Also, a warm welcome to the following: **Sgt Stu Fidler, Cpl Curley** and **LCpl Lindsey Payton**. Finally, congratulations to **Kate Deal** on finding the lucky dip bag with the stripe in it.

It's been a busy few months for Foxtrot Tp (AKA Guard Tp). Its not all been duties though as the Troop has been busy with JTFHQ and other exercises, the JOCs ORE to name but one. The Troop has also recently had a day out in York on which everybody had a fabulous day visiting the museums and places of local interest (ha ha). Well done to those members of the Troop who participated in the Lanyard Trophy, Race the Sun, Regimental Athletics and the Morrison Cup.



The Troop Commander after a hard swim on Race the Sun

On a final note, congratulations to **LCpl Paul Howard** and **Cpl Sarah Faulconbridge** on their Engagement.

31 (CITY OF LONDON) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS - SOUTHFIELDS

CO	**Lt Col Linda Harrison TD**
RSM	**WO1 (RSM) John Gibson**

The Regiment has been kept exceptionally busy over the last couple of months with a Royal Visit, two Executive Stretch exercises, Range Days, trade training, sports competitions and social events.

HELLOS AND GOODBYES

Good luck to **LCpl Mick Taylor** and **Emma** who have moved onto pastures new at 249 (AMF(L)) Sig Sqn. Welcome to **LCpl Dave Wynne** straight in from 19 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn, who takes over as CO's driver. **LCpl** 'GPS' **Wynne** certainly had an interesting first two weeks navigating around London. It is still a mystery to RHQ how he ended up at Heathrow when trying to find the CO's house in Twickenham!! Farewell to **SSgt Roy Messenger** who moves to 2 Sig Regt. Although the move north may temporarily locate him closer to his wife in Carlisle, the 'system' has ensured that this is only temporary as he deploys to the Falklands next month - good luck & enjoy!! Welcome to his replacement **SSgt Alfie Kirkham** fresh from 14 Sig Regt (EW), we hope you settle quickly and enjoy your tour.

MAYOR OF WANDSWORTH'S DINING OUT

Throughout her time in office **Cllr Prof Elizabeth Howlett**, the Mayor of Wandsworth has provided tremendous support to the Regiment. Therefore it was considered only right and proper that a delegation should be sent to her dining out - oh no not another posh dinner! The CO, Trg Maj, Adjt and RSM all donned their Mess Kits and spent a very enjoyable evening at Wandsworth Town Hall. One custom that the Mayor resurrected was that of the 'Loving Cup'. A large gold cup is passed around the room with each diner drinking from it before passing it on with great amounts of pomp and ceremony.



Adjt and Trg Maj demonstrating the Passing of the Loving Cup!

ROYAL VISIT - HRH THE DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER

On Tuesday 25 May 1999 **HRH The Duchess of Gloucester** visited the Regiment at Kensington Town Hall. The occasion was the 200th Anniversary of the Presentation of Colours to the Kensington Volunteers, the only surviving element of which is 41 (Princess Louise's Kensington) Signal Squadron. A total of 200 guests attended including GOC LONDIST, **Maj Gen Sprackling, Maj Gen Stokoe, Brig Hughes**, as well as serving and ex members of the Regiment and councillors from the Borough of Kensington. The original Colours were presented by the then Duchess of Gloucester in 1799, so it was only fitting that 200 years later it was the current Duchess of Gloucester who came as the guest of honour. There was an exceptionally good turn out from the Regiment. Particular mention goes to **LCpl Laurel Allot, Cpl Manns, Sig Farquarson-Roberts, Sig** 'CB' **Coleman-Brown, Cpl Simon May, Sig Scott Fisher** who all performed brilliantly as Pikemen. Well done to **WO2 (AQMS) Andre Scrivener** who somehow managed to make his way through the crowds to shoot a Regimental video of the occasion. The evening was a tremendous success with many old acquaintances renewed and numerous tales told. With the formalities completed at Kensington Town Hall it was time to adjourn to Mercury House for supper and a couple of relaxing jars of well earned ale. These were certainly enjoyed by the Adjt, **Capt Mel Rayner**, who had spent most of the evening at Kensington Town Hall trying not to fly at 30,000 ft whilst organising more than her fair share of senior officers!

ROYAL SIGNALS ORIENTEERING CHAMPIONSHIPS 29/30 MAY 1999

Who in their right mind arranges the Corps Orienteering Championships to take place on a Bank Holiday weekend in deepest darkest Wales?!!! Equally, who in their right mind actually goes!! Well six members of 31 Sig Regt (V) braved the bank holiday traffic to fight their way out of London and drive the entire length of the M4. As competition time arrived on Saturday the heavens opened, the thunder and lightning started and all competitors knew it was going to be a very wet and soggy afternoon. The 31 Sig Regt (V) female team comprised **Capt Mel Rayner, Capt Sarah Streete, Lt Linda Davies** and **Cpl Becks Strickland**. By the end of Day One all were soaking wet, but this seemed irrelevant when they were enjoying a 44min lead over their nearest rivals. **Sigs Chris Cox** and **Chris Hanlon** both competed as individuals on Day One. Both would like to thank the Regimental Orienteering Rep, **SSgt Neil** 'Snake Hips' **Fisher** for entering them on the longest course again!! All competitors managed to dry out in time for the evening activities. The girls challenged some of the 16 Sig Regt male team to 10 pin bowling - another resounding success!! Gentlemen - despite your protestations of cheating, we didn't need to, you were beaten fair and square - twice! Well done **Lt Linda** 'Aussie' **Davies** who scored a staggering 154 points! Back to the orienteering. Day Two saw the teams competing in the Relay. An excellent run by the Ladies Team saw them increase their lead and win the overall team competition by over an hour. The final total was two trophies and ten medals between the four members of the team!! Well done to **Capt Sarah Streete** for becoming the Corps Ladies Champion (and managing to beat all the TA men on her course as well!!) Congratulations to **Lt Linda Davies** for winning the D Course and to **Cpl Becks Strickland** for coming second on it. The weekend was a tremendous success, great fun and very well organised by 14 Sig Regt (EW) - I guess we can't blame them for their location!!



Capt Sarah Streete with her clutch of trophies as the 1999 Royal Corps of Signals Ladies Orienteering Champion

MAYOR MAKING DINNER

It is a Regimental traditional that following the local Mayoral Elections a dinner is held in Southfields TAC for all the new Mayors of the boroughs in which the Squadrons are based. This year's Mayor Making Dinner took place on Thursday 3 June 1999. The field officers paraded in their Mess Kit and the Mayors in their formal attire ensuring that the event was a colourful and formal affair.

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON - SOUTHFIELDS TAC

Sqn Comd	**Maj Julian Carmichael**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Chrissie Stanton**

SQUADRON NEWS

The Squadron life continues to hurtle along at the hectic pace dictated by the Forecast of Events. A number of new faces have turned up recently, mainly as a result of SDR. So welcome to all those unfortunate people whose units are closing down, we hope that you settle in quickly to your new home in HQ Sqn.

FAREWELLS

It is with great regret that the Squadron says farewell to **Sgt** 'Taz' **Campbell** who has decided to leave the TA. **Tanya** will be missed by all the Squadron and indeed the Regiment. All who worked with this very capable SNCO will know how much of a pleasure it was to do so. All ranks wish **Tanya** and **Mike** all the very best for the future and hope to see you both at some of the social events.

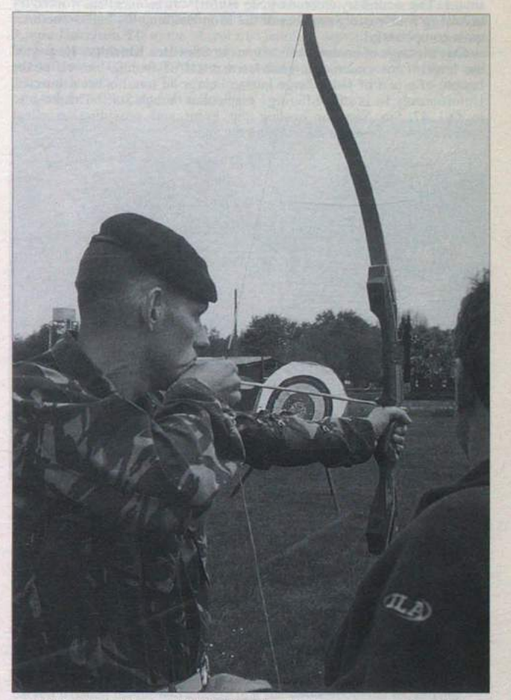
THE REGIMENT V THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF INNHOLDERS SHOOTING COMPETITION - 8 MAY 1999

The Shooting Competition is an annual event which took place this year at both Bisley and Ash Ranges. The Innholders are the Regiment's sponsoring Livery Company and close ties and good friendships have developed between the two organisations. The shooting is just one of many annual joint ventures.

The day began early for the soldiers of HQ Sqn who were tasked to assist their PSI, **SSgt Craig Bruce BEM.** He had been picked from a cast of thousands as the event organiser - well done Staff! After a guided tour of Southern England the Squadron arrived at Bisley (we could say we got lost but that was left to the new CO's driver, time on recce seldom wasted **LCpl Wynne**?).

At Bisley the PSI had a few nervous moments trying to track down one of the civilians who was running one of the ranges. However, assisted by **2Lt Paul Ukpai** the problem was rectified without anyone knowing (well almost). The three ranges taking part were a 7.62mm civilian range run by a member of the Bisley Shooting Club, an archery range, again run by the club, a shotgun range, expertly run by the QM, **Maj Ken Clark** and the QM(V), **Capt Fred Southey** and an LSW range run by the SSM HQ, **WO2 (SSM) Chrissie Stanton**. All ranges were run totally professionally, well done to all concerned. Vital to the success of the weekend were the efforts of **LCpl** 'Am a Londoner ain't I' **Ford** and his side kick **LCpl** 'do you want some gear' **Mackay.** They were tasked with the job of ensuring that the children who took part in the children's archery shoot required no first aid. These two JNCOs successfully achieved their mission much to the delight of the TM, the RSM and the PSI as their children were doing their 'Robin Hood' bit.

WO2 (SSM) Chrissie Stanton, Sgt Martin Oliver, Cpl Becks Strickland and indeed all the team from the Squadron deserve a massive pat on the back for the excellent way they handled both themselves and the guests on the day, well done. The prizes were evenly split between the Regimental Association, the Worshipful Company of Innholders and the Regt. Fortunately though the winning team was RHQ (mainly due to the contributions made by **Lynne, Kay** and **Pamela** - the better halves of the TM, RSM and **SSgt Bruce** respectively!) Well done to everyone for a very successful day, especially **SSgt Bruce** for his excellent organisation. We now look forward to next year's event.



SSgt Craig Bruce BEM taking the Archery very seriously!

THE FLORA LONDON MARATHON 1999

Three of Southfields' finest took part in the London Marathon. They were **WO2 (FofS) Bob Wymer,** running for the 'Anthony Nolan' Appeal, **SSgt Craig Bruce BEM** and **Sgt** 'Taz' **Campbell** running for the 'Find Your Feet' Charity. After months of training, the Troops were suitably ready for the challenge ahead. In the build up to the event as much time was taken to raise money for the respective charities as it was to physically train for the distance! Incidentally, the runners would like to thank everyone who donated their 'hard earned cash' for the various good causes. The runners all started from different locations and 'mingled' in with the thousands of other hopeful runners. The atmosphere was superb. There was a plan to meet up on route but it never happened due to the mass of people taking part on the day. All three runners enjoyed the run, unfortunately **SSgt Bruce** picked up an injury at the 15 mile point but managed to soldier in a painful 4 hours 30 minutes, raising £600. **WO2 (FofS) Wymer** ran an excellent 3 hours and 27 minutes and raised a superb £1000 for his charity and **Tanya** completed the marathon in 4 hours 47 minutes and also raised £500.

REGIMENTAL RUGBY - 31 SIG REGT (V) V 47 SIG SQN (V)

Two months ago the CO was challenged by OC 47 Sig Sqn to a game of Rugby. Apparently the match had been a permanent fixture in the Regimental Calendar up until a few years ago. The CO a keen Rugby fanatic (although obviously does not take the sport seriously, as she supports Wales) immediately agreed to the game and passed it over to the RQMS, **WO2 George Coffin**. Having been given the task, the RQMS and **SSgt Roy Smith** set about trying to find volunteers for the event. After much trawling and arm twisting, 20 fine young-blooded men were found to take up the challenge. A full weekend of training was decided upon. However the date chosen was also one of the many Trade Training weekends that the troops love to attend, or are told that they would love to attend. Unfortunately the training had to be cancelled, because when the 'squad' arrived of the seven who turned up, one was on crutches and two were in collar and tie having forgotten their kit!

One week later on a warm Sunday in May the team gathered at RAF Uxbridge. Having spent the previous evening drinking orange juice at two going away functions, everyone felt fit and raring to go! A quick training session was called for, so that everyone could get used to each other's names, and the shape of the ball. The RQMS decided that as it was a friendly game the team would be on first name terms on the pitch. However, because of the two officers in the team it was decided that their names would be 'BOSS' for OC 83 Sqn, **Maj Mike Jackson** and 'RUPERT' for **2Lt Kieron Francis.** That way, the opposition would have no idea who they were and would not target them - honest! The game commenced and 31 Sig Regt overcame the opposition and won the game 12pts to 5pts, with two superb tries that would have put the All Blacks to shame. The second try (scored by **Sig Hulin**) was an excellent worked try involving nearly every member of the team handling the ball, sometimes quite competently!

One message of commiseration goes to **SSgt Dez Eldridge.** He passed the limit of his endurance, when as a result of finding himself at the bottom of a pile of rather large human beings he tore his neck muscles. Unfortunately he is still suffering - nice collar though Staff! Thanks goes to OC 47 Sig Sqn for hosting the event and providing excellent refreshments before, during and after the game.



The Victorious Team
Back Row (L-R): SSgt Graham Browning, Sig Garreth Burgess, Sig Jethro Rowles, WO2 (YofS) Si Tyler, Maj Mike Jackson, 2Lt Kieron Francis, SSgt Craig Bruce, Cpl Sid Ahluwalia, LCpl Mark Bell
Front Row: SSgt Roy Smith, Lt Andy Lowther, WO2 (RQMS) George Coffin, LCpl Colin Anderson, Sig Hulin, Sig Steve Templeton, Sig Jon Murphy, Sig Kev Spring

41 (PLK) SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj Baker**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Watson**

HELLOS AND GOODBYE

Hello to our new PSI, **SSgt Kirkham**, who comes to us from 14 Sig Regt. Goodbye to **SSgt Roy Messenger,** who is off to 2 Sig Regt and a couple of months in South Georgia. We wish him all the best with that. We welcome five new members to the Squadron who have transferred from the now closed 6/7 PWRR in Horsham. **SSgt Holman** and **Cpl Bedwell** have quickly made an impact on N Tp, **Cpl Taylor** and **Sig Grant** have joined J Tp, and **Sgt Thomas** has come into our recruiting cell. We hope they will enjoy wearing a Royal Signals Cap badge.

200 ANNIVERSARY OF THE PLK COLOURS

25 May 99 saw the 200th anniversary of the presentation of Colours to the Kensington Volunteers. 41 (PLK) Sig Sqn is the only surviving element of the old Infantry Regiment. The Princess Louise's Kensington (PLK) name was added to the Regimental title when **Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll** gave consent for her name to be used in 1908, three years after the Regiment had been granted permission to use the arms and motto of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, and had become known as the 'Kensington Rifles'. The name and colours were passed down to 41 Sqn in 1967, when the Kensington Regiment was finally disbanded.

The reception to celebrate the 200th Anniversary was a grand affair at Kensington Town Hall. HRH The Duchess of Gloucester came as the guest of honour. During her visit she managed to meet many of the serving and ex members of the Squadron. Some of the more senior guests (in terms of age and service with the PLK) had a fascinating tale or two to tell. Most notable was **Col Wood** who served with the Kensington's. During the war he had rescued the Colours and placed them in a chapel and it was his wife, who after the war stitched the necessary repairs to return them to their former glory. The younger members of the Sqn certainly left the Town Hall puffed up with pride for their history and with a greater insight to their heritage and the Colours. The PLK soldiers clearly stood out from everyone else due to their distinctive red and grey stable belts. The Duchess was charming and certainly had an impact on those people fortunate enough to engage her in conversation. It was generally considered to be a very fitting way to celebrate the Bicentenary.



LCpl Pearl Sethna and Sgt Bob Stanton of 41 (PLK) Sig Sqn with HRH The Duchess of Gloucester

EXERCISE COURAGEOUS COMMUNICATOR

On 22 May, the Squadron deployed on Exercise in order to test and carry out fault finding on all Troop equipment in preparation for Annual Camp. We spent a sunny Saturday afternoon in Meredith Woods successfully establishing secure and insecure comms. Then on Sunday morning the Squadron tackled the new TA CFT, once again proving the variety of activities that can be packed into one weekend. Everyone completed the CFT in good time, despite a few blisters and sore shoulders.



Members of 41 (PLK) Sig Sqn (V) taking water on board before embarking on the TA CFT!

LONGHAUL WEEKEND 15-16 MAY 1999

Whilst the Bde Comd, CO and OC 56 Sig Sqn were enjoying a liaison visit to the USA, the Squadron took part in a comms exercise with the 1108th US Sig Bde in Washington. Members of the Squadron spoke to fellow Signallers from across the water. This gave us an opportunity to fully exercise our new Lanward equipment and to put into practice all those hours spent training up on the new system. After the hours of training, the Squadron technician, **Sgt Nick Tuck,** should be an expert on this by now!

KEEPING BLANDFORD BUSY

Members of the Squadron have been keeping the teaching staff at Blandford busy these last couple of months. **LCpls Traynor** and **May** successfully completed their det commander's course in February. Hard work, but I think both girls enjoyed it..... **Sgt Stanton** passed his Class 1 Tele Op (Tg) in April - although they did have a bit of trouble siting their antennas. You would think by the time they reached Class 1 they would know to avoid cows when siting in a field!

56 SIGNAL SQUADRON - EASTBOURNE

Sqn Comd	**Maj Brian Howe**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Kevin Godden**

NEWS FROM THE SQUADRON

Congratulations to **Cpls Light** and **Harding** on their recent promotion. Welcome back to **WO2 Paine, Sig Coleman-Browne** and **Sig Baldwin** who have just returned from a 6 month stint on Op PALATINE - by all accounts a good time was had by all. Welcome to **Sgt Hall, Cpl Young** and **Sig Burgess** who have all recently transferred into the Sqn - we all hope that you settle quickly into life on the sunny (!) South Coast here in Eastbourne. Congratulations to **Sig Wood** who has now been appointed as an Officer Cadet after successfully passing his MTQ2 course last month. Next stop Sandhurst - good luck '**OCdt Wood**'!

REGIMENTAL HOCKEY V 47 SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)

Having challenged the men to a game of Rugby, 47 Sig Sqn then threw down the gauntlet and challenged the females to a game of Hockey. In the space of three days, Seven willing (?) volunteers (including the CO)

agreed to dust of their boots (what boots?) and borrow sticks to represent the Regiment. Several had not played since their third year at school (a long time ago!) so it always promised to be an interesting game.

The opposition scored two quick goals in the first half, despite the brilliance of our goalkeeper, **LCpl Jo Reader**, who would not have looked out of place on a county side. After half-time, we found our feet and got on the score card thanks to two goals by **Capt Sarah Streete**, playing up front and being well supported by Aussie **Lt Linda Davis**. Lt **Liz Fitzpatrick** and **SSgt Chrissie Stanton** defended expertly despite not having held a stick for 30+ years between them and **Cpl Becky Strickland** proved to be very adaptable, playing every position on the pitch. Sadly, although we conceded one more goal before the final whistle and so went down 2-3, we certainly did not disgrace ourselves.

EXERCISE EXECUTIVE STRETCH

56 Sig Sqn were tasked to provide a stand and a command task for around 80 executives trying out at being soldiers for a weekend. We deployed in the field to set up an interesting scenario, brought to life by the imagination of **WO2 (SSM) Kevin Godden** and then spent the next day, putting the civvies under pressure. **Sgt Micky Dowds** was a superb 'blind' radio operator who had to give instructions for setting up and tuning the radio to people who did not even know what a radio looked like. In fact, one started to take the fuse box to bits before **Sgt Dowds** miraculously regained his sight very briefly! **LCpl Eric Gardyne**, who remained remarkably cheerful throughout the day, despite having had both his hands 'blown off', managed to instruct each group in how to erect a radio mast and antenna in order to send that all important message. Our two refugees, **Sig Trish O'Sullivan** and **Sig Evershed** enjoyed the day, dressed in ragged clothes and basically being disruptive, although one group did solve the problem by tying them up! The executives were not quite sure what to do when **Sig O'Sullivan** beckoned for them to follow her in a rather seductive way, even though she only wanted them to mend the telephone line! **Cpl Jason Light** did well, chivvying the executives on in the various tasks. **Sig Richard Baggs** had a great day, firing off the rounds to signal a new attack by the enemy and throwing the smoke bombs and thunder flashes to end the scenario.

To add to the interest, one executive was asked to lay out a helicopter landing pad and learn how to bring a helicopter in as the stores were due to arrive. They got a shock when they found that they had to do it for real! 666 Sqn AAC were with us for the day and really brought the scenario alive when they flew in. We did get some valuable advice from one Major, acting as DS, who suggested that we used a remote control helicopter to make it more realistic, only to find that five minutes later, a real one flew in!

On Sunday, we set up a command task and tested the executives on their ability to set up the field telephones and then send messages using the phonetic alphabet. They looked absolutely shattered and many were suffering from blisters and sore and aching limbs and they still had the assault course to do! **Capt Tony Potter** and **Sgt Martin Cooper** had a thoroughly enjoyable weekend (I'm having a laugh) out in the field with the inexperienced and unprepared executives, acting as their DS. They were certainly pleased to know that next time they were going out on exercise, it would be back with 56 Sig Sqn.

83 (LONDON) SIG SQN (V) - CHELSEA

Sqn Comd	**Maj Mike Jackson**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Jim McMahon**

Welcome back to the PSAO, **Capt Dave Thomas**, who has finally returned from his jolly to Nepal with 238 Sig Sqn - good job if you can get it!! Congratulations to **SSgt Dez Eldridge** and his wife **Denise** on the recent birth of their son **Liam**. Congratulations as well to **Cpl Ahluwalia** on his well deserved promotion. Welcome to **2Lt Andrew Lowther**, a recent transferee from 10 Para (V).

VISIT OF THE MAYOR OF KENSINGTON CLLR DR J. MUNDAY 20 APRIL 1999

83 (London) Sig Sqn (V) were honoured with a visit from the Mayor and Mayoress of Kensington at their TA centre on the night of Tuesday 20 April 1999. The Mayor, **Cllr Dr J. Munday** was briefed on the future commitments of the Regiment and talked to members of 83 and HQ Sqns. He then took a tour of the TAC observing lessons in weapon handling, physical training and trade training. A presentation was then made by the Commanding Officer, 31 (City of London) Signal Regiment (V) **Lt Col Linda Harrison TD** to the Mayor of a painting depicting the last time the Regiment exercised its Freedom of the Borough. Amongst the guests present were **Cllr and Mrs Corbet-Singleton** who were Mayor and Mayoress at the time. The evening was rounded off with a curry supper and the chance to chat less formally.



The Mayor of Kensington takes rifle lessons from Sig Knight under the watchful eye of OC 83 Sig Sqn, Maj Mike Jackson

A FAREWELL DINNER - 22 MAY 1999

The Squadron said 'farewell' to its longest serving member **SSgt Ben Ferguson** at a formal dinner held in his honour. After 30+ years of dedicated service, missing only one Annual Camp, **SSgt Ferguson** amused us with tales of old and words of wisdom. For a man who has served longer than many of us have been living, that's a lot of talking! **SSgt Ferguson** who was famed for this sharp wit and hot sauce will be missed by a Regiment which has benefited over the years from his knowledge, experience and charm.

The opportunity was also taken to say 'Goodbye' to **2Lt Kerianna Houia**, a Reservist with the New Zealand Royal Signals Corps. Having spent the last year on attachment to 83 (London) Sig Sqn (V) gaining valuable experience commanding C Troop, she is now on her way back to warmer climates. **2Lt Houia** made a parting gift of an engraved hand carved wooden plaque and a poem that she wrote about her experience.

We wish both **SSgt Ben Ferguson** and **2Lt Kerianna Houia** every success and happiness in the future.



33 SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

55 (MERSEYSIDE) SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj Micah Cummings**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Paul Williams**

By the time this reaches the hallowed pages of *The Wire* a great change would have taken place in the Regiment; the renaming of HQ Squadron to 55 (Merseyside) Signal Squadron (V). This change in title retains the historic nature of 55 Squadron in its new home here in Huyton. So to mark this change I thought it worthwhile allowing the rest of the Corps, including the retired members, time to digest the history as the Aintree chapter of life closes and a new era begins in Huyton.

55 Signal Squadron (V) was formed on 1 April 1967 as a unit of the Territorial Army and Volunteer Reserve (TAVR). This was the date on which the TAVR itself was formed on the demise of the Territorial Army. The Squadron was the only complete unit of the Special Army Volunteer Reserve, the'Ever-readies', which were introduced by **Mr Harold McMillan**, the then Prime Minister, as a measure to reinforce the Regular army quickly in the event of an emergency. Members of the Squadron were recruited from the former Territorial Army units and from the Army Emergency Reserve. The Squadron Headquarters was established at Townsend Avenue, Liverpool with troops at the Duke of Yorks Barracks, Chelsea (Airhead Troop) and Park Street, Cardiff (Port Troop). The first Squadron Camp was held at Crowborough, Kent. In 1968 the Squadron deployed overseas for the first time when it went to Cyprus in support of the United Nations (UN). During this deployment members of the Squadron wore the famous 'Blue Beret' of the UN. The Squadron then passed through a phase of being without a role, a situation in which it was to find itself on several occasions in future years.

In 1970 Airhead Troop was detached to form the basis of 44 Parachute Brigade Signal Squadron (V). However, a new Radio Relay Troop was formed, at the same time, and based at Old Street, Ashton-Under-Lyne. With this reconfiguration came a new role which was to provide communications and administrative support to HQ Logistic Support. The Liverpool Troop took on the responsibility for the Logistic Support Force (LSF) while the Cardiff Troop were responsible for the Logistic Support Group (LSG). At this time the superior administrative command HQ and head of arm for the Squadron was HQ 11 Signal Brigade (V) who were also located in Liverpool.

1971 saw the Squadron in BAOR for the first time exercising in support of HQ LSF and HQ LSG with 3 Division and 2 Transport Group. It was in the following year, 1972, that the Squadron moved to Grace Road and shared a TA Centre with 'A' Company, 4th Battalion the Parachute Regiment. With the additional room provided by the move the Radio

Relay Troop was moved from Ashton-Under-Lyne to Liverpool. The Logistic Support role continued with camps in BAOR and UK. However, this role was passed to 30 Signal Regiment, a regular unit, in 1977 on conclusion of a very successful final exercise in Denmark.

In 1978 the Squadron had a new role, or rather several new roles together with a major reconfiguration. Support Troop provided administrative support for HQ 8 Field Force, who had a home defence role. 'A' Troop provided Rear Link Detachments (RLD's) for the TA Infantry Battalions of 5, 6, 7 and 8 Field Force whilst 'B' Troop and 'D' Troop provided identical communications support for HQ 8 field Force. Support Troop, 'A' and 'B' Troop were all based in Liverpool whilst 'D' Troop was the former Port Troop in Cardiff. As a direct result of the change in role command of the Squadron was passed from HQ 11 Signal Brigade (V) to HQ 1 Signal Group in Tidworth, Ex Crusader 80, the largest exercise since the end of the war, saw the Squadron fully deployed within its role. The RLD's of 5, 6 and 7 Field Forces deploying to BAOR and the remainder providing support for 8 Field Force in their home defence role.

In 1981 the role in support of 8 Field Force was transferred to the expanded all Regulars 8 Field Force Headquarters and Signal Squadron. Although the Squadron retained the role for providing RLD's for the TA Infantry Battalions of the now re-titled 1, 5 and 19 Infantry Brigades and 'D' Troop in Cardiff took on the provision of Radio Detachments in Support of Tactical Air Command Posts (TACP's), there was a Troop in Liverpool without a role. During a major redeployment of the Army, which included the move of 2 Division from BAOR to York, the Squadron was given the responsibility for providing additional RLD's. This brought the total RLD commitment to 17, the majority in support of the 2 Infantry Division Battalions. At the same time an additional Troop, 'E' Troop, was formed in Cardiff to provide radio detachments for the mobile air operation teams (MAOT's). As a result of their increasing involvement with air support the Cardiff troop was transferred in 1983 to 244 (Air Support) Signal Squadron, a regular Squadron based at RAF Brize Norton. This left 55 Signal Squadron based entirely in Grace Road with a Support Troop and 2 Radio Troops, 'A' and 'B' Troops. The role now was to provide 17 x 6 man RLD's.

In 1984 the Squadron left the cramped and decrepit accommodation of Grace Road for a new TA Centre in Aintree. The barracks was formerly a 'Mothers pride' bakery which, after a £1.8million rebuild gave 55 Signal Squadron one of the newest TA centres in England. Various changes to the RLD's supported by the squadron occurred over the next ten years with assistance given to; 4 and 10 Para, 4 RGJ, 1 Wessex, 3 Staffs, 3 PWO, 6 RRF and 4/5 Rangers.

With 'Options for Change' came a new role for the Squadron and its assignment to the ARRC. Its role was firmly established its RLD detachments deployable worldwide, its parachute trained communicators able to support AB operations and its pool of Radio Rebroadcast Station available in support of any operation.

In 1998 'The Strategic Defence Review' SDR took place and once again a change was to take place for the Squadron. A new Squadron was to form in Aylesbury to be called 60 Signal Squadron and it would undertake the role of 55 Signal Squadron resulting in the TA Centre being closed. This was the most dramatic change in the Squadron's history, however, the trained communicators were not lost to the TA, rather, they transferred to 33 Signal Regiment (V), a Ptarmigan Regiment. The Squadron's title and pennant has also been saved as HQ Squadron of 33 Signal Regiment and been renamed 55 (Merseyside) Signal Squadron, so keeping the title alive in the North West of England.

59 SIGNAL SQUADRON - MAINTENANCE WEEKEND

The Squadron is now in full flow preparing for annual camp. A recent Squadron maintenance weekend proved very successful both in equipment availability and manpower. This was the first weekend that the influx of personnel from 55 Squadron were able to integrate.



Cpl Lorna Brierley and LCpl Kev Tilley showing that integration is being achieved with a smile

There was much work required to ensure our vehicles would be ready and the REME FRT gave good support as can be seen from the photo.



Will this one be going to camp Cpl?

MILITARY SKILLS WEEKEND

The Squadron had a particularly successful weekend at Halton Training Centre recently where soldiers took part in Pistol Shooting, Orienteering, Clay Pigeon Shoot and the obligatory assault course. The Squadron 2IC, **Capt Alan Richardson,** proved he was a good impersonator of Mel Gibson when given a pistol. In line with the CO's directive on returning to camp all those attending received a substantial meal.

34 (NORTHERN) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO	**Lt Col D. A. Hargreaves**
RSM	**WO1 (RSM) N. C. Yarwood**

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS

An update from 'muddle mansion'.

Lt Col 'More energy than a 5 year old' **Hargreaves** continues to do 300 things all at once but always asks for results on the 301st issue. **Maj Simon Green** remains planning everything but managing very little except a release from the Trg Maj's slot in the very near future. **Maj Les Wood** is still the major focus in Corps athletics proving that an excellent RQMS is vital! **Capt Mark Brookes** has finally got his wish in that he is going to the Balkans and his position as Tech Adjt has been dis-established. **WO1 (RSM) Norman Yarwood** remains focused on his BA while maintaining his golf handicap at 28 by playing the 18th hole in 30 shots. El BANDITO! The FofS, **WO2 Kev Sturman**, is counting the days to his departure and the pennies in his wallet! Finally the Adjt, **Capt Dave Wilson**, (or as some would say 'Problem Child') continues to give his own brand of moral guidance and has finally announced his resignation.

HEADQUARTER SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj R. Holmes**
SPSI	**Sgt S. Goodyear**

EXERCISE MOORS CHALLENGE

HQ Sqn is located in Middlesbrough, an area which to most people who have not been there conjures up an image of smoke and acid rain (this is only when the wind is coming from the east). In fact the North Yorkshire Moors are right on our doorstep, so it was decided that Ex Moors Challenge would be the Lyke Wake Walk. The aim of the Lyke Wake Walk is to walk from Osmotherly to Ravenscar via Scarborough, in under 24hrs. A distance of some 40+ miles.

The weather was cold with the odd snow flurry, so rest stops tended to be kept short. Dawn saw us at the Lion Inn on Blakey Ridge, just as those who had a 'lock in' were leaving. Never mind **Sgt Faulder** would be just up the road waiting at the check point with the mini-bus. 'I'm sure you said you wanted breakfast at the next check point sir'. 'Did I really. Tell you what then you drive on to the next check point and we'll have hot tea and bacon sarnies there'. (Not the exact words used but the end result was the same). 'Some people do this walk in ten hours and some do the return trip in 24 hours', explained **LCpl Julie Wilkinson**. At last the sea, and the weary walk down the road into Ravenscar. We didn't break any records, but the scenery was great and we completed the challenge.



Journeys End
(L-R): Maj Holmes, Sig Graham, LCpl Wilkinson, Cpl Williamson, Sig Bibby

LORD LIEUTENANTS CERTIFICATE

Congratulations to **Sgt Bassett** on receiving the Lord Lieutenants Certificate for exceptional service. He has served for 38 continuous years with the R Signals TA. Is this a record?



Sgt Bassett, Lord Gisborough, Mrs Bassett

49 SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj D. E. Sixsmith**
FofS	**SSgt (FofS) Moore**

WELCOMES

The Squadron would like to welcome the following transferees; the new 2IC, **Capt Richard Lenton,** also **Cpl Mayfield, Cpl Malloy, LCpl Franklin, LCpl Wimpenny, Sig Barrett, Sig Basford** and **Pte Mathieson** to Leeds and Hull and we hope that the transition is not too painful. We would also like to officially welcome the new recruits upon successful completion of their recruit training. Well done to **Sig Best, Sig Buck, Sig Crayton, Sig Goldthorpe, Sig Hall, Sig Osbourne, Sig Padgett, Sig Sinclair** and **Sig Stead.**

SQUADRON RANGE WEEKEND

The Squadron, along with 90 Sqn, conducted a Range Weekend on 15/16 May at Strensall Ranges. The aim was to complete ATD Training for the APWT, First Aid, NBC and the LOAC. The Battlefield First Aid proved quite interesting with the soldiers having to cope with an unconscious casualty, a burn victim, a perforated chest wound, a nail bomb injury and finally they had to search for a missing arm. The most arduous part of the entire weekend was the chasing of the sheep off the butts and 100m point. Luckily we have a few imported Welshmen who for some reason seemed to revel in the task.

The weekend culminated in an inter squadron falling plate competition. **Maj David** 'my weapon isn't zeroed' **Sixsmith** was to lead his team against the experienced **Capt** 'Taff 'this is my last year' **Watts**. 49 Sqn went first and almost knocked all of the plates down. 90 Sqn went second and did knock all of the plates down, apparently that means that they are the winners. Well done 90 Sqn, but watch out for the new rules next year. A special mention to **Sgt Dave** 'briefing' **Carr** whose planning and preparation made the weekend a great success.

DUE SOUTH

Our thoughts go out to **LCpl Terri Collict** currently serving on attachment with 'A' Troop, JCUFI. We are thinking of you in your Chinese fighting suit, supping lots of tea and doing bags of PT. Best wishes and see you soon from the Squadron.



New recruits to the Squadron



Lt Ruth Middleton-Powell
briefing a team during the Range Weekend

RAF BENSON MARCH – 24/25 APRIL 1999

The RAF Benson Two Day March is a qualifying march for the Nijmegen Marches. It was decided this year that a Regimental team would be entered. As the name implies the RAF Benson March is conducted over two days with 25 miles being marched each day. Between 800 and 1000 military personnel take part in this qualifying event, including members of the Dutch Armed Forces. The event is not a race, teams being disqualified for racing, but a team marching competition. The male members of the team are to carry 10kg plus water and the female team members are to carry water. The original list of volunteers contained thirty names, but with other commitments that was reduced to the nineteen who arrived just south of Oxford in the early hours of the Friday morning. With reveille at 0430hrs there wasn't much time for sleep and it was a case of finding a dry space in the tent and getting some rest.

The team leader **2Lt Keith Williams** was not too happy when he discovered that his helpful 2IC, **SSgt (FofS) Steve Moore**, had laid his kit on the newly painted white lines. The Foreman's kit, surprisingly, did not have a single mark on it. Cheers FofS! Everybody was surprisingly awake at 0430hrs and ready to hit the road. It was decided to use the smallest member of the team as the pacer and they don't come any smaller than **Sgt Rob McCluskey**, who provided a good pace throughout the two days. One of the great traditions of the marches is the singing, it is even possible to purchase a songbook for a small fee. It was with some trepidation and many delaying tactics that the team leader finally got round to joining the dawn chorus. There is no doubt that the singing helped the team through some of the less interesting periods of the two days, although a greater repertoire will be needed for Nijmegen.

The second day saw the team walking gingerly to the start line, but once they got warmed up the feet didn't feel too bad, looking back on it that is. No one found the two days easy and most would admit that it was harder than they had anticipated. The real strain is caused by the constant pounding of the feet on the road, blisters being the order of the day. All but three finished the two days, a groin strain and blistered feet causing the casualties. A well done to all those that took part and for those that didn't quite make it, there is always next year.



RAF Benson Team, with medals and team award

LANYARD TROPHY

FofS Steve Moore, on initial interview, told the RSM that he would love to be 2IC for the 1999 Lanyard Trophy. **2Lt Keith Williams** shooting the breeze with the aforementioned Foreman declared, 'Oh, I've done it before, the Team that I was in came second'. That is how the Team Leader and 2IC were decided for 34(N) Sig Regt (V). The competition this year was to be along part of the North Downs Way. We decided to tell everyone that the North Downs Way is in Kent and therefore must be a totally flat course. The volunteers came thick and fast, well if a trickle can be called fast. It was decided to try and get an even mix between TA and Regulars. The team was:

OC	**2Lt Keith Williams** 2IC	**SSgt (FofS) Steve Moore**
	Capt Dave Wilson	**SSgt Rob Eden**
	SSgt Mick Ginty	**LCpl Si Clayton**
	Sig Rob Crayton	**Sig Ben Martindale**
	Sig Rob Parkes	**Sig Adie Sutcliffe**

Things did not begin too well as we had to climb over the gate at the Kent County Show-ground to reach the start line. Not to worry, the normal Lanyard reunion conversations began and then we were off. The start was more exciting than any Grand Prix with teams changing positions many times before the show-ground circuit was completed. The route itself was fairly straight forward although our thanks go to **Capt Sophie Davies** whose team showed us the way on one tricky little section. It certainly wasn't completely flat. A special mention must be made of **Sig Martindale** and **LCpl Clayton** whose determination kept them going when others might have taken the easy option. **Sig Crayton** is certainly getting stuck in to the TA life as he has completed the Lanyard Trophy before he even has a Regimental number.

The Team had come together with very little training and finished as a sweaty, smiling heap of team spirit. That is what it is all about! Thanks go to **Sgt Chas Base**, the admin man, great job and to **SSgt Mick Ginty** who stepped into the breach at the eleventh hour. Thanks must also go to 216 Para Sig Sqn who hosted the event for the last time, see you all next year.



The end and never again! *(Well, until next year!)*

LORD LIEUTENANTS CERTIFICATE

Congratulations to **SSgt Holdstock** on receiving his Lord Lieutenant's Certificate for exceptional service.

The Wire
is YOUR magazine
Air YOUR views . . .
Share YOUR views



SSgt Holdstock receiving his Lord Lieutenant Certificate

90(NR) SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

Sqn Comd	**Maj I. T. Hall**
SPSI	**SSgt C. Dawson**

NATIONAL HALF MARATHON CHAMPION



Sgt Patterson winning the TA Half Marathon

Sgt Kevin Patterson of 90 Sig Sqn at Brambles Farm has achieved remarkable success recently in winning the Territorial Army Half Marathon Championships. Competing against both regular and TA soldiers, **Sgt Patterson** was placed 13th overall and won the TA event outright in a time of 73.09. To add to his success he has also led a team to victory in the Wallsend 10km Road Race. This is an annual event, and the team, consisting of **Sgt Patterson, SSgt Gary Jowers, SSgt Rob Eden, Cpl Eddie Walker, Sig Gareth Martinez** and **Sig John Twinberrow** won the event for the second year running against stiff opposition from other local units.

REGIMENTAL SHOOTING TEAM

The Regimental Shooting Team has just completed an extremely busy few months. Following an off the cuff suggestion that 'perhaps we should try field firing', **SSgt Colin** 'Buttons' **Dawson** earned himself the task of training the team for a field firing exercise. This was no easy task, since only one of the team had done this before. Months of preparation followed, usually in the driving rain of a Catterick range day, until finally the team and safety staff were ready.

Arriving at Feldom range, we were all disappointed to find a bright sunny morning – we certainly hadn't trained for that! After the usual debate over who could throw the smoke grenades and thunder-flashes the furthest, the firing began. **Sgt Dave** 'Rambo' **Smith** led the first assault, aided by **Sgt Graham** 'Let me throw it' **MacFarlane**. Between them they managed to arrange an underwater reorg, which made us all feel at home – a dry range? Never! Having shot everything in sight, the morning was over in a flash, and the war stories began over lunch, including **Sgt Gary** 'More rounds' **Openshaw**'s apparently single handed attempt to 'keep their heads down'. The afternoons Exercise continued in the same vein, particularly after the CO arrived just in time to see a heroic attack on the last enemy position by **LCpl Dave** 'Follow me!' **Ross** and **Lt Simon** 'No you follow me!' **Smith** who both disappeared into the thick smoke screaming wildly and shooting anything that moved (except each other). **Sig Gareth Martinez** managed to get the right target every time, and even **Cpls Kev Pountain** and **Ian Evans** got into the spirit of things, using enough rounds to halt an entire army. The Exercise was a complete success, despite the time it took to complete all the training, and thanks to **SSgt Dawson, SSgt Gus Honey** and **Sgt Ian Cleavey**, who ran the Exercise, plus **Sgt Ian Lockwood, Sgt Jon Barrass, Sgt MacFarlane** and **Lt Smith** who provided the safety team.

During the training phase, we managed to fit in little things like the Corps SAAM at Pirbright, where **Sgt Gary Openshaw** won the individual FIBUA shoot and finished third overall, and **Lt Simon Smith** won a bronze bar in the pistol shoot. Contrary to popular belief this was for actually hitting the target, not just frightening it. **Cpl Ian Evans** won the prize for the person most likely to miss the train during Saturday evenings entertainment, and **LCpl Marianne Meek** got the 'Game for a Laugh' award for her interesting choice of hair colour (bright red – a mistake she claims). We also entered the 2 Div SAAM, where Catterick lived up to its reputation, and despite our best efforts the howling wind managed to knock down more falling plates than our shooting! Apparently it's not the winning, it's the taking part that counts! (At least that's our excuse).

Sadly, we have to say goodbye to **SSgt Colin Dawson**, who is now posted to 2 Sig Regt. His enthusiasm for shooting, and passion for fastening buttons, has been infectious, and from a starting point of 'what's competition shooting?' a couple of years ago, we now have a team of regular firers and a plan to build on our successes in future years. Thanks for all your hard work and help **Colin**, and good luck in your new post.



Regimental Shooting Team

35 (SOUTH MIDLANDS) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)



LIEUTENANT COLONEL MILES STOCKDALE MBE

It is with the deepest sadness and regret that we have to announce the death of a much beloved and respected Commanding Officer who died after a short illness on Thursday 24 June. **Col Miles** was a strong, active and determined leader who set, demanded and maintained high standards but was also a kind, generous, considerate and compassionate man who loved soldiering, cared passionately for his Regiment and despite his ailment lived life to the full. His early loss has left all members of the Regiment and his many friends and colleagues both stunned and distressed. He will be missed by all who knew him and our prayers and thoughts are with his wife **Jane** and the children.

A DEBT OF HONOUR

54 years to the day, on Sunday 30 May, a debt of honour was repaid to the Shropshire Yeomanry by the New Zealand Army. On this celebrated and very special day **Brig Rick Ottaway**, Chief of the New Zealand Defence Forces UK confirmed the wearing of the New Zealand Fern Leaf to surviving elements of the Shropshire Yeomanry in recognition of the most valuable support given by members of the Shropshire Yeomanry to the 2nd New Zealand Division at Cassino, Faenza and during the advance to the River Po. The original honour was conferred on 30 May 1945 by **Gen Sir Bernard Freyberg VC**. **Brig Ottaway** represented the High Commissioner for New Zealand who was engaged in matters of state and therefore unavailable. The presentation took place at a special ceremony at The Music Hall Shrewsbury which was attended by the Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire, **Mr Algernon Heber-Percy**, His Worshipful The Mayor of Shrewsbury & Atcham, **Cllr Reg Jones**, **Sir Kenneth** and **Lady Jones**, the Representative Colonel Commandant RA, **Maj Gen Mike Tennant**, the Honorary Colonel RMLY, **Maj Gen Robert Ward**, the Representative Colonel Commandant Royal Signals, **Brig Nigel Wood**, Comd 143 (WM) Bde, **Brig King**, Comd 11 Sig Bde, **Brig Jonathan Cook** and the CO 35 Sig Regt, **Lt Col Miles Stockdale**. Here **Brig Ottaway** formally presented the Fern Leaf to OC 95 Sig Sqn, **Maj Jo Fathers.**

Following the ceremony a special service of dedication was held in the majestic and sacred surrounds of St Mary's Church (a redundant 11th Century church in the heart of Shrewsbury) which was re-opened for the service. Here the Shropshire Yeomanry Guidon was recovered and with its escort party, led by **WO2 Clive Winstanley** and **Sgt Craig Kinsey**, proudly positioned the Guidon at the head of the march past through the town centre, which was led by veterans of 76 (Shropshire Yeomanry) Medium Regiment RA followed by B Sqn RMLY and 95 Sig Sqn with music provided by the Band of 34 Sig Regt.

Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire took the salute in the Town Square flanked by several local and military dignitaries. The parade generated a great deal of local interest and the town centre was crowded with members of the local population who turned out to lend the Yeomanry their support. The evening before a celebration dinner was held at Sundorne House TA Centre at which all the guests mentioned above, with the exception of the Lord Lieutenant, attended. Special thanks are extended to **Capt Dennis Hawkesford** for his organisational support , to **WO2 Mick Kearney** and his splendid staff and in particular to **SSgt Paul Holland** for providing such an excellent meal, to **Cpl Kay Yeubrey** for the super efficient waiter service, to the QM, **Maj Rod Gladwin,** for always finding the solution to those awkward and difficult problems and finally to all those Squadron members, Honorary members and their families for their most valued support on this historical and memorable occasion .



Maj Jo Fathers
in the lead vehicle ready to lead the pass off parade



The contingent from 95 Sig Sqn led by Capt Jane England preparing to march off



Brig Rick Ottaway with members of 95 Sig Sqn

BATTLEFIELD TOUR

I was always slightly cynical about Battlefield tours and chose to believe that, whilst they brought home the tremendous sacrifices made by our forefathers and the savage futility of warfare, some of these visits were a bit of a jaunt rather than a pilgrimage of learning and discovery. Because of my scepticism I made a journey of enlightenment and followed the Regimental Battlefield Tour Party to Germany during the April Bank Holiday. My plan was to join them for a day as a neutral observer. The party, which was led by that veteran of battlefield tours, **SSgt Oz Linden**, was based in Cassells House at JHQ Rheindahlen. This proved to be an ideal base location as the battlefield tour concentrated on the final push to the Rhine by the 3rd British and Canadian Division through, Kleve, Goch, Weeze and the Rheichswald, which resulted both sides suffering heavy losses and enormous casualties. At Cassells House the party was divided into six syndicates, with each given the task to research a particular aspect of the battle after which syndicate leaders and other members of the group were required to give a presentation at the site of the conflict. When I observed the amount of work carried out by each syndicate, I felt both humbled and forlorn at having questioned and doubted their motives .

When I recovered my composure I joined the group just outside Weeze and listened intently at the graphic and detailed presentation given by **Sgt Colin Marshall** at the Yorkshire Bridge near Weeze. This was close to the German War Cemetery where over twelve hundred German soldiers are interred, most of whom died after savage hand to hand fighting and aerial bombardments in and around the town during the final few days of World War 2 - while a brave and courageous rearguard action proved to be a futile waste of life. Equally detailed presentations were given by **Sgt Lorraine Ward, SSgt Martin Thacker, SSgt Kevin Potts, Sgt Brian Phelan, Sgt Jim Broomfield, Cpl Alan Lunn** and finally **Cpl Steve Bell** who gave a spell binding presentation of the courageous exploits of **Pte Jim Stokes VC**, Kings Shropshire Light Infantry, at Kervenheim which led to his award of the VC.

Visits were made to the British and Canadian War Cemetery in the Reichswald and flowers laid . It was at the grave of a Canadian soldier that a poignant discovery was made - left at the grave was a moving plea from a wife no longer able to travel from Canada to visit her husband and lay flowers, requesting that any visitor to the cemetery would lay flowers on her behalf in memory of her beloved husband - a request we honoured. At the end of the tour **SSgt Oz Linden** also gave a stirring rendition of the famous scene from Henry V when the King rallied his troops before the battle of Harfleur. Still feeling contrite I am now convinced that battlefield

tours serve a vital purpose in reaching into the hearts and minds of today's modern soldier and to make them understand the nature of warfare and human sacrifice and why strong defence forces are vital to preserve the peace secured by the bravery of our predecessors!

BIGGER IS BETTER!

Following the TA Open Day the Regiment experienced what can only be described as a Recruiting surge and many recruits have not progressed through both the attestation and Phase 1 stage. But we refuse to rest on our laurels and our recruiting efforts remain undiminished with proactive recruiting activities such as recruiting exercises, attendance at fetes, shows, colleges and workplaces remaining an essential element of our recruiting strategy. However, we could at least take tremendous satisfaction and pride in the knowledge that Recruit Course 3/99 would prove to be one of the largest courses to complete Phase 1 in the past six years with thirty three recruits on the Pass Off Parade. The CO, **Lt Col Miles Stockdale,** could not contain his delight - the parade contingent was so large that instead of the traditional march out to receive their Corps Badge the CO broke with tradition and returned to the Squad following his formal inspection and presented each recruit with their Cap Badge and a broad smile! However, this break in tradition was not extended to the award of Best Recruit and following the announcement, **Sig Neil Somerville** of HQ Sqn, proudly stepped forward to receive his award from the CO. A slightly disappointed **Sig Danny Osborne** of 89 Sig Sqn was runner up. Sadly it was also time to say goodbye to some Training Wing stalwarts and following the CO's address to the recruits, their parents, relatives and friends the CO took time out to praise the hard work put in over many years service with the Regiment of **WO2 (SSM) Paul Mellish** who leaves the Army after a combined total of 28 years Regular and TA service, six of which have been served as a dedicated member of the RRTT. The CO in his speech also marked the departure of **Cpl Dennis Feely MBE** who leaves the Training Wing after six years service on posting to 48 Sig Sqn. A very special welcome is extended to **WO2 Terry Douglas** who joins the RRTT on transfer from 5 RRF who are sadly disbanding as a result of SDR.



WO2 Paul Mellish and his team mates say farewell



Sig Neil Somerville receiving his award of Best Recruit

ORIENTEERING

The Regiment is continuing to celebrate its successes on the Orienteering scene and in particular the efforts made by 89 Sig Sqn. Their series of successes was extended to the Corps Orienteering Championships held at Brawdy during the weekend 29/30 May. The Sqn retained the trophy for the 5th successive year and also achieved considerable individual attainments with **SSgt Dave Arnot** - Corps TA Champion, **Cpl Tony Griffiths** - Corps TA M40 Champion and **Sig Simon Kavanagh** - Corps TA under 21 runner up. Other individual achievements from the Regiment included the award of TA under 21 champion to **2Lt Andy Sturt** of 48 Sig Sqn and Corps TA M21 runner up to **Sig Brown** of HQ Sqn. On the relay day **Andy Sturt** also proved to be the fastest runner on the Light Green B Course. At the earlier Army Championships held at Barry Budden during the weekend 10/11 April, the 89 Sqn female team secured a commendable third place. To all team members many congratulations and well done!



Recruit Course 3/99

36 (EASTERN) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO — **Lt Col J. A. Allan TD**
RSM — **WO1 (RSM) R. J. Stanton**

FAREWELL

As I write, posting orders are flying in and out of the office, so are the rumours and speculations, but that's another story! Since my last time of writing we have said a very hasty good-bye to that stalwart of the Regiment, **Capt (QM) Ray Cory**, who was called forward early to 7 Sig Regt for obvious reasons and now believed to be in slightly less comfortable but more exciting surroundings, (Keep your head down Sir). We've also said farewell to **Sgt Graham Smith** from the QMs Dept who, some might say, really kept the Department going. He's off to the recruiting office in Hull. With only the QM being replaced in August, **WO2 (RQMS) Tony Gaston** is finding out what real power is all about, and real work!

The LAD are no better off as **SSgt Paul Haggett, Sgt Craig Sinclair** and **Cpl Al Vanstone** have all been posted and adventure training will never be the same. **LCpl Scott Witts,** the CO's driver decided he could not bear to be away from the QM and quickly followed him to 7 Sigs, where sleep and copies of MCN are things of the past. We also say farewell to **SSgt Gethin Thomas** off to 14 Sig Regt. Taff (to his mates) found his true vocation in life whilst at 36. He quickly found out that he was at his best when providing 'Portaloos' for the Regiment's comfort (I won't go into nicknames) and this he did with great skill and gusto and his appointment I hear you ask? Yes, our very own Regimental Yeoman of Signals, (I can see his CV now!)

WELCOME

We are a bit thin on the ground with welcomes due to SDR, but we do say a big welcome to the following:

SSgt Tony Dale REME - PSI LAD
Sgt Kev O'Sullivan - NRPS Armourer
LCpl Dave Worsfold – CO's Dvr

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON

OC — **Maj D. Watson**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) T. Wells**

VISIT OF DEPUTY COMMANDER LONDON DISTRICT BRIGADIER WILLIS

Brig Willis recently visited the Regiment to meet members from RHQ and HQ Sqn. He was briefed on the Regiment by the CO, **Lt Col Jackie Allan TD** before being shown around the deepest of HQ Sqn by **Maj Dave Watson.** The visit included a short walk to the LAD where the Brigadier was met by OC LAD **Capt Robin Needham** whose brief was centred around the recovery vehicle commanded by **Cpl Rich Fisher.** Onto TM Troop, where **Capt (TOT) Alan Newbery** briefed the Brigadier on RSIT and then introduced **SSgt (FofS) Mike Meddeman** and **Sgt Kev East** who showed him around the workshop. The Ops Offr, **Maj Mike White,** briefed the Deputy Commander on comms and future exercises, which was followed by presentations in the WOs' and Sgts' Mess. **Sgt Pete Stidwell,** accompanied by his wife **Helen,** received the LS and GC, **Sgt** 'Mac' **McDonald** received a clasp to the TEM and **WO2 (AQMS) Drew Johnson,** accompanied by his partner and family, received his Royal Warrant. After a few words, flowers and photos, the Brigadier was introduced to many members of HQ Sqn.

54 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC — **Maj M. Smith**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) L .Scott**

EXERCISE CUMBRIA COCKNEY

Over the recent Bank Holiday, 21 members of 54 Sqn set off to the Lake District to complete a Lakeland challenge based on a triathlon. Three days training, one for each discipline was conducted under the watchful eye of **Sgt Gaz Tuff,** PSI Cambridge. **SSgt Martin Wright** performed his usual miracles on the admin front, even the weather was good for the time of year!

At 0700hrs on the day of the challenge, all members were amassed at the start line, ready to canoe two miles across Lake Windermere, once complete they were met by some locally hired bicycles that needed to be ridden to the base of Scafell Pike. Tired, but still with the determination to complete the task in hand, they clambered up and down Scafell Pike to complete the challenge in just under 12 hours. An excellent trip was had by all, learning something about themselves along the way and, if everyone pays up, earning £2000 to be split equally between the NSPCC and Children in Need. This has been the third challenge in three years and long may they continue. Well done to all the participants.



The Participants

38 (CITY OF SHEFFIELD) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO — **Lt Col I. W. Griffiths**
RSM — **WO1 (RSM) S. Carr**

87 (CITY OF NOTTINGHAM) SIGNAL SQUADRON
SQUADRON OPEN DAY – 13 MARCH 1999

A fantastic display of the Squadron's communication and military skills was open to the public on Saturday 13 March. It was visited by the Lord Mayor of Nottingham. **WO2 Cooper** and **WO2 Frank McCubbin** masterminded the communications displays. NCRS equipment and HF Mould supported a field COMMCEN laid out and manned as if 'on Exercise'. The Squadron Medics were out in force showing the public how they treat 'battle casualties'.

The Recruiting Team were making the most of the day – persuading interested members of the public to consider joining a dedicated and well trained group of soldiers.



OC, Maj David Tomlinson with two new recruits

RETURN FROM REGULAR SERVICE IN BOSNIA

Sgt Jones is back from Bosnia after her latest expedition with the Regular Army and she has got straight back into the swing of TA life. Seen here on 'light duties' she always adds energy to the Squadron – Welcome back.



Sgt Mandy Jones on 'light duties'

NVQ TRIUMPHS

Cpl Ibby Nevill and **LCpl Andy Doran** both had something to smile about recently. They were each celebrating success on the Regiment's NVQ Programme. Pictured here are **Cpl Nevill** and **LCpl Doran** receiving their NVQ Level II in Telecommunications certificates from the Lord Mayor of Nottingham.



Cpl Nevill and LCpl Doran receiving NVQ certificates

CAREFUL COMMUNICATIONS

Nottingham Territorial, **Sig Adrian Matthews**, will need cat-like reactions when he communicates with some tricky customers in Africa. The 19-year-old soldier was packed early for his adventure with the Raleigh International Youth Programme later this month (June). now all he needs to do is steel his nerves for collecting sperm from some anxious cheetahs.

Sig Matthews, from Lenton, aims to help in a wildlife project playing a key part in saving the world's fastest animal. So far not even the big cat's ability to run at 68mph guards it from near extinction. **Adrian**, who serves with Lenton based 87 Sig Sqn, said, 'The conservation project is part of a captive breeding programme. I'll assist wildlife experts who will be collecting the sperm. I just hope that the cheetas get the message that we're only trying to help.' He said that he would also be preparing waterholes for elephants. He and his team will dig the pans outside villages to prevent the huge animals blundering round peoples houses looking for water.

Most of **Adrian**'s two and a half months in Africa will be spent in the bush, 20 miles from Windhoek. However, he will also explore hundreds of miles of uncharted territory. His task will be to gather data for maps covering Namibia's southern region. Living in the bush will be hard going but **Sig Matthews** reckoned that his 12 months of part-time military training would stand him in good stead.

BATTLEFIELD FASHION TIPS

Nottingham Territorials were queueing for a battlefield make-over when beauty expert **Gail Soar** joined up. The 29-year-old city make-up artist shocked even herself when she strode into the soldiers' Lenton base to see if they would let her enlist. But her confidence soon grew when she swapped her six inch heels and £100 a bottle perfume for boots and perspiration. Now she cannot wait for weekends and a chance to get stuck into training with 87 Sig Sqn.



Battlefield beauty tips
LCpl Jason Rawlings (27), a computer analyst from Beeston, receives a makeover from Sig Gail Soar (29) from Stapleford

She is always ready to give her comrades fashion hints on tints for the colours in camouflage face paint. **Sig Soar** said that she had to pluck up all her courage to walk through the army base door the first time. She added, 'Boy, what a culture shock! I couldn't believe I'd done it! I took a spare change of clothes and shoes, my make-up and a hair dryer for my first Exercise. I realised my mistake when they told me to get my bag off the lorry and I could hardly lift it. Now I travel light. I've learned a great deal in my two-month military career. Every young woman should try it. My only regret has been having to cut my fingernails. I used to spend hours keeping them long elegant and in perfect condition. **Gail** said that finding out that her first major Exercise, with the Territorial Army, would be in Gibralter made sacrificing her talons well worth it. She also said that military training was proving to be everything she had hoped for.

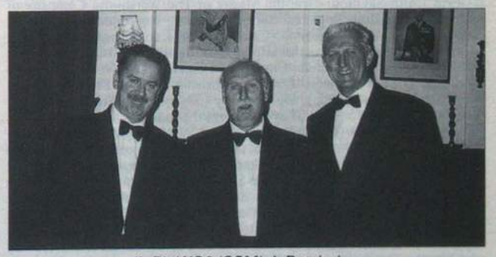
NEW COLOURS FOR COUNTY SOLDIERS

Nottingham Territorial **Jamie Henley** and his comrades have regrouped under new Colours. The part-time soldiers feared that it was the end when their city based infantry battalion was lost in the national army reorganisation. So they were delighted when other county TA Units began clamouring for their services. Now the former members of The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment say that there is no looking back.

46 (CITY OF DERBY) SIGNAL SQUADRON
THE DINING-OUT OF PSAO CAPT C. S. ROYSTON-WEBB

On Friday 12 April 1999, the Squadron's Officers said 'Goodbye,' to **Cliff Royston-Webb** after serving with the Squadron, as PSAO, for 15 years. In addition the Squadron managed to track down all the former OCs who served with **Cliff** bar one, who had inconveniently moved house and lost all contact with the Squadron in the intervening years. Previous OCs were:

Maj (Retd) T. E. Lea	(March 83 – March 86)
Maj (Retd) D. J. Etherton	(September 87 – January 91)
Maj J. R. Linguard	(January 91 – March 93)
Maj P. Williams	(April 93 – March 96)
Maj (Retd) R. Szulakowski	(April 96 – April 97)



(L-R): WO2 (SSM) J. Batchelor, Capt (Retd) C. S. Royston-Webb, WO2 A. Whittaker

The dinner was prepared most skilfully, as usual, by **Sgt Karen Gelsthorpe.** It was (sometimes not so skilfully) served by a handful of long-serving Seniors within the Squadron, including the current SSM (**Jim Batchelor**), very adept at spilling wine and **WO2 Al Whittaker** (brilliant as Maitre D), **SSgt Jane Atherley** (Whoops watch the gravy). After the dinner, the usual speeches took place which included anecdotes about pies and cans of lager. The Squadron OC (**Kevin Flanagan**) presented **Cliff** with a model of four clowns sat round a table. This could have represented the four PSAOs within the Regiment or certain members of the hierarchy, who shall remain nameless. As a leaving gift, **Cliff** presented to the Officer's Mess a statuette of a Royal Signals' soldier. The evening concluded after dinner with many stories of old times being told, none of which could possibly be considered for publication! Good luck in your retirement **Cliff.**

TO BE OR NOT TO BE A PSI? THAT IS THE QUESTION!
by SSgt J. H. Longman (SPSI)

The posting order arrived on my desk at 10 Airborne Wksp in August 1998. I was to be posted to 38 Sig Regt LAD (V) REME on 2 September 1998 as the SPSI. The questions came flooding in, my mind was working overtime. Where is 38 Sig Regt LAD (V)? Why me? I was happy in sunny Aldershot and enjoying life to the full in the mighty 10 AB Wksp. What is an SPSI? What does the job involve? All I could see was the enjoyment factor disappearing and the alienation of being stuck in a small LAD on my own with no other regular REME tradesmen on the outskirts of Sheffield, becoming a reality. Little did I know! Yes it was true; everything I had been told was accurate except for one thing. The enjoyment factor was to multiply by an incredible rate. To be a Senior Permanent Staff Instructor (SPSI) at an LAD which had just won The Gardiner Trophy for the best Territorial Army Workshop or LAD in the Army is definitely a privilege only a small number of people will appreciate.

After initially settling in to my new posting I began to let my Airborne winning tendencies out to play. First of all I bid for a Nordic Ski Instructors Course at Sjuseon in Norway. A good staging post I thought for some hard winter training that would stand me in good stead for the forth-coming season's activities I had in mind. After returning from the course as an instructor I sent the entrance form and fees off to the REME Ski Championships for the meeting later on in March. In the mean time I had to keep myself occupied and fit by running in the Cross-country league races around the 2 Div area for the forthcoming REME Cross Country Championships on the 20 January 1999. A hard well-organised race gave me a Third place and a qualification to race at the Inter Corps Championships in March. Unfortunately the Inter Corps Cross Country race clashed with the REME Ski Championships. The decision wasn't that hard to make and off I trundled to Bavaria with my wife for ten days of hard competition. This year the snow was more than most people could contend with. I did say most people! Not the REME ski race officials. All the races were well organised and represented throughout the championships. A big thank you must go to **Capt N. I. Taylor**, Supervising Officer and all the staff of the REME ATC at Guntersreid Saga. I would also like to thank the Airborne Vikings of 10 AB Wksp for the hard competition in all the Nordic races, especially **Cpl Cam Williams** for pushing me so hard to win the overall Nordic Ski Champion 1999. 'Next year it's your turn **Cam'.**

My next deployment came on the 22 April in the shape of Ex Redcoat Stampede. This is the annual two week Army Triathlon training camp. This year in the USA at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The Exercise was well supported by 46 Triathaletes from all Arms and Corps in the British Army and one US Ranger, **Alex Samoba**. Whilst we stayed in America we entered two Triathlons in the area (a three hour drive, America is big). The first was at North Sails Beach near Camp Lejeune (home to the US Marines and Navy Seal's). The event was only a sprint Triathlon, comprising of a 750m swim, 40km looped cycle and 5km beach run. The local population had been warned to expect a few foreign competitors, what turned up was a 'British Invasion' as they kindly put it. The race went well apart from the swim, with six-foot waves (everything is big in America) crashing onto the shoreline, it was off putting to say the least for the weaker swimmers. This paled into insignificance at the prize giving with most of the individual race categories having an Army Triathlon member picking up one of the skyscraper trophies. The second race, still a sprint race was a little easier going with an open water lake swim. The weather was a lot more accommodating, with bright sunshine throughout the day, and a gentle breeze to keep you cool. Once again the Army Triathlon members managed to collect trophies in most categories. Unfortunately some individuals had to leave their bigger trophies behind after a bout of PX shopping fever took hold.

The final culmination in the fast and furious life of a REME PSI took place over the weekend of the 22/23 May at Catterick Garrison. The event was The Warcop Trophy. The annual competition organised by the hard working staff of HQ 2 Div in York and DS'ed by volunteers from major and minor, regular and TA units taking part. The competition itself forms part of a round-robin theme with each team visiting 15 different stands. The majority are all unfamiliar to the teams taking, part with only old favourites like the assault course, falling plate shoot and the usual ATD's featuring on a couple of the stands. Overall the weekend went well. The strength of 38 Sig Regt (V) LAD REME proved too much once again for the other teams. Being placed Second overall out of 18 teams, even beating four Regular teams. To top it all the Catterick weather front managed to behave itself gracing us with a rain free couple of days.



39 (SKINNERS) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS

CO	**Lt Col J. Crackett TD**
RSM	**WO1 (RSM) P. Anderson**

GOODBYE'S AND WELCOME THE GAPS!!

The Regiment has recently said their fond farewells to **Maj Chris Mote** (Regimental 2IC) and **Capt Mick Campbell** (The Singing Quartermaster). The Regiment wishes them the best of luck for the future whatever it may bring. It is thought that whatever it might be, they hope it does not include the Adjutant, **Capt Bobby Davis**! The Regiment also says goodbye to **Sgt Robbie Hall** (PSI Tech 5 Squadron). It is now presumably safe to resume going for meals on leaving runs as he will not be there to eat everybody else's! Good luck **Robbie.**

VISIT OF THE MASTER OF THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF SKINNERS

Prof Colin Seymour-Ure, the Master of The Worshipful Company of Skinners visited the Regiment during a training weekend on Saturday 8 May 1999 at Longmoor Training Camp. He was accompanied by two of his wardens. **Mr Patrick Crosthwaite** and **Mr Philip Attenborough** as well as the Clerk of the Skinners, **Capt David Hart-Dyke** RN. On arrival, he was met by the Skinners Guard comprising of **Cpl Francis** (Guard Commander from 47 Sqn), **Sig Murphy** (57 Sqn), **Sig Smith** (HQ Sqn) and **Sig Williams** (5 Sqn). They had spent the morning being put through their paces by **WO1 (RSM) Anderson** and **WO2 (RQMS) Bloomer**. By lunchtime they definitely looked and played the part excellently. The Guard escorted the Master to the parade square where the Regiment was formed up awaiting the presentation of the Skinners Awards for 1998-99. These awards are presented to the most outstanding male and female soldier within the Regiment. This year's winners were **LCpl Oliver** (5 Sqn) and **Cpl Hill** (57 Sqn). Congratulations to them both. The parade was followed by a Drumhead Service led by **Padre David Sutch** with the lesson read by the Master. The visitors spent the afternoon visiting a variety of training activities including the recruits, trade testing boards and Op New World.

REGIMENTAL COCKTAIL PARTY

The Regimental Cocktail Party was held at Longmoor Training Camp on Saturday 8 May 1999. Amongst the guests were the Honorary Colonel, **Lt Gen Sir John Foley KCB OBE MC**, the Master of the Worshipful Company of Skinners and **Brig Hughes CBE**. The Beating Retreat was played by 34th (Northern) Signal Regiment (Volunteers) with the salute taken by the Master of Skinners. Under the watchful eye of the ever faithful **WO2 Dickie Lee** (Mess Manager), the following individuals are thanked for acting as waiters and waitresses for the evening:

Cpl Francis (47 Sqn)	**LCpl Estcourt** (57 Sqn)
Sig Murphy (57 Sqn)	**LCpl Scutt** (5 Sqn)
Sig Bayer (5 Sqn)	**Sig Goodwin** (5 Sqn)



The Master of the Worshipful Company of Skinners says a few words to the Parade



SSgt Phillips tries to convince the Master that he has just seen that light come on



SSgt Tocker leads the visitors in a rendition of 'For he's a jolly good fellow'

THE LANYARD TROPHY 1999
by Sgt 'Badger' Gresswell and LCpl 'Smudger' Smith

A seasonal band of Lanyard competitors from 39 Sig Regt started their fifth attempt of this gruelling speed march. This year assisted by **Sgt Tam Ewart**, **SSgt Simcock** and **Sgt Rick Norman**. This year's team captain was **Lt** 'Its only 2Ks' **Cormack.**

The first shock of the two days came on arrival late on Wednesday evening when we found that the good news was that the course was not 40 miles, but that the bad news was it was 39 miles. So it was with much trepidation that the team assembled on the start line at 0530hrs after the traditional cooked breakfast at 0300hrs, lovely! The team got off to a flying start, however after only 100m **Sgt Ewart** had to withdraw as he suddenly remembered he should have been doing team admin with the RSM. So down to nine, and now trailing in last place the team began to make steady progress through the field helped at each of the checkpoints by **RSM** 'I've seen two 4 o'clocks today' **Anderson**. At the second check point **Sgt Klass** was already looking a bit tired and it was thought by some team members that he was going to do his usual trick of joining the admin team for the rest of the day. However, with some 'encouragement' from the RSM he continued on. By the 30-mile point the strain was beginning to tell and large amounts of sports drinks and painkillers were being dispensed.



39 Sig Regt still smiling at the halfway point (all will change)

The course, this year over the North Downs Way, stood out for two reasons, one; the number of stiles and two; the radio tower before the final checkpoint which appeared to be on wheels moving further away as we walked towards it. Over the last 5km we had a real battle on our hands as we tried to beat another team in. **Sgt** 'Scouse' **Simcock**, however, talked them into submission and we marched passed, up the final hill (thanks to 216 for that!) to be met by a fresh looking **Sgt** 'see you in the bar' **Ewart** and **RSM** 'smile its only 39 miles' **Anderson** to finish as fourth place TA Team. It is also well worth noting that although we only started with nine men we were one of only three or four teams in the whole competition who complete the course without dropping anyone.

A special post competition thanks go to **LCpl** 'does the right leg go in front of the left' **May** for his stretching exercises (they made all the difference NOT), and to **Lt** 'Shall we run this bit' **Cormack** for his bottle of Champagne, that did make the difference!

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj R. H. Belbin**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) L. Carr**

COMINGS AND GOINGS

We welcome **Maj Ritchie Belbin** as Squadron Commander and **WO2 Lou Carr** as Squadron Sgt Major. We say farewell to **Maj Glyn Nash** who has come to the end of a long and distinguished career with the Territorial Army. We wish **Glyn** and **Penny** all the very best for the future and hope to see them for the odd party or two! **WO2 Bloomer** has moved the RQMS (V) after being our Sergeant Major, we wish him all the success in the world in his new appointment.

EXERCISE LIVELY LYNX - BROWNDOWN CAMP 5-6 JUNE 1999

The weekend did not get off to a good start. The TA factor had crept in. 2300hrs on Friday, the night before the Inter Squadron Military Skills Competition and HQ Sqn has no Team Captain and only eight team members (Admin Order said 10 required). OC LAD, **Capt Gus Loveridge**, accepted the OC's invitation to lead the team, sort of graciously, from the comfort of his sleeping bag. Discussions between the Squadron Commanders and the Training SSgt (**SSgt Dec Painter**, the poor man responsible for organising Ex Lively Lynx) soon had the other problem sorted, teams were reduced to nine.

Saturday morning broke with a brilliant blue sky and wondrous views across the Solent towards the Isle of Wight. Stand in RSM, **WO2 Phil Martin**, SSM RRTT, joyfully declared on the Regimental Parade that the All Ranks barbecue planned for the evening would be inside due to the weather forecast: rain and Force 8 winds! The team gathered after lunch for the start of the competition and set off to tackle the Observation Stand. Things went well, bar for missing the Highway Code Book in the tree, where else would it be! Then followed the Recovery Stand (bit of luck we had the OC LAD, **Cpl Andy Gray** and **Cfn Jason Airey** in our team, a Command Task and the First Aid stand followed. Not much had been said about these last two which the OC thinks is because the Team did not do very well on them. Things changed apace with the next two stands. The Grenade Stalk was across the shingle shore. Having cleared the first building the Section re-grouped to move off on their new axis.

The OC was amazed to hear from the distance, OC LAD asking his team to 'get in to arrow-head formation, please'. With this kind of control it had to be good! As they moved stealthily along their axis they came under fire from a bunker. The assault was effective and very swift. **LCpl Hawkins** and **Sig Worthington** tore through their smoke to post two grenades into the bunker. A very surprised **Sgt Andy Cunningham** staggered out of the bunker holding his head, having taken a direct hit from one of the grenades! Next came the House Clearance and CASEVAC stand. The OC arrived to see the team lying on the ground only half way to the objective. Just as he was about to wade in and chastise them a gun team suddenly appeared on the right flank, covering the objective, the old control tower. Without a sound the rest of the section were bounding forward up the steps and through the building's window; small arms fire broke out and the enemy were silenced. Suddenly there was shooting from outside the tower; a lone enemy soldier, well concealed, 'struck' **LCpl Hawkins** in the leg, who promptly needed evacuation. **Cpl Gray**, the team 2IC and gun group commander seized the initiative and led a counter-attack against the concealed enemy, who was very surprised to hear a voice from behind informing her that she was no more. A hasty withdrawal followed and ended an Exercise that even left the DS wide-eyed. The Weapons Skills stand caused problems, particularly for **Sig Tris Smith**, who had no previous experience of assembling a LSW wearing a blacked out respirator. The last stand of the day was another command task which went far better than the first.

0915hrs Sunday 6 June, the Team is formed for the March, Assault Course and Shoot, looking somewhat nervous. The OC had told them that this one really counted and we needed to win it to stand any chance of winning the competition. The March went well; the Assault Course was interesting with **Sig Bradbeer** stopping to put his dislocated shoulder back in before completing the course, the shoot should have been better. At last the Prize Giving. The Training Major, **Maj** 'Only 1 weekend to go before I retire' **Shaw** was telling us how close it had been throughout the competition, with two joint leaders at the end of the first day. He agonisingly worked his way from Third to Second place and no mention of HQ Sqn. Until he quickly announced that the winners were HQ Sqn! I am sure both the SSM, **WO2 Carr**, and SQMS, **SSgt Smith** had tears in their eyes as OC LAD received the Lafone Cup from the Trg Maj. The OC was jolly pleased too, so much so that he bought the Squadron a drink back at the TA Centre at Horfield.



HQ Sqn, 39 Sig Regt,
Winners Exercise Lively Lynx, 5 - 6 June 1999
Back (L-R): Capt Loveridge, LCpl Taylor, Sig Worthington,
Sig Kersting, Sig Smith
Front: Cfn Airey, Sig Bradbeer, Cpl Gray, LCpl Hawkins
The Lafone Cup
WELL DONE LADS!!!

EXERCISE SOUTHERN CRAFTSMAN

The competition for REME units in Southern England was held at Longmoor Camp. The team led by **SSgt Paul Hanley** arrived in plenty of time to book in, the taskings started immediately and kept team members up all night. Saturday was non-stop with a varied array of stands to be visited, these included Battle Damage Repair on boats and a Signals stand. The Saturday night consisted of the normal entertainment, although many members of the team struggled to remain long at the bar!

Sunday morning was an early start as we were second off on the March and Shoot, as always there was a twist in the tail. Removing and carrying a Bedford starter motor for a couple of miles, **Sgt** 'The Fall Guy' **Gleed** came into his own here. On arrival at the range there was a few surprises afoot (both planned and unplanned) the mist, the Trailer Race (Gleedie the fall guy Mark 2) and the memory game. The shooting was over in no time at all, there was a demonstration of the unpractised unload by **Cpl Phear**, luckily not penalised. Then it was back to camp for the wait until the prize giving. There was much joking and mickey taking as we waited with bated breath. Then at last success, The Wingfield Cup for the Minor Units March and Shoot competition. Along with Second placed Minor Unit and Fifth place overall, as a good achievement for the whole team.

Many thanks to **SSgt Phil Sweetland**, our PSI, **Sgt Scotty Doyle** and **LCpl Sheena White** for the in camp prep, **Maj Belbin** and RQMS (V) for their support and **LCpl McKinlay**, our Medic for the running repairs carried out on Saturday night. Well done to all those who took part in the weekend for securing these trophies for the Squadron:

SPORTS

Members of the Squadron have competed in the following Road Races recently:

The Fleet (TA Championships) Half Marathon
Sgt Clarke, LCpl Thurlow, Sig Smith

The Bath Half Marathon
LCpl Hawkins

The Great West Run (Exeter Half Marathon)
Sgt Clarke, LCpl Hawkins

Keep up the good work and all the best for the Bristol Half Marathon in September.



Sig Bradbeer on the assault course
having just put back his dislocated shoulder



March, assault course and shoot

5 (QUEEN'S OWN OXFORDSHIRE HUSSARS) SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj R. D. Stone**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) G T Simpson**

SKINNERS AWARD - 1999

The Squadron congratulates **LCpl Steve Oliver** on being awarded the 1999 Best Male Soldier in the Regiment for 1999.



LCpl Steve Oliver being awarded
The Skinners Award by the Master Skinner

RECRUITS

Following a successful Recruit Campaign and the National TA Open Day, the Squadron would like to welcome the following new members following the passing out on 9 May 1999: **Sigs Michael Bayer** (Best Recruit), **Adrian Allen, Holy Alison, Debbie Anderson, Clare Goodwin, Steven Van Nie Kerk, Chris Hancock, Jason Gates.** We would also welcome **LCpl Alan Howell** Ex Radio Op, found lurking with COMTEL by **Sgt Robbie Hall** during his one week civilian attachment.



Sig Michael Bayer being congratulated by the Commanding Officer Lt Col John Crackett on achieving Best Recruit

TRADE BOARDS

RTW 7 held at Longmoor over the weekend 8/9 May 1999 saw the end of the trade training cycle and success for many of the Squadron Personnel. Congratulation to all those who were successful.

EMPLOYERS EVENING AT BANBURY TAC

Col John Bridgeman TD DL, Honorary Colonel Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars and Chairman of the National Employers Liaison Committee (NELC), gave an interesting and informative talk on his visit to Bosnia to employers, Oxfordshire Yeomanry Trustees, Old Comrades and the Squadron on Tuesday 25 May 1999. **Col Jim Blake** accompanied him. **Brigadier Nigel Mogg** represented TAVRA and the **Lord Lt Mr Hugo Brunner** attended. **Col Bridgeman** presented a NELC Certificate to **Mr Nigel Knight,** Director of Oxford & County Business College.



Mr Nigel Knight and Col John Bridgeman

Col John also had the pleasure of promoting the following members of the Squadron: **SSgt Judith Phillips, Sgt Mark Taylor, Sgt Paddy Ferguson** and **LCpl Colin Bowdery**. The evening ended with an excellent buffet supper prepared by **SSgt Les Kavanagh** and his team of chefs.

57 (CITY AND COUNTY OF BRISTOL) SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj Rosemary Tuhey**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) P. Packer**

There have been a number of changes within the Squadron since the last edition. Not the least of which has seen the departure of **Maj Dave Watson** our previous OC and the return to Horfield, after many years, of **Maj Rosemary Tuhey**. On the competition front the Regiment again did well in the Lanyard Trophy, with as in previous years the nucleus of the team coming from 57 Sqn. We also entered a team into the TA Half Marathon this year, the team consisted of **Sgt Dave Gresswell, LCpl Kevin May** and **LCpl Martin Davies**, all serving with our detachment in Cheltenham. The team came a creditable 5th position, with **Sgt Dave Gresswell** achieving second individual overall.

One of the implications of SDR has been the closure, after thirty plus years, of our detachment location at Arle Road, Cheltenham. Thankfully however the detachment itself has been saved and has recently moved to the TAC in Eastern Avenue, Gloucester. On the promotion front congratulations go to **Cpl Jo Stevens, Cpl Ray Hall, LCpl Sam Estcourt, LCpl Ali MacGilp** and **LCpl Martin Dyer**. Also congratulations go to **Cpl Kerri Hill** on receiving the Skinners Award for the best female soldier in the regiment for 98/99.

As a lead into the next edition, up to twenty members of the Squadron are at present trying to persuade GPs or the RMO that they are fit to go parachuting, age range for this momentous event is 18 to 54!

TEN TORS 1999

Mid May - must be Ten Tors time again! Ten Tors is a youth challenge event which takes place every year on Dartmoor. This year 402 teams of six took part, drawn from various schools, colleges, cadet and scout groups. Their aim - to walk 35, 45 or 55 miles visiting ten manned check points situated on the Dartmoor Tors and to return safely before 1700hrs on the Sunday. And what have 57 (City and County of Bristol) Squadron to do with all this you may ask, since several Squadron members clearly grew out of the youth category some time ago! 57 Sqn play a vital role in manning the communications to ensure the smooth and safe running of the event. We man the rear links from the Tor checkpoints to EXCON and make all the data entries into the management information system so that in theory at least, the location of every team member is known at all times. We also deploy two MIVs to improve the MOULD network coverage over the moor.

At 0500hrs we awoke to the familiar strains of Tina Turner's 'Simply the Best' over the camp tannoy system! This was also the cue for the competing teams, in tented accommodation throughout the camp, to pack their kit and prepare for the big start. We reported to the COMMCEN ready to start work at 0600hrs, where we were joined by our Sqn Comd, **Maj Rosemary Tuhey** and Sqn 2IC, **Capt Bill Ruthven**. Four experienced radio operators were allocated to the MOULD sets and four persons each to the telephones and data terminals. We then had the opportunity to confirm operating procedures and provide training where necessary, before the Exercise began at 0700hrs.

In the past, the event has seen a variety of weather from driving snow to hot sunshine. This year, by way of a change, the start gun saw teams plunging into a Dartmoor mist. Soon, however, the work began in earnest, and as teams began to pass through their early checkpoints, the Tor parties passed the reporting times through to the COMMCEN via the MOULD or telephone. The operators noted the information on the pre printed forms and passed it through to the data operators for input. As the results began to come in thick and fast, the COMMCEN, ably supervised by **SSgt Jane Burn** and **WO2 Dickie Lee**, became a hive of activity processing an average 200 messages an hour. Just in case we did not have enough to do (!) the CO had also tasked the Squadron with providing a long range HF link as part of the regimental exercise going on elsewhere. Thus it was that, with everyone else fully occupied, two surprised technicians, **Sgt Chris Klass** and **Sig Robin Bishop,** found themselves polishing up their antenna erection and radio techniques.

We manned the COMMCEN, on a shift basis until 2200hrs that evening, when the last of the teams stopped to camp for the night. With a two man crew designated to keep a listening watch for the night, the rest of us were able to relax, (and celebrate **LCpl Kathy Ashley**'s birthday) until the following morning.



Members of the Squadron detachment
following the move to Gloucester



The Squadron Commander briefs the Comd in Chief
and Maj Cartwright of 43 Bde during Ten Tors

71 (YEOMANRY) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO **Lt Col C. H. Turner**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) M. Godwin**

REGIMENTAL NEWS
HELLO AND GOODBYE

The Regiment said farewell recently to its longest serving PSI, **SSgt Steve Matthews**. He leaves the Army after 22 years to settle down with his family in Grimsby and embark on his second career. His support and dedication were valued by all ranks, and he will be greatly missed. Best wishes to him and his family for the future. He is replaced by **SSgt Jason Barsley,** who has only a few months to find his feet before the Regiment deploys on Annual Camp! We also said farewell to our FofS, **SSgt Andy Riglar**. He moves on to Blandford, and is replaced by a 'brand new' FofS, **SSgt Rob Clifford**. We hope they will both settle into their new roles with ease.

REGIMENTAL SHOOTING TEAM – CORPS SAAM
by 2Lt Richard Woodhams

Having experienced difficulties in securing the best range facilities for our training, hopes were not high of producing the kind of performance enjoyed at last year's event and the plethora of silverware that it yielded. Despite this the Regiment's shooting team struck camp at Ash range on the morning of 10 April with the assistance of **SSgt McHenery** and some of the unit's youngest members, **Sigs Baird, Stone** and **Woo**. Having just finished their recruits course they are keen to try for the team next year. The Team Captain, **Maj Corfield**, formed two teams: the 'A' Team, made up of **2Lt Downing, Cpl Charter, Cpl Jules, Cpl Woo, LCpl Foxwell**; and the 'B' Team, made up of **2Lt Woodhams, Capt Walker, Sgt Allen, Cpl Carter** and **Sig Handley.** In addition, **Cpls Brace** and **Myers** were entered as individual, taking part in the Roupell and pistol matches.

The first match was the Association Cup, a standing/kneeling competition at both 100 and 200 metres. A whole spectrum of scores were recorded from **Cpl Charter**'s outstanding effort (which subsequently won the day) through to less reportable scores. Somewhere in the middle came **Cpl Carter** who was unlucky enough to experience a broken cotter pin half way through the shoot. A shame as he was on for a good score. A trip to the armourer's tent later and we moved onto the FIBUA, an excellent shoot from 100m down to 25m from a variety of positions. Again reasonable scores were recorded across the board, the highest being **Capt Walker's** 141. Several members had been entered to fire both pistol and/or LSW and these events were squeezed in during the day between other shoots. Of note here was **2Lt Downing**'s prize-winning pistol score **and 2Lt Woodhams** prize-winning LSW score of 137. The final event for Saturday was the Roupell, which for many members of the team was something of a disappointment with only average scores being recorded for an event that has previously meant good things to us. At the close of play on Saturday (with most of the other scores either not posted or confirmed) the mood was downbeat with nothing to disprove our earlier misgivings. Whilst the 94 Sig Sqn contingent headed off for a dinner night, the remaining members took full advantage of the bar and having been treated to some fine cooking by our new Chef, **Cpl Sturman**, there was no time for being downcast. As the evening progressed, the mood became increasingly upbeat!

Sunday morning brought the Team Snap, four members of the team all firing at either a Fig 12 or a Fig. 11 target from 100m. Apparently the choreography of the B Team was excellent in all adopting the kneeling position, even if the score was nothing to write home about. The A Team, however, saved the day with an impressive score of 28. All that remained was the falling plate and the B Team set about removing the A Team in the first shoot. Whether they had finally found their form (on the last shoot!) or were simply saving their best till last, they went on to win the Corps Championship, being knocked out of the Inter-Corps Championship by the eventual winners (RLC) in the semi-final. **Brig Verey** was in attendance to present the awards and we would certainly endorse his comment about the increased competition on this years shoot. In summary, the teams were awarded:

71 'A' Team	**71 'B' Team**
Champion Rifle team (1st)	Team pistol Trophy
Fibua Cup	Falling plate shield
Association Cup	Champion Rifle team (3rd)
Combat Snap winners	APWT Cup
Champion Unit (1st)	Champion Unit (runners up)

Whilst the following individuals won:

2Lt Downing	Individual Pistol (1st)
Cpl Charter	Individual Rifle Competition (1st)
2Lt Woodhams	Individual LSW (1st)
	Individual Pistol (3rd)

As for next year, we know our work is cut out. Training begins, as ever, in November and one person we will certainly be keeping our eye on is **Sig Baird** (aged 17) who managed to win the pool bull!

HQ (KCLY) SQUADRON – BEXLEYHEATH
Sqn Comd **Maj P. B. Corfield**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) M. J. B. Mustoe**

A quiet period for HQ Sqn, who are now starting to prepare for Annual Camp. More news next time!

68 (IC&CY) SIG SQN – WHIPPS CROSS AND LINCOLN'S INN
Sqn Comd **Maj E. J. H. Marshall TD**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) L. Evans**

The Squadron is still busy preparing for Ex Capital Pursuit.

70 (EY) SIG SQN – CHELMSFORD AND HARLOW
Sqn Comd **Maj Simon Palmer TD**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Paul Humphreys**

FAREWELL

The Squadron says a fond farewell to the PSI **SSgt Steve Matthews** who leaves the Squadron at the end of his Army service. **Steve Matthews** has worked extremely hard for the Essex Yeomanry Signal Squadron in military and social activities and he has gained the respect and admiration of all ranks. The Squadron thanks him, his wife **Linda,** and their family for all their support and wish them well for the future in civilian life. **SSgt Matthews** was dined out of the Squadron at a dinner held in the WO's & Sgts' Mess. He was presented with a bronze figure of an Essex Yeoman and a caricature of all the serving Senior NCOs. In addition the Sqn 2IC, **Capt Craig Tallents**, presented him with a boxed set of Essex Regiment soldiers. He was a popular figure in the mess and his presence will be greatly missed.



WO2 Paul Humphreys presents SSgt Steve Matthews with his leaving gift

LANYARD TROPHY



The 70 Squadron Lanyard Trophy Team
(Rear): LCpl Pilcher, Cpl Gilbey, Cpl Cavanagh, LCpl Ferris, LCpl Cloughton, Sig Blythe
(Front): Sig Cambron, LCpl Smith, Sig McIlroy, Sig Brown

The Squadron entered an all-female team in this year's Lanyard Trophy competition. The team, led by **Cpl Natalie Gilbey**, trained hard and maintained their high spirits and sense of humour throughout the competition. Mention must also be made of **Cpl Colin Cavanagh** who provided the admin backup for the training and during the competition. He was assisted by **LCpl Jo Smith**, who also took part in the event. The Squadron congratulates them on their efforts in this most gruelling of competitions. We are assured that they are all keenly looking forward to next year's event!

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations go to the OC, **Maj Simon Palmer**, on the award of his TD. He was presented with the medal at Longmoor by **Maj Gen Stokoe**, in his capacity as IGTA, shortly before he retired from the Army.



Maj Gen Stokoe presents Maj Simon Palmer with his TD

265 (KCLY) SIG SQN – BEXLEYHEATH AND BRIGHTON
Sqn Comd **Maj Hugh Robertson**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Keith Wrate**

EXERCISE SHIRE HORSE

On a weekend in early May, the Squadron deployed to Bramley Training Area for a military skills training weekend. The Exercise scenario required the Squadron to practice their basic infantry skills and started with a series of recce patrols against opposing Troop locations. The most memorable of these was **Cpl Colin** 'Doughnut' **Alderton** who became geographically embarrassed and spent two hours recceing his own location! After filing the recce reports at Sqn HQ, the two Troops then went on to visit a variety of stands including NBC, Battlefield First Aid and Cam and Concealment. Saturday afternoon was spent by the Troops conducting a joint recce of the new SHQ location in preparation for a joint attack at first light on Sunday. The recces were thoroughly and professionally completed and led to a well executed attack, masterminded by **Capt Penny Wood**, which ended with **SSM Keith Wrate** receiving an Oscar nomination for his death at the hands of 884 Tp.

Once the POWs were returned to a fully clothed state (!), the Squadron received an unexpected Heli lift to Bisley. On arrival, the Troops took part in the Annual Squadron Patrol Race. Both Troops entered two teams to compete for the Malik Trophy. The competition consisted of a 15 mile route march, carrying 15lbs, including stands for NBC, first aid, weapon handling and comms, followed by an assault course and shoot. The result was extremely close, with 887 Tp 'B' Team pipping 884 Tp 'A' Team at the post to win the trophy.



The winning 265 Squadron Patrol Team

JOINT SERVICE SIGNAL UNIT (AYIOS NIKOLAOS)

DHEKELIA MOTOR SHOW AND TRADE FAIR

This years Dhekelia Motor Show and Trade Fair was the Sixteenth organised by the major unit based at Ayios Nikolaos and the first under the unit's new title as the Joint Service Signal Unit (Ayios Nikolaos). Having grown from strength to strength since its start in 1984, gaining in both popularity and the professionalism with which it has been organised, this years show offered a superb opportunity to see all the major car dealers under one roof There was also a wide range of other leisure and service trade stands, and many other forms of entertainment including a Bouncy Castle and bungy running. For the more adventurous there was also the Ayios Nikolaos Kart Club and in-line skating ramps, making it an enjoyable day out for the whole family.

The main aim of the Trade Fair is to raise money for charity and this year was no exception. Over the last fifteen years the event has raised in excess of C£128,000, and this years show raised a further C£9000. The money will be distributed to a variety of charities both in Cyprus and in the United Kingdom. The Motor Show began with the Garrison Commander, **Col A. M. F. Potter OBE** handing over a cheque For C£500 to Cyprus Anti Cancer Association. The highlight of the day for many was the chance to win a new car in the raffle, along with many other great prizes. The raffle draw was made by the Garrison Commander. The first prize, however, will not be seen on the roads of the Eastern Sovereign Base Area, as the lucky winner was from Akrotiri.

It is thanks to the support of the Car Dealers and Traders who attend the show and the support from the British Forces Cyprus and Cypriot Communities, who come to see the show, that we are able to do so much to help others less fortunate than ourselves. Now that the 1999 show is over we look forward to watching those who will benefit most from the hard work put by all those involved.

JOINT SERVICE SIGNAL UNIT (AYIOS NIKOLAOS

On Thursday 1 April at Mercury Barracks, Ayios Nikolaos, the Joint Service Signal Unit (Ayios Nikolaos) was formed. This was a result of the amalgamation of 9 Signal Regiment (Radio) and 33 Signal Unit RAF. Both Units have a long history in the region. 9 Signal Regiment (Radio) arrived in Ayios Nikolaos in 1947 as the 2nd Special Wireless Regiment. This was due to the imminent expiry of the mandate for Palestine and its renaming to 9 Signal Regiment (Radio) in 1957 reflected the changes in Army structure and communications. 33 Signal Unit became established in Ayios Nikolaos in 1968 after originally locating itself at RAF Pergamos, and made significant contributions to the Gulf War in 1991 in support of Operation Granby.



9 Signal Regiment (Radio) and 33 Signal Unit (RAF) fly their flags for the final time on Thursday 1 April 1999

The parade square came alive early on the morning of the 1 April. Following the arrival of the Reviewing Officers, **Maj Gen I. O. J. Sprackling OBE** - Master of Signals, and **Air Commodore P. A. Robinson OBE** RAF, a disbandment parade took place, with the two units being led by their respective Commanding Officers, **Lt Col D. J. Whitby** R SIGNALS and **Sqn Ldr M. Williamson** RAF. Music was provided by the Royal Anglian Regiment Corps of Drums. The flags that had been flying over the station for the last 52 years were lowered for the final time, and paraded off the square.

An amalgamation parade then followed under the watchful eye of the Inspecting Officer, **Air Vice Marshal J. C. French CBE FRAeS**, RAF. The Squadrons, consisting of five Officers and 131 Other Ranks, returned to the Parade Square and **Lt Col D. J. Whitby** R SIGNALS assumed command of the newly formed Joint Service Signal Unit (Ayios Nikolaos). In his speech the Air Vice Marshal emphasised the importance of the Jointery between the three services and went on to congratulate the RSM, **WO1 A. S. Sherrard** on the hours of work that had made the parade such a success and his delight at the standard of the drill. Following the parade the visiting guests took the opportunity to meet the Civilian Element personnel and enjoy a drink in *Tommy Tuckers*. There was then a presentation of the 9 Signal Regiment (Radio) flag to **Maj Gen Sprackling OBE** who accepted on behalf of the Royal Corps of Signals, and the 33 Signals Unit flag to **Air Commodore Robinson OBE** on behalf of the RAF.



A presentation was made by the CO, Lt Col D. J. Whitby to Maj Gen I. O. J. Sprackling OBE – Master of Signals representing the Royal Corps of Signals and by the OC 840 Squadron, Sqn Ldr M. Williamson to Air Commadore P. A. Robinson OBE (RAF), representing the Royal Air Force

In order to commemorate the occasion **Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal** was invited to the Island, and on Tuesday 27 April members of the Joint Service Signal Unit (Ayios Nikolaos) travelled to Happy Valley to form a Guard of Honour to welcome her. **The Colonel in Chief of the Royal Signals** was then invited to unveil the Joint Service Signal Unit (Ayios Nikolaos) Crest carved in stone, which now takes pride of place in Ayios Nikolaos Station. The visit to the Island was also an opportunity for the **Her Royal Highness** to witness some of the other activities undertaken in Ayios Nikolaos. There was a display by the Youth Club's In-Line Skating Team, and a song by the 'Grease Singers'. It was also a chance for the **Princess Royal** to meet pupils and teachers from the Primary School and see photos of the new school buildings that have greatly changed since her last visit to the station.

SEVEN LONG SERVICE AND GOOD CONDUCT MEDALS AT JSSU (AN)

Seven members of the Joint Service Signal Unit (Ayios Nikolaos), representing all three services, were rewarded for their exemplary service when they were presented with Long Service and Good Conduct Medals by the Signals Officer in Chief (Army), **Brig J. H. Griffin**. The soldiers, sailor and airman, who have seen service in a number of countries including Northern Ireland and Bosnia, received their medals in front of the officers and SNCOs of JSSU(AN), and were accompanied by their wives, who each received a bouquet of flowers. After the presentation, **Brig Griffin** took the opportunity to meet the members of the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess.

JSSU HOT SHOTS

After some intense training a shooting team of relatively inexperienced competitors from JSSU(AN) entered a team for the Inter Corps Skill at Arms meeting held at Ash ranges near Bisley. The Training commenced in January with the squad of 20 which eventually drew down to six. The selection was based on experience, years of service and natural ability. The team was led by **Capt Kevin Fitzpatrick** Royal Signals with coaching, administration and ample packed lunches supplied by **SSgt Bill Dodd** Royal Logistic Corps. The other team members and their personal qualities were moans, groans and kit loss from **Sig Zukowski,** mastery of the keys from **Sig Ridley**, Court Martials from **Pte Hanson** and dance routines from **Pte Doughty**. The teams performance and overall placing of third from 14 teams was outstanding when considering that the teams placed in front form part of the British Army Squad and the remainder all hold the coveted badge of the Army 100 top firers. After some excellent results the teams now look forward to Bisley and bettering its place next year. The overall results were as follows:

Team Matches: JSSU(AN) placed 3rd from 14 teams overall.
3rd in the Rifle match (aggregate of 5 matches).
4th in the Combat team snap.
4th in the LSW match.

Individual Results:

Capt Fitzpatrick 12th from 92 and selected for the R Signals Corps Team who won the inter corps match.
SSgt Dodd 3rd from 80 and selected for the RLC Corps team.
Capt Fitzpatrick won the Exell Cup for the best Officer.
SSgt Dodd won a trophy for the best Other Arms firer in the R Signals Shoot.
Pte Hanson won two medals for the best 'B' class shot in the Association Cup and the Whitehead Cup.



Capt Fitzpatrick collecting his trophy from Brig (Retd) N. F. Wood (the former SOinC)

NEPAL 1999

9 Signal Regiment's expedition started well with six representatives and one LI instructor meeting up at Larnaca airport around one hour before the flight's departure. Everyone had US Dollars plus a group total of £c200 which we later found out was not a recognised currency in Nepal.

The flight from Larnaca to Bahrain was quite pleasant on Gulf Air and was a reasonably enjoyable flight. After an entertaining night in Bahrain our connecting flight to Kathmandu via Abu Dhabi left early for our six hour flight. We landed with a vicious bump on a very short runway in Nepal only to be told that it was one of the better landings! We entered the flight terminal in quite an excitable mood which soon changed rather dramatically after the loss of one of our tents meant standing around for an hour and a half awaiting a slip of paper for lost luggage claims. Walking out of the arrival lounge we were swarmed by taxi driver's trying to take our bags and beggars trying to take our money! The group were met by retired **Gurkha Major Ram Guru**, who with two helpers loaded our bergens on to an old coach.

The next half hour was a huge culture shock. The streets were filled with a dense smog, clapped out vehicle's and dirty people trying to make a living by the side of the road in shanty market stalls. The coach endured several near misses with on coming traffic on severely pot holed roads which proved to be quite daunting. Getting to our guest house in one piece was a relief. The Sungawa guest house was very basic but sufficient. **Maj Ram** took us to sample the local cuisine. The food was of a very high standard and reasonably priced. The next couple of days were spent around the densely populated streets of Kathmandu, sorting out trekking permits and looking around the market stalls. On 8 March we endured a six hour bus journey in uncomfortable conditions to the town of Pokhara, where we spent the night in a hotel by the main strip of shops on a scenic lakeside sun-trap. That night we had our last proper meal for a week at the Everest Steakhouse, it was every bit as tasty as described by 7 Sigs on their expedition the year before.

The trek started after a one and a half hour trip in two taxis to our first point Lumle, a road side village with a small gathering of locals and lots of tourists. Our bergens weighed between 20-25kgs, it seemed we were the only group carrying this sort of weight as most trekkers carried small holdalls with Sherpas carrying the bulk. Our guides, **Ram** and **Jit**, started off on a bad note, taking us the wrong way but we were soon back on track. The first day was enjoyable and the scenery beautiful. When we reached our first nights destination it was very hot, so we went for a game of rugby in the river. The locals had never seen a rugby ball before and it was quite amusing watching them prodding and throwing it! The first night was the start of our problems. The youngest member of the expedition, **Sig Sankey**, came down with a bacterial infection in his stomach, causing violent vomiting and severe diarrhoea. He lost all fluid in his body and was up all night keeping the group awake, moaning with bodily cramps. In the morning, the group decided to leave **Sig Sankey** behind with his partner, **SSgt McCann**, who were to descend if his condition did not improve. The bulk of the group ascended to Gorepani, and the disadvantaged pair continued later even though **Sig Sankey**'s condition was only slightly better. He only made it half-way due to a severe lack of strength and dehydration. The next day was to be a crucial decider, either catch the group or turn back. Both **SSgt McCann** and **Sig Sankey** did not want to give up so they trekked for eight hours to reach Tarapani just before dark, reunited with a huge cheer from the lads.

The next day was a major descent down a dust covered hill into a huge ascent after the crossing of a somewhat unstable suspension bridge over a river. As we climbed higher over the foothills into the mountains, the scenery became more and more breathtaking, showing the spectacular awe of the snow covered mountain tops. It took us seven days to reach ABC (Annapurna Base Camp) which was our final destination where we played rugby in the snow at 4200 metres, possibly the worlds highest lineout! After seeing the top the group decided that a rapid descent would be a good idea. **Ram**, our head guide, doubted our ability to do it in the given time but we descended in one and a half days, travelling at 5-6kms an hour. We were two days early so after a night in Pokhara, we returned to Kathmandu. **Maj Ram** then informed us that it was the fastest trek around that route he had known, which was a nice little boost.

After the trek everything went wrong. **Sig Sankey** had recovered but everyone else started to get ill except **Sig Jackson** who must have a cast iron stomach! **Lt Short** suffered for the rest of the trip. The local newspapers read of airline strikes which proved to be a big problem. We spent three extra nights in Kathmandu and flew to Delhi on Indian Airlines where we spent the next ten days due to missed flight connections through lack of availability. The guys were tired and ready for a return to Cyprus, but Gulf Air gave us nothing but bad news every time we visited. Money was low and our visas had expired, making morale very low. A brief day trip to the Taj Mahal made a nice change from the bustle of Delhi. **Cpl Evans** left early on Emirates Airways to get back to his family on the only available flight in a week. The group had been continuously turned away by Gulf Air for our connecting flights, so we took it upon ourselves to pay for the only seats available, which was in first class. With only four seats spare, **Cpl Beckett** and **Lt Short** flew back three days later. The expedition started in a great buzz and dragged out to be a bit of a nightmare, it was certainly an experience which we won't forget in a hurry.

STAGS ON TOUR

The Stags RFC from Ay Nik boarded their flight to Malta for the start of their week long tour. 17 people went on the tour and one of those was injured. Therefore the team selected for the matches was not particularly difficult.

Everyone arrived at the pitch in high spirits hoping to win the first game. The opponents were the Maltese Select, a team picked from the best three teams on the Island. Kick off was at 5pm and for the first 20mins there was no score, with the game mainly being played in the forwards. In the twenty second minute the Malta Select managed to release their winger, and break through for a try. With the conversion missed, the Stags were down 5-0 with 15mins left to play of the first half. From the restart the Stags forwards put pressure on the Maltese side on their own try-line, and the ball eventually popped out to **Marc Beckett**, who managed to release the fullback, **Pete Rouse**, for the Stags first try in the corner. The conversion was missed, however, it brought the scores level at 5-5. With the last attack of the first half the Maltese managed to score their second try, produced from all overlap into the corner. This meant the Stags were 10-5 down going into half time. The Second half started in a similar way to the first. Both sets of forwards piling on the pressure, however, neither team was able to turn pressure into points. The Stags tackled hard and suffered two significant injury losses. **Si Joyce** cracked two ribs and **Pete Rouse** suffered concussion. Having borrowed a player the Stags carried on but were overpowered by the Maltese, eventually losing 30-5.

Wednesday was a rest day with everyone suffering from the previous day. That night the team met the next opposition for a meal of a local Maltese delicacy, 'Bugs Bunny'. A nice bit of rabbit, with head, feet and tail - enough to turn even the hardest rugby player a funny colour!

The second match caused concern due to the fact that there were only 14 fit players, and thus there were thoughts of a whitewash. By the time that the kick off took place, the teams attitude had changed and everyone was completely focused and knew exactly what they had to do. For 80% of the first half the Stags were camped in the oppositions 22 yard box, but yet again they could not convert pressure into points. The only score of the first half came from a breakaway by the Overseas making the score 5-0. In the second half the Stags were tiring. With five minutes to go the Overseas forwards turned on the pressure and their No7 went over for a try making the score 10-0. This was how it stayed. After the game it was time to pose for Kiss TV who had been filming the game and an interview for the Tour Captain, **Mark Evans**.

The final match of the tour had to be cancelled due to the Stags injury crisis and therefore the rest of the time in Malta was spent sightseeing and relaxing. All those who went on the tour would like to thank everyone who contributed towards it, and a big thanks goes to **Frank McCann** and **Bill Mearns** who did most of the organising.

NEWS FROM THE SQUADRONS

20 ARMOURED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (200)

Sqn Comd **Capt N. O'Kelly**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) T. P. Crane**

LANYARD TROPHY

With a minimum of training an intrepid team of ten set off from Paderborn for the Lanyard Trophy 99. Ahead lay pain, cramp, sweat and tears, and that was just getting to Calais and the ferry. On arrival in Dover fortunes took an early nose dive as **LCpl Billy Mathews** spent the evening talking to the U-Bend. By the morning he was still vomiting and spent the day asleep in the minibus tended to by the admin/drinking team. The early phases saw strong progress undoubtedly assisted by **Sgt** 'Nige' **Kenyon** and the morale radio. As the halfway point drew closer the lack of training began to tell and the pace slipped with **LCpl** 'Squirrel' **Tyrell**'s knee injury worsening. After a gutsy effort and despite the teams efforts he was eventually forced to drop out and seek medical attention only eight miles from the finish. With **Cpl** 'Dex' **McFaul** completing shuttle runs around the squad to ensure he got some training value the team limped over the finish line to be met by the admin team, some welcome beers and a still snoring **Billy** 'Rip Van' **Mathews**. Congratulations to all the squad for a well deserved 12th place in 12hrs 40mins and a big thanks to **LCpl**'s **Andy Moss** and **Morgan Lewis** for a well run admin team. Best of luck to **Lt Paul Randell**, **Cpl** 'Dex' **McFaul** and **Sigs** 'Smudge' **Smith** and 'Billy' **McDade** who go on to compete in the Comrades Marathon in South Africa. Just remember 56 miles is only 19 BFT's or 7 CFT's or.....!!

EXERCISE APENNINE 'CHAW BABE' DIAMOND

Exped Ldr **Lt R. M.** 'Just around the corner' **Jones**
Instr **SSgt M.** 'Letch' **Payne**

Ex Apennine Diamond was a hiking expedition to the Apennine mountains in central Italy. The plan was to undergo two expeditions, the first lasting two days the second for four. The group were to hike an average of 15-20km per day, over rugged terrain ranging between 1100m to 2940m in height. In between the group were to spend their R & R phase tasting the cultural aspects of Italy's capital, Rome. As with every plan it failed to cope with the first contact with the enemy, the enemy being the weather. First the group was held up in Switzerland for ten hours waiting for the pass to Italy to open again. Then on arrival in Abruzzo National Park, the weather was so poor that erecting the tent in three foot of snow was an inconceivable option, a local and reasonably priced chalet, however, was far more enticing.

The following morning, we attempted to dry our soaking kit in the early morning sunshine, **LCpl** 'Weak at the knees' **Benson** was in charge of the roof rack, and while cutting the rope managed to cut himself, a couple of minutes later he was being comforted by his compadre **Cpl** 'Hot dog' **Reardon** after a cracking effort of fainting in the minibus. The Expedition eventually began a day late, and the day began well, there was still snow in certain areas, but the spring sun was shining, and morale was definitely high. We climbed towards a ridge that we were going to walk on for the day, unfortunately, as we arrived at our summit, the weather encompassed us once more, and the view we had so aspired to see all day during our climb had evaded us.

We descended at a rapid pace as the snow grew deeper around us. On arrival back in camp, the guys brewed the tea, whilst I considered with **SSgt Payne** on where we could go to find lower ground nearby, avoiding the by now worsening weather conditions.

The group moved westward toward Rome and to lower ground, here the snow had vanished, the weather improved, and the group were finally able to begin its Expedition. The next four days saw the group complete its aims, an arduous trek over rugged terrain, whilst practicing their map reading, and control of the Expedition. Our main problem was with **Sig** 'Crusty the balancing clown' **Weller**, who at every opportunity would dive to the front of the group and begin picking up the pace, this would

continue until his reins were drawn in by **Sigs** 'Must have an ice cream' **Heathcote** and **Jermany**. Next on the hit list was **Lt** '15 minutes' **Jones**, his command decision to climb 800m for the spectacular views at a rapid pace, and after a gruelling day was met with disdain from the remainder of the group, who threatened to chuck him off the cliff.



Playing in the snow



The group taking a five minute break

After six days in Italy the group had finished their Exepedition and were happy, relieved, fulfilled and now looking forward to their rest phase in Rome. Rome in 24 hours was no mean feat, the main sights were covered, including the Coliseum, the Sistine chapel and MacDonalds, the girls still had time for a bit of shopping. During the sight seeing tour **Sig Claire Coverly**, and **Sig Kate Collins** managed to see twice as much as the others in the same time, how they achieved this I will never know, and can only guess (stereotypical Italian transport). That night we had the customary pizza, followed by an evening in Rome's most exclusive club, before the long drive home the following day.

BRAVO TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt Randell**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Crabb**

Hello to **Cpl** 'Daz' Bailey, **LCpl Si Harris, Sig Paul King** and **Sig Tony Lewis**. Congratulations to **Sgt Griffiths** on his Staffy and avoiding Middlesbrough and to **Cpl** 'Mo' **Morrison** and **LCpl Andy Moss** on their promotions.

EXERCISE BRAVO DIAMOND - *by Sig Booker*
BRAVO TROOP ADVENTURE TRAINING IN BAVARIA

We all knew that the two main activities for the first two days were walking and mountain biking, except for **LCpl**'s **Thompson** and **Spinks** who chose a more relaxing option - fishing. Mountain biking, due to so many land slides on the main roads, turned into mountain bike pushing, up steep stony paths and through metre-deep snow. However, thanks to **LCpl Doyle** (mountain bike instructor) the return journey turned into a somewhat hilarious afternoon. We took the short cut lifting our bikes over fallen trees and streams and then we came to a muddy patch. Half of the group managed to get over safely then **Al Doyle** landed right in the middle and started to sink. He managed to pull himself free but his trainers weren't so lucky and were sucked in never to be seen again. **Al Doyle** wasn't too happy when he had to cycle home bare footed but it made the rest of the group laugh after a hard day up the mountain.

Day two was mountain walking, this was extremely tiring and tough but with **LCpl Osmond** in the group it was never going to be boring. He enlightened the day with his exceptional use of walking sticks.

The third day was free day to do what we wanted. A few people went to a lake, a few to a castle and the rest went sun bathing at an out door water park. Everyone enjoyed whatever they chose to do except for **LCpl Lee Lewis** who paid the price for falling asleep in the mid-day sun with no sun cream on. He looked like a red and white stripy deck chair. The night was finished off with a rushed meal in a local restaurant which was really nice but everyone wanted to get down town to watch Manchester on the big screen and their brilliant win over Bayern Munich. Overall the week was a success and thanks to 200 Sig Sqn for a break from the tank park.

SUPPORT TROOP - *by LCpl Barrett*

Tp Comd **Capt (QM) M. Bohanon**
Tp SSgt **SSgt H. Capelman**

On 7 May it was the MT's turn to hold a Training Day for the rest of the Squadron. The challenges were to reverse park an articulated lorry, manoeuvering a car on a skid pan and hardest of all the BFG tick test! Nearly everyone seemed to master reversing the lorry into the parking bay whilst the BFG tick test produced a few nerves and only a few passes. The favourite of the day was as expected the skid car. The aim was to manoeuver around the course as many times as possible in a set time. Due to people driving too quickly many lost control but a fun time was had by all.

The Troop says goodbye to **LCpl Ian Cousins** who is posted on promotion to 7 Sig Regt and also congratulate him on his recent marriage. Hellos go to **LCpl Paul Barnett** arriving from 1 (UK) ADSR and **Sig Les Gearing** along with his wife **Karrie** and daughter **Freya** posted in from 11 Sig Regt.

7 ARMOURED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (207)

Sqn Comd **Maj Andy Bristow**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) Colin Milne**

It has been another busy period for the Squadron since Easter, with exercises in Denmark, Germany and Poland, as well as RSIT, a change in the Squadron structure and a number of arrivals and departures. We now look forward to a period of Adventure Training and leave and then to the build up for the Brigade test exercise in the autumn. What the future holds after that remains to be seen!

ALPHA TROOP

Tp Comd **2Lt Andy Hill**
Tp SSgt **SSgt James Runchman**

TWO MONTHS WITH ALPHA TROOP
by Cpl Murray, Royal New Zealand Signals

Alpha Tp, where men are men and the girls from Ooh La La's are happy ('But we only go there for the beers' - yeah right boys!) It's been work hard and party even harder for the last couple of months. The Troop has taken part in three Exercises: firstly one in Denmark, where we assisted Bravo Tp in giving the Danish Special Forces the run around for two weeks. The good old Panzers then ventured out to Hohne Training Area to practice a few new SOP's on Ex Jerboa Rage. The Troop would like to thank newly arrived **Sig** 'Damon' **Hill** for the light entertainment he provided when he tried to take on the Panzer back door with his little pinkie - hope it gets better soon! Last but not least, the whole Squadron deployed to Poland on Ex Prairie Eagle with the Troop under the command of **2Lt Andy** 'Map Reading Extraordinaire' **Hill**. The Unit performed well and got a big thumbs up from the Brigadier. Once again we all returned with numerous itchy red spots . . . thanks to the mozzies of course!

Alpha Tp has had a bag full of Kia Oras and Ka Kite Anos (Kiwi for Hellos and Goodbyes). First of all Kia Oras to **Cpl** 'Kiwi' **Murray**, **LCpl Simon Pereira**, and **Sigs Rob Castles**, **Stewart Blakeley**, **Grace Howard** and **Nigel Wells**. We also welcome **Sigs Danny Richardson**, **Phil Brown** and 'Geordie' **Soppitt** from Support Tp. Ka Kite Anos to **Sgt** 'Recon Platoon' **Ward** (moving to the training wing), **Cpl Dave Langridge** (to shape and mould our new recruits), **LCpl Bernie Clifton** and to **Sigs Gaz Ayto** and **Jase Court**. Finally the last farewell to **Sgt** 'Cylume Party' **Yates** who arrived recently, did such a good job and is now leaving us to go to 249 Sig Sqn on a well deserved promotion.

Between all the Exercising, farewells and general hard grafting, we enjoyed a good RSIT visit which went well - by the way, what's an 'A' job? Also well done for newly promoted **LCpl Des White** and **LCpl Tom O'Hanlon**; don't be shy with the slabs lads as we're all really thirsty! All

in all, an extremely busy period and the Troop is really looking forward to the Adventure Training period where we can all relax, have a Becks and put another shrimp on the barbie.

BRAVO TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt Adam Corkery**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Dave Sloane**

Firstly a warm welcome to **Sig Nikki** 'Fast Asleep' **Thompson** from 1 Div and to **Sig Simon** 'Saville' **Rowe** from Blandford. Secondly farewell to **Cpl Tarquin Jones** and to **LCpl** 'Titch' **Meakin** - may your new postings be just as happy as this one! Secondly congratulations to **Sgt Andy Buckle** on being selected for promotion to SSgt, **LCpl** 'Titch' **Meakin** to Cpl on posting and **LCpls Harold Broderick** and **Phil Green** on their promotion to LCpl.

DENMARK

The first day back after Easter leave and most of Bravo Tp, with elements of Alpha Tp in support, deployed to Denmark to act as Hunter Force for the first phase of the Danish Jagerkorpset selection course. The first week involved the Troop being deployed in observation posts around the northern Danish countryside, sited along various routes the students were expected to take whilst moving from one objective to another. The Ops were to note how tactically the students were moving with instructions to engage if drills were not up to scratch. Other members of the Troop manned various objectives that the students were to recce, in order to provide realistic targets.

The second week saw the Troop given more aggressive roles. These included mobile patrolling in Land Rovers, providing heliborne QRF's, setting ambushes, as well as providing casualties for various CASEVAC exercises. The Troop was also joined in the field by **Lt Wendy Wright** and **Cpl** 'Ruby' **Murray** from the Royal New Zealand Corps of Signals, who will be with us until August. With only a few days left of the E and E phase the Troop was pulled out of the field to assist with a search and rescue for a student who had gone missing at the start of the phase, having failed to make any contact at all at the RV's. At this late stage hopes were starting to fade. The missing student eventually turned up after the phase had finished: he had lost his escape map and had decided to lie low till the end of the Exercise and then give himself in. Needless to say, he didn't pass.

Other excitements included a heath fire which **Sig Danny Richardson** had nothing to do with starting, and finally a short period of R and R on the last night. The inhabitants of Alborg were friendly enough and everyone had a chance to unwind. Memories fade and some things are better left to those that can remember.

POST DENMARK

The annual RSIT inspection took place a couple of weeks after Denmark and there were quite a few early starts in the final week to ensure readiness, however the deadline was met and the Troop performed well. As soon as RSIT was over **Sig Chris Nixon** and **Sig** 'Ronnie the Rooster' **Barker** from Bravo Troop went to Kiel Sailing Club with the Squadron OC for a week to take part in a sailing competition. The results for the team were good with the Squadron team winning overall and, along with the Scots Dragoon Guards, winning the Inter-Garrison competition.

EXERCISE PRAIRIE EAGLE 1 AND 2

The Exercise commenced in unfortunate fashion with the armour being delayed by 24 hours at the railhead. Eventually however the Troop reached its destination of Drawsko Pomorskie in Poland. Bravo Tp, along with the rest of the Squadron and the Brigade Staff, exercised in the field for just over a week and then returned to Konotop to take over the manning of Excon and Hicon for Ex Prairie Eagle 2. Quote of the exercise has to go to **Pte Nikki Jenkins** AGC who, after hearing of peoples' fears of the local Grunny Pigs was heard to ask why everyone was so afraid of the Guinea Pigs! The Troop now looks forward to adventure training in the French Alps and a well deserved summer leave.

19 MECHANIZED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (209)

Sqn Comd **Capt C. M. Vaudin**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) S. Mitchell**

As many of you will now be aware 19 Brigade has been warned for operational deployment to FYROM/Kosovo, with the Headquarters assuming command in theatre, from 4 Brigade, on 1 September 1999. Consequently training and preparation continues apace. In SHQ, the Yeoman and Foreman, **WO2 (YofS) A. Drummond** and **WO2 (FofS) A. Williams** respectively, have been chained to their desks. The RSM, **WO1 (RSM) S. Mitchell**, meanwhile is preparing to charge his now overdue unborn baby, with being late for a parade.

Out on the tank park, the troops continue to curse and sweat over their beloved 43's, with track bashing providing the latest entertainment. Rumours continue of sightings of the Troop Commander B Tp and the Staff Sergeant B Tp (**Lt Toze** and **SSgt O'Brien**) in coveralls working on the armour, although many have dismissed this as pure fantasy. Meanwhile **Sig Allinson** has decided to redesign the Squadron Commander's FFR, the challenge of rebuilding it having now been issued to ABRO. A mention must also go to our colonial visitors, **Lt J. Wright** and **Cpl Peterson** of the Royal Australian Signals, who continue to suffer mild hypothermia from the Catterick weather, despite it now being June. In Support Tp, **SSgt S. K. Legg** grimly hangs on to his sanity, as he strives to control the MT and get on the heel. The technicians, however, have migrated to Blandford as they attempt to beat the number of courses completed record.

24 AIRMOBILE BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (210)

JAILBREAK! - *by Cpl P. Kirk*

210 Sig Sqn has always taken part in charity events where possible and more often than not has assisted in running them. This year it has been put to the Corporals to organise an event of their choosing, the 'Jailbreak!' theme being chosen by **Cpl Carl Tweddle, Cpl Rutland** and myself. The aim was for teams to get as far away as possible from Colchester and back again within 24hrs, with no possessions other than an emergency £10 note, ID cards and authorisation letters. On top of that teams had to collect as much money for charity as possible whilst wearing the most outrageous fancy dress they could come up with.

We worked hard to maximise the publicity coverage for the event. Radio Essex interviewed us live before and after the jailbreak and put the word on the street to watch out for rather strangely dressed soldiers roaming the countryside with collection tins.

There were some superb efforts but the winners for the furthest distance travelled were **LCpl Childs, Sig Jones** and **Sig Turner** who managed to get to London and up to Edinburgh before heading back to London and down to Dover all in 24hrs! Jailbreak! was a great success. At the last count the event had raised £700 for the Army Benevolent Fund with more money still to be collected. On top of that all the participants had a great time and got to go AWOL for the day without the risk of getting charged!



Goodies and Baddies ready for the OFF!

EXERCISE LION SUN FROM A PLANNERS LAPTOP

by Capt R. M. Harvey

Ex Lion Sun happened by chance. One cancellation and a change in the Brigade Programme left a slot in the OTX plan and a gap on the Ops Room board. Seizing the opportunity to spend December in Cyprus, the QM and I were off on the Recce faster than **LCpl Ayre** could type out the F Ident 173s. 'I'm sure I put the OC's recce guideline list in here somewhere….' **Ben Britton** looked unconvinced as I rummaged through my bag full of coconut oil and Nivea at RAF Akrotiri. Armed with my training programme and the guideline list, the recce commenced – five days of ranges, camps and training areas and then there were the bookings, rations, ammunition, vehicles, stores, boats, helicopters, maps, frequencies, fuel, flights and transport. At last, off to the beach, but only for an in depth briefing on Adventure Training qualifications and a glance at some splash dinghies. At the end, with about 200 new pamphlets (which took up every spare nook in my luggage) we returned to the UK. I set about *rewriting* the training programme. Somebody once told me that time spent receeing is a good skive. Hmmm…..

Having never deployed the Squadron further than SPTA for five days, planning for five weeks in Cyprus was quite a challenge (in the good old days you'd say *nightmare* but *challenge* suggests a more spirited 90's approach). I divided the training programme up into blocks of four days. **SSgt McKenna** on Ranges, who managed to devise a package that required more RMQ instructors than the entire Small Arms School Corps, **SSgt** 'Tiffy' **Elsmore**, who thought he'd get away with idling about in his canoe, on Mil Skills, **FofS Knight** on Navigation - at least the six months he had spent adventure training during the year would be put to good use and finally **Sgt Prichard** running the Inter Section Competition – I expected this to be changing tyres and so I was a bit surprised to find it involved me being rescued from a cliff. The next three months saw planning conference after planning conference, meeting after meeting and board after board. 'What about enemy?' the OC mused whilst on a Brigade FTX in March. Standing at the Comms Ops desk we sighted **FofS Knight** and **Sgt** 'Hammy' **Hammlett** and **Sgt Palmer**. The Foreman looked a bit Middle Eastern, **Sgt Hammlett** looked a bit shifty (stores trained) and **Sgt Palmer** just happened to be there. Within minutes the characters of **Col Adeous Knightali, Maj Wynali Hammet** and **Spiros Palmeros** were created, ruthless activists mercilessly intent on terrorising the Ex Patriot population of Abbelia. The Signal Squadron would train for a Non Combatant Evacuation Operation and rescue all UK EP's.

In April, I was busy making 'one last amendment' to the nominal role when **RSM Hodgson** slapped a sheet of paper in my in-tray. 'There!' he said. 'What's that?' I said squinting at the document. 'I've booked the packed lunches,' he replied with such conviction that there surely couldn't be any going back now. One last meeting with **RQMS** 'Taff' **Furnival**, more to reassure each other that we hadn't forgotten anything …. 'bit late now' we shrugged, checking into the Brize Norton Hotel. 24 hours later and I was back in arrivals in RAF Akrotiri. I'll let **Rob Hamilton** take up the story from here.

EXERCISE LION SUN 14 MARCH – 13 APRIL 1999

by 2Lt R. A. Hamilton

210 Signal Squadron left Colchester in rather surprisingly high spirits. Despite the fact that the state of Friland had been subjected to a number of ferocious attacks carried out by the terrorist group 'Action For Abbelia' (AFA), and that we would shortly find ourselves in the midst of these hostilities, everybody seemed raring to go to the area that on most maps is shown as Cyprus. Consequently, it was in an air of enthusiasm that we left RAF Brize Norton at a ridiculously early time on the morning of 14 March 1999 to take part in Ex Lion Sun, a four week infantry based training exercise.

Fortunately, the area ten kilometres Southeast of the Abbelian-Friland border was found to be secure and rather conveniently had a desolate camp close by, which the Squadron was able to occupy. From there the three platoons conducted platoon level tactical training in order to prepare themselves for future skirmishes with the Abbelian guerrillas. Nobody doubted the potential of the Abbelian troops and thus all training was conducted with the utmost vigour. A 'round-Robin' of training packages were laid on by the Squadron Training Team including a four-day military skills package, a two-day navigation package and a live firing phase culminating in section live fire attacks.



If you're sitting comfortably then we'll begin
2 Platoon's Section Commanders
(L-R): Cpl Barringer, Cpl Kirk, Cpl Smith

The training was indeed challenging. As anybody will tell you who has exercised on Cyprus, it is a beautiful golden island to look down upon from an aircraft, but once on the ground it is the most evil of terrain. The lie of the land and nature join forces to bite, sting, devour or spike anybody that is naïve enough to leave the safety of a tarmac area and lay foot on the countryside. Consequently the military skill and navigation phases proved harder than first envisaged but nevertheless were enjoyable and of great benefit for the final Exercise. Unfortunately the range package at Pyla was not as big a success as had been hoped for due to the number of suicidal sailors and fishermen who insisted on motoring into the impact area. The infuriation generated by constantly hearing the words 'STOP, apply safety catches,' could always be alleviated with a call to whichever member of the platoon hierarchy had the onerous task of boat sentry for the day and without doubt would be clinging on for dear life whilst kindly contributing rations to the Mediterranean food chain.

The situation on the Abbellian-Friland border continued to deteriorate and before long all three platoons found themselves deployed to rescue the remaining British ex-patriots left in the area . The Exercise began with an amphibious assault on Melanda Beach and securing the beachhead before moving North to the border. Over the following four days, a number of attacks, recces and ambushes were carried out before a final attack was made on the remaining enemy pocket in Paramali village. Exhausted, the company moved back to camp and prepared for the biggest challenge – the assault on the bank balance to be conducted over several days of adventure training.

A number of the Squadron grabbed the opportunity to visit either Israel or Egypt on one of the cruises from Limassol. On a more physical note a number of adventure training packages were laid on including parachuting, climbing, walking, mountain biking, sailing, horse riding and canoeing. Rejuvenated, the Exercise culminated with an excellent barbecue before returning to Colchester to annoy loved ones with hideously good tans. Ex Lion Sun proved to be a great success with the vast majority of training objectives met. The Squadron had a thoroughly enjoyable time and now goes forward having refreshed itself on basic tactics, fieldcraft and military skills, not forgetting the most important quality of how to recognise a good Brandy Sour from a bad one!

ROTHERA ATTACHMENT - *by Cpl Drew Meehan*

Between September 1998 to March 1999 I was lucky enough to undertake an attachment with the Antarctic Expeditionary Team to provide communications between the science parties out on the ice and the base camp. It was a fantastic chance to see a unique part of the world and deal with communications in the harshest of environments and I was therefore not going to let the opportunity slip by me.

The task started with a rather long flight out to the area. Unfortunately the weather was so bad that we were forced to stop in the happening megalopolis of Port Stanley for a week. Eventually the all clear was given and we continued with the final eight hour leg to the base camp. The pilot was excellent and flew at low level around some of the glaciers, giving us the chance to appreciate the vastness of Antarctica. Before long we had touched down on the ice between the oil drum markers and were whisked away to learn ice breaking drills and how to drive the ski-doos. I was lucky enough to have four weeks out with one of the science teams helping out with hot water drilling. This entailed drilling bore holes in the ice to assess its thickness, by maintaining a constant supply of boiling hot water down the shaft, quite a difficult task when the temperature is an average minus 35 degrees!

Base camp life was just as entertaining. In between looking after the communications, the social life was excellent with a fully stocked bar and a plethora of scientists who were only too keen to have a few beers! In any spare time there were ample opportunities to go off and explore the local islands or to go skiing. In summary, I had the adventure of a lifetime and can thoroughly recommend it to anyone interested.

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238 (LONDON) SIGNAL SQUADRON

SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS

OC	**Maj Steve Hunt**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Ewan Hall**

FAREWELL

SHQ bids farewell to one of the stalwarts of the Corps, **Maj (TOT) Richard Howes** on retirement. **Maj Howes** has been responsible for the high technical reputation of the Squadron and particularly the specification of the VIP PA system. We wish you and the family well in the tax haven of the Isle of Wight. We also say farewell to **LCpl Sophie Morris** on posting to 11 Sig Regt. Thanks for all the beasting sessions in the gym, congratulations on all your running achievements whilst with the Squadron and best of luck in Blandford.

DONATION TO MAITI NEPAL ORPHANAGE AND REHABILITATION CENTRE

During a recent visit to Kathmandu, Nepal, **Sgt Anderson** presented £1300 to **Mrs Anurada Koirola**, the director of Maiti Nepal Orphanage and Rehabilitation Centre. **Maj Steve Hunt** and **Cpl Steve Hook** raised the money by running in this year's London Marathon and **Sgt Fergie Anderson** running in the Fleet and Gatwick Half Marathons raised additional sums. Funds are still being collected and it is expected that the final sum will be in excess of £1500. Maiti Nepal was established in 1993 by **Mrs Anurada Koirola** to give support and assistance to women and children who have been trafficked into servitude, prostitution or who have suffered from any form of exploitation. The money will be used to pay the travel costs for the safe return of Nepalese girls from the brothels of India to their homeland Nepal. **Major Hunt, Sgt Anderson**, and **Cpl Hook** thank all those who gave support and encouragement in their fund raising efforts.



Sgt Anderson presenting £1300 to Mrs Anurada Koirola the Director of Maiti Nepal Orphanage and Rehabilitation Centre in Kathmandu, Nepal

TRAINING WING

Trg Offr	**SSgt Si Hadley**

EXERCISE COCKNEY SPLASH 2

Once again Trg Wg and Radio Tp joined forces for the annual offshore sailing Exercise which took place immediately after the LONDIST Shooting competition. Unfortunately **Sgt** 'Schofs' (NATFA President) **Schofield** was left behind, with a tear in his eye, to care for the remainder of the Troop. On arrival we were faced with our first dilemma, from **Cpl** 'Gordy (just one more question)' **McNeillie**, the conversation went as follows:

Gordy: So how do we sail up wind then?

Real Skipper: Well, tacking, beating, Close hauled (and lots of other sailing jargon).

Gordy: So how do we move from here against the wind and facing backwards?

Real Skipper: We turn the engine on!

Gordy: Clever! Clever!

The second dilemma was slipping out between the other Corps Yachts. **SSgt Si** 'The real skipper' **Hadley** opted to move *Skywave*, leaving **Capt Kerry** 'I am the skipper and I want to be the Skipper' **Levins** to slip *Petasus*. All went well except *Petasus* was last seen heading for the bridge over Haslar Creek. De-masting drills to follow. The crew then set sail for Ocean Village, a marina for the exclusive Martini Club people. Unfortunately standards slipped when **LCpl** 'My side burns are not ginger' **Lester** was allowed on shore to mix briefly with real Martini club members.

The Yacht and crew moved westward over the course of the week in strong winds with **Cpl** 'No Warning' **Hook** succeeding in drenching the crew from a huge Bay of Biscay wave which somehow ended up in Poole Bay! Wednesday was Weymouth night and the crew prepared for a night on the town. **LCpl Lee Lester** was finally lowered from the masthead to join us! An excellent week was had by all, with many nautical miles covered, much sailing learned and damaged credit cards. The Top Eight Events are listed below.

1. **SSgt Si Hadley** -Top Speed 7.6 Knots.
2. **LCpl Lee Lester** - Seasick whilst in harbour, through his nose! (NATFA club)
3. **LCpl Bry Stewart** - I don't feel well, can I take the train? (Scottish)
4. **Cpl Gordy McNeillie** - Can I go too? (Scottish)
5. **Cpl Gibbo Gibson** - You can go down the hatch head first whilst still in your sleeping bag! (Ex White Helmet)
6. **Cpl Steve Hook** - Flaking in a pub full of lovely girls (Trg Wg).
7. **Capt Kerry Levins** - I know I am the skipper but can I go back to bed, (six hours later) Where are we?
8. **Sig Greg (Green) Burgess** - For dedication to the Trg Wg, while the rest of us had an arduous exercise.

RADIO TROOP

Tp Comd outgoing	**Capt Kerry Levins.**
Tp Comd incoming	**Capt Andy Carroll.**
Tp Sgt	**Sgt Simon Schofield**

It is said when Bagpus is awake all his friends are awake and in Radio Tp Bagpus is Running the London Marathon twice. Life in Radio Tp goes from obscurity to full tilt with the Troop making up to 90% of all the teams the Squadron has entered in events from the Corps and LONDIST SAAM's to Race the Sun and if that was not enough Radio Tp becomes Ceremonial Tp yet again with Trooping the Colour, Beating Retreat, a State Visit, the State Opening of Scotland's Parliament and not forgetting the many Garden Parties and receptions at Buckingham Palace, all in an eight week period. Putting up the Div's Billy Smart's Tent on a rainy night has never been so far away.

The Troop have the following hellos and goodbyes to make, the Troop would like to welcome the incoming Tp Commander, **Capt Andy** 'love me love my hair' **Carroll,** from attachment to 1 Green Howards and **Sig Mac** 'been there done that more than you' **McGregor** from 249 (AMF) (L) Sig Sqn. Welcome to the Big Smoke. Unhappily we have to say farewell to **Capt Kerry** 'no bike' **Levins** and his wife **Sharon** also **LCpl Gaz** 'never happy' **Winders** and his wife **Julie** Best of luck in Civvy Street. Finally a big hello to the operational side of 238 (London) Sig Sqn to **Cpl Mick** 'I got the best Det' **Breydin** and **Cpl** Daz 'I got the worst det' **Pond** who are currently in Bosnia. Also, not forgetting **Sig Stu** 'Brace up' **Parker** who is currently taking it easy in BATUS. Keep up the good work lads and sorry you missed the Photo.



Radio Tp in Summer Ceremonial dress on the south side of the River Thames adjacent to the Houses of Parliament

RACE THE SUN

An early start topped the day to move to Race the Sun competition but we finally made it to York after stopping at virtually all the service stations enroute, no thanks to **LCpl** 'Pathfinder' **Lester.** After a night of finely honed preparation and with 'all men accounted for' we were ready to tackle every eventuality and if the race had not been cut short **WE'D HAVE WON!** You must understand that by coming 11th this year, we bettered our position by two places from last year. By 2010 we should win it, so watch out 30 Sig Regt (start preparing now). When everyone had finished, **Capt** 'I'll meet you down there' **Carroll'** ordered a CUR (Close Urban Recce) to be carried out in order to prepare us for our multi stage service station hop home. The trip home was uneventful and we made it back to London in fairly good time with 'no fallen soldiers'. A special mention in dispatches has to be made to **Capt** 'Commando in a kilt' **Carroll** for a very good impersonation of meat and two veg!

OSCAR TROOP

Tp Comd **Maj (Tfc) Dave Gilchrist**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Karen Ripley**

As we kiss goodbye to those cold winter blues, we welcome with open arms those long summer nights, time for recuperation and to have a well-earned beer or two in the warm hazy London sunshine. Not much chance of that unless your name happens to be **Sgt** 'Freebie' **Anderson** . You see 'Freebie' is getting on a bit now, with approximately 18 months until retirement. He feels he needs extra privileges, so for the 648th time in his 15 or so months here, he has again been chosen as Det Comd of 238's 501 DET in Nepal. What about the rest of the crypto ops BOSS, cross training flexibility/adaptability and all that? On a serious note 'Freebie' does an excellent job raising funds for the less fortunate people in that part of the world and we just wish he would show as much charity to his fellow crypto comrades back here in Blighty. The rest of the Troop just keep plodding away in his absence, doing a fine job down in the now not so murky corridors of Horseguards. We've had a lick of paint (yippie) and we thought the Strategic Defence Review was all about cutbacks. Well, painting is just like politics you can only paint over the cracks for so long.

On the social front an excellent evening was had by all at the recent Tp function held in the Bruno Bistro Bar. This was an excellent function organised by the girls in the Wellington Barracks OAC (operator assistance centre). For some strange reason Oscar Tp functions always seem to go down well with the rest of the Squadron and I wonder if it's something to do with a higher ratio of females to males, however, this may be put to the test soon with reorganisation getting ever closer. The Troop will diminish even more with closures but in the face of adversity it's that one for all, and all for one spirit that pulls everyone through. It has to be said that the Commune will now be a quieter place with the loss of one if it's longest serving stalwarts, **Shaida Hasizi** who has departed to test the eardrum's of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. **Mr Dave Tivey** also departs London Central to COMCEN Whitehall. The rest of the CO4's are wondering what the extra travelling expenses will amount to for travelling the extra 50 metres across the Horseguards parade ground.

The Troop continues to excel on the sporting front and it would appear the older you get the fitter you are and so naturally end up doing more Inter-Troop competitions. The Troop recently won the squash and rowing competition with the participants ages averaging out at 38. That's how old we feel ourselves to be after the event, but a few short John Smith's we all rekindled our youthful age of 25ish! The Troop also won the hockey event winning 2-0 and 1-0 respectively against Radio and Mike Tp. So watch out, as predicted in previous pages, the trophy is coming our way.

MIKE TROOP

Tp Comd **Capt (TOT) Phil Cooper**
Tp SSgt **Sgt Twizell**

Yet another busy period with the season of rehearsals and parades well and truly getting under way. The planning of the communications for the State Opening of the Scottish Parliament has also started with **Cpl** 'Gordy' **McNeillie** spending a week up in Edinburgh. 'Gordy' was rumoured to be checking water contamination in Princess Street during brief moments of free time.

The Troop would like to say a final farewell to the TOT, **Maj Richard Howes** who after thirty eight (38) years of Army life has handed in the last of his remaining uniform and picked up his brief case and left for a life in civvy street. In his place a hello, welcome and congratulations to the newly commissioned **Capt Cooper** who has arrived for a short period of time, on loan, from CPD Blandford. We hope you enjoy your short stay. Congratulations also to the newly appointed **Sgt Twizell**.

Welcome back **Cpl Bone**, complete with suntan, who has been on an expedition in Nepal. Congratulations to **Cpl McNeillie** for collecting a gong at the London District Shooting Competition with his team mate **Sig Kearns** of Radio Tp. Well done also to **Cpl Bone, Sig McGuire** and **Sig McFaul** for completing various legs in this years Race the Sun up in York. Congratulations also to **Sig McGuire** for being the only member of the Tp to pick up a medal in the London District Athletics Competition. Well done to all other members who took part.

CHALLENGE CUP COMPETITION

Early April saw the fourth in a series of inter Troop sporting competitions take place in one of the few non asbestos solid structures still standing in Chelsea Bks - the squash court. In a fairly close fought competition, all Troops were guilty of pulling out their old and bold. M Tp dragged out their deadly weapon - the TOT, **Maj Richard Howes** and SHQ/O Tp found the oldest trio going, which included the OC, **Maj Steve Hunt** and **SSM Ewan Hall**! Much rested on the final game which the SSM had to win to level the competition with M Tp. The SSM took the game in his stride but the overall result was a tie. The OC, making a somewhat odd tactical decision, decided the outcome would rest on the results of a one-off 500m rowing competition, against the clock. Despite a closely run competition, age prevailed and SHQ/O Tp won the squash on their rowing machines! SHQ/O Tp continued on their current form in May by storming off with the inter Tp Hockey competition. Their secret weapon, this time, was **SSM Ewan Hall** back out of retirement for the last time (allegedly) and **YofS Neil Stewart** nursing a groin injury.

CORPSAAM/LDRAM

Pull up a sandbag my friend and listen to a tale of great daring. Once upon a time there was a shooting team from 238 Sig Sqn. This was a proper team, I mean to say, they even managed to conduct some training! I know, I know, how did they do that, but stop interrupting me. This team of only the truest and stoutest to be found were aiming to knock some giants off their perches. The first day of the Corps SAAM did not go too well. The evil eye was upon them. This team was not daunted and set out on the second morning prepared to resume their David and Goliath struggle. Suddenly their illustrious (non participating) team captain, **Cpl** 'I can fire three rounds in a minute from my musket' **Storey** cried out the words oft heard amongst these folk.

'We're effluent and we know we are'

These immortal words had a remarkable effect on this band of weary fighters. It seemed that all the glory (and silver) was going to the 'Wicked 30 Sigs of Midshire' and the '11 'Anything south of London is France' Sigs'. At this time all the other participating units had fallen under a strong spell of lethargy and were anticipating an evening of merriment. The words of the Good Wizard, **Capt Reith** (whose evil twin **George** was nowhere to be seen) broke this spell and all sat up to remark upon a change in the prize distribution routine – little **David** had triumphed in the form of **Sig** 'Dead eye Dick' **Kearns**. All present warmed to this news and the crowd raised a cheer worthy of Wembley on Cup Final Day. Next, the unstoppable morale machine packed their bags and went to the London District shooting competition at Pirbright, yet again facing another nightmare journey through the shooting maze. On this occasion, however, they first met the all seeing eye of the SUSAT which unfortunately did not help their cause. Yes that's right, their battle cry was heard far and wide, bringing good cheer to the Woodentops, Wedgeheads, Dukes of Boots and WAFTAM (ask your mother who they are).

Back to the tale in question, as you have gathered the team had not done so well, or so they thought. The great God – non – combatant was looking down upon these very sorry individuals and gave the team the best battle honour yet. The only hope we may have was the young soldier in the LSW gun run. He was accompanied by a more elderly soldier convinced that the shoot was individual (wrong – see age does not bring wisdom just optimistic delusional behaviour). After some discussion, shoulders were shrugged believing that all hope was lost. So the merry band trooped off to another Prize giving. Well named for them – how could it be anything other than Prize Giving – oh to receive!

To the surprise of all gathered there, **Sgt** 'bit of a gabbler' **Schofield** was honoured with a medal for coming second in the pistol shoot. This was only until the AGC managed to calculate the scores correctly and everybody's faith was restored – he had in fact come ninth. To save face, however, they let him keep the sacred medal. Then came the surprise of four decades, **Cpl** 'Quick Draw' **McNellie** and yet again **Sig** 'Dead eye Dick' **Kearns** had taken the LSW gun match. This was the first time since 1952 that the Household Division had not won. The Great War God, GOC, was not happy. Somebody's head was on the block Monday morning. Ha Ha. So 30 Signal Regiment and 11 Signal Regiment, beat that! Not bad for a non-conference league team!



238 (London) Signal Squadron
CORPSAAM and LDRAM shooting team

PS. All the best to the SOinC on his new posting to Civ Div from the lads and lasses in the Corps that have worked with you over the years. You are one in a million, and will be a major loss to the Royal Signals. We wish you and your family well in the future. Keep in touch – do not leave us on the battlefield.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please advise the Subscriptions Clerk, at RHQ, IN WRITING, of any change of address.

THIS INFORMATION SHOULD NOT BE TELEPHONED

242 SIGNAL SQUADRON

FAREWELL TO THE ISLES

On 31 March 1999 members of the Corps serving with H Troop, 242 Signal Squadron, bade a fond farewell to the Hebridean Islands of North and South Uist and Benbecula. After 41 years the Corps' communications responsibilities came to an end as all functions were handed over to DERA. The last members of the Troop are pictured below flanking the cairn built to commemorate the Corps long association with the Islands.



Top Row: Sgt R Ewan Kinnear, WO1 (now Capt) Dave Alexander, Sgt Chris VDK, Sgt Steve Munro
Bottom Row: LCpl Darren Lane, Cpl Lee Stennett, Sgt Joe McGiness, SSgt (now WO2) 'Smudge' Smith
(Cpl Lane still hasn't found the 5p he dropped)



The cairn and the plaque were unveiled by GOC Scotland Maj Gen M. A. Strudwick CBE and is shown flanked by Cpls Gareth McWha and Susie Learmouth



That afternoon the Corps, headed up by Brig N. F. Wood ADC hosted a cocktail party and then the Pipes and Drums performed a ceremony of Retreat

The day was rounded off with an all ranks function in the JRC at West Camp.

On Friday 14 May we marked the impending closure of the Glasgow and Edinburgh Operator Assistance Centres. A good day was had with presentations to the Glasgow girls in Kentigern House followed by lunch in Edinburgh and a social afternoon in the Squadron area.



The Glasgow Exchange Staff after receiving their presentations from the personnel of Kentigern House
Ms Gayle Outhwaite - (Comms Offr 2),
Mrs Catherine McGeoch - (Telephonist Glasgow)
Mrs Agnes Donaldson - (Supervisor Glasgow)
Mrs Diane Neely - (Telephonist)
Maj (Retd) G. A. Carmichael - (Sqn 2IC)

Even in the Static Signal Squadrons 'things' continue to change. We have closed two doors but more open as we move into CIS more and more and the Squadron boundary is now all Scotland and South to Altcar, Preston and Warcop. More changes are ahead and we look forward to the new challenges.

IMPORTANT!!

Would ALL Units please note the following: **ALL** PHOTOS accompanying Articles for *The Wire*, **MUST** have CAPTIONS and an indication where they are to be placed in the text, otherwise they **MAY NOT BE USED**

243 SIGNAL SQUADRON

LANYARD TROPHY 1999 - *by LCpl Andy Dunn*

Having recently arrived in the unit **LCpl**'s **Andy Dunn,** 'Fitzy' **Fitzpatrick** and 'Geordie' **Gray** were interested to find out that they were to be participating in this year's Lanyard Trophy competition. Team selection wasn't a problem for the Team Captain **SSgt Bob Lawrence,** as this year's team consisted of the only ten healthy, available members of the Squadron including **SSgt Bernie Smith** the only female team member and who was carrying two injuries before we even started!

After an 0300hrs reveille and quick breakfast we boarded the minibus and headed for the start point. We were assured by **WO2 (SSM)** 'Paddy' **Morrow** that the aim of the team this year was to complete the course and it wasn't too important which position we finished in, however the pace we set off at, showed us it wasn't going to be just a gentle stroll. Unfortunately at CP1 we had to drop off **Cpl Jim Gray** who had taken a fall and twisted his ankle after about five miles. We were also met by the OC, **Maj Andy Walker** who had arrived to offer his support. We were dealt another blow at CP2 when we lost **SSgt Andy Burdge** who was severely drained after a recent heavy schedule of many rugby matches other sports and illness. So after completing fourteen miles and having lost two of our fittest members we were down to the minimum finishing requirement of eight team members!

Halfway through the twelve mile leg to CP3 **LCpl** 'Geordie' **Gray** started to feel the effects of dehydration, after a few litres of water, numerous sticky bars, a generous helping of honey supplied by **Cpl** 'Gregsy' **Gregory** and a few choice words of 'encouragement' from **Bob Lawrence** he was soon flying high again. After quickly composing ourselves at CP3 we were soon on our way to CP4 and heading towards a mast which brought back memories of last year for some team members. Arriving at CP4 knowing we only had four miles to go we were met again by the OC who had kindly nipped to the shop's to replenish our supply of Lucozade and stickies. The last four mile leg continued along the same lines as the rest of the course, hills, followed by stiles, followed by more hills, followed by more stiles! Having crossed a major road and a railway bridge we were encouraged by the sight of the OC's dog bounding to greet us on the home straight. It was heads down as we made our way up the final hill and a smile for the camera as we crossed the finish line. The relief was felt by everyone as we handed over our Bergen's for the final weighing as we congratulated each other on a job well done.

Our thanks go to **LCpl Lorraine Giudici** and **Pete Mudway** for their efforts on the Admin side and to the members of 216 (Para) Sig Sqn who helped us negotiate many busy roads enroute, also to the OC for his support and the beers which were very welcome.



Lanyard Trophy 1999 Team
Standing (L-R): Sgt Jim Robertson, Cpl Gregs Gregory, SSgt Bob Lawrence, LCpl 'Geordie' Gray, WO2 (SSM) 'Paddy' Morrow
Front (Sprawled L-R): L Cpl Andy Dunn, SSgt Bernie Smith and LCpl 'Fitzy' Fitzpatrick
(Absent from Photo - SSgt Andy Burdge and Cpl Jim Gray)

NEWS FROM U TROOP - *by SSgt Andy Burdge*

Hellos and Goodbyes, yet again there has been many comings and goings. On the arrival front we welcome **Sgt Jackie McCorry** from Blandford and **LCpl** 'Taff' **Gibbard** from 15 Sig Regt. Departing, from us, for Australia is **Sgt Caroline Towers** who is getting married to **Richard** of the Australian Army and leaving the Corps also to **Sig Richie Templeman** who has left us for Civ Div. We thank both of them for all their hard work whilst in the Troop and wish them all the very best for the future.

Sports and Social, once more time has flown by with the HQ Land Inter-Departmental Competition due to start soon. Troop members have been busy finding things to occupy their spare time! **Cpl Jim Grey** and **LCpl** 'Vinny' **Vincenzi** have been away with the unit shooting team at the Corps SAAM under the watchful eye of **SSgt Andy Burdge** and there have also been many 'Tabs' around the local area preparing for the Lanyard Trophy with **SSgt Bernie Smith, Andy Burdge** and **Cpl Jim Grey** not being able to find anything better to do than spend three or four hours out in the bush! On the social front, the unit had its first Military All Ranks function for quite a while (at least four years) the 2IC finding the key to the cash box at last! A fine night was had by all and the Troop would like to thank **Cpl Stu Powney** from Tech Troop for organising the event.

Corps SAAM 99, again it was time to make the pilgrimage to Ash Ranges for the SAAM. With there being a sudden influx of young blood from the 'Factory' at Blandford, team selection became a little easier than in previous years, as for once we could field some young soldiers and Class B shots. The build up, as usual did not go very well with training and Operational commitments taking its toll, however, what time was spent on the range was put to good use. The week went well overall with **Cpl Jim Grey** and **LCpl** 'Fitzy' **Fitzpatrick** doing exceptionally well in the LSW match and the team after three years of trying finally clearing the Butt in the combat snap and gaining a creditable position. After a good week's shooting the team of **Cpls Jim Grey, Gregs Gregory** and **LCpl Stu Golightly,** 'Fitzy' **Fitzpatrick** and **Vinny Vincenzi** finished Second Minor Unit behind 19 Mech Bde. Yet again all the team have benefited in their soldiering skills from this competition and they would like to thank **Capt Reith** (Corps Secretary) for another well run competition. Quick mention for the **SSM** 'Paddy' **Morrow** who entered as an individual and bought the drinks all week 'Cheers Paddy'.



Squadron Shooting Team 1999
Standing (L-R): LCpl Stu Golightly, Cpl 'Gregs' Gregory and LCpl 'Fitz' Fitzpatrick
Kneeling (L-R): Cpl Jim Gray and LCpl 'Vinni' Vincenzi

SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS ROUNDUP

Personal Best for the SSM, this year the Unit has decided to collect funds in support of our local branch of MENCAP. **WO2 (SSM)** 'Paddy' **Morrow** who is the driving force behind the project decided he would do his bit by entering into the local marathon from Avesbury to Stonehenge which took place on Sunday 2 May 1999. After much training the SSM assembled at the start line on a very warm and sunny day, the course was described by the organisers as being multi-terrain and undulated which proved a very accurate description. The SSM had no intention of making a race of it in fact his only aim was to beat his previous marathon finish time of 3hrs 48mins, this he did by finishing in a time of 3hrs 20mins. We would like to thank all those who sponsored the SSM and to confirm that he did complete the course we have included a picture of him at the finish with his medal. Well done



Marathon Man - WO2 (SSM) 'Paddy' Morrow with medal after completing the Marathon

249 SIGNAL SQUADRON
ACE MOBILE FORCE (LAND)

OC — **Maj D. J. Foulkes**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) K. Marsh**

VISIT OF ACOS G6 CIS LAND - 30 APRIL 1999
by Sig Ellis

On 30 April ACOS G6 CIS Land, **Brig Shaw**, visited the Squadron, accompanied by his daughter. The visit enabled the Brigadier to see the Squadron up close and get the general feeling of the troops. He was first greeted by the OC, **Maj Jim Foulkes**, and the SSM, **WO2 (SSM) Cummings**, and then began his visit with a tour of the single soldiers 'five star' accommodation. Meanwhile his daughter, under the able guidance of **Cpl Dave Atherton,** enjoyed a spin cross-country in a BV206

On leaving the 'Ritz', the Brigadier and his daughter were given three different accounts of life in the Squadron from the soldiers point of view. Picked from a cast of thousands, **Sig Kev Rutherford, LCpl Neil Whitely** and myself gave our accounts of recent Squadron deployments to Slovenia, Norway and Italy. Next stop for the Brigadier was a chat with the Lanyard Trophy team, where the talk centered on how we had prepared for the competition and our tactics on the day. (Little did we know that the next time we would meet would be at the ceremony to collect the trophy from him). The Finale to the day was the 'Gun Run', where Oscar and Papa Troop, watched by the Brigadier and the OC, beasted themselves around a rugby pitch, carrying parts of the gun and pulling a trailer. Thankfully it was only one of the hottest days of the year so far and we were wearing helmets and combat jackets.

Following that **Brig Shaw** presented **Sig Welburn** with the Cook Pot for the best Novice time in the Norway 10km Ski Race. He then addressed the entire Squadron in order to shed some light on the events taking place in the Balkans and how they might effect ourselves in the future. Finally he departed in the direction of the Officers mess, for a buffet lunch, before leaving the Squadron in the early afternoon.



Sig Welburn receives the Cook Pot from Brigadier Shaw

THE LANYARD TROPHY 1999
by Sig Welburn

It was the beginning of March when the Squadron decided that the Lanyard team should begin training. Myself and fourteen others volunteered or were 'volunteered', not suspecting what was in store for us. After some research by **Cpl Dean Wilson**, we discovered that other units had been training for three months before us, and we realised we were facing some harsh competition. Our training soon began with daily sessions at 0900hrs with **LCpl Steve** 'the Gym Queen' **Douglas,** followed by a few hours off, finishing with a 'tab' on Salisbury Plain. For the purposes of training the team was removed from normal Squadron activity and this certainly helped foster team cohesion and the will to win. After a few weeks the training became much more intensive as we moved to Folkestone in order to train on the North Downs Way - the actual Lanyard Trophy route. The route did seem somewhat overwhelming on paper but after a week of dissecting and mastering it, it did not seem quite so bad. In all we spent two weeks in Folkestone, we trained and played hard, and certainly gained maximum benefit from our proximity to the route. There was an abundance of well earned food courtesy of **LCpl Jim** 'Casey Ryeback' **Fraser**, our chef and a daily dose of morale from **Sig Jim** 'the Pest' **Gallagher.** We knew the route, we were fit and confident we could win the Trophy for the Squadron.

On the morning of the competition we were up at 0400hrs for breakfast. The competition started at 0530hrs with 32 teams, a total of 320 people, trying to get over a single stile. The first part of the tab quickly became a race between ourselves, 216 (Para) Sig Sqn and 30 Sig Regt. Gradually the teams began to separate and off we went, with the 216 Team in the lead for quite some time. We were convinced that they had a considerable lead until we came to the end of one of the sections in the woods and we had them in view. From what we could see some of them were struggling, and it gave us some hope that we might just beat them. So with 'guts, determination and the desire to win' (as **Cpl Mat Witham** puts it) we managed to overcome the excellent competition and come in first.

To win was a great honour as all of the team will agree. We could never have done it without the superb support provided by our admin. team. We would like to thank the other competitors, particularly 216 (Para) Sig Sqn for pushing us all the way and their organisation of the entire event. Hopefully next year we can come back and endeavour to win for a second time.



INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES ARMY BASKETBALL TEAM TOUR OF THE UNITED STATES - *by Sig Thompson*

No sooner had I arrived at the Squadron, than I was given the chance of a lifetime. As a selected member of the Army Basketball team I joined their tour to Fort Hood, Texas.

The Tour consisted of five games against very strong US opposition. It was also an excellent opportunity to meet US soldiers and see how their lives differed from ours. Suffice to say their facilities were amazing. However, the main aim of the tour was to play and by the time the first game came around everyone was raring to go. In total we played five games managing to win only one of them. Of the five games we played The Fort Hood All Stars were by far the hardest team that the Army faced, proving to be far better than us to come away easy winners in our fixture with them. The other four games were closer but it wasn't until the final game that we managed to win.

That said it was a great tour and everyone seemed to take something special home with them. Personally I had a great time and can't wait to go back.

EXERCISE THUOLO KHOLA COCKNEY – *by Sig Smith*

This expedition to the Kingdom of Nepal included trekking and white-water rafting and ran from 9 April to 26 April. The group included eleven Army personnel, from differing units and cap badges, and one member of the RAF.

On arrival in Nepal we enjoyed a brief stay in Kathmandu at the hotel 'Moonlight' before departing, on a six hour bus journey, to Gorka, a town roughly in the middle of Nepal, where we met our guides and porters. Our porters were very much appreciated as the first days included an endless amount of steps to a temple at the very top of Gorka where we slept on our first night. Over the next seven days we trekked ninety kilometres through the Maraslu Region of Nepal surrounded by amazing scenery. The trek culminated with a white knuckle ride on the Marsyangdi river. The raft negotiated grade four and even some grade five rapids, the adrenaline flowed freely.

This trip was the chance of a lifetime to visit such an extraordinary country, where the people are so friendly and some areas are straight from 'the land that time forgot.' Modern influence and technology seem to have passed the place by. I had an excellent time and must thank my unit for enabling me to go.



(L-R): Sig Smith, Cpl Nagusha and Flt Lt Wagh taking a break from the Trek in Nepal

251 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj John Oakes**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Jim McNaught**

HAIL AND FAREWELL

Departures and arrivals have certainly slowed down over the last few months to a slow trickle, with only one new arrival and three departures! Welcome to **WO2 (SSM)** 'Smudge' **Smith** posted in from 1 (UK) Div. Farewell to **WO2 (SSM) Jim McNaught** posted to 202 Armd Sig Sqn 3(UK) Div Bulford. Also off to pastures new are **Sgt Sean Curry**, posted to SHAPE (someone had to go!!), and finally **Sgt Dave Green** who leaves the army after 15 years service with a new longer length bouffant hairstyle and the Squadron's best wishes!

251 SIGNAL SQUADRON IN THE RUNNING FOR NEW TOYS!
by SSgt Glynis Watton

On Sunday 21 March 1999 six members of the Squadron participated in the gruelling Fleet Half Marathon, a total of thirteen miles, each runner having been sponsored. It was a unanimous decision that the local Queen Mary's Nursery would be the beneficiaries as many of the Squadron's staff use the facilities at QMN. The dedication and care given to our children is very much appreciated and its great to be able to give something back. The fact that it is also the QMN's 100th anniversary certainly spurred the runners on to help the Nursery celebrate in style.

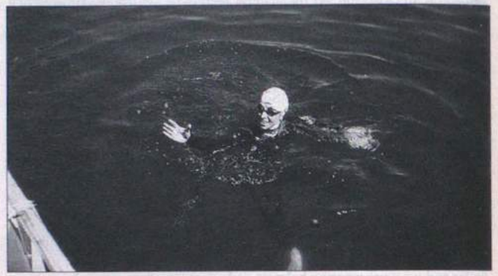
The OC, **Maj John Oakes,** was extremely pleased to present the Matron, **Mrs Hutchison,** with a cheque for £342 on behalf of the Squadron at a small ceremony along with twenty or so of the nursery's toddlers. The nursery will be using the money to buy lots of new play equipment for the children. Thank you to everyone who supported us in this worthwhile cause which hopefully will now be repeated in years to come!!

Runners: **SSgt Glynis Watton** - Organiser
Maj John Oakes - OC Squadron
Sgt Dave Green
Sgt Jim Kelly
LCpl Jules Dolan
LCpl Nicki Dean
Mrs Sara Chivers.

EXERCISE REDCOAT STAMPEDE - ARMY TRIATHLON
by Sgt Daphne Clash

In a mad moment earlier this year I decided that a new challenge in my life was needed. Thoughts of the Army Triathlon entered my buzzing head. Never one to dither once I have got the bit between my teeth, I bought the bike, my moth eaten costume was binned in favour of something that was half decent to be seen swimming in! Now all I needed was to get on with it. With this in mind I somehow managed to wangle a place onto the Army Triathlon Association's annual training camp in North Carolina USA!!

At the end of April, fifty of us set off to Fort Bragg which was to be the base for the first phase of the ex. The aim of the annual training camp is to introduce novices like myself to the sport, and to improve the already experienced Army tri-athletes in preparing themselves for the racing season ahead. Qualified coaches put us through our paces, with emphasis on technique. The training was hard but rewarding (definitely not for the couch potatoes)! At the end of the first week we set off to the Appalachian Mountains, the place was beautiful (they filmed Last of the Mohicans and Dirty Dancing here). The novices accommodation was sumptuous much to the chagrin of the elite athletes who ended up with the worst! Now the hard work really started with open water swimming practice and some seriously hilly bike courses. We also competed in a sprint distance



'Get me out! My left foot has been bitten off!'

triathlon at Clemson, South Carolina, my first, of which I had a pleasing result. The two weeks flew by, it was very hard work but brilliant.

I have now got the 'bug' and since returning I have competed in the Army Sprint Championships coming a creditable Fourth, and also the Army Championships with an amazing Third position, my first Olympic distance event. So if any of you out there fancy a challenge and something out of the ordinary, try it. You never know you may have a talent, but even if you don't it is a fantastic sport and the camaraderie is excellent!

259 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj Steve Turnbull**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) D. Ewing**

The SOinC (A), **Brig Griffin ADC**, visited the Squadron on the 28 April after first hosting **HRH The Princess Royal** on her visit to Cyprus on the 27 April. Both of the visits went well, as a result of a great deal of preparation from all in the Squadron. **Brig Griffin,** accompanied by the Regimental Secretary, **Col (Retd) Carter**, visited all three Troops after first receiving an update on all relevant issues from the OC Sqn and Ops Team. At Episkopi Tp **Brig Griffin** was presented a pencil sketch of himself drawn by **LCpl Lee Bearfield.**



Brigadier Griffin receiving a pencil sketch from LCpl Bearfield

It was a day of presentations for the Brigadier as he also unveiled the new Squadron painting and was presented with a copy to take back to hang in RHQ R Signals. The Brigadier's visit was finished off by a Royal Signals Ladies Dinner Night which was attended by Royal Signals Officers from 259 Sig Sqn, HQ BFC and JSSU (AN).

After the visit season quietened down, life in the Squadron has continued at its usual busy pace, as the summer temperatures continue to rise, making all new comers to Cyprus feel decidedly uncomfortable. The largest number of newcomers to the Squadron are from 81 Sig Sqn (V) who each year are attached to the Squadron for two weeks, per Troop. As usual this is a successful arrangement and a chance for both TA and Regular personnel to learn more about each other. We hope that they enjoy their stay this year.

Farewells from the Squadron go to **Lt S. Pedder, Sgt Jones, YofS** 'Taff' **Thomas** and **SSgt O' Holloran** who all leave the Squadron on posting. Best of luck in your new jobs.

SIGNALLER'S DEVELOPMENT COURSE

Some 16 of the young soldiers in the Squadron gathered in Episkopi for a week long course. The activities were designed to develop and then test them as potential JNCOs. They diversified from their usual jobs to try their hand at problem solving and giving lessons, this was mixed in with classes on first aid, map reading, skill-at-arms and drill supervised by **Sgt Dave Wilson**, the course administrator.

As the week progressed the days got longer and the tasks harder which culminated in what they thought was a night navigation exercise. Though when they arrived at the Paramali Village checkpoint they were shocked when smoke and bangs started and they were tasked to deal with a simulated mortar attack. This involved casualty simulation ably provided by **Cpl Matt Pryme** and a Press Team in the form of **SSgt Kev Tierney** and **Sgt Mickey Harman** as well as the shock victims and the DS putting them under pressure. As it was the first time most of them had been in command they did remarkably well. This phase ended with a night bergen run up into the back of camp from Happy Valley to the Squadron, not very pleasant!

The next day was presentations and photographs with the OC Sqn, **Maj Steve Turnbull** presenting **Sig Steve Hickling** from Dhekelia Tp with his Top Student award.



DONKEY SANCTUARY PROJECT

'Friends of the Cyprus Donkey Sanctuary' was in need of some serious maintenance when 259 Sig Sqn stepped in to help. A group of twelve made the trip under **Sgt** 'Fudge' **MacPhee** to the small mountain village of Vouni where the sanctuary cares for some 84 abandoned donkeys. The Sanctuary needs lots of work done to it and the team worked on some of the heavier maintenance tasks. The soldiers, including **Sgt Dave Street** and **Sigs** 'Jock' **Milne** and 'Scott' **Duffie**, cleared an area for a new boundary fence to be erected. This task took just a day with plenty of enthusiasm along with the hard work.



The A team with Sgt Fudge MacPhee (1st left) at the Donkey Sanctuary

Mr Patrick Skinner, the sanctuary manager, said that they did a marvellous job and that they were delighted with the result. He was especially pleased that the Squadron had brought such a large group because it meant much bigger tasks could be undertaken. The soldiers thoroughly enjoyed their day and are looking forward to going back. Another trip is planned for the near future this time to erect a fence and make some steps for them.

THE FORCE WORKSHOP WALKDOWN *by Sig 'Admin Vortex' Eyre*

The whole idea of walking from the top of Troodos Mountain to the sea, down at Curium Beach, on a work day seemed like a nice idea when my Troop Foreman suggested it to me two days before the event. Unfortunately what I didn't know at the time, was that we started at 0600hrs in the morning, and that we would be running instead of walking!

When we arrived at the top of Troodos, prior to starting, the whole team were looking forward to an eventful day out and spirits were high. We set off at a fast but steady pace and continued to do so for the first six to seven miles. This soon slowed to a walk when we realised that we had overtaken at least half a dozen teams and were an hour ahead of others. If it had been up to **FofS Eric** 'Speedy' **O'Halloran**, we would have continued to run like madmen. However, **YofS** 'Taff 'I know the way' **Thomas** put a quick end to the Foreman's ideas by reminding him that we still had about 20 to 25 miles left to go.

It was at this point that someone noticed that my day sack was open, and as the blood drained away from my face I realised that I had not only lost the map but the check point co-ordinates as well. Thankfully, we managed to continue due to the spare map and being able to remember where most of the checkpoints were. We plodded on through the morning down hills, up hills, back down hills, back up hills and all the while laughed, joked and had a good time.

We stormed across the finish line with **Sgt Dave** 'I need the toilet' **Street** leading us in. Thoroughly exhausted and ready for dinner and a bath we crossed the line in seventh place, completing the 30 mile course in eight hours. The afternoon was rounded off with drinks and a barbecue at the *Forced Inn* at RAF Akrotiri where we all shared our horror stories of the morning's event. We had all had an excellent day.

1 (ROYAL BUCKINGHAMSHIRE YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON (SPECIAL COMMUNICATIONS)

OC **Maj David Raleigh**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Dave Scott**

This has been something of a regrouping period for the Squadron. Following the highly successful USA deployment, the requirements for Regular operator's continuation training were overhauled and **Cpl Ian Grant** launched his so-called mates into a busy schedule of activations and deployments. Several Operators, as well as stores expert **Sgt Danny** 'I've lost my fill' **Ford** and **LCpl Rosey** 'I need some sun' **Roseveare** caught up on a backlog of work and training in Cyprus. At the same time the SC Course has been steadily improving standards, in some cases more than in others – watch this space for a complete report next issue. The ever elusive Ops Offr, **Capt Richard** 'where am I this week?' **Newhouse** managed to recce a couple of Exercises and complete the Lanyard Trophy before heading off to Scotland for a week of valuable sail training. On the TA side the main highlight was the Trade Weekend in which **SSgt** 'Deano' **Poole** and **WO2 Paul Willimont** tried to explain that there was more to antennae theory than simple trial and error… Perhaps second careers as *Tomorrows World* presenters beckon! Lastly the Squadron has said 'Cheers **Flo**' for the last (lunch) time at least. **Lawrence** 'Flo' **Jordan** is moving on from chef-ing at the TA Centre to higher things, and his replacement **Rahe Ibrahim** is warmly welcomed. Needless to say, in his other guise as a TA soldier we hope that we are still going to see **LCpl** 'Flo' **Jordan** commanding his detachment in 602 Tp for a long while yet.

602 TROOP

As ever the Troop has been keeping busy with a seemingly never-ending series of Exercises. We managed to fit in a much needed maintenance weekend in April which allowed us to catch up with all those jobs which somehow never seem to get done when you get back off Exercise. At the time of writing we are gearing up to deploy 2 Field Detachments in the UK to support the Squadron's deployment to Cyprus on Ex Global Lynx 1/99.

Although few in number, the airborne element of the Squadron has been surprisingly active over the past few months. **Sgt Jason Trimmer, Cpl Jason Broome** and **Cpl Mick Peace** went to Florida on Ex Global Lynx 3/98 and qualified for their American wings, while back in the UK **Lt Angus Evers, Cpl Sylvester Hack** and **LCpl Ian McKerrow** have jumped with 10 Para (V) and 21 SAS (V) as well as spending countless hours sitting around windy airfields. The Squadron would be grateful to hear from any other airborne unit with places going on a parachute programme.

Over the May Bank Holiday weekend the Squadron left its vehicles behind and deployed on a military training weekend to Yardley Chase. There they practised patrolling and other military skills and the JNCOs practised receiving and giving orders under the watchful eye of the DS, **Capt Conrad Giles, Lt Angus Evers, Cpl Jason Broome** and **Cpl Ian Grant**. The weather was as expected for a Bank Holiday and ideal for the training undertaken – hot and sunny for section attacks, freezing cold for OP work and torrential rain for ambushes.

GOING DOWN IN A BOG, SIR ? – *by LCpl Gareth Clarke*

'We need three good Rovers and two Bedfords.'
'We've had no problems with these ones.'

That conversation started the dirty weekend that the MT/LAD was planning for those not lucky enough to be on the trip to the USA, Belize and Bermuda. Unfortunately for the lads this was a sunny trip to Bordon. The road move went well apart from the alternator packing up on one of the Rovers - was this a sign of things to come? Nevertheless we got the Rover going again and made it to Bordon with out further mishap. Once at Bordon the training finally got underway, and with the theory out of the way we got on with the fun of off-road driving until our first Rover got stuck. Oh well - we never get enough winching practice anyway. Then, about an hour later, our very own **Lt Evers** was demonstrating the amphibious capabilities of a Rover and it sank like a brick!! It only took

about two hours to pull the Rover back out. While that was going on everyone else, apart from the instructors, was involved in a water crossing up to their waists!! Sunday involved a bit of trailer reversing and some more off-road driving. It didn't take long before the appearance of 'our Rover won't start' technician **Sig Bri** 'Cpl' **Jones. Bri**, along with **Sig Paul Chambers** managed to kill the starter motor. At least it kept the VM's in work. We all managed to get back to Bletchley, with all the vehicles, on Sunday afternoon and a fantastically useful couple of days was had by all.



'Why don't you stick to parachuting Mr Evers?'

The following Recruiting Events will be run for anyone considering selection and training as a Special Communications Operator or Technician:

25 August - Ballykelly, 26 August - Lisburn, 23 September - Bramcote, 30 September - Colerne, 4 October - Brawdy, 7 October - York, 22 November - Hereford, 23 November - Krefeld.

See your Adjt or phone the Sqn YofS on (9)4240 8516 for details.

THE WELSHMAN
WHO WALKED UP AN ENGLISH HILL OR TWO
by Cpl Taff Hamar

Ex Ultra Cumbrian Tiger was a five day hill walking jaunt, surprisingly enough in the Lake District. The seven fearless mountaineers arrived at the Langdale Camp Site during a dark wet stormy night, and debussed from 'Silver' the faithful Squadron red minibus! Towards the dawn all the tents were up and all were abed.

As dawn broke so did the weather again, therefore 40 winks was the order of the day, before popping out and conquering a few peaks and summits. **Cpl Jamie Copeland** of the Royal Australian Signals was surprised to find that everything in Britain was not on a mission to bite, sting, or make you itch and most creatures were classified as 'not bloody poisonous mate.' After the big push back to base camp, a few jars in the Stickle Barn Tavern became necessary. The next day was much the same. **Cpl Jase** 'Brushmeister' **Broome** and **Cpl Ian** 'Brian The Snail' **Grant** (because he had his house on his back) along with **LCpl** 'Nurse Rosy' **Roseveare** were raring to go and look at the inside of a cloud, from altitude, so **Cpl** 'Taff the Mountain Goat' **Hamar** dragged them all up Pike O Blisco - a fine summit. The cloud was much as expected, so they all came back down again.

Wednesday was even wetter, but being far too thick to chicken out, a few more summits were scaled without oxygen. **LCpl Paul** 'Mattress Man' **Hadfield** still had time to nod off whilst the rest of the group poured a hot brew down their necks and down their fronts!!

Thursday was even wetter so the Stalwarts set off again (yes, by now we were amphibious).

Friday: a culture shock! A big yellow thing appeared in the sky and hurt our eyes. **LCpl** 'Gaz' **Woolley** mounted up 'Silver' and everyone headed for Wasdale and the ascent took place of Scafell Pike. **Jamie** 'Poisonous' **Copeland** became the first ever SC Aussie to reach the summit the highest point in England and Mattress Man had another snooze. The Mountain Goat declared Snowdon to be far superior and Brian The Snail took a well deserved breather, while Nurse Rosy bandaged a broken rock. On our return to sunny Bletchley all agreed that it had been a good week, despite the weather, before going home for Tea (it's a TA thing!).

2 (CITY OF DUNDEE) SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

OC **Maj E. M. Blyth TD**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) A. T. Waterston**

In January the Squadron was re-equipped with new Chirpcom equipment. This has meant a period of intensive training and instruction for both the Training Team and the Operators. The knowledge that having a kettle in your boxbody is no longer the preserve of the Technicians and has been a source of great joy to Comms Tp. The introduction of the new equipment has given the Squadron a greater ability to communicate more effectively and efficiently. Maintaining operator skills on other equipment within the Squadron is also a high priority as ensuring that all operators can switch between communications assets is vital.

In May the Squadron deployed on Ex Mercury Galloway with detachments spread from Wick down to Stranraer. This was the first test of the new Chirpcom equipment and allowed the Squadron to try new procedures and prove that a seven hour drive to deploy is a mere trifle for the crews. The Wick detachments arrived at Wick 'range' (a five lane field for those who have never visited) and quickly discovered that the selection of chip shops was minimal but it is always quality that counts. **LCpl Andy** 'Sludgebeast' **Henderson** was well noted for his interest in his sleeping bag and refused to leave the safety of his basha prior to return to Dundee. Some things never change with technicians. The CP at Stranraer had an excellent time with tremendous feeding from our new culinary gurus in Support Tp. The communications showed that although it is some time since the Squadron deployed in a comms role the operators can still produce the goods when required. It was also the first opportunity for many of the newer members of the Squadron to deploy and see what the Squadron actually do out on the ground. The return journey for the chefs was something of a magical mystery tour taking them from Stranraer around most of Scotland before finally making it back to the TAC, just before dark.

The training of new blood can be a double-edged sword. The Squadron has worked extremely hard to produce a good training package that brings the recruits through the system efficiently and allows them to go to Blandford confident and capable of what they will be doing. Out of the current batch of eight, three are currently at Blandford and will pass out on 19 June 1999. Their first experience of socialising with the rest of the Squadron was during a military training weekend in Inverness when they led astray the unwitting OC Comms Tp, **Lt Andy McDowell,** by taking him to one of the seedier night-spots of the Highlands, tremendous fun. On this showing they will quickly adapt to life with the Unit and will lead from the front as they progress through the system. In the best recruit competition **Sig Scott Fraser** came out at the head of the pack and was presented with his trophy by the Ops Officer, **Capt Bob Davidson.**

As a result of the Strategic Defence Review 1117 Plant Sqn RE in Dundee has been disbanded. The happy result for 2 Sqn is that the majority of these former Sappers have transferred across to us. This has given the Squadron new impetus and given the Training Team the pleasant headache of getting almost forty people trade qualified as quickly as possible. The integration of so many people has been seamless and the Squadron has moved forward quickly. The skills that have been brought across give the Squadron even greater strength in depth with a significant percentage of the Squadron having recent operational experience. This increases the professionalism element within the Squadron along with a greater knowledge of procedures than previously.

In early April, 15 members of the Squadron went to Barry Buddon Training Area to re-enact their favourite scenes from the cinema. The cameras from the Beechgrove Garden were there to capture every move on celluloid. This was all in aid of proving that soldiers only actually do what plants do, which is essentially to camouflage themselves into their surroundings. **WO2 (SSM) Andy** 'Spielberg' **Waterston** ensured that the military aspect of things was carried out correctly but was disgruntled that he never got to utter the immortal line 'Cut!'. The OC, **Maj Eric** 'Kubrick' **Blyth,** also popped along to have a look and see whether, or not, a career in television was beckoning for any of his soldiers. Sadly it was not. The Squadron's moment of glory when it came to the small screen lasted approximately two minutes. Solace was taken from the fact that many great actors were not given their chance until later in life. At least it wasn't raining and the ladies from the burger van were most impressed at the Corps's ability to adapt and overcome. However, the lack of a make-up artist and stylist did cause resentment as everyone had to wear clothing courtesy of 'man at Q&M'.



LCpl Nicky Randall leads the potential Det Comms CFT on a wildlife tour of Barry Buddon

Whilst on a military training exercise in Inverness the departing Deputy Brigade Commander, **Col Foulkes,** made his final visit to the Squadron. Commencing with a tour of Culloden battlefield at breakneck speed he found that both the OC and 21C, **Capt Joe Meade,** could demonstrate their extensive knowledge of all things tartan to good effect. They then visited the rest of the Squadron at Fort George Training Area and this gave **Col Foulkes** an opportunity to see the new Chirpcom equipment. A short

presentation back at Cameron Barracks was followed by dinner with the Squadron officers. A couple of local libations were put into circulation to assist the festivities.

On 8 May the Squadron and the Corps bade farewell to a true stalwart of 2 Sqn. **SSgt Tony** 'Baldy' **Doherty** was dined out by both the Officers and WOs and Sgts Messes. Having served with 2 Sqn in a previous incarnation he has amassed five years service in Dundee over his two tours. He has seen the Squadron go through changes in location, personnel, equipment and role during his tenures as SPSI. His remarkable love and knowledge of Coronation Street did however set him apart from his contemporaries. This along with his encyclopaedic knowledge of film production allowed him to produce some fantastic work for the Squadron. We wish both **Tony** and **Sue** all the best for the future in their new home in the Manchester area.

During the last week in April the Squadron had a visit from Dundee's **Lord Provost, Mervyn Rolfe**. This was the first time that he had been to the Squadron and found out what the TA could do. It was also the first time that the Unit has hosted a civic leader since the Squadron was granted the title of 'City of Dundee Signal Squadron'. The **Lord Provost** was given a brief on the Unit and then taken on a tour of the TAC where he met various Squadron personnel. The photo opportunity allowed the 2IC the chance to steal the SSM's chair and thus push the SSM off to the periphery of the Squadron photograph. It is still unclear if this has anything to do with the SSM's love of Rangers and the 2IC's preference for Celtic.

Back in March **Sgt Daz** 'Faldo' **Collins** decided to disprove the myth that PSIs are lazy and unfit by doing the Fleet half-marathon. He was accompanied on this by **Cpl Brian** 'Fatboy' **Duffus.** This was a precursor to the London Marathon which he also ran in support of the Barnardos charity. He finished both runs in respectable times and raised over £1000 by doing so. However, he has steadfastly refused to stop smoking on the grounds it might affect his playboy, devil-may-care image that he has worked so hard to cultivate. Well done **Daz.**



Sgt Daz 'Marathon Man' Collins strolls past yet another pub in the Fleet Half Marathon

The TA Det Commanders course is occasionally viewed with trepidation but not this year. **LCpls Sally** 'Big Bird' **Purves** and **Andy** 'Romeo' **Henderson** had trained hard in both the physical aspects as well as the military skills side prior to going to Blandford. This included their own personal CFT under the watchful eye of **LCpl Nicky** 'I'm dead unfit me' **Randall** with **SSgt Bob** 'Methuselah' **Tasker** and **Sgt George** 'Tom Thumb' **Cowan** running alongside for morale encouragement.

The TA National Open Day on 13 March included a raffle for a mountain bike. Stands for all TA units were sited in Dundee city centre and minibuses were on hand to ferry prospective recruits and sightseers up to the Squadron. All attendees were taken on a tour of the TAC with an opportunity to sample various aspects of Squadron life with demonstrations ranging from communications fundamentals to field cooking. This proved successful and several new names are now on the books and in training.

The SOinC, **Brig Griffin,** visited the Squadron the following day. This was his first visit to the Squadron in his role as SOinC. Following a brief on the Squadron and its' capabilities he was taken on a tour of the unit and met Squadron personnel. This was followed by a buffet lunch with all Squadron members. After this he was taken to one of the local golf courses for a swift eighteen holes with the **WO2 (MS) George** 'Nicklaus' **Hume** and **Sgt Daz** 'Faldo' **Collins. Sgt Collins,** claims of amateur status were initially believed but ultimately he won out. Another fantastic achievement for the adopted Dundonian.



Sgt Heap explains the merits of life in the LAD to the SOinC whilst the OC, Maj Eric Blyth, quietly reassures him that it will all be over soon. Sgt Collins looks on, concerned

SPORT

ATHLETICS

REGIMENTAL ATHLETICS
by Capt (MAA) B. J. Dupree APTC

The Regimental Athletics team has made an excellent start to the 1999 season. The season began with the Blandford Garrison competition held on the evening of Wednesday 12 May. The evening format worked very well, the weather held out and competitors and spectators alike enjoyed a very exciting competition. The ladies competition was a close fought contest, with 1 Sqn eventually triumphing over 3 Sqn. The Men's result was reversed and was won by 3 Sqn, with 1 Sqn a close second. The first real test from outside units came at the 5th Division Inter Unit Team Championships, which was held at Blandford Garrison on Wednesday 26 May. The home advantage was put to good use and both the Ladies and Men's teams were crowned Divisional champions. The Team entries and results are listed below, the strength of the entry highlights what an excellent result the double triumph was.

MAJOR UNITS	1st	11 Sig Regt	208 Pts
	2nd	1 CHESHIRE	200 Pts
	3rd	32 Regt RA	185 Pts
	4th	30 Sig Regt	142 Pts
	5th	3 (UK) Div Sig Regt	131 Pts
	6th	14 Sig Regt (EW)	114 Pts
	7th	1 STAFFORDS	57 Pts
LADIES TEAMS	1st	11 Sig Regt	53 Pts
	2nd	30 Sig Regt	42 Pts
	3rd	3 (UK) Div Sig HQ & Regt	40 Pts
	4th	32 Regt RA	33 Pts
	5th	14 Sig Regt (EW)	33 Pts

The next event in what has been a very busy schedule was the Morrison Cup, which was held at Blandford on Thursday 3 June. The weather defied tradition and remained dry, no doubt inspired by the Commanding Officer, **Lt Col Canham**'s decision to wear a panama. The Balkans crisis thankfully had not yet bit too deep into unit's commitments and a good entry was assembled for the day's competition. 11 Sig Regt convincingly won the men's competition, but the ladies was close fought with three teams neck and neck throughout the day. 11 Sig Regt eventually triumphed and completed a unique double for the Regiment. The trophies were presented by the newly installed SOinC (A) **Brig C. J. Burton OBE**.



Cpl Francis receives the Morrison Cup from the SOinC (A) Brig C. J. Burton OBE

The Morrison Cup was a great success for the Regiment, not only providing the logistics and manpower for this unique event to take place, but also the winning teams. The 1999 Morrison Cup results are listed below:

MAJOR UNITS	1st	11 Sig Regt	204 Pts
	2nd	3 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt	171 Pts
	3rd	14 Sig Regt (EW)	132 Pts
	4th	30 Sig Regt	130 Pts
	5th	15 Sig Regt	74 Pts
WOMENS UNITS	1st	11 Sig Regt	70 Pts
	2nd	238 Sig Sqn	65 Pts
	3rd	30 Sig Regt	65 Pts
	4th	14 Sig Regt (EW)	50 Pts
	5th	3 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt	47 Pts



Cpl Malin (White Helmets Display Team)
on his way to winning the 110m Hurdles in the Morrison Cup

The busy summer schedule continued one week later with the Inter Corps Championships held at Blandford Garrison on Wednesday 9 June. The Regiment provided over 50% of the Royal Signals team in what was a high quality event. The Royal Signals ladies team were captained by **Cpl Francis** of 3 Sqn, and contained the majority of the Regimental team. They held off spirited challenges from the Royal Logistics Corps and the Adjutant Generals Corps to be crowned Inter Corps champions. The male team was a close second and a hectic but very successful three weeks competition ended on a high note. The team's performance has been a total team effort, but the following are to be congratulated on being chosen to represent the Army at the Inter Services Championships to be held at Portsmouth on Wednesday 7 June.

Cpl Malin	White Helmets Display Team
LCpl Morris	Radex Tp
Sig Cowan	1 Sqn
Sig Greenhalgh	1 Sqn

FOOTBALL

CORPS FOOTBALL END OF SEASON REPORT 1998-99

by WO2 (RQMS) Buckingham

The Corps football team have now completed the Merit League fixtures for the 1998/99 season despite being over-stretched in manpower and commitments. This season saw the introduction of a new management team, **WO1 (RSM) Higgins** running the team, **WO2 (RQMS) Buckingham** taking over as the Secretary and **Maj Ponton** also adding his own experience to ensure the smooth running of all matters. The season started with what is now an annual friendly fixture against RAF Log Sp at Blandford. The Corps ran out resounding winners 7-1 in a game which usually gives a sterner test.

THE MERIT LEAGUE - MASSEY TROPHY

The first game was away to the Royal Armoured Corps at Bovington. On a small, tight pitch the Corps found it difficult to mark their authority on the game against a well built physical opposition. However, perseverance was the order of the day and despite not playing well, the Corps managed to get the right result - a 3-1 victory. Goals came from **Sgt Dean Boughen, Sig Craig Hattie** and **LCpl Richards**.

The mood was one of determination for the next match against the Adjutant Generals Corps at Worthy Down. The players realised the stark reality of this league - no match will be easy and all points gained will have to be worked for. A performance of quality ensured the Corps were never likely to be in danger. A 4-1 win could have been more but was enough to bring a smile of satisfaction to the team manager. Goals came from **Sig John Stephenson, LCpl Joey Collins, Sgt Dean Boughen** and **Sig Jimmy Murrey**. This put the Corps in good spirits for the next game just before Christmas for the visit of the Infantry team to Blandford. This game is always a tough one and the Infantry are always capable of beating the best on their day. However, the Corps were determined not to let the Infantry get a chance and totally dominated a fast and frenetic game. The chances came thick and fast but were not taken until after the Infantry goalkeeper was sent off. Goals by **Sig John Stephenson** and **Sig Curley Watts** ensured the Corps won a vital match and keep the pressure on the other teams at the top of the merit league.

The first game of the new year was away to the AMS at Ash Vale. A game of missed opportunities for the Corps ended in a 1 - 1 draw. **LCpl Joey Collins** getting the goal. Lessons were learnt by the team for being over-confident and experimenting too much. The next match against the RLC at Hullavington proved to be full of incidents: Having had two players sent off in debatable circumstances the Corps found themselves a goal down and really up against it. However, a battling display by nine men and some rather naive defending by the RLC, **Cpl Alfie Alford** caused mayhem for the RLC. Having scored the equaliser after a period of prolonged pressure the RLC went ahead again with a harsh penalty decision. It then turned upside-down when the Corps got a penalty themselves which **Cpl Gary Hayhurst** dispatched comfortably. It was then left to **Cpl Alfie Alford** to finish the job with a low drive into the corner. It was an excellent win against a serious rival for the Massey Trophy.

The Corps then entertained the APTC at Blandford. A resounding 7-0 victory was recorded against a weakened APTC side. Goals were scored by **LCpl Joey Collins (2), Sig John Stephenson (2), Sig Jimmy Murray, Sig** 'Curley' **Watts** and **LCpl** 'Johnno' **Johnston**. This was followed up the following week with another impressive performance against the AAC with the Corps running out winners by 5-0. Goals were scored by **LCpl Joey Collins (2), Sig** 'Galli' **Galliford (2)** and **Sig** 'Sniffer' **Clarke**. This meant the Corps went into the Quadrangular Tournament unbeaten and with great expectation on the teams shoulders due to home advantage with this competition. between RA, REME, RE and R SIGNALS being hosted at Blandford for the first time.

THE QUADRANGULAR TOURNAMENT

The first game against the RA ended 2-2 which was acceptable considering the unusually lack lustre performance by the team. An own goal in the last five minutes ensured a share of the points for the Corps after it had started so well with **Sig** 'Galli' **Galliford** volleying home. This meant it all came down to the game against the RE on the Wednesday. With both sides unbeaten it was 'winner takes all'.



Sig John Stephenson takes on the RE Defence

The game started nervously for both teams until just before half time RE scored a goal which the assistant referee signalled for offside. The referee chose to ignore his decision and allow the goal. The second half saw the game explode into life with the Corps putting up a spirited display with only ten players having had **LCpl** 'Leo' **Ross**, sent off. Goals by **LCpl Joey Collins** and then **Sig John Stephenson** put the Corps 2-1 up with seven minutes to go. Then disaster struck when the RE managed to exploit their numerical advantage to score an equaliser. A nightmare scenario followed when they snatched a winning goal deep into time added on. This result meant the RE had won both the Merit League and virtually the Quadrangular Cup.

The final game of the season came against REME. A deflated performance by the Corps meant a 2-2 draw secured only third place in this year's competition. Goals from **Sig John Stephenson (2)**. The RE became the first side in over 14 years to win all three Quadrangular matches. Congratulations must go to them on doing a clean sweep of all the silverware.

FINAL PLACING

The Corps finished the season a creditable second behind RE in the Merit League which is an improvement from fourth place the previous season. The Corps retained the Boyne Trophy by drawing this season's fixture with REME. The Corps Football performance for season 1998/99 in the Merit League was as follows:



Royal Signals Corps Football Team 1998/99

Played	Won	Drew	Lost	For	Against	Points
10	6	3	1	31	12	21

REPRESENTATIVE FOOTBALL

The Corps has continued to provide the Army Football team and Combined Services Football teams with more players than any other Arm or Corps this season. **WO1 (RSM) Higgins** is now on the Coaching Staff of both the Army and Combined Services teams. **Sgt Dean Boughan, Cpl Alfie Alford, LCpl Joey Collins, LCpl John Johnston, Sig Jamie Galliford** and **Sig** 'Curley' **Watts** have all represented the Army during this season. The Combined Services Football Association selected both **Cpl Alfie Alford** and **WO1 (RSM) Higgins** (Coaching Staff) to represent the Combined Services in the Kentish Cup against the Dutch and Belgique Armed Forces.



LCpl Joey Collins (Captain) receiving the Boyne Cup
from Brig (Rtd) T. H. Wheawell

THE ROYAL SIGNALS ASSOCIATION

Patron: HRH The Princess Royal

President: The Master of Signals

Chairman: Major General A. Yeoman CB

Vice Chairmen: Brig C. T. Garton Area 1; Brig W. H. Backhouse Area 2; Brig S. G. M. Gordon Area 3; Brig K. H. Olds Area 4; Brig P. J. Evans CBE Area 5; Lt Col J. G. Billingham Wales; Maj R. Sampson CBE Scotland

General Secretary and Treasurer: Col A. R. Carter MBE
Welfare Secretary: Mrs J. Nicholson
Assistant General Secretary: Lt Col I. J. Hamilton
Administrative Officer: Mr. P. J. Cuckow (Membership & Records)

Association Office, RHQ Royal Signals, Blandford Camp, Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 8RH. Telephone: Military System 737 2090 or 01258 48 2090. Welfare Secretary Telephone: Military System 737 2089 or 01258 48 2089.

All contributions for *The Wire* should be addressed to the Editor and any queries referred to him on extensions 2079 or 2085.
Internet: www.royalsignals.army.org.uk/museum/rsa.htm

The Association communicates with its branches and individual members through the pages of The Wire, *which contains accounts of Branch affairs as well as a forecast of Association events.*

Branch Secretaries are asked to check that their Branch members receive sufficient copies of The Wire. *Association HQ can arrange for copies to be delivered in bulk to Branch Secretaries for further distribution if this is convenient; it helps us save on postage.*

Dates of Branch events can always be published in The Wire *and should be submitted to the Editor. We also welcome letters, requests to contact old comrades and announcements of births, marriages and deaths. We hope that each Branch will contribute a short account of its activities, preferably with photographs, at least once a year.*

NOTES FROM THE AO'S DESK

Branch News - Wally Cutler, Hon Secretary of the North London Branch, has changed his address to; 24 Fayland Cottages, Hare Str, Buntingford, Herts SG9 0EE. Tel: 01763-289492. **Capt Guy Richards** has succeeded **Steve Morgan** as Hon Secretary of The Airborne Signals Assn, which remains based at 216 Para Sig Sqn, Arnhem Bks, Aldershot GU11 2AU.

For Branch Secretaries - A request from the Editor of *'The Wire'*. When submitting cut outs from local newspapers or magazines, please ensure that the items are not covered by any copyright. Authority from the originator should accompany the item.

Empire Field of Remembrance - The Queen Mother intends to open the Empire Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey on Thursday 11 November. The opening service will incorporate the two minutes silence, now traditional on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. This necessitates advancing the usual timings and all those who plan to attend should now be in position by 1030 hours at the latest. As in previous years, The Association will lay crosses in the Corps plot. Following the service, members are cordially invited to join the Chairman of The Association for a buffet lunch in Mercury House, Duke of York's HQ, Chelsea.

Reunion - Around 600 members and their guest attended the RSA Annual Reunion at Blandford over the weekend 26/27 June 1999. The weather was kind enabling everyone to enjoy a memorable weekend. The Arena display included a re-enactment by the Corps Museum's Living History Society, of the 'Go to it' painting by **Peter Archer.** It depicted the battle at the Pegasus Bridge, complete with a low fly over by an old Dakota.



Cpl Brewin leads the group of Paratroopers emerging from their glider during the 'Go to it' re-enactment

The finalists of the Standard Bearers drill competition were **Peter Howells** (Swindon Branch), **Barry Moody** (Scarborough), **Michael Hawkins** (Bristol), **Harry Ruff** (West London), **Bill McNamara** (Glasgow) and **Graham Krinks** (Southport). A gob-smacked **Peter Howells** was announced as the winner and **Harry Ruff** as runner up. The result rounded off a memorable week for **Harry** as he was on his honeymoon.



Peter Howells of the Swindon Branch receives the Standard Bearers Winners' Cup from the Master

My personal thanks to **WO1 Keith Fisher MBE**, OC Iron Troop, 11 Sig Regt, for running the competition so well. It was good to see **Doug Woollford** and **Bill Harmsworth** from the Royal Hospital, Chelsea at the Reunion. It was a delight to have them here and know that they enjoyed the whole weekend. I hope the boys from Glasgow Branch arrived home without hitch - their train broke down en route to Salisbury. Over 250 members took part in the March Past on Sunday with the Master of Signals taking the salute.



The Master takes the Salute at the March Past

Reunion Video - A video recording of the 1999 RSA Reunion at Blandford has been produced and a 30 minute tape showing the highlights is available from Association HQ at £10.00 (which includes P & P).

ALDERSHOT BRANCH

In the last edition we reported on our 50th Anniversary Dinner (or was it the 78th Anniversary?) the photographs of which are now available and give an excellent impression of this memorable event. It was a hard act to follow but a month later we were pleased to be able once again to host our Annual Quiz Night. This attracted more than 70 contestants including many from neighbouring Branches and Units in Aldershot Garrison.

Carole Thomas is to be congratulated on putting together a series of questions at just the right level to make everyone feel they were in with a chance. Indeed it was a close fought competition in which the honours eventually went to team - Foot Men (?) from Reading Branch who just pipped Adam, one of the home teams led by **Nigel** and **Betty Ribchester**. Teams from 251 Sig Sqn and the WRAC Association (The Lionesses) were just unlucky not to be on the prize list. The evening was once again acknowledged to be a great success by virtue of bringing a wide spectrum of serving and retired members of the Association together. Great credit for this success goes to **Neville Lyons** who acted as Quiz Master for the night.

Earlier in the year, thanks to the enthusiasm of our Branch President, **Gen Henry Hild**, we turned out in some force to support the Corps Rugby Team in their match against the Army Physical Training Corps in the stadium at Aldershot. It was a famous victory for Royal Signals by a comfortable margin. Players of former years gave vociferous support throughout the afternoon.



50th Anniversary Dinner
(L-R) Mrs Janet Hild, Mrs Annie Sprackling, Maj Gen Henry Hild, Brig Noel Moss, Mrs Edelgard Moss, The Master

BATH & DISTRICT BRANCH

Since our last report the Branch has had its 50th AGM, in April 1999. As reported in the February *Wire* because of the difficulties our far flung members find in attending an evening AGM, this year we tried a lunch time meeting. This worked as we had a greater attendance in the WOs' & Sgts' Mess, 21 Signal Regiment, Colerne, and was much more satisfactory. **WO1 (RSM) J. Williams**, 21 Signal Regiment attended (in uniform by request because as the Chairman, **Lt Col Geoff Oakley** said, "It is so nice to see a real Soldier!') and extended the courtesies of the Mess to the Association Branch members.

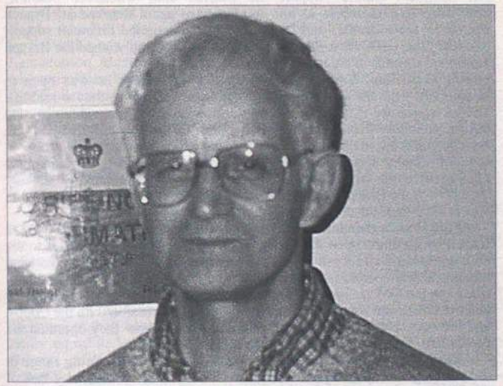
In May the Branch had another very successful Curry Lunch. As the kitchens at Pockeridge House, the Officers' Mess of 2 Signal Brigade were being reorganised, the lunch was held at the Amenity Centre, Basil Hill Barracks, Corsham and was well attended. We were all particularly chuffed to have the SOinC, **Brig C. J. Burton OBE**, feeling especially honoured to be among the first to entertain him. The photograph shows

him chatting to one of our members, **Maj Gen (Retd) David Horsfield OBE**, who figured on the front cover of the April *WIRE* with the late King Hussein of Jordan.



BRIGHTON BRANCH

In March we had our Annual Wine & Cheese Evening. This event is always popular and this year was no exception. There were 40 members and friends who attended. **Gordon Holloway** found some unusual wines whilst **Audrey Chinchen** found more than 20 different cheeses. Joe Soap, who you may remember, complained that last year we did not have any camel's cheese. This year he complained that we did not have any mare's cheese. 'Ah' we said, 'You need to go to Ulan Bator for that.' Sad to say he got muddled up on the Trans Siberian Railway and went to Janno Touva instead. We await his return.



Gordon Holloway



Margaret Holloway (L) and Audrey Chinchen

April is when we had our Annual Quiz Night. Last year R. Sigs Assoc won the Shield. This year it went to 884 Tp. Their winners were **Sgt Vincent, LCpl Boyden** and **LCpl Cox**, alias 'The Bra Poppers'. We had a splendid result from the Raffle, thanks to **Jo White**.

May saw us delighted to welcome our President, **Brig Colin Brown**, who came to give us a talk, 'First In Last Out', a personal view of the Gulf War. Basing his dialogue on personal experience, supported by treasured press cuttings, his own diary, emotive poetry and an exciting video, **Brig Colin** took us through a great mix of Gulf War perceptions. The whole evening was a great success and we renew our thanks for the great pleasure he gave us. The Wednesday 'Coffee Mornings' continue to flourish and as a result we have enrolled five more Members. Meanwhile your humble scribe continues to push *The Wire*.

Due to excellent support we are running a minibus to Blandford on 26 June. This delights your humble scribe who is anxious to see the new Army Pigeon Service display. 'Pigeon Pie?' did I hear you say? Certainly not!



Ken Brown – Committee Member Burma Star

EAST KENT BRANCH

The Royal Signals Association Branch Representatives meeting and AGM was held in London on 10 April. There was a strong posse from the Branch with the Chairman, Hon Treasurer, and Hon Sec all being driven in style by the V/Chairman and joined by six other members It was a good meeting and included an extremely interesting description by the SOinC of the Corps's present activities.

On Sunday 9 May, 23 members gathered at the Queen Charlotte Inn in Rochester to partake of what might be described as a 'real soldier's lunch'. Afterwards many invaded the Dickens Centre which had just admitted about 70 French school children. Whether or not the party derived much cultural benefit was perhaps open to question but it is well worth a visit anyway. As usual **Donald Crisp**, Chairman and Artist does not miss an opportunity, even whilst in Jersey himself.



THE OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION OF 'THE FORGOTTEN WAR'

On 25 March the Hon Sec, **Maj Gen John Badcock** attended the opening (he still does not know why!) with **Lt Col Mike Barrett** who was eminently qualified to do so. This excellent and much delayed exhibition is now part of The Land Warfare Museum at the Imperial War Museum, Duxford. It is a most fitting tribute to those who served in Burma; the whole display of which it now forms an integral part is well worth a visit.

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome is extended to **Mr Robin Mason** of Chatham, he served as a Regular from 1975-84 with the School of Signals, in Hong Kong, 8 Field Force at Tidworth and with 5AB HQ & Sig Sqn in the rank of Lance Corporal.

Mr Charles and **Mrs Gladys Baker** of Faversham. **Charles** served from 1944-48 in Northern Ireland and then on the North West Frontier in 3rd Indian Armd Bde HQ and later at Secunderabad in 1st Indian Armd Div HQ as a Lance Corporal.

Mr George Foggo of Sidcup. **George** was a Regular who served from 1957-79 in 3 GHQ Sig Regt, Cyreniaca Sig Tp, 16 Sig Regt, 19 Air Portable Bde, 248 Gurkha Sig Sqn in Hong Kong, in 30 Sig Sqn incl UNICEF, and finally with 55 Sig Sqn TA and held the rank of WO2.

Mr Percy Thorne of Maidstone. **Percy** served as a National Service man from 1943-47. He was with 105 Inf Bde Sig Sqn through France and Germany and when the War was over, served with 17 Inf Bde Sig Sqn. He was a Signalman.

We look forward to seeing them all soon at one of our functions.

NEWS OF MEMBERS.

John Kendal due to pressure of other commitments has had to resign. He was a Founder member and we are sorry to say au revoir. **Bob** and **Gwenda Morris** have moved house to Sittingbourne. **Bob Mitchell**, following the sad death of **Doreen**, has gone to live with his daughter in Italy but is keeping the flat in Ramsgate and hopes to attend some functions when he is there.

GLASGOW BRANCH

At the Branch meeting on 16 February 1999 **Ex WO1 (RSM) Jim MacLachlan**, who has just retired from active service as a regular after 24 years service with the Royal Signals, the last two years as RSM at 32 Sigs, was officially welcomed into the Branch as a new member. **Bill Taylor**, the Branch President, presented him with a hip flask suitably inscribed and a bottle of whisky with a personalised label specially printed with **Jim**'s name on it. These were from the Branch members to thank him for his support of the Branch whilst he was the RSM. **Jim** thanked the members for their gifts and good wishes. He said he was pleased to be able to join the Branch and, knowing the members of the Regiment, would assist in any way he could to keep and foster the goodwill existing between the Branch and the Regiment as he had whilst he was the RSM.

At the AGM, with **Maj Gen A. A. G. Anderson CB**, Honorary President of the Glasgow Branch presiding, were 28 members and six associate members, apologies were intimated from six members. In his opening remarks the President thanked the members for the flowers and good wishes expressed by them to his wife, over the last 15 months during her illness, which prevented them participating in the Branch activities. He went on to say…..

'You have had another very successful year which reflects well on your committee and individual members and their wives. I would particularly like to congratulate **Bill McNamara** for winning the Standard Bearers Competition at the Blandford Reunion. This brings great credit to himself and the Branch. I am delighted to hear that you have continued to have a varied and innovative programme of events throughout the past year and I congratulate all those involved in organising them and am pleased that they have all been well supported. I see that you held a Burns Night Supper, with 43 sat round the table to enjoy the haggis and traditional toasts, recitations and speeches, and I am pleased that the St Andrew's Dinner and Dance went with a swing once more. I also congratulate you on your continuing support to the Blandford Reunion, the Remembrance Day Parade in Glasgow, and 32 (Scottish) Signal Regiment's Annual Camp. Last, but not least, I would like to record the Branch's continuing debt of gratitude to the Regiment for their support and friendship. I wish you well during the coming year and am sure that you will continue to flourish.'



Glasgow AGM
(L-R): Ivana – Secretary, Maj Gen Anderson – President, Bill Taylor – Chairman, Eric McWater - Treasurer

Bill Taylor, Branch Chairman, reported that it was again time for our Annual General Meeting, and to look back and see what we have done as a Branch over the past year. Our membership at 1 April was 86 Life Members, and 14 Associate Members with applications in the pipeline for another three life members. One member **Jim Kerr** passed on during the year. The average attendance at Branch meetings had been 34, which is very pleasing when you consider we have a core of only about 50 members who are active in the Branch. The annual trip to Blandford for the reunion was undertaken by 11 members and everyone enjoyed the weekend, the highlight of which was **Bill McNamara** winning the Standard Bearers competition. **Bill** had put in a lot of hard work practicing and was a worthy winner. The Branch can be very proud to have such a smart Standard Bearer. Twelve members went on a three day visit to 32 Sig Regt during their annual camp at Ripon, Yorkshire in September and thoroughly enjoyed the occasion - I wonder why?- we never have any problems getting members to accept this invitation. For the Remembrance Day parade at George Square, we had 35 members on parade, our biggest number yet, and were congratulated on our turnout and marching. Well done everybody on parade. After the parade we joined the Regiment for a most enjoyable brunch provided by **Capt John Lynch**, **Master Chef John Wren** and his team of chefs and catering staff. Our St Andrew Dinner and Dance was a success, 85 members and guests sat down to an excellent meal provided by **Master Chef John Wren** and his team from the Regiment. The Christmas night social was well attended, a very enjoyable night. The Branch had its first Burns Supper organised on 23 January, 43 members and guests attended. It was well presented and a wonderful night. As in the past the Regiment has given us all the help and support we have needed. Everybody from the Commanding Officer down to the male and female soldiers in the JRC gave us wonderful support. Thank you everybody, it is nice to know we are still part of the family. The committee worked hard during the past year and he thanked them and also the ladies in the Branch, for all their hard work making the buffets for our social evenings. As we go towards the next millennium, he said how he was satisfied that the Branch is going in the right direction and would still go from strength to strength due to the support and generosity given by the Members, their families and their friends. He took the opportunity of thanking everyone, and said, 'Lets make the year 2000 a good one, my best wishes to everyone.'

Ivana Muir, the Branch Secretary, reported 1998/9 has been a good year for the Branch. **Ivana** then mentioned the time at the Reunion drinking champagne on celebrating **Bill**'s win in the Standard Bearers contest and the Sunday visit to Edinburgh Castle to see the RBS Scotland combined bands Beating Retreat with high tea at the Forte Hotel. **Ivana** mentioned that the arrangements for the year 2000 are in the hands of Central Committee and Branches will be advised of the outcome. The Corps will be celebrating the year 2000 with a week of competition and sporting events in May, and have applied for the Princess Royal to attend. Catterick Branch has been chosen to look into the proposed supply of a badge to celebrate the millennium. Details will be issued to the Branches.

Eric McWater, the Branch Treasurer (and Super Sales Scot), gave an excellent report on the Branch expenditure and the latest financial position, with a bob or two in the black. Eric has excelled himself over the years in keeping the Branch on the right footing for income and expenditure. He stated that from the report it could be seen that we were dependent upon our Branch membership fee as our main financial base. All members should support the Branch and, whenever possible, encourage new members to join us. He once again thanked all Branch Members, their families and friends for their continued financial support over the year, enabling him to pay our bills on time and wished the Branch continued success in the year to come.

Jim McMillan, Branch Social Convenor, said that he was open to suggestions from the members as to what type of functions they would like and he would see if they were feasible to arrange at reasonable cost. He hoped members would attend the social functions and thanked the members and the main committee for their help in making it a success. A vote of thanks was passed to the President and then the members adjourned to the bar and the buffet, which was provided by the lady members of the Branch. The members applauded the ladies and very much appreciated their efforts in providing the victuals when required.

At the Branch meeting on 24 April members were welcomed by **WO2 Karen Swan** to the open day arranged by the Regiment, to allow us to see their equipment, and for most of us it was an eye opener compared to what we trained and operated on. It was very interesting and I for one would not like to be the QM i/c Tech Stores to account for all the bits and bobs I saw laid out beside the wagons. After a great deal of discussion with the troops, and the ease with which they were able to explain how they operated the equipment, the members were invited to a buffet lunch.

After lunch the members were invited to the simulated firing range in the buildings occupied by the 52nd Lowland Division. **WO2 John Bell** of the 52nd Lowland Div was the instructor, on details of what equipment is carried by the troops, and the improvements in kit compared to pre and WW2 troops, except for the canteen which has not altered since we last saw one. He was an excellent instructor even making the Bergen sound interesting. He talked quietly and then could make one jump with a barked command. He joked and made the members laugh, but, with some salty language got the message across.

The simulated range with the laser beam from the rifles on to the screen, plus the sound of the rifle being fired made it so realistic. The screen went from urban to jungle, and required a great deal of concentration on the part of the members, who opted to try their hand at firing the weapons from the firing point. To see the enemy fully camouflaged rise out of the ground just in front of you, or shoot at one and see him fall out of a tree. In the urban scene to recognise an enemy at a window or an innocent civilian, in seconds before firing. A thoroughly enjoyable day's outing. Serious to a degree, but entertaining with a superb instructor. The members thank the CO of 32 Sig Regt, **Lt Col A. G. C. Lapsley** for arranging the open day. **WO2 Karen Swan** and **WO2 John Bell** for a very interesting day out.

During the monthly meeting on 18 May **Bill Taylor**, the Branch Chairman, notified the members that one of the founder members of the Glasgow Branch ex **SSgt Bob Bell** had died. He asked members to stand for a minute in silence to his memory. He had served with several members of the Branch and several were able to attend the funeral. The Branch Secretary, **Ivana** was able to inform those members going to the Blandford Reunion, of the costs and the seating arrangements booked on the trains. The cost of meals and arrangement for accommodation. All we need is good weather. The Social Convener, **Jim McMillan** is arranging a coach trip to Inverness with a stop at a distillery on the way, with about four hours in Inverness, before a meal arranged in the Inverness Branch RBLS premises. Notice of the Branch's existence has been placed with *Service Pals*, where there seems a delay in publication, also with the *Mature Tymes* publication, and with the *Scottish Legion News*, published by The Royal British Legion Scotland, where we hope to enlist some more members to play an active part in the Branch activities.

NORFOLK BRANCH



Col S. P. Foukes TD DL with **Donald Ellingworth** at the unveiling of the plaque to **Don**'s father and the Lt Comd he worked with, who were both killed when the parachute mine they were trying to render harmless, exploded killing them both. They were both awarded a posthumous George Cross, not only for this mine but also for all the work they had done together. Five members of a Royal Engineers Bomb Disposal Unit are also remembered.

The Norfolk Branch continues to flourish and leads a fairly active life, we are getting a steady influx of new members which includes some recently discharged Soldiers two of which are: **Andie Osborne** and **Steve Nobbs** who have got right in with the spirit of the Branch, **Andie** has agreed to be our new standard bearer and will carry the standard at the June reunion. Meanwhile **Steve** is to be the next Branch Secretary and will take over from **Brian C. Gibbs** at the next AGM. **Brian** will have been Branch Secretary for the past nine years and he thinks its about time he moved over.

We had our AGM last March, it was very well attended as all our monthly meetings are, and all the Branch Officers were elected en-bloc as were the Committee. The Chairman, **Frank Mortlock** and Treasurer, **Richard Green** stated that this would be their last year in office and that they would like someone else to take over at the next AGM.

We recently visited Bletchley Park, all thirty of us, and we found it to be a fascinating experience. We were treated like Royalty. The tour around the House and grounds was conducted by **Dr Peter Jarvis** who is an authority on all matters that took place there including the secrets of the 'Enigma' machines. The visit was arranged by Ex 'Y'-Service member **Derrick Carr** for which we all thank him.

Twenty of the Branch will be attending the Maj Generals review of the Trooping of the Colour this year in London, it's a lovely day out and we all really enjoy it. Last year we met several members of the Peterborough Branch, greetings were exchanged and photos taken which made it a complete day out.

At our annual Branch Dinner held in March our guest from RHQ was Administrative Officer **Peter Cuckow** and wife **Sheila. Peter** was welcomed by Chairman, **Frank Mortlock**, and responded with latest Association news, which was very heartening.



(L-R): Frank Mortlock, Peter Cuckow and his wife Sheila

It was a very well attended Dinner and a good time was had by all. **Peter** was presented with a Branch Tie to give to the Museum. At a recent meeting Branch President, **Don Ellingworth**, presented Service Officer **Reg Hannant** with a 'Corps' shield to be placed at the bedside of any hospitalised members.



Sitting (L-R): Tina Nobbs, Louise Osborne, Andie Osborne
Standing: Steve Nobbs

NORTHERN IRELAND BRANCH

We are saddened by the passing of our immediate past Chairman, **Tommy Maguire**. We will miss him (please turn to *The Last Post* section for a fuller tribute).

Readers of this column may remember that a year or so ago I asked if any other Branch had bye-laws which we could, perhaps, copy. Having had no response we roughed some out over a period but could not find time to complete them and asked **John Loveday** (Now Chairman but then Vice-Chairman) to finish the job. Thanks to **John** for trimming them up and having them printed out and passed at the April meeting. If any Branch is interested in introducing bye-laws we would be happy to provide a copy to them.

Our May meeting (which the writer unfortunately missed due to holidays) took the form of a social and games evening hosted by Support Squadron, 40 (Ulster) Sig Regt with various games including darts and a number of teams took part in a quiz. A most enjoyable evening concluded with a very acceptable buffet. The thanks of the Branch go to branch Member **WO2 (SSM) George Cooke** and Sp Sqn for organising the event, for their hospitality, provision of prizes and the buffet.

It hardly seems that a year has passed since the 1998 Blandford re-union but **Edgar McCall** has been fully occupied trying to organise the 1999 trip which takes place in two weeks time while **Jim Reilly** has been collecting, over the year, monthly savings for those who avail themselves of this Branch facility. Our members serving in 40 (U) Sig Regt (V) will be going direct from annual camp to meet up with the remainder of the delegation at Blandford. Although they are all looking forward to the reunion, it will be with some sadness as this will be the first time for some years that **Tommy Maguire** will not be with them.

Due to TAVR Camp and stand down there will be no meetings in June or July but we will meet again in August. New Members and Visitors will be welcome.

READING BRANCH

Two and a half teams represented Reading at the Quiz Night held at Aldershot Garrison Sergeants Mess on Thursday 20 May 1999, hosted by the Aldershot Branch of the Royal Signals Association. The team names were 'The Footmen' (Not servants but The Berkshire Yeomanry which of course everybody knows today are the Royal Signals) and the 'Half Wits'. I am very pleased to report 'The Footmen' team of **Gloria Isaacs, Chris Lewis, Dave Norris** and **Alan** were the winners. Congratulations, and thank you Aldershot for those wonderful prizes.

Is it becoming endemic among associations and other charitable organisations that Annual General Meetings are attracting minimal audiences? Sadly our association suffered thus on Friday 21 May 1999 when we held ours. Never mind, those who did not manage to attend because of those thousands of good reasons can rest assured that once again our Branch is in the safe hands of a revamped committee. The new crew are as follows: President – **Maj Gen W. T. Macfarlane**, Chairman - **D. J. 'Jeff' Hazel**, Vice-Chairman/Coordinator - **Pauline Tennant**, Branch Administrator - **Alan Foot**, 50 Club Secretary - **David Norris**, PRO - **Hugh Saunders**, Social Secretary - **Thelma Wakefield**, Newsletter Secretary - **Julia**... The post of Welfare Officer did not get filled. If there is anybody out there who would like to help, please contact our Branch.

Several of our members made it to our 'Mecca' the Blandford Reunion 1999 and gathered for a champagne picnic. This has become the event we most look forward to as somebody amongst us always seems to meet an old veteran who he 'hasn't met for fifty years.'

SCARBOROUGH BRANCH

The Scarborough Branch of the Royal Signals Association, by making a donation of £280.00, has enabled Springhead School to buy a new flotation blanket aid for the youngsters. With this blanket they are able to relax in the school's pool and practice exercises which will help their mobility. **Wendy Popple**, the Senior Physiotherapist, said that the Branch had offered to help buy new equipment after spotting an article about a charity donation featured in the *Evening News*.

Wendy said that the blanket is like having an extra pair of hands in the pool. It is a wonderful piece of equipment and the children find that it's great fun. **Brian Mortimer**, the Branch Treasurer, said that they give to charity every year. They have a big Whisky bottle which they fill with coppers and the odd pound coin.

SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH

On Sunday 18 April the Branch held their annual lunch at Southampton Cricket Club. More than eighty members and their partners attended together with our Guest of Honour, **Col Ken Hadfield**. It is the second time that this event has been held at the Cricket Club and all agreed that it was a great success. **Col Hadfield** spoke about the role of the Corps in the modern army. Our photograph shows **Brig Johnny Clinch** (President), **George Packer** (Chairman) and **Col Ken Hadfield**.



The Branch has recently formed a Social Committee in order to arrange events of interest. A dinner arranged at a restaurant between Southampton and Salisbury attracted nearly thirty members and partners. Other events are in the pipeline. A newsletter has been started and is to be issued quarterly.

We regret to announce the deaths of two members of the Branch **Alex Winter**, who was our Standard Bearer for more than twenty-five years, joined the TA in 1932. He was with the 43rd Wessex Division and in 1942 was posted to Italy. He rose to the rank of CQMS. **Ron Fletcher**, a stalwart member of the Association was CSM at 43rd Division HQ and landed in Normandy shortly after D Day. He joined the TA in 1939.

SOUTHPORT & DISTRICT BRANCH

Our Annual Dinner Dance was a great success. Held as usual at the famous Scarisbrick Hotel in Southport. **Lt Col Ian Thomas** was our Guest of Honour. He gave an excellent speech updating us all on the present state



RSA (Southport & District) Dinner/Dance
Back Row (L-R): J. Johnson, J. Roach, J. Roberts (Padre), P. Dooley (Secretary), E. Amor, D. Carrier, Maj A. Littlejohn
Front Row (L-R): R. Malabon, G. Krinks, J. Reaney (Welfare), M. Macleod (President), B. Gillingham (Chairman), B. Moorcroft (Treasurer), W. Kesketh

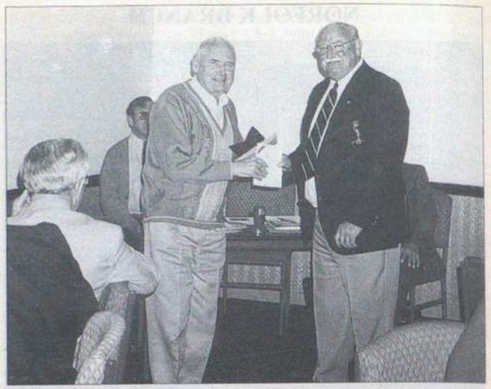
of the Corp. We are now planning our Millennium Dinner Dance, and have already booked the band and the champagne.

We have welcomed six new members so far this year. Anyone interested in joining us would be made most welcome. We meet on the third Thursday of the month at the Conservative club, Bath Street, Southport at 8 o'clock. Or contact **Peter Dooley** on 01704 569083 for details.

WEST LONDON BRANCH

At our Meeting in April it was the pleasant duty of our Chairman, **Maj** 'Dusty' **Miller** to present the 50 Year Badge to **Sam Coombes**, a dedicated Member of the Branch.

In May eighteen of our Members joined the Aldershot Branch on their annual Quiz Night, fielding no less than three teams. Alas, Hercules, The Bodiceas and The Mixers did not quite manage to defeat our neighbouring Branches. We think they must have had inside information. At all events, we had a good night out with our friends of the Corps. We are now planning



Sam Coombes receiving his Badge from Ron Miller

our Millennium Dinner Dance, and have already booked the Band and the champagne. We have welcomed six new members so far this year. Anyone interested in joining us would be made most welcome. We meet on the third Thursday of the month at the Conservative Club, Bath Street, Southport at eight o'clock, or contact **Peter Dooley** on 01704 569083.

THE MIDDLESEX YEOMANRY ASSOCIATION

This year's Cavalry Memorial Parade in Hyde Park on 9 May was a success, despite the military bands being cut down to only four. The salute was taken by **HRH The Prince of Wales**.



As our photo shows a very smart body of Association members gave a good account of themselves at the March Past. Our members were led by **Col Tim Scarlett BEM TD**. **Nicholas Bartlett** carried the banner in a very able manner. Several other members of the Association attended the service but were unable to march. **Len Smith** and **Ted Hawkins** were Parade Marshalls and did a fine job keeping a very large parade in order. The weather was kind to us which greatly pleased our wives and partners. After the Parade, Members wined and dined at the Knightsbridge Barracks.

A couple of dates for your diary, 8 October …. The Annual Dinner at the Duke of York's HQ Chelsea. The Guest of Honour this year is **Lt Col J. Crackett TD**. The other date is 10 October, 'Lafone Day' at St Paul's Cathedral. Another good turnout for members, wives and partners are more than welcome on both occasions.

Finally it is with deep sadness that we mourn the death of **Col Bill Williams MBE TD**. 'Col Bill', as he was known to everyone, was cremated at Finchley Crematorium on 23 April. A Guard of Honour was formed by members of the Band and a trumpeter from the band played the Last Post. Out thoughts are with his wife and daughter. He was a gentleman and a soldier of the highest quality. He will be sadly missed by his friends and comrades.

31 SIGNALS REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

The Association is still on the move and going from strength to strength. A successful AGM was well attended and chaired by our leader **Col Donald Crawford**. Also in attendance was the CO, **Lt Col Linda Harrison**, The Adjutant, **Capt Mel Raynor** and **WO1 (RSM) John Gibson**. This year the 'Fish & Chip' member was **George Collins**. Our Annual Dinner at Mercury House was another success, well attended and very convivial. The CO, **Lt Col Linda Harrison**, was in very good form with her after dinner speech. Congratulations to our Secretary, **Henry Holman**, and his team of workers for a good evening. A special thanks to **LCpl Garrity** for surviving behind the bar against heavy odds.

Our overseas trip, this year organised by **Maj** 'Dusty' **Miller**, was to the Somme Battlefields. Sixty-eight people on a double-decker bus is a wonderful sound when they are singing Mongolian sea shanties. The following day, after a night of drinking 'duty frees' and exploring the local wine bars, quietness appeared to be the order on what turned out to be a scorcher of a day. Then it happened, the coach shuddered to a halt in the middle of nowhere, on a small French road. **Brig Ann Field** and **Brig Ian Rose**, supported by four Colonels, decided that the best thing to do was to make a cup of coffee. Traffic control was organised by **Maj Bob Simpson** in the best Royal Signals tradition. Then, as if by magic, a fleet of taxis arrived and got everyone back to base to catch up on their eating and drinking time, by midnight the song sheets were out again.

The next function organised by 'Dusty' was the final rehearsing of the Trooping of the Colour on Horseguards. The salute was taken by **HRH The Princess Royal** in excellent fashion. Then some of the party had to travel across London to **Sgt Cattrall**'s wedding. The Best Man was **John Stephenson**. The weather stayed fine and the whole occasion went like clockwork. We wish **Gloria** and **Derek** all the very best for their future together.



The Smilers prior to the coach breakdown

REUNIONS

602 SIGNAL TROOP (AOF)

The Reunion for 1999, was held on 17 April at the Copthorne Hotel, Dudley and what an outstanding success it proved to be after much bartering over prices for the accommodation and the dinner, by our Secretary, **Danny Williams.**

Most of the members arrived early on the Saturday to take full advantage of the leisure complex (the ladies that is) and the men took full advantage of the bar, to talk over old times and meet members as they were arriving. Approximately 87 members and wives sat down to dinner and it was so good to see so many new faces from the past. **Gen Bill Robins**, who was our Guest of Honour at our reunion dinner last year, came this year in his own right as a fully paid up member, having been an ex OC of the Troop.

Sadly our President, **Lt Col (Rtd) Bill Lidster,** could not make it this year so our Chairman, **Mike Hope,** after giving his speech of the progress of the AOF called on our ex-Chairman, **Ken Purnell,** to say a few words on behalf of our President. He said how good it was to see the younger element of past Troop members attending the dinner and how important it was for them to be there and keep the AOF going as the old and bold are getting older everyday. It was good to see some of the older members getting out of their bath-chairs and make the effort, such as **Dave Hay, Pat Gratten, Alan Micklethwaite, Jacko Jackson, John Stanley** plus still serving members **Col Jim Ross, Maj Gordon Duncan** and so many more that I apologise if I have failed to mention them, they all turn up year after year.

Our next Reunion will be held in Liverpool at the famous TV series Hotel Adelphi in late April plus we have been offered accommodation at a very reasonable rate, £50 per double room. Our membership figures have now reached 166 paid-up members, even if some of them have to be reminded about their fees, but if you were a member of 602 Troop (SC) at any time regardless of your trade or rank (no, you don't have to have been an operator) and if you would like to join the 602 Association of Friends and meet your friends of the past who you may have lost contact with, please write or telephone our Secretary, **Mr Danny Williams,** 78 Gorham Drive, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 2HP, Tel: 01727 833955 and he will be only to pleased to inform you of how you can join the AOF and attend our next reunion. So don't delay call **Danny** today.

60s 16ers

'The 1960s 16 Signal Regiment's Reunion Club'
(Including HQ BAOR Signal Troop)

The 1999 Reunion will be held on 3-5 September in Alton, Hants. For details contact **Chris Bartlett**: 45 Whitehouse Road, Leigh on Sea, ESSEX, SS9 5SR, or telephone: 01702 524620, E-mail: (1) chris60s16ers@tesco.net
There has been 188 contacts to date.

260 SQUADRON NEWS

ANNUAL REUNION HELD ON THE 24TH APRIL 1999
by Steve Freeman - Pannett

This year we had to move to new accommodation due to the fact that there would be a few more members joining us for this Reunion. So we went to the small town of Loughborough, a place well known in the Royal Corps of Signals. Our new venue was The Quality Hotel just off the M1. With a few members turning up at the hotel on the Friday 23rd April, I myself decided to drive over from East Anglia to arrive in time to meet the people for breakfast on the Saturday morning, I just made it. After breakfast most of us went into town for a look around and arranged to meet at the Royal British Legion Club for lunch. The invite to come to the club was given to **Roy Andrews**. On return to the hotel in the afternoon people took advantage of the Hotel's facilities before the evenings activities. As many people arrived during the afternoon, when it came to hold the main meeting at around six-o'clock thirty-one people had turned up and we sat ourselves in the bar area. **Roy Andrews** on behalf of the president **Bill Cunningham** opened the evenings meeting. As we are now recognised as an Association by the Corps the formal meeting procedures were observed and towards the end of the meeting the last Officer Commanding the Squadron was introduced.



(L-R): Maj (Retd) Jack Fiskel (last OC),
Mr Roy Andrews (Hon Sec),
Maj (Retd) Bill Cunningham (OC - 1971/73)

Jack Fiskel brought a very pleasant surprise, the presentation of a flag to 260 Signal Squadron Old Comrades Association. Incidentally this was the last flag flown on the flag pole at Dortmund before closure. It was accepted by **Bill Cunningham** on our behalf and all members showed their appreciation and of course photos were taken for posterity.

Ulla Freeman-Pannett whose birthday was to be on the Sunday was presented with two badges, one red 'I AM 5' and the other '5 TODAY' (no guessing what age she is) but **Ulla** did wear them for the rest of the weekend. **Ida Fowler** organised a raffle to support funds (Well done **Ida** same next year please) which would be drawn during the evening meal but the only prize of half the moneys taken was won by **Roy Andrews** to a rousing chorus of 'Fiddle.' After the meal we all boarded four mini buses and headed for the RBL club and took part in their evenings activities of Bingo, a raffle in which one member of our party won four of the prizes. To round off the night a cabaret and a sing song before returning to the Hotel, once again to invade the bar until the wee small hours of the morning. Talking of which a few hours later at breakfast on the Sunday, we were all in good spirits (one or two still full of them) but we all slowly said our Good Bye's and departed looking forward to the next Reunion in Dortmund in May 2000. So friends if you know of anybody that served in the Squadron in the Sixties and Seventies who wish to join the people already going to Germany, then please contact **Roy Andrews** on 01227 264551 or myself, **Steve Freeman-Pannet** on 01603 300027, you would be made most welcome.

MALTA/LIBYA COMMAND OCA REUNION

At a hotel in Loughborough, Leicester
24/25 September 1999

Any Royal Signals, Regulars, National Service, WRAC and supporting arms who were in Tripolitania, Cyrenaica between 1950 – 1966, are invited to attend. Please contact the Secretary: **Mrs Patricia Andrews** on 01227 – 264551

THE LANGELEBEN REUNION KONIGSLUTTER 14TH/17TH MAY 1999

Konigslutter am Elm was the destination of 70 plus members and their wives and partners. The 1999 Langeleben Reunion took place in Konigslutter, 23kms east of Brunswick and was to coincide with the Schutzenfeste (shooting festival) which takes place in Konigslutter annually. Members and their wives assembled at the TSGK Sports Club for an evening meal and an informal get together. The meal consisted of pork schnistzel, kartoffeln and vegetables which was kindly organised by our members **Dave Twigg, John Richardson** and **Sid Hicken**, who all live in Konigslutter. **Dieter Dilling**, the Manager of the sports club, did our members proud with the meal. There was plenty for all and even some seconds for those with large appetites. The evening became more and more relaxed as the beer started to flow. Many of our local German friends came along to join in. Most of our members had not seen each other for a year or so and in some cases, 40 years. Hence, I was taken aback when someone approached me and said, 'I bet you don't remember me.' This was **Dave Rounce**, whom I had not seen since 1961, and who had only decided at the very last minute to attend as he now lives in Nassau in the Bahamas. The last time **Dave** and I met was at our DF site at Kaltenkirchen, north of Hamburg, in March 1961. The evening was passing very quickly, as it always does when you are enjoying yourself, the last ones were assembled around the bar, while most had made their way back to their hotels.

Saturday 15 May was our AGM at 1100hrs. We were joined by the Burgermeister of Konigslutter and the fire chief, **Horst Funke**. After a minutes silence for three of our members who had sadly died in the last twelve months, the AGM got underway. This year we are having a change of Chairman, **Maj Tom Perkin** who has been in the chair since we formed the Langeleben Reunion Club, had asked to stand down due to business and family commitments. **Jim Husband** who in the past had deputised for Tom, was elected our new Chairman with the re-election of the committee for a further twelve months. When the AGM agenda finished we then presented **Herr Arnulf Baumann**, the Burgermeister and Fire Chief **Horst Funke** with honorary membership of the Langeleben Reunion Branch. These were framed membership certificates of our Branch.



The Burgermeister Arnulf Baumann and
Fire Chief Horst Funke being made Honorary Members of the
Langeleben Reunion Branch
(L-R): Jim Husband – Chairman, Arnulf Baumann,
Horste Funke, Frank Mitchell - Secretary

The Burgermeister spoke of his admiration for our Reunion Club and his interest in it. **Herr Funke** also gave a speech. After we all had partaken in a snack of Bockwurst's and bread rolls, we made our way to the Kaiserdom (cathedral) where we were to meet up with shooting clubs from the district around Konigslutter. We joined the locals in a march through Konigslutter to the market place where speeches of welcome were made to all participants. The lads were welcomed formally by the Burgermeister in English, which was very moving for us. After all the speeches were over the bands started up and off we marched, making our way to the beer tent, some 1km distant.



The March through Konigslutter on 15 June 1999

Passing along streets lined with locals. I'm sure the lads from Langeleben felt very proud, I know I did. Arriving at the beer tent we dismissed and made our way into the tent where two tables had been reserved for the Langeleben contingent. As is usual with German beer tents the beer was flowing fast and furious with beers being sent to our table from every corner of the tent. The bands were still playing and everyone was getting in the mood. After a break, for a wash and change, we all made our way back to the tent for the evenings' entertainment. A good rock group was on stage and even included us with announcements in English. The evening was moving on and more and more locals had joined the Langeleben tables. These friendships had lasted over many years and are still very strong today. The band played on and on and on. Before I knew it, it was three in the morning and the start of another early day.

The Sunday morning was when the locals at the Schutzenfeste held their 'Hangover' breakast, which included free beer for those able to stand the pace. Many members took this opportunity to visit Berlin and the Harz mountains, to see Wernigerode and Quedlingberg which are two old towns of half timbered buildings. Whilst we were stationed at Langeleben we were unable to visit them, as both towns were in the old Eastern Zone. After our various trips we all assembled on the Sunday evening at the 'Sport Klaus' a hostelry which over the years has made all the lads from Langeleben very welcome. After some had had an evening meal. Goodbyes were the order of the evening as many members were making their way home to Blighty. Although some had decided to make a longer stay, but for most this was their last evening in Konigslutter. With a, 'See you next year,' that was the evening over for them. On the Monday, those who stayed on, decided to visit the camp at Langeleben which had now been empty for seven years. It all look rather forlorn and very sad, not like the hive of activity back in the 60's and 70's. Our last night in Konigslutter was now upon us so we said our goodbyes and made for our hotel. Next morning Hamburg was our destination, with an onward journey to Newcastle and home. Another very successful Langeleben Reunion, now it's time to get plans going for our Millennium Reunion.

36 FofS COURSE REUNION



The photo shows those who attended a dinner night in the Royal School of Signals on Saturday 24 April 1999, it includes **Trevor Fellows** and **Bob Taylor** who came from Australia and America respectively. Others came and went during the weekend but could not attend the dinner night. Our deepest thanks to ALL who made it a most memorable weekend. The weekend started at 2000hrs on Friday 23 April 1999, in the Crown Hotel in Blandford; continued on the Saturday with a visit to the Royal School of Signals in the morning; lunch at the Langton Arms, Tarrant Monkton; then a visit to the Museum in the afternoon. The day culminated in the dinner night. We lunched in the Sgts' Mess on Sunday 25 April 1999 and tearfully departed at 1500hrs having had a splendid time. For those who have insider knowledge, our thanks go to the person who picked up the bar bill for Room 44W

The next reunion is in Texas in five years time and is going to be organised by **Bob Taylor** so, start saving, keep in touch and see you there.

LOST COMMS

From: **Mrs Julie Slater**
1 Donaldson Drive
Cheswardine
Nr. Market Drayton
SHROPSHIRE TF9 2NY

Dear Editor,

I am writing to you about my Grandfather in the hope that one of your readers may remember him or have served with him.

He was **Sig Stanley Day** and, ideally, I am trying to obtain a photograph of him, as no family member has one. I am hoping that just maybe one of your readers may have some snapshots or military photos which might feature him. They could contact me at the above address. Below are the particulars of Grandfather's years of service:

Enlisted into TA and posted to 1 Anti Aircraft Div Sig		1938
Posted to 1 Holding Battalion		1942
Embarked for India		1943
Arrived India & posted Sig Trg Ctr Mhow	March	1943
Posted to 4 Corps Signals	June	1943
Attached to Bellahouston Transit Camp	April	1945
Posted to Depot Battalion	June	1945
Released to Reserve	December	1945
Died		1947

Thanking you in anticipation.

From: **Andrew J. S. Hobbs**
Higher Woodcombe Cottage
Bratton Lane
Minehead
SOMERSET TA24 8SQ
Tel: 01643703579
Mobile: 0974 748088
Email: hobbs@easynet.co.uk

Dear Sir,

Ref: Maj John Norton Stractan R. SIGNALS

I am writing to you on the advice of the Royal Signals Museum who said you may publish a letter for me in your magazine. I am trying to find out about my grandfather who served in the Royal Corps of Signals during the Second World War. I have the following information on him from the War Graves Commission web-site.

Rank: Major
Number: 143977 (dog tag number 399126 CE)
Died: Sunday 11 June 1944

I have been told by my grandmother that he died on 4 of June 1944. I have also been told that he, being a keen potholer, worked on a project to hide troops in the caves at Wookey Hole should the Germans invade. He is also meant to have doubled for Montgomery. I would love to find someone who served with him so that I could find out more about him. If any of your readers can help I would be very grateful. Thank you for your time.

Yours truly…….

Mark Parkinson
49 Derby Road, Eastleigh, Hants, SO50 5FE
Tel: 01703 368162

WOULD LIKE YOUR HELP

He writes:

I'm wondering if you can help me trace a person I'm looking for, on behalf of my parents. My parents are trying to trace an old army friend they knew when they were serving in Malaya, unfortunately I don't have much information about him as it was a very long time ago. I recently contacted the Royal Signals museum to see if they had any information on him because my parents believed him to be a Signalman. Sadly they had no record of him.

The Royal Signal museum suggested that I contact you in the hope that one of your readers may remember serving with him or know his whereabouts. His name is **Peter Evans**. He held the rank of Sergeant and was stationed in Malaya between 1955 and 1960. His last known posting was in Germany in 1960. Unfortunately that's all the information I have.

I know it's a long shot but any help that you can give me would be very much appreciated.

Ronald G. Grant would like to contact **Robert** 'Jock' **Lennie** (from Glasgow), and any other ex-Royal Signals who were attached to the Long Range Desert Group Patrols, (especially Y2 Patrol) during WWII. Please send any contacts to :

Email: Fenton@worldchat.com
Postal: 426 Burlington Avenue
Burlington
On L7S 1R4
CANADA
Tel/Fax: (905) 681 0241

CORRESPONDENCE

From: **Mr D. W. Smith**
Castilian House
34 Park Avenue North
Abington
Northampton
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE NN3 2JE
Tel: 01604 712 863 - Mobile: 0411 806 303

Dear Sir,

I felt that I must write and express my appreciation (and surprise) at the quality and content of *The Wire*. As a recent Life Member and a veteran, 42-45 of the Royal Signals, it has been surprising how much interest there has been in it for me.

My original unit, 1 Corps (now 7 Signal Regiment), has been most kind in response to a letter that I sent them and but for their deployment to Bosnia, I would have received an invitation to their 40th Anniversary – now postponed. It is my intention to attend the Reunion in June at Blandford.

I make a point of passing my copy of *The Wire* on to other members – making sure that it is not to someone who would subscribe! I have written previously, hoping for an entry in the 'Lost Comms' section. It is interesting also to see donations from the Certa Cito Lodge.

Yours Sincerely and with all good wishes…….

From: **SSgt Tom McKay MBE**
HQ 52 Lowland Brigade
The Castle
EDINBURGH
EH1 2YT
Tel: 0131 310 5071

Dear Col Valder,

The 'One o'clock Gun' Museum Committee, with the backing of Historic Scotland, is presently setting up a 'One o'clock Gun' Museum below the Mills Mount Battery, Edinburgh Castle. The museum is scheduled to open at the beginning of December.

The original cable connecting the time-gun's clock to the Carlton Hill Observatory Hill was rigged by the Royal Engineers. Our travelling exhibition was recently on display at the Edinburgh Room and we are also in the process of preparing a world time-gun travelling exhibition.

We now have an extensive archive covering the world's time-balls and time-guns including the Saint Petersburg Noon Day Gun. We are collaborating with the US Naval Observatory, in Washington who are planning a synchronised time-gun shoot and time-ball drop when the millennium arrives.

We would appreciate any information and photographs from readers on time-guns and time-balls for our archive. All the best.

Yours Sincerely……

From: **A. D. Brown**
34 Silverdale Road
Tadley
HAMPSHIRE RG26 4JW
Tel: 0118 981 2610

Dear Sir,

Some of your readers who were at the Blandford Reunion, last year, may recall an announcement on the PA system on the Saturday afternoon. It concerned an old member of the Corps who was hoping to meet someone that he knew when he was serving. It said that he joined in 1932 and had served in India. His name was **Charlie Falcon**, he was severely incapacitated, was in a wheelchair and lived in a nursing home. When I heard his name I was sure we had met somewhere but could not remember where. I looked for him during the afternoon and evening but did not find him. Some other members told me that they had seen him and that he had not found anybody that he knew.

On the following Monday I phoned RHQ and obtained his address. I wrote to him and received a reply, written on his behalf by a member of the nursing home staff, telling me he had been in 'B' Corps Signals in Karachi when I was posted there in 1936. So we were in the same unit for nearly three years until I was posted to Meerat on attachment to the 17/21 Lancers in January 1939.

I was able to visit **Charlie** four times last year. We had long talks about all the people we had known and looked at the old photos we had. Sad to relate that when I phoned the nursing home, before Easter, I was told that he had passed away the week before, and was being buried the day that I rang them.

When I received my copy *The Wire*, for April, I read of the death of **Maj Ken Jordan**. He was a Corporal in 'B' Corps at the time **Charlie** and I were there. We knew him well.

Yours Sincerely……

From: **Ron Larby**
178 Braemar Avenue
Neasden
NW10 0DS

Dear Sir,

Perhaps a reader of *The Wire* can supply the answer to the following story.

The misfortunes of the England cricket team 'Down Under' brings back a memory of my first days at 3rd Training Regiment, Bourbon Lines, Catterick, in early December 1950. As a new intake we had to do three weeks fatigues prior to commencing our trade training as OWLS.

For my first assignment I and a number of others were taken to an unoccupied barrack room to refurbish the lockers etc. The NCO in charge, a Long Service Lance Jack with three or four 'skaters' indicated to me to remove from one of the lockers the small card upon which would have been written the previous occupier's name rank and number.

'Read it!' ordered Corp.

I did so, '22———, -, **Signal man Close D. B.**'

'Know who he is?' enquired the Corporal.

'Of course,' I replied, '**Brian Close**, the Yorkshire cricketer!'

An uproar in the press and questions had been asked in The House, because of **Brian Close**'s selection to tour Australia with the MCC, and his release from National Service to be able to do so. Our Corporal didn't approve of this at all and expressed himself in no uncertain terms, finishing with, '……It's just not fair on the rest of you lads!'

However, after his departure our work party was unanimous in declaring that we'd rather be playing cricket in sunny Australia than doing fatigues (or anything else) in rainy Catterick! Which leads me to the query: Did **Brian** have to finish his service after his return. Furthermore was his selection a success?

With Regards……

From: **James E. Prentice**
RSA Glasgow
21 Jardine Street
GLASGOW G20 6JU

Dear Sir,

Thank you for the April issue of *The Wire* received today. I have passed the copy on to **Mrs Archibald, Sgt A. Archibald**'s widow. It is appreciated by myself and the Branch Chairman, **Bill Taylor**, that you managed to grant the request made to us, from **Mrs Archibald** for the copy.

Yours Sincerely.....

From: **Maj Gen D. R. Horsfield**
Dear Sir,

YUGOSLAV RELATIONSHIPS

In 1961 when I was Chief Instructor at the School of Signals in Catterick we had a formal visit from a Yugoslav Delegation. They travelled up on the night train so my first meeting with them was at breakfast in the Headquarters Mess.

Col Gen Orescanin and **Lt Col Pavlovic** headed the party and they were accompanied by **Col Ian Ramsay**, the Military Attaché from Belgrade. **Maj Ron Hardy** was in charge of the Mess arrangements and it was only at breakfast that I observed that he had laid on a liberal supply of slivovitz. It was not neglected.

Let us hope that before long the soldiers of our two countries will achieve similarly good relations with their counterparts.

Yours Sincerely.....

DONATIONS

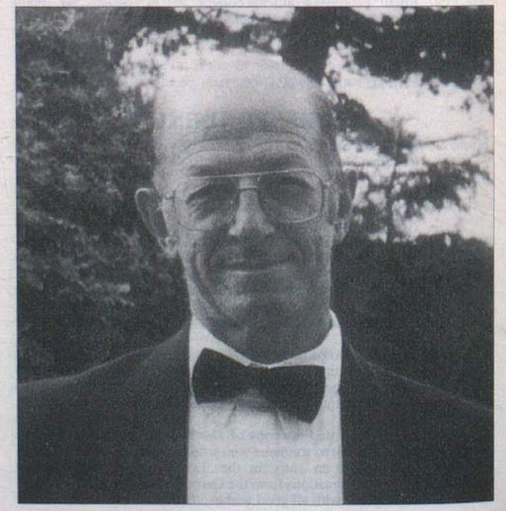
RSA Chester £50.00
RSA Eastbourne £150.00
RSA East London £150.00
RSA Norfolk £100.00
RSA Guernsey £50.00
RSA Reading £100.00
Certa Cito Lodge £10.00
Mrs W. Jackaman £5.00
D. E. Hannaford £10.00
T. MacDonald £20.00
Mr Roy Green £6.50
Mr Chick Cheetham £10.00
Mrs F. Wolley in memory of Capt John Rudkin £20.00
Mrs Vera Butt in memory of Capt John Rudkin £20.00
Mr & Mrs M. D. Hutchings in memory of Capt John Rudkin £10.00
Colin & Jane Davey in memory of Capt John Rudkin £10.00
Lt Col G. N. A. Curtis in memory of Capt John Rudkin £10.00
F. P. Mitchell in memory of Capt John Rudkin £20.00
Lt Col J. A. C. Webster in memory Capt John Rudkin £25.00
Alec & Sheila Forty in memory of Capt John Rudkin £25.00
V. Webber in memory of Capt John Rudkin £10.00
3 Div Sigs Reunion Club in memory of Mr T. A. Elleker £10.00
3 Div Sigs Reunion Club in memory of Sig G. A. Elwick £10.00
RSA Eastbourne in memory of Col D. D. Fairman £30.00
In lieu of flowers at the funeral of David Gaddas £100.14
Sig E. C. Higham a legacy from the Will of Sig Higham £500.00
Anonymous in memory of Maj Gen Thuilliers CB, CVO, OBE £5.00
Rose Williams & Daphne Thullier in memory of
Maj Gen L de M Thullier CB, CVO, OBE £20.00
Collection at the Funeral Service of
Maj Gen L de M Thuilliers CB, CVO, OBE £207.25

LAST POST

Attrill - WO1 E. C. Attrill	Served 1928/41	Died Jan '99
Avery - WO2 T. J. Avery BEM	Served 1967/??	Died 06/05/99
Bell - Sgt R. Bell	Served 1948/73	Died 10/05/99
Boulding - Lt Col K. R. R. Boulding	Served 1939/82	Died 12/06/99
Carley - Sig P. A. Carley	Served 1939/46	Died Dec '96
Cox - Maj J. Cox	Served 1946/82	Died 10/05/99
Cox - Capt D. E. P. Cox	Served 1953/83	Died 11/06/99
Crofts - WO2 (Supvr R) G. J. Crofts	Served 1963/93	Died 09/05/99
Currie - Maj A. D. H. Currie	Served 1958/68	Died 26/05/99
Drew - LCpl M. D. J. Drew	Served 1971/95	Died 22/05/99
Elleker - T. G. Elleker	Served	Died 12/06/99
Elwick - Cpl G. A. Elwick	Served 1939/47	Died June '99
Fairman - Col D. D. Fairman	Served	Died
Fletcher - R. Fletcher	Served 1939/??	Died
Gabbitas - Sgt A. W. A. Gabbitas	Served 1940/46	Died 15/05/99
Green - LCpl D. M. Green	Served 1976/99	Died 28/04/99
Griffiths - WO2 R. E. Giffiths	Served 1934/56	Died May '98
Higham - Sig E. C. Higham	Served 1934/46	Died 31/12/98
Howie - RSM G. A. Howie	Served 26 years	Died 19/03/99
Inglis - Lt Col A. D. Inglis	Served 1940/73	Died 12/04/99
Jackson - Sig R. Jackson	Served 1946/48	Died Feb '96
Mathews - Lt Col R. E. D. Mathews	Served 1939/62	Died 26/05/99
Mizen - S. A. K. Mizen	Served WW2	Died 15/04/99
Noble - WO2 L H. Noble	Served 1964/86	Died 13/05/99
O'Shaughnessy - Capt O'Shaughnessy	Served 1940/47	Died 23/05/99
Page - Sig J. A. Page	Served 1939/45	Died May '99
Pennington - Maj A. J. Pennington	Served 1968/76	Died 24/05/99
Phillips - Cpl G. Phillips	Served 1941/57	Died Mar '99
Randolph-Pearse - Maj W. Randolph-Pearse	Served	Died 07/04/99
Rooney - Sig J. P. Rooney	Served	Died 21/05/99
Rudkin - Capt J. B. Rudkin	Served 1943/47	Died 17/06/99
Russell - Sig W. Russell	Served 1944/47	Died 04/05/99
Sparks - WO2 D. L. Sparks	Served 1954/88	Died 06/05/99
Underwood - Capt S. Underwood	Served 1939/41	Died 18/01/99
Vickers - Sig A. S. Vickers	Served 1961/83	Died 26/05/99
Whitfield - Sig S. Whitfield	Served 1939/46	Died 05/06/99
Whybrow - L. S. Whybrow	Served 1941/46	Died 22/05/99
Williams - Cpl J. Williams	Served 1953/78	Died 02/05/99
Willis - A. G. Willis	Served	Died 22/10/98
Wilson - LCpl D. Wilson	Served 1955/59	Died 02/06/99
Winter - A. Winter	Served 1932/??	Died
Woods - Sig D. Woods	Served 1948/50	Died 08/05/99

Rooney – Sig John Rooney It is with deep regret that 36th (Eastern) Signal Regiment (Volunteers) have to report the tragic death of **Signaller John Rooney** in a Road Traffic Accident on 21 May 1999. His funeral took place on Friday 28 May 1999 at the Essex Regiment Chapel, Warley, Essex. A bearer party was provided by members of 44 (Cinque Ports) Signal Squadron (Volunteers), of which he was a member. **John Rooney** joined the Regiment in July 1998 and trained as a Radio Relay Operator. He had previously served three years with the Royal Green Jackets, which included a tour in Northern Ireland and service in Germany and Canada. In the short time with us, he had proved to be a loyal member of the Regiment. He was a cheerful man with an excellent sense of humour and well respected by other Regiment members, by whom he will be sadly missed. **John Rooney** leaves his partner **Jane** and a daughter **Emily**. The Regiment extends its deepest sympathies to them and his family.

Crofts - WO2 (Retd) G. J. Crofts MBE. WO2 (Supervisor Radio) **Guy** 'Screw' **Crofts** passed away peacefully in the John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford on 10 May 1999 after a short but valiant fight against cancer. **Guy Crofts** was born in Leicester in 1945 and joined the Army as a Junior Leader in 1960. He passed out with flying colours but after a short spell with the Royal Military Police, which earned him the nickname 'Screw' which he never shook off, he transferred to The Royal Signals in 1963. He successfully completed the Telecommunications Operator (Special) Course in 1964 and served in a variety of specialist appointments in the UK, Germany and Cyprus until 1984 when he was posted as the Supervisor Radio in Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Branch, Headquarters Northern Ireland. This was a highly specialist role in which he provided direct operational support to the, then, RAOC counter-terrorist bomb disposal teams operating throughout the Province. 'Screw' quickly mastered his new, extremely complex and potentially life saving responsibilities and swiftly gained a reputation as a thoroughly professional technician and extremely gallant soldier. He played a key role in a large number of highly dangerous and sophisticated security operations and earned the respect of all members of the EOD and intelligence organisations with whom he worked so closely. His outstanding contribution to operations during this period led to his richly deserved MBE at the conclusion of his tour. However, he was not to escape the clutches of the EOD world and continued his close association with RAOC and later RLC EOD operations at home and overseas for a further 7 years whilst serving with 11 EOD Regiment RLC. On retirement in 1993 he could claim a glittering career which had spanned 33 years service and had been rewarded by the MBE, MSM and LSGC and bar.



'Screw' **Crofts** was a fine regimental soldier, an outstanding technician and a very gallant gentleman who could be relied upon to lighten even the darkest moment with a quip or humorous comment. He had a wicked sense of humour which he used regularly to get his point across in a most painless and yet unforgettable manner. Yet he was not in the slightest bit put out when he himself became the target of humour and was proud of his uncanny facial resemblance to the American TV character Sgt Bilko. Yet he was completely dedicated to his profession and took great pride in bringing on those soldiers junior and less experienced than himself. He was in all respects larger than life and enjoyed almost legendary status throughout the EOD community who adopted him as their own.

On retirement 'Screw' and his family settled near Oxford and he soon embarked on his second career as a porter at first University College then later at St Edmunds College in the City. To all intents and purposes he became the very epitome of the College RSM. He was feared, loved and respected by staff and students alike as they fell victim to his unrelenting sense of humour and often bizarre methods of getting his point across. From his highly bulled shoes to the top of his unmistakably bald head, with his rolled umbrella in place of a pace stick, 'Screw' kept order throughout the College and yet with his ever helpful, kindly and friendly nature he swiftly made his mark and earned a reputation and status to rival that he had in the Army. At his funeral service his family were joined by over 200 of his friends from the Army, serving and retired, and by the staff and students from the Oxford Colleges. Such was the mark of **Guy Crofts** that his funeral was not a melancholy affair but rather a wonderful celebration of a man who had contributed so much and enriched the lives of so many. We have all lost a dear friend but his impact on the Army and more recently on the Oxford Colleges will remain. 'Screw' was immensely proud of his family and all they had achieved. At this difficult time we offer **Wendy**, who supported 'Screw' and the Army so loyally for over 25 years, and his son **Adam**, himself a former Royal Marine, and daughter **Mandy** our most sincere condolences.

Howie – RSM G. A. Howie It is with regret that we were informed of the death of **RSM G. A. Howie** on 19 March 1999. **Gordon** served 26 years with the Corps and more than half of his adult service was with the Gurkha Signals. His last appointment was as RSM of 48 Gurkha Brigade. Many members of the Corps will remember him as a dedicated, fun loving soldier and an avid all-round sportsman. He is sadly missed by his friends and family and leaves behind his beloved wife, **Doris**, daughters **Felicity** and **Vanessa** and four loving grandchildren.

Maguire – T. W. Maguire it is with the greatest regret that the Northern Ireland Branch of the RSA have to report the passing of their former Chairman 'Tommy' **Maguire**. **Tom** joined 66 (Ulster) Sig Regt (V), later 40 (Ulster) Sig Regt (V) in the early 1960s when he also became a member of the RSA Northern Ireland Branch. Over the years he served the Branch well, particularly during his long reign as Branch Chairman a job he carried out with great efficiency and enthusiasm, and was indeed made a Honour Member of the RSA. His easy manner of communicating with people of all ranks was an asset and he regarded many people as his friends rather that simply acquaintances.

Each year he looked forward to the Catterick and latterly Blandford Reunion and had his name down for the 1999 trip but unfortunately did not make it. Some years ago he was involved in a traffic accident from which he never fully recovered and although suffering from a terminal illness for the past year he still retained the Chair until the 1999 AGM missing only one meeting. It was good that he was able to act as Master of Ceremonies at our recent Annual Formal, Dinner.

We would dearly have liked to have displayed the Branch Standard etc. at his funeral but his wife **Joyce**, to whom we extend our deepest sympathy, carried out **Tom**'s wishes for a quiet funeral which was private and by invitation only. He will be sorely missed.

Attrill – WO1 (ASM) E. C. Attrill – joined the Corps at Catterick in 1928 at the age of 14 years. During his time in the Corps, he served five years in India. He was transferred to the RAOC shortly after Dunkirk and was later forced to change to the RE. He ended his service at the Guided Weapons Establishment at Aberporth, Wales. In spite of the enforced changes, **Mr Attrill** always considered himself as Royal Corps of Signals and wore the Corps' tie with pride, during his retirement.

Bell – SSgt Bob Bell. It is with regret that the Glasgow Branch of the Royal Signals Association announce the death of one of our founder members, 22212995 **Staff Sergeant Robert** 'Bob' **Bell**, who died suddenly in Hospital on Monday, 10 May 1999. Bob served in the Corps for 25 years from September 1948 to June 1973. **Bob** was a life member of the RSA and a founder member of the Glasgow Branch. During his regular service **Bob** served in Malaya during the Emergency, and in the Canal Zone Egypt, before going to SHAEF in France. On the changeover from TA to TAVR, **Bob** was posted to Glasgow as Chief Administration Clerk of 32 (Scottish) Signal Regiment (V). Whilst there he met his wife **Sarah**, who was a member of the Corps. **Sarah** is also a Life Member of the RSA and a member of the Glasgow Branch. On leaving Glasgow **Bob** spent time in Catterick before being posted to London, where he spent the rest of his service. He held the award of the General Service Medal with the Bar Malaya. His Cremation was attended by the Chairman of Glasgow Branch, **Bill Taylor**, accompanied by members of the Glasgow Branch who had served with **Bob** at some stage in his career. The Glasgow Branch members offer their sincere condolences to **Sarah**, sons **Martin** and **Mark** daughter **Sarah Jane** and grandson **Jamie**.

Willis – Arthur George Willis will be remembered with great affection by those who knew him, especially his fellow cadets at 150 OCTU, Royal Signals, Catterick shortly after the Second World War. He had served with the Corps for several years, and during the North Africa campaign was captured by the Italians in Libya. Until released towards the end of the war he was in Italian or German prison camps; one of these was at Sulmona in Italy, and in a group photo sent to his parents he is pictured at the German camp Stalag 344.

On release he was keen to continue his career with the Corps, and was subsequently recommended to apply for a commission. After attending Basic OCTU at Mons Barracks, Aldershot, he joined 176 Course at Catterick's Royal Signals OCTU in 1946. Being perhaps a little older than other course members, considerably more experienced and with the hardships of war behind him, he could have been forgiven for treating his fellow cadets with a degree of superiority. However, that was not the case; he seldom spoke of his time as a POW, and was ready to offer genuine encouragement (and to neutralise any eruptions of youthful immaturity!) with a dry, but understanding, sense of humour. He was commissioned into the rank of Lieutenant on 19 March 1947; soon afterwards he was posted to Burma where he was attached to Burma Army Signals. He enjoyed his time there, and managed when off duty to pursue an interest in amateur dramatics.

Resigning his commission in the early 1950s, he joined the well known tea producers, Liptons. After tea-tasting training in London he was sent first to Calcutta and then posted to Coonoor in southern India. There he met his future wife **Anne** who was teaching in the area and whose father was a tea-planter. The couple married soon afterwards. Later, **George** was posted to Colombo, Sri Lanka, where he was general manager for 17 years; when Liptons were taken over by Unilever he was made a director, and at that stage spent a six month period in Melbourne, Australia.

George and **Anne** had three children, and subsequently five grandchildren. Anne continues to live near Dorking in Surrey, with the children's families living not far away, and would be interested to hear from any of **George**'s friends. **George Willis** died on 22 October 1998 at the age of 77; representatives of 176 Course and wives were among those attending the cremation service.

A LEGEND REMEMBERED

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A unique video is now available telling the story of how this first and only Memorial to the 'Desert Rats' all came about.

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NEW LIFE MEMBERS

A warm welcome is extended to the following newly enrolled Life Members:-

Rank	*Name*	*Branch*	*Service*
LCpl	Robert Gulliford	Doncaster	1954-56
Capt	Kenneth Annas	Huddersfield	1940-46
Sig	R. N. McVey	Lincoln	1952-54
Pipe Major	Bill Clezy	Glasgow	1997-date
WSgt	M. M. Murphy	Glasgow	1979-98
SSgt	A. M. Wilson	Glasgow	1950-67
WO2	Jim Thompson	RHQ	1981-99
SSgt	Alan Martin	RHQ	1975-99
Cpl	Scott Dickinson	RHQ	1985-99
Capt	Norman Johnson	RHQ	1960-70
SSgt	Steve Swinfield	RHQ	1963-88
Sig (now Dr)	Jeffrey Balmer	RHQ	1960-63
tbc	Bob Manning	Beverely Ex-Boys	1950-61
WO2	G. A. Foggo	East Kent	1957-79
Cpl	Steve Robinson	RHQ	1976-94
SSgt	Adrian Downes	RHQ	1975-98
Sgt	Marc Reeves	RHQ	1984-99

WPte	J. G. Greer	Glasgow	1942-46
WPte	Mary McGregor	Glasgow	tbc
Sig	David Everett	Bath	1959-67
Sig	Roy Green	Beverley Ex-Boys	1951-56
SSgt	Ian Usher	RHQ	1978-99
Sig	P. McAndrew	Sale	tbc
SSgt	Austin Lindon	RHQ	1977-present
Capt	Rupert Whiting	RHQ	1992-99
Maj	Mick Rattray	RHQ	1964-99
Maj	Chris Urquhart	RHQ	1964-99
Maj	Gus Boag	RHQ	1959-99
Lt Col	Derek Robertson	RHQ	1973-99
Lt Col	Derek McLean	RHQ	1965-99
Lt Col	Martin Nicol MBE	RHQ	1960-99
Maj	Steven May	RHQ	1965-99
Maj	Mark Castle-Smith	RHQ	1981-99
Lt Col	Joe Moreland	RHQ	1969-99
Cpl	Joe Hughes	RHQ	1950-79
Sgt	Bill Parker	RHQ	1963-83
SSgt	Tom Thornton	York	1965-86
WO1	Robbie Burnett	York	196?-89
Sig	Andrew Walker	RHQ	1990-98
WO1	John Warburton-Ford	RHQ	1942-68
Cpl	Raymond Irwin	N Ireland	1990-date
Sgt	Andy Leishman	N Ireland	1992-date
SSgt	Neil McKie	RHQ	1976-93
Sgt	David Lock	East London	1974-95
SSgt	Steve Matthews	RHQ	1975-99
Sgt	Dale Brown	RHQ	1982-99
Sig	Frank Gilkes	RHQ	1954-56
Sgt	Wayne Kennedy	RHQ	1983-99
Sig	Percy Thorne	East Kent	1943-47
LCpl	Charles Baker	East Kent	1944-48
Sgt	Craig Scotson	RHQ	1984-99
LCpl	Roy Constable	RHQ	1988-99
Sig	Rob Wells	RHQ	1992-95
Cpl	Trevor Mackown	RHQ	1970-80
WO1	Kevin Lodge	RHQ	1974-97
SSgt	Linda Lodge	RHQ	1975-99
WO1	Peter Martin	RHQ	1972-99
Sgt	Jimmy Meadows	RHQ	1986-99
Cpl	Ted Drake	East Kent	1947-49
Capt	Stephen Hatfield	RHQ	1976-99
Lt Col	Roland Ebdon	RHQ	1967-99
SSgt	Robin Fitzpatrick	RHQ	1986-date
Sig	J. G. Whitworth	Manchester	1944-48
Sig	B. C. Murphy	Manchester	1957-59
WPte	E. F. Haynes	Bristol	1950-54
Cpl	Peter Casson	RHQ	1985-99
SSgt	Gordon McGowan	RHQ	1975-99
Sig	David Edwards	RHQ	1985-99
Sig	Dennis Taylor	Cornwall	1952-55
Cpl	L. D. J. Lynn	Lincoln	1950-60
Cpl	Eric Jones	Birmingham	1937-46
WCpl	Henrietta Jones	Birmingham	1940-44
SSgt	Glenn Renshaw	RHQ	1977-99
WO2	Brendan Kelly	RHQ	1976-99
WO2	Rod Oakley	RHQ	1977-99
Sig	Len Moore	RHQ	1940-42
Cpl	Winston Manning	RHQ	1956-65
Sig	Jim Crotty	RHQ	1942-47
LCpl	M. G. Simpson	Langeleben	1959-61
WO2	Chris Gopsill	RHQ	1976-99
Sgt	Paul Morgan	RHQ	1983-98
LCpl	Simon Watson	RHQ	1992-99
SSgt	John Carpanini	RHQ	1977-99
SSgt	Frank Corrigan	RHQ	1975-99
SSgt	George Davies	RHQ	1950-70
LCpl	Danny Monks	Southport	1984-92
WO2	John Rodgers	RHQ	1964-84
Sgt	Keith Anderson	RHQ	1972-89
WLCpl	Alison Johnston	RHQ	1992-99
Cpl	David Cox	RHQ	1988-99
Sgt	Paul Lockwood	RHQ	1984-98

YOUR ONE DAY'S PAY – WHAT HAPPENED TO IT IN 1998

by Col C. J. Walters Regimental Colonel

Your One Day's Pay is the main source of income for Corps Funds. It is very encouraging that 95% of the Corps make this generous annual contribution. In addition, officers pay 0.75 of One Day's Pay each year into the Officers Fund; this is mandatory under QRs (a fact that not many Officers realise) and is in support of the HQ Officers' Mess and other officer functions such as entertainments, silver and paintings. Retired Officers volunteer to pay an annual subscription of £25 (or more) and this also entitles them to receive a copy of *The Wire*. SNCOs and WOs may subscribe a further 0.25 Day's Pay for their own specific fund.

PURPOSE OF CORPS FUNDS

A Trust Deed is registered with the Charity Commission to govern the use of Corps Funds. The main advantage of this is to avoid paying tax on subscriptions and investment. The main purpose of Corps Funds are:

- The relief of poverty for all members of the Corps, serving or retired, their families and dependants. This is the main area of expenditure.
- To maintain and improve the physical efficiency and morale of the Corps at large eg: Funds for Sport and Adventurous Training.
- The payment of donations to charitable organisations concerned with welfare of signallers and their dependants.

HOW IS THE ROYAL SIGNALS BENEVOLENT FUND STRUCTURED?

There are three main Funds:

- The Corps Fund.
- The Royal Signals Association Fund.
- The Officers Fund.

The chart shows the combined income and expenditure of all Funds for the Financial Year 1998.

INCOME

The total income for the year was £820K. The main sources of income were from the subscriptions of officers and soldiers (£472K). Additionally nearly all subscribers covenant their subscription by signing an appropriate document. This enables the Corps to claim the tax on their subscription AT NO COST TO THE INDIVIDUAL (£134K). Investments from our well invested savings amounted to £193K and donations accounted for the final £21K. All legacies and donations are allocated to the Association Fund, for reinvestment in order to meet the cost of future Benevolence.

EXPENDITURE

The main single source of expenditure was the RSA Benevolent Fund which granted £57K to the Army Benevolent Fund who give tremendous help to Signallers, and distributed £245K elsewhere. The main activities of the RSA Benevolent Fund are:

- It provides financial support for cases of need. About every three weeks a formal committee gathers at RHQ to consider benevolence requests. These are normally submitted by SSAFA, British Legion, COs, Association Branches or the Army Benevolent Fund. It should be noted that cases from serving personnel are also considered.
- It supports the Annual Reunion of the RSA that is held annually at Blandford in Corps Week: last week in June.

The Corps employs a number of personnel, such as the Corps Accountant, and incurs running costs all amounting to £101K.

The Royal Signals Institution costs were £49K that is all taken from the Officers' Fund. The expenditure includes lectures, Corps prizes, Insurance and Maintenance of silver and paintings.

The Royal Signals Corps Band was subsidised by £10K. This was mainly to support the band in a professional way with sheet music, instruments and instrument repair and uniforms. The Band of 34 Sig Regt (V) was subsidised by £10K.

Corps sport was allocated £73K that was distributed by the Games Club. This included a trip for 40 Corps personnel to South Africa. *The Wire* was subsidised by £36K.

Capital grants received £39K that included the purchase of Corps paintings and silver by the Corps Heritage Committee.

The Funds allocated £38K to Corps entertainment for such occasions as Royal visits to units and made provisions of £88K for the serving Corps including £30K for Adventurous Training. Finally, £74K was invested to boost our income in future years.

SUMMARY

The One Day's Pay Scheme is extremely well supported by the Corps. Undoubtedly, the main area of support is in benevolence that amounted to £302K in 1998 which is a commendable effort for which the Corps as a whole are to be congratulated.

I hope that this explanation of expenditure is excellent news for subscribers and encouragement of the few who, for whatever reason, do not subscribe.

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CORPS AND ASSOCIATION FUNDS 1998

How was the money spent? (All figures are in thousands)

Expenditure	£K		
Association Welfare and Benevolence		245	
Association Grants (Army Benevolent Fund etc)		57	
Salaries and Expenses	47		101
Institution		49	
Band		20	
Sports		73	
Wire Subsidy		36	
Capital Grants		39	
Entertainment		38	
Other (Note 1)			
Invested or Carried Forward		74	
Total		820	

Where did the money come from?

Income	£K
Soldiers Subscriptions	312
Soldiers Covenants	86
Officers Subscriptions	160
Officers Covenants	48
Investments	193
Donations	21
Total	820

NOTE 1.

	£K
Adventure Training	30
Assistance to Units	1
Grants	3
Recruiting	35
HQ Officers' Mess	16
HQ Sergeants' Mess	3

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THE Wire

and the Journal

October 1999



The Royal Corps of Signals

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The Royal Signals Magazine

October 1999 Vol. 53 No: 5

The Wire

(Incorporating the Journal of the Royal Signals Institution)

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Editor Lt Col (Retd) P. Valder
Assistant Editor Mrs J. A. Herring

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FRONT COVER
Comes courtesy of HQ 1 Signal Brigade and shows the **Colonel in Chief, HRH The Princess Royal** whilst on a visit to our troops in Kosovo. There are representatives of the Corps, from all the Units in Kosovo.

BACK COVER
The Gurkha Memorial at Darjeeling

ROYAL SIGNALS YACHT CLUB

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & DINNER
6.00 PM 5TH NOVEMBER 1999
CROWN HOTEL BLANDFORD
Contact:
Lt Col (Retd) Collins: 01202 843990

Authors alone are responsible for the content of their articles. The opinions expressed in the articles of this publication are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy and views, official or otherwise, of the Royal Signals or the Ministry of Defence. This publication should be treated with discretion by the recipient.

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PRESENTATION OF SOVIET GALLANTRY MEDAL TO THE ROYAL SIGNALS MUSEUM

On 25 June 1999, **Col Ken Smith** and **Maj Bob Rowland**, President and Chairman of the Peterborough Branch of the Royal Signals Association presented to the Museum on behalf of **Cpl Bob Rogers** the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Medal 'For Valour' which he received in 1944. The medal was received on behalf of the Museum by **Col Cliff Walters**, the Regimental Colonel.

Cpl Rogers enlisted in the Royal Artillery in April 1937, became a Gunner Signaller, and served with the British Expeditionary Forces in France and later in the Middle East for two years. He was then recruited into the Special Operations Executive, and after parachute training saw special service in Persia and Iraq in 1943. Towards the end of 1943 he took part in 'Operation Mulligatawny' which was an SOE operation in the Balkans to assist partisans by organising dropping zones and arranging the reception of arms behind enemy lines. During this operation many of his comrades, including his mission leader, were killed or captured and executed. In spite of very difficult conditions the mission continued to provide dropping zones and the reception of arms and ammunition for the partisans. These were used against the Germans and the Bulgarian police. Eventually, **Cpl Rogers** was wounded and was treated by a doctor provided by the partisans. In May 1944, when they were operating west of Sofia, he became ill with a serious infection. After being unconscious for two days he was informed there were two messages for him from his HQ in Italy. One of these informed him of the award of the gallantry medal which was presented to him by a British Officer on his return to Italy some months later. The medal also carries a monthly pension of ten Roubles and entitles the holder to travel free on any tram in any Soviet city. Part of the citation reads:



Col Ken Smith and Maj Bob Rowland present the medal to Col Cliff Walters

'The medal 'For Valour' is awarded to Servicemen of any rank in the Workers'- Peasants' Red Army, the Red Navy and the Border Guard for personal courage and audacity in action against the enemies of the Soviet Union in a theatre of military operations, in defending the inviolability of the State Borders or engaging saboteurs, spies and other enemies of the Soviet State.'

Cpl Bob Rogers transferred to the Royal Signals later in 1944 and served in Albania, Italy and the Middle East until his release in 1946. He is a member of the Dunkirk Veterans Association, the SOE (Signals) Association and a Life Member of the Royal Signals Association and an active member of the Peterborough Branch. He is also a keen member of the Royal Signals Amateur Radio Society (Callsign GOCNL) He celebrated his 80th birthday in March of this year. The medal with citation, complete with English translation, will be on display in the Medals section of the Museum.



The 'Medal of Valour' with the citation and a recent picture of Bob Rogers

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MUSEUM OF THE BRITISH RESISTANCE ORGANISATION
Parham, Suffolk
(dedicated to the GHQ Auxiliary Units of WWII)
(390th BGMAM - Registered Charity No. 284146)

Dear Sir,

THE BRITISH RESISTANCE ORGANISATION
(The Wire, June 1999, p.276)

We have been fortunate to read the above article and understand it to have been written by one of our honorary members (WWII soldier in the Royal Corps of Signals), **Arthur Gabbitas**. **Arthur** dedicated retirement years at Rayleigh in Essex to discovering the story and collating details of the secret GHQ AUXILIARY UNITS - the creation of **Lt Gen Sir Colin McVean Gubbins** (later of SOE), about which his article gives such a comprehensive summary.

You may not be aware that **Arthur Gabbitas** died suddenly in the Spring. His research papers have been passed by his family to our Museum.

With the aid of similarly committed historians, this Museum has been created at Parham to gather all the exhibits we can obtain and become the focus of research about a fascinating aspect of British genius for irregular warfare. It would be appreciated if this could be brought to the attention of your readers, among whom there may well be survivors from Aux Unit (Signals) days of WWII, who could assist our research, give us the benefit of their experiences in this former world of secrecy and even, perhaps, help to trace the No 17 and TRD sets, which were their workhorses and which we propose to install in an 'OB' when Planning Permission is granted. Indeed, we are anxious to display all relevant documents, souvenirs, photographs or memorabilia and will assure donors their property will be attributed to them, and carefully preserved and protected with our many other exhibits and artefacts.

Yours sincerely.....

The White Helmets

OC RSMDT **Lt Col Jack Amberton**
Team Capt **Capt Gordon Newell**
Team Sgt **Sgt Don Brebner**

TEAM UPDATE - *by Capt G. P. Newell*

The main event to have taken place over the past few months was the Team's appearance at the 1999 Royal Tournament. The Team performed for over two weeks at the last ever Tournament at Earls Court in London over the period 20 July to 2 August 1999. The Tournament's producer, **Maj Michael Parker** had decided that he wanted the very best military participants involved in the event and the Team was pleased to be amongst the Armed Force's finest displays.

The Show was split into three distinct sections with the Team playing important parts in each. A complex opening parade was followed by the individual displays and was rounded off with a finale - which was more reminiscent of Last Night at the Proms than the Royal Tournament! The opening sequence involved the Team riding the '6 Bike Fan' into a packed arena; with the Household Cavalry, King's Troop RHA, Bands, the Queen's Colour Squadron RAF Regiment, Royal Marines and Naval Gun Teams and all the other contributors marching or riding through. Our subsequent appearance was only a 10-minute compression of our otherwise 30-minute display but it was very fast and furious. Following the King's Troop into the arena we made an (often subdued) crowd sit on the edge of their seats on every occasion. Showing off the very best of the rides and tricks, made more difficult by the narrow arena restrictions, the crowd was always taken by surprise. The Opening Ride with 16 Triumphs storming into the public eye and the subsequent fast cross-over rides combined with stunning displays of balance and precision never failed to find adulation. Our sequence ended each time with a salute to the visiting dignitaries. In the finale 12 members of the Team dressed up as 'figures from history' in large sponge rubber suits to be ridden around the arena as standing passengers to add a light-hearted element to an otherwise sobering closing farewell. The last night was a sad yet memorable occasion when our Colonel in Chief, **The Princess Royal**, took the final salute at the last Royal Tournament.

Several members of the Team had a chance to meet the Royalty who attended many of the shows. All were unanimous in their opinion that the White Helmets were the most thrilling and dangerous element of the show. 'You boys go hell for leather!' **HRH Prince Michael of Kent** told **Cpl Bob Sizeland. Her Majesty The Queen** summed things up when she told **Sig 'Fish' Fisher** '...I couldn't watch – you must do lots of training.' We were also very pleased to gain national TV and press coverage for the Corps, The Times writing of the '...death-defying cross-over rides of the Royal Signals White Helmets.' The BBC filmed the Team over the final three days, including **Jim Davidson** taking part in a light-hearted joke sequence. 10 million people watched its subsequent showing on prime-time TV.

Excluding rehearsals, the Team performed 24 displays (i.e. more than 50 Six-Bike Fans, twice daily in front of 18000 people. It is certainly sad to see the demise of the Tournament, especially following such a successful final run, but the Team can look forward positively to the future. Next year we go to Horseguards in London and take part in Royal Military Tattoo 2000. Although it would have been ideal to go into a quieter part of the season following the busy time at Earls Court this has certainly not been the case as we now find ourselves in the busiest part of the year. Lots of large County events will see the Team travelling all over the country until the end of September. The final few months of the year will see us busy recruiting new Team-members to fill the gaps left by those who are leaving following their tours.

The Selection Course will be based at Blandford from 6-21 November 1999. Any members of the Corps interested in the Team should contact Blandford Mil 2365 for information.

THE 1999 ROYAL TOURNAMENT (THE LAST RUN)
by LCpl J. Hooper

Three of us set off for Earls Court on Thursday 15 July to take the transporter and trailer in. That gave myself (**LCpl** 'Gypo' **Hooper**), **LCpl** 'Scotty' **Eccott**, and **LCpl Daz Hankin** a chance to get the Team equipment into Earls Court before the rush and hopefully sample a little bit of London nightlife. After some help from **Maj George Douglas** (the Arena Master) we rang **Capt Newell** and informed him that we had the truck in place and we were off out into town to complete the recce. **Capt Newell** laid down some ground rules! We eventually ended up at Leicester Square and sampled the fine ales and alehouses. **LCpl Daz Hankin** even attempted to sample the fine young ladies but perhaps they didn't want to sample him!

The bulk of the Team turned up the next day at the Royal Tournament Pass Office wondering what to expect, so we had a few questions like 'Where are we sleeping? Where's the nearest bar? How many birds are here?' and so on. It seems to me that some Team members had got their priorities wrong and I quickly gave their names to **Capt Newell**! The Team all managed to get through security okay before we went across to Earls Court 2. I directed **Sgt Don Brebner** to where our accommodation and office was. I think it was quite a shock for the lads when they walked into a single 'room' filled with 30 single beds. It was a case of who was the quickest in to either get into the corners of the room or the sides. Everyone was in the same boat – well, apart from the three of us that turned up first and made quite a comfortable boudoir! It was then time for the lads to make things better by up-turning beds, hanging up blankets and hessian with string, begging, borrowing and asking **Cpl Bob**

Sizeland to sort things out ('Brigadier' **Sizeland's** influence is understated - he can get hold of anything). We should have asked him to wangle a hotel for all of us !

Once everyone had settled in it was time to explore and have a look at where we would be riding. What a sight it would be with seats going from the floor at the front row to the roof which we were told would be full every night – 18000 people twice a day! I don't think anything can prepare you for the sight as you enter that arena and I think people who hadn't been there before got quite a shock. The next day we had our first rehearsal in the arena. Our first rehearsal on the Saturday didn't exactly go to plan. We were only given nine minutes for our own 'act' (from our usual performance of 30 minutes) so we had to try and put in as many spectacular tricks and rides as possible. In the half-hour rehearsal slot we had to learn to put each event in a lot quicker than normal. The Opening Ride went in and out with no problems. When the Double Jimmy went out **Sig** 'Scouse' **O'Leary** decided that the engine didn't need to be running to get around the arena and kicked out the engine safety cut-out lead - which sent the rider (**Cpl John Strachan**) and himself with a Triumph Tiger hurtling to the ground. To their credit, every single time after that they went around without any problems. The only other problem was that we were four minutes over time, but we knew we could shave time off as we became more used to the arena.

It wasn't long before **Maj Michael Parker**, the show's Producer, came and met the Team. He welcomed us and, informing us of his plans, said that he had asked the Team to the last ever Royal Tournament because we were the best motorcycle display team in the world and he wanted the best for this event! We would be involved in the opening parade, our own show and also at the finale. The opening parade seemed quite easy but, if you have ever had the chance to be involved in our most famous trick (the 6-Bike Fan) you will realize that erecting at least four of those a day (more than 59 in 17 days) is tiring. For the Opening, all the participants were put in the order of first appearance at the Royal Tournament. Our first appearance was in 1931 so that put us between the Royal Marines Commandos and the Royal Marines Band. The applause and whistling that we received just for doing a 6-Bike Fan was overwhelming every time and, although physically challenging for those involved, we were determined to prove we could continue to keep doing it, and doing it well.

Then came our part in the Finale, which wasn't as easy as just putting metal frames on the bikes to carry 12 people dressed in costumes. The mechanics, **LCpls Tonka Richardson, Fozzy Forster, Baz Fullerton** and **Ricky Ross**, had to bed-in and tailor them to fit each individual bike. As usual they did a stalwart job because we were then able to take our costumes, depicting characters through the ages, around the arena. There were 12 in all (including Wellington and Napoleon, the Czar of Russia, a Para, a Commando, and an Astronaut) who went around the arena during the finale waving and getting the crowd involved. Some of the costumes waved too much, especially **Sig** 'Tintin' **Owen** who literally waved his hand into the crowd!

Finally, after rehearsing all our parts, the producer was happy with us and the next thing was our first live performance out of 24. They all went really well, but some people have had their mishaps. **Sgt Don Brebner** decided one night he would try to beat the spotlight around the arena on the ladder headstand, and succeeded! Well-done **Don**, a new world-record for the shortest ever ladder headstand! **Cpl Charlie Chester** was brilliant with his car jumping over four cars which took the crowds breath away every time, but as soon as he tried riding a Triumph on the ground he kept falling off! **Cpl John Strachan** has had to order some new gloves for **Sgt Don Brebner** because as soon as he came off the car jump (in front of Royalty) all he could mention was the fact his gloves were too big! Needless to say, the Team really does believe it was his gloves that were at fault...! Not only were Team members involved in our show, but a few managed to get involved with other acts too. **Cpl Adam** 'Orange-hair' **Malin, LCpl** 'Scotty' **Eccott** and **Sig Matty Adams** managed to swap jobs in one finale by pulling the gun for the Devonport Gun Crew and likewise some of the Devonport crew dressed up in the costumes and came in on the back of our bikes in finales. **LCpl** 'Tonka' **Richardson** dressed up in Fleet Air Arm colours one morning and beat a few field gunners into swinging across the chasm - which apparently only a few people can do.

After 24 performances and 59 6-Bike Fans in 17 days, appearing in front of 350,000 people we feel that we will never do anything like this outside the Royal Tournament. After two weeks everyone was glad to be back home and have a few days off (did I say days off - I mean washing and ironing!). It was a pleasure and a privilege to be involved in such a prestigious event, especially the last one ever, and I'm sure it leaves a lot of lasting memories for everyone.

JOINING THE ROYAL SIGNALS WHITE HELMETS

by Capt G. P. Newell

It will soon be time to recruit new members into the Team - this year we will have over 16 vacancies to fill. Since taking over the role of Team Captain last year I have found that there are many misconceptions within the Corps about the White Helmets and what they do. I was told that riders didn't get promoted and that it was a bad career move for soldiers to spend time in the Team. Nothing could be further from the truth and I have found an environment full of talent from every trade group in the Corps. Since September 1998 I have seen five of my 26 Team members get promoted and watched others disappear on upgrading or other career courses. **Cpl Andy Butterfield**'s story is typical.

BEING A TELE TECH (SYS) IN THE WHITE HELMETS

by Cpl Andy Butterfield.

I joined the Army in 1989, and after doing my apprenticeship at Harrogate and finishing it off at Catterick, I was posted to 3 Div for four years; in which time we moved back from Germany and did a tour in Bosnia. From Bosnia I was posted to 608 Sig Tp at Ashchurch near Cheltenham. The two postings couldn't have been more different. At 3 Div I was a 1st Line Technician, carrying out 1st Line inspections, fixing Radio Relays, Centrals and processor equipment - it was an enjoyable job, for the first couple of years, but then boredom set in. 608 Sig Tp was totally different - here you carried out 1st Line inspections, then you had to rectify all the jobs you picked up, whether they were technical or not.

So why did I join the White Helmets? Firstly I thought that I couldn't join because I was a Technician, well that's what people kept telling me - but as you can see, it isn't true. The reason I joined was that I was bored doing the same old thing day in and day out. I thought it was time for a change, and if I hadn't changed jobs I would have left the Army. I was due to go on my T1 entrance test at the time, so it was a rather a big decision to make. Knowing the myth 'The White Helmets will ruin your career' wasn't true I decided to apply to go on the selection course. After passing the 2-week course I was posted to the Team for three years. That long out of your trade can put people off but Team members can complete 2-year tours if they are concerned. There's no reason to be put off - like most Team members, I've completed all my career courses during my tour.

This is my final year in the Team, and after passing my T1 entrance last year, I leave to start my T1 course next January. The White Helmets has been a good experience and, now I've achieved my ambition of being in the Team, I'm looking forward to getting back to my trade and furthering my career. I think I have gained a lot of useful experiences over the past few years and would say to anyone thinking of applying to join the White Helmets that it is the experience of a lifetime.

ROYAL MILITARY TATTOO 2000

THE ROYAL MILITARY TATTOO 2000

As the end of the year approaches, many people have been asking whether the Ministry of Defence is planning to celebrate the arrival of the next Millennium. The Secretary of State's recent announcement confirmed that there is to be one MOD flagship celebratory event to be held on Horse Guards Parade. The Royal Military Tattoo 2000 (RMT 2000), will comprise six performances of a totally unique spectacular from Monday 10 July - Saturday 15 July 2000, combining the most imaginative staging, state-of-the-art technology, pageantry, son et lumiére, lasers, fireworks and the largest video screen to be seen in Europe. RMT 2000 will recount 1,000 years of military history within the superb setting of Horse Guards Parade together with a glimpse into a crystal ball. The theme will be 'Defence of the Realm: Past, Present and Future'.

Her Majesty the Queen has graciously agreed to take the salute at one performance with other members of the Royal Family, the Prime Minister and the Chief of the Defence Staff being invited on other nights.

RMT 2000 will involve 1,200 men and women from all three Services, three quarters of whom will be musicians. It will be a fast moving non-stop, dramatic 90 minute show saluting the past, celebrating the present and looking into the future. Freefall Parachutists from the Royal Marines, Parachute Regiment and the RAF Falcons will land in the arena. The Red Arrows, Blue Eagles, the Royal Navy, Army and RAF will fly past at each performance and The King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery will perform their Musical Drive without the space constraints imposed by most arenas. This will be the first time that the full Musical Drive has been performed on Horse Guards Parade.

Accompanying music will be provided by Bands of Her Majesty's Royal Marines, the Household Division, the Queen's Division, the Prince of Wales's Division, the Brigade of Ghurkas and the Massed Bands of the Royal Air Force. They will be joined by the Massed Pipes and Drums of the Scottish Division, supported by an orchestra and choir, culminating in a grand finale which will premier a new Anthem especially composed for the occasion to celebrate the contribution of our Armed Forces to World Peace and Humanitarian Aid.

The RMT 2000 Box Office will open in November 1999 with ticket prices ranging from £20 to £50 per seat. Concessionary tickets will be available for the Preview Evening to Servicemen, their families, veterans and disadvantaged groups on Sunday 9 July 2000. The three principal Service Charities, King George's Fund for Sailors, the Army Benevolent Fund and the RAF Benevolent Fund, will be beneficiaries of this unique Millennium Event which, it is intended, will be commemorated by a 200 page souvenir programme. This will be a once-in-a-lifetime event which should not be missed.

Further information: Commander Robert Avis,
Telephone: 020 7218 7543 Fax: 020 7218 9517
E-mail: enquiries@RMT2000.f9.co.uk

MOVEMENTS

OFFICERS

AUGUST 1999

Name & Rank	*Unit to which posted*
Lt Col M. A. Little	SHAPE Staff (BAE)
Lt Col D. E. Rowlinson	HQ DCSA
Maj J. S. Adams	ACDS OR (Land)
Maj G. D. Anderson	32 Signal Regiment (Volunteers)
Maj R. S. Appleton	3 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt
Maj M. Baines	HQ CSSG (United Kingdom)
Maj A. R. Blackwell	ACDS OR (Land)
Maj A. J. Botterill	AD OR (C2I/IS)
Maj A. D. Burgin	16 Signal Regiment
Maj R. N. Clapp	BLO (USA)
Maj G. J. Complin	HQ LAND G6 CIS
Maj J. W. Cooper	30 Signal Regiment
Maj T. C. Cooper	31 (City of London) Sig Regt (V)
Maj D. A. Craft	HQ Scotland
Maj P. J. Daisey	36 Signal Regiment (Volunteers)
Maj M. A. Eaton	British Exchange Offrs (A) USA
Maj M. J. Fensom	HQ UKSC (G)
Maj N. W. Gill	British Exchange Offrs (A) USA
Maj N. J. Griffiths	259 Signal Squadron
Maj A. G. Hill	Dept Ag
Maj J. M. Hodges	14 Signal Regiment (EW)
Maj S. D. Hodges	7 Signal Regiment
Maj D. B. Hudson	249 Signal Squadron (AMF(L))
Maj H. A. Jenkins	DCIS (A)
Maj S. C. Johns	HQ 11 Signal Brigade
Maj D. J. Kinnaird	ACDS (OR) Land Systems
Maj R. W. Lapslie	Exch Officers Canada
Maj G. R. Leyland	40 Signal Regiment
Maj R. G. Mather	264 Sig Sqn (SAS)
Maj S. J. McConnell	Royal School of Signals
Maj C. J. McIntosh	1 (UK) Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt
Maj P. D. Peel	19 Mech Bde & Sig Sqn (209)
Maj K. M. Potts	39 Inf Bde & Sig Sqn (213)
Maj S. J. Purser	DIT MTC
Maj C. C. Richards	HQ DCSA
Maj D. G. Robson	Aus (Prog)
Maj A. G. Ross	HQ UKSC (G)
Maj M. G. Shaw	HQ TSC/HQ TSU
Maj J. R. Tod ..	15 Signal Regiment
Maj P. I. Turner	HQ LAND
Maj I. P. F. Vingoe	1 Mech Bde & Sig Sqn (215)
Maj D. J. Walker MBE	HQ FORCE TPS/ Rhine Garrison
Maj N. A. Walker	Royal School of Signals
Maj D. I. Whimpenny	Comd Sp DGD&D
Maj C. J. Whitehead	Royal School of Signals
Maj G. J. Wyman	34 Signal Regiment (Volunteers)
Maj D. Wright BEM	HQ DCSA
Maj R. C. Young	HQ 11 Signal Brigade
A/Maj D. C. Gaul	Comd Info Sys Sector - Malvern
A/Maj A. M. White	SANGCOM
Capt B. Alderson	DERA (CIS Sector) - Malvern
Capt I. M. Ballentyne	264 Signal Squadron (SAS)
Capt A. M. Churchill	Royal School of Signals
Capt A. P. J. Coulston	30 Signal Regiment
Capt T. N. Crapper	21 Signal Regiment (Air Support)
Capt R. J. G. Edwards	36 Signal Regiment (Volunteers)
Capt S. T. Gillespie	38 Signal Regiment (Volunteers)
Capt I. C. Gray	Royal School of Signals
Capt G. T. Greig	HQ DCSA
Capt T. Hall	Royal School of Signals
Capt J. P. Hazlewood	30 Signal Regiment
Capt J. A. Kennedy	CIS Engineering Group
Capt A. Knott	JCUNI
Capt A. J. Large	1 (UK) Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt
Capt R. J. Lovett	35 Signal Regiment (Volunteers)
Capt A. G. Lucas	40 Signal Regiment
Capt A. J. Mould	DGD&D
Capt A. J. E. J. Parsons	Royal School of Signals
Capt N. H. Range	Royal School of Signals
Capt A. S. Saddington	PM SP
Capt G. Shakespeare	14 Signal Regiment (EW)
Capt D. M. Sharkey	Royal School of Signals
Capt M. J. Smith	15 Signal Regiment
Capt R. G. Strawbridge	15 Signal Regiment
Capt J. E. Sutton	HQ PSCNORTH (BAE)
Capt A. E. Talbot	Comd Info Sys Sector - Malvern
Capt S. J. Whytock	HQ DCSA
Capt S. S. M. Youngson	Royal School of Signals
Lt A. C. Aylward	Royal School of Signals
Lt J. S. Balfour	225 Signal Squadron
Lt P. J. Brunton	Royal School of Signals
Lt A. K. T. Crapper	ATR Bassingbourn
Lt B. Y. Higgs	Royal School of Signals
Lt S. H. Hutchinson	1 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (215)
Lt G. C. Tyndale	2 Signal Regiment

SEPTEMBER 1999

Name and Rank	*Unit to which posted*
Lt Col N. P. Harrison MBE	38 Signal Regiment (Volunteers)
Lt Col P. Parfitt	SHAPE ACE COMMSEC
Maj W. E. H. Adsett	3 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt
Maj P. C. Baker	7 Sig Regt (Corps Main HQ)
Maj K. Bell	HQ ARRC
Maj A. G. Brand	31 (City of London) Sig Regt (V)
Maj M. C. Burke	RMCS Shrivenham
Maj A. D. E. Cameron	Royal School of Signals
Maj J. W. Clark	Combined Joint Planning Staff
Maj J. J. Cole	JSCSC
Maj N. H. Colville	HQ ARRC
Maj J. A. Compston	2 Signal Regiment
Maj C. D. Cook	RMCS Shrivenham
Maj R. C. T. Cuthbert	DAAVN
Maj P. J. Davies	RMCS Shrivenham
Maj C. A. Ford	JSCSC
Maj J. D. Forrest	21 Sig Regt & Sig Sqn (220)
Maj N. D. Fraser	JSCSC
Maj F. J. Freeley	JSCSC
Maj M. G. Hanson	RMCS Shrivenham
Maj R. J. Healey	JSCSC
Maj A. Hickling MBE	HQ London District
Maj K. Mannings	RMCS Shrivenham
Maj S. J. May	2 Signal Regiment
Maj R. G. Nicholson	Royal School of Signals
Maj C. S. K. Paterson	JSCSC
Maj C. E. Rankin	HQ ARRC
Maj W. Ritchie	Bowman Military Team
Maj F. C. Running	ACDS (OR) LAND Sys
Maj P. A. Smith	JSCSC
Maj R. G. C. Sparshatt	HQ 11 Signal Brigade
Maj S. J. P. Spiers	RMCS Shrivenham
Maj J. S. Stuart	RMCS Shrivenham
Maj D. A. Sunderland	RMCS Shrivenham
Maj S. J. Turnbull	R Signals/Intelligence Division
Maj S. J. Vickery	JSCSC
Maj M. S. Wallis	HQ DAAVN
Maj F. E. R. Wichelo	JSCSC
Capt P. R. Abbott	39 Signal Regiment (Volunteers)
Capt G. E. Bennett	24 Airmob Bde & Sig Sqn (210)
Capt M. J. Crawford	21 Signal Regiment (Air Support)
Capt M. C. Cornell	G6 HQ LAND
Capt D. A. Cooper	Royal School of Signals
Capt P. J. Griffiths	HS Royal School of Signals
Capt G. C. Hailstone	9 Signal Regiment (Radio)
Capt A. L. Hayden	Joint Staff Div J6 HQ BF Cyprus
Capt G. Johnson	16 Signal Regiment
Capt C. M. Moye	JSSU Ayios Nikolayos
Capt S. Roden	16 Signal Regiment
Capt P. R. Smith	DITMTC
Capt R. J. B. Spencer	Royal School of Signals
Capt E. R. Warren	280 Signal Squadron

WOs & SNCOs

AUGUST 1999

Rank and Name	*Unit to which posted*
WO1 FofS P. S. Hodson	40 Signal Regiment (V)
WO2 FofS R. J. Wymer	600 Signal Troop
SSgt FofS P. S. Johnson	ARMY CIS Eng Gp
SSgt FofS J. W. Chambers	242 Signal Squadron
SSgt FofS O. D. Leyland	2 Signal Regiment
SSgt P. B. W. Hogg	1 (UK) Div & Signal Regiment
SSgt G. A. Martin	The Royal School of Signals
SSgt K. Tierney	HQ NI & 15 Signal Regiment
SSgt J. C. Duncan	259 Signal Squadron
SSgt G. Steel	JSSU (Ayios Nikolaos)
SSgt A. B. Lothian	1 (UK) Div & Signal Regiment
SSgt S. Swithenbank	2 Signal Regiment
SSgt I. R. Burton	8 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (218)
A/SSgt A. Lloyd	35 Signal Regiment (V)
A/SSgt N. P. Sorley	14 Signal Regimen (EW)
A/SSgt R. K. Owen	251 Signal Squadron
A/SSgt D. P. Wilson	21 Signal Regiment (AS)
A/SSgt A. J. Cannadine	238 Signal Squadron
Sgt R. Carter	2 Signal Regiment
Sgt D. A. Welch	14 Signal Regiment (EW)
Sgt R. C. W. Thomas	HQ ARRC

Sgt S. P. Hulse	2 Signal Regiment
Sgt K. A. Cooney	JSSU (Ayios Nikolaos)
Sgt R. S. Webb	251 Signal Squadron
Sgt M. A. Trotter	31 Signal Regiment (V)
Sgt M. K. Ind	JSSU (Ayios Nikolaos)
Sgt E. A. Jones	JSSU (Ayios Nikolaos)
Sgt G. P. Kerr-Morgan	14 Signal Regiment (EW)
Sgt S. S. Sanderson	251 Signal Squadron
Sgt C. Pullen	38 Signal Regiment (V)
Sgt G. H. Brown	20 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (200)
Sgt M. A. Jones	39 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (213)
Sgt A. A. Ramsay	16 Signal Regiment
A/Sgt A. S. MacDonald	JCUF1

SEPTEMBER 1999

Name and Rank	*Unit to which posted*
WO2 FofS P. J. Hubble	JCUF1
WO2 FofS G. A. Lewendon	HQ 1 Signal Brigade
WO2 FofS R. E. Paterson	1 Mech Bde & Sig Sqn (215)
WO2 FofS A. J. Maul	SANGCOM
SSgt FofS J. O'Donnell	HQ NI & Signal Regiment
SSgt FofS S. L. Hutchinson	39 Signal Regiment (V)
SSgt C. D. Wrath	30 Signal Regiment
SSgt D. A. Giles	21 Signal Regiment
SSgt P. J. Hatton	16 Air Assault Brigade
SSgt S. Couzins	38 Signal Regiment (V)
SSgt K. E. Langton	The Royal School of Signals
A/SSgt P. J. Langley	33 Signal Regiment (V)
Sgt D. Uttley	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt P. A. Stidwell	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt G. J. Topps	7 Signal Regiment
Sgt P. Greenwood	24 Airmob Bde/Sig Sqn (210)
Sgt J. W. Pritchard	7 Armd Bde HQ Sig Sqn (207)
Sgt P. D. Davies	SSSU
Sgt P. H. Shawcross	1 Mech Bde & Sig Sqn (210)
Sgt G. M. Cassidy	40 Signal Regiment (V)
Sgt I. B. Pearson	19 Mech Bde & Sig Sqn (209)
Sgt T. J. Ward	39 Signal Regiment (V)
Sgt M. P. Richardson	3 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt
Sgt K. J. Eaves	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt M. Frangleton	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt R. G. James	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt M. S. Knowles	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt A. J. Miller	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt N. J. Mitchell	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt L. J. Morrison	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt B. Palmer	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt B. D. Pradhan	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt S. G. Prendereast	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt J. G. Setchfield	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt P. R. Stevens	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt J. D. Harvey	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt J. P. Walsh	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt S. C. Wesseldine	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt R. D. Alien	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt D. R. Crowther	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt D. K. Fielding	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt L. R. Coffill	The Royal School of Signals
Sgt R. M. Avery	259 Signal Squadron
Sgt P. R. Howlett	4 CTT
A/Sgt I. D. C. Strachan	7 CTT
A/Sgt S. R. Sale	ATR Bassingbourn
A/Sgt C. Purdon	14 Signal Regiment (EW)
A/Sgt R. Dray	30 Signal Regiment
A/Sgt T. Rigby	JSSU (Ayios Nikolaos)

The Royal Signals White Helmets

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NEWS FROM HEADQUARTERS

HEADQUARTERS ROYAL SIGNALS

ACHIEVES RECOGNITION AS INVESTORS IN PEOPLE (IIP)

At a short ceremony in Blandford **Mr Gordon Page**, the Chairman of Dorset Training and Enterprise Council, formally awarded the prestigious Investors In People plaque to the SOinC (A), **Brig C. J. Burton OBE ADC**. The award recognises that the Headquarters, which includes Regimental Headquarters Royal Signals, the Royal Signals Motor Cycle Display Team and The Royal Signals Band, has achieved the national standard in taking care of the training and development needs of its staff. The photo shows **Mr Page** presenting the plaque to the SOinC (A) with Mr Alan Knott, the IIP Project Manager, in attendance.



2 (NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS) SIGNAL BRIGADE AND COTSWOLD GARRISON

Comd **Brig S. G. Hughes CBE**

VISIT TO THE HEADQUARTERS BY THE DEPUTY COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF LAND FORCES, LT GEN SIR JOHN DEVERELL KCB OBE

On 2 July this year, the DCinC LAND, **Lt Gen Sir John Deverell KCB OBE** visited HQ 2 (NC) Sig Bde here in Corsham. **Lt Gen Deverell** is also Inspector General of the TA (IGTA). Upon arrival at Basil Hill Barracks (now known as the Basil Hill Site of the Joint Services Corsham complex), **Lt Gen Deverell** was met by Comd 2 (NC) Sig Bde, **Brig Gordon Hughes CBE, COS Maj Paul Kelly** and by the GSM, **WO1 (GSM) Charlie Dubique.** The GSM then led the VIP party into the Portway House WO's and SNCO's Mess, where the DCinC presented Long Service & Good Conduct Medals to four well deserving recipients from the Brigade, namely: **WO2 (YofS) James,** the YofS (ND) at HQ 2 (NC) Sig Bde, **SSgt Burdge** of 243 Sig Sqn, **SSgt (FofS) Dawson** of 39 Sig Regt (V) and **Cpl Sangster** also of 243 Sig Sqn. In attendance at the ceremony were **Mrs Sangster, Mrs James** and the James' three young daughters, the recently appointed D Comd, **Col Chris Laurence TD,** the recently appointed Con ACISG **Lt Col Geoff Cary** and CO 39 Sig Regt (V), **Lt Col John Crackett TD.**

At the Bde HQ itself, the DCinC was introduced to various key personalities from about the Brigade, including the Regt COs, the SO1



Back Row (L-R): WO2 (YofS) James, SSgt (FofS) Dawson, SSgt Burge, Cpl Sangster
Front Row (L-R): Mrs James and the children, Brig Hughes, Lt Gen Deverell, Mrs Sangster

Comms, **Lt Col Roger Davenport TD** and OC 2 Sig Sqn (V). Also in attendance was the Head of the Electronic Mail Service (EMS) in Corsham, **Lt Col Peter Grogan.** There followed a series of briefings and a tour of the CISCC, before the DCinC was escorted back outdoors to view a number of equipment displays, including LANWARD and NCRS detachments from 31 and 39 Sig Regts (V) respectively. OC 243 Sig Sqn **Maj Andy Walker** and his team of technicians were also on hand to give a demonstration of the ACISG Signals Works Services (SWS) capabilities.



(L-R): WO2 (YofS) Tyler, WO2 (YofS) Whiting, Lt Gen Deverell, WO2 (FofS) Wymer

The DCinC departed Corsham after lunch, having received a detailed insight into the organisation, the role and the capabilities of the Brigade. He also had the pleasure of meeting many members of the Brigade in the process. The Brigade was greatly honoured by his visit to the HQ and should benefit considerably from his enhanced understanding of what it is that we do, what else we are capable of doing and just how well we can do it. Indeed, the visit was a great success in spite of efforts by a certain Foreman of Signals from 3 1 Sig Regt (V) to jeopardise proceedings by puncturing a gas main only a few yards away from a communal smoking area. The said culprit - who's identity the author is at pains not to reveal - has henceforth been known to his friends here as 'Butane Bob'...



'Can anyone else smell gas?'
(L-R): Col Laurence, Maj Kelly (hidden), Lt Col Cory, Brig Hughes, YofS Whiting, Lt Gen Deverell

VISIT TO THE HEADQUARTERS BY THE SIGNAL OFFICER IN CHIEF (ARMY), BRIGADIER CEDRIC BURTON OBE ADC

On 30 July, the HQ played host to another VIP visitor, the recently appointed SOinC (A), **Brig Cedric Burton OBE ADC. Brig Burton** had the pleasure of meeting a great number of the HQ Staff before receiving a series of presentations aimed at enhancing his awareness of recent developments within the Brigade and of the future challenges which the Brigade now faces.

A WISE INVESTMENT - PEOPLE FIRST!

Those who have not served with **Brig Gordon Hughes** may not have heard of the Commander's Pillars. They are the foundation principles which ensure the future success of 2 (NC) Sig Bde, namely: Recruiting, Retention, Training and Equipment. While these foundation stones underpin the Brigade's activities, our people are very much the Comd's top priority. He is keen to promote an ethos of teamwork, team spirit and equal opportunity. This requires good, strong leadership based upon values of decency, proper behaviour and fair treatment for all. People are at the heart of 2 (NC) Sig Bde and the Comd is committed to investing in the training and development of his Regular and TA officers, soldiers and civilian staff. Indeed, he aims to create a working environment in which continuous improvement, professionalism and high performance are constant goals.

Investors in People (IIP) is the National Standard which sets a level of good practice in people-management and aims to improve organisational performance in so doing. In recognition of the soundness of our own practices and procedures, of the quality of our training and professional career development programmes, of the effectiveness of our command and management styles and of our total commitment to looking after our people, 2 (NC) Sig Bde has been awarded IIP accreditation. This is excellent news for the Brigade and a huge 'well done' is said to all those involved in the accreditation process - in particular, **Lt Col (Retd) Tony Hill,** who dynamically and successfully led the Brigade through the whole process.

FAREWELLS AND GREETINGS

The HQ recently bade sad farewells to D Comd **Col Stephen Foakes TD,** Con ACISG **Lt Col Malcolm Sinton,** CIVM-AN **Mrs Deborah Bradley,** the PS to the Comd, **Mrs Myra Higgins** and to **Mr Les James** of the Registry. In turn, the warmest of greetings were extended to those who stepped valiantly into the various breaches so created, namely **Col Chris Laurence TD BVSc MRCVS, Lt Col Geoff Cary, Miss Karen Blamey, Mrs Barbara Parry** and **Mrs Sandra Hayes.**

LOOKING UP AND DRIVING ON TO THE MILLENNIUM

Planning is almost complete for Ex Autumn Belle 1, a Brigade FTX to be held over the weekend of 15-17 October 1999 in preparation for the deployment of the Brigade over the Millennium. CinC LAND's intent is for HQ LAND, all Dist, Div and Bde HQs on the UK, mainland and other specified LAND organisations and units to be provided with access to a networked system of assured communications over the Millennium period - a contingency measure in case existing LAND Forces communication systems should fail as a result of the Y2K date change. Under the provision of MoD Op Surety - the name given to all such measures which will both guarantee the continuity of extant operations at that time and ensure that the UK can mount additional operations - 2 (NC) Sig Bde has been given the vital task of deploying NCRS, LANWARD, CLANSMAN and MOULD outstation assets in order to achieve the CinC's aim. Ex Autumn Belle 1 is essentially a full dress rehearsal for the Y2K deployment and will see the Bde deploying its key communications assets to some 22 locations up and down the country, from Perth in the North to Marchwood in the South. For further information on Ex Autumn Belle 1, please contact the SO3 G2/G3 (Ops) at HQ 2 (NC) Sig Bde, **Capt John Russell,** on (9) 4382 4343.

ACISG

Lt Col Malcolm Sinton departed on 28 May for pastures new in Civvy Street, we wish him and his family all the very best for the future. It is the new 'brush' of **Lt Col Geoff Cary** presently 'sweeping clean' in HQ ACISG (not to mention further afield!). **Lt Col Cary** joins ACISG from as far afield as HQ DCSA (next door!), we wish him a successful and enjoyable tour. HQ ACISG has been restructured in line with our evolving role and new tasks have been identified. 81 Sig Sqn (V) join us on 1 September 1999 on transfer from 21 Sig Regt (AS) as part of post-SDR restructuring. Their current role and skills fit well with that of the existing ACISG Sqns. **Capt John Harris**, PSAO 81 Sig Sqn (V) has finally been convinced that moving to Corsham really isn't such a bad idea!

A team from HQ ACISG departed for Germany to conduct a Y2K upgrade on 27 July 1999. IC Party, **Sgt Pete 'Oz' Borley** RA SIGNALS, unfortunately lacked the sufficient local knowledge to know that AO (IT) **Mark Pegler** got 'geographically embarrassed' on the way to Herford until it was too late.

Alison James, our MCTG 1 gave birth to **Katy** on 12 May 1999. Both mother and baby are doing fine. Proud dad **David**, our HPTO COMMCEN as well as being **Alison's** husband has as yet, not been seen without a cheesy grin.

HQ ACISG has recently gained Associate Installer status from Krone. This is in recognition of the training carried out by Cable System Group, Royal School of Signals, for personnel from the ACISG Sig Sqns. The benefits of this are:

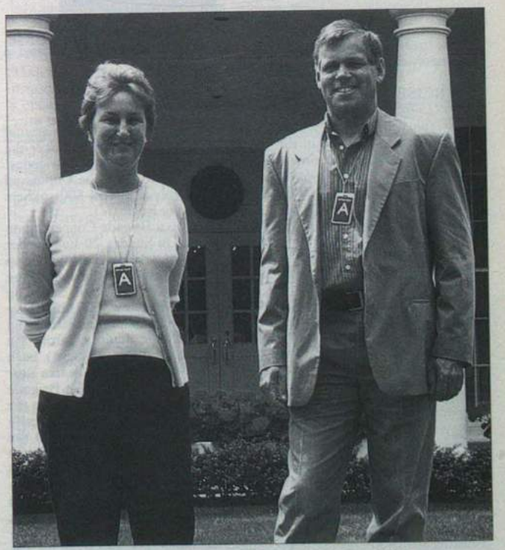
1. ACISG Sig Sqn personnel who have completed this training will be certified CAT 5 installers.
2. HQ ACISG can offer a 20 year product and system guarantee on all installations undertaken by them.

NOTES FROM BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS



Brig Claude Fairweather and his wife Alice with their favourite mascot 'Jimmy'

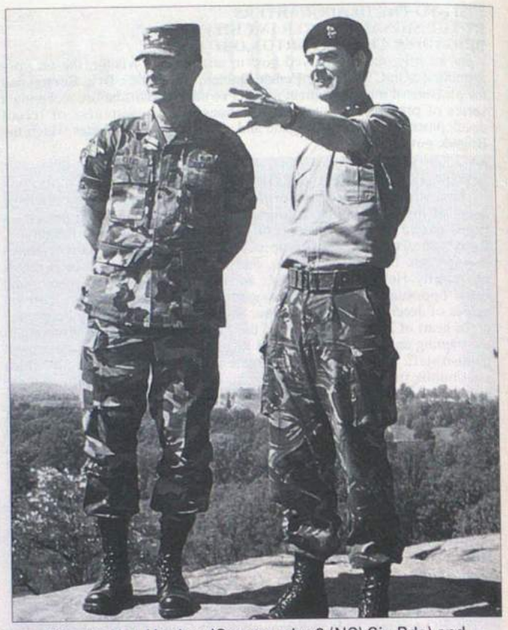
Brig Claude commanded 2 Sig Regt (1941-43). They now live in Broomcroft House, Eecleasall Road South, Sheffield S11 9PY. **Claude** and **Alice** send best wishes to all their friends in the Royal Signals, and would love to hear from any of their Corps comrades.



Lt Col Linda Harrison (CO 31 Sig Regt (V)), with Maj Brian Howe (OC 56 Sig Sqn (V)), in the Rose Garden, outside the White House in Washington
(Lt Col Harrison plans to run for the Presidency next year, with Maj Howe as her running mate. He has hopes for nomination as the Vice-President)



Lt Col Linda Harrison practising to become the US President to be selected from 2 (NC) Sig Bde.
(She is taking the next tough question from Senator Clinton. Both Senators Hughes and Howe are still hoping to run for Vice-President!)



Brig Gordon Hughes (Commander 2 (NC) Sig Bde) and Col David Titus (Comd 1108 US Sig Bde) discuss ground and tactics on the battlefield at Gettysburg as they cement the 'special relationship' between their Brigades

XI HEADQUARTERS 11 SIGNAL BRIGADE

The period has been dominated by Ex Able Condor and a disproportionate number of farewells

EXERCISE ABLE CONDOR 1999 (UK)

by WO1 (YofS) Graham Pardew

Ex Able Condor 1999 (UK) was Commander 11 Sig Bde's annual FTX, which took place in the Grantham and Yorkshire areas over the period 20–25 June. The aim of the Exercise was to practise the Brigades' deployment of CIS in support of the JRRF, ARRC and the Command Posts of subordinate formations. Overall it involved almost 800 soldiers (TA) and 400 vehicles from 33, 34, 35 and 40 Sig Regts (V).

The Brigade deployed on Saturday 19 June to a Brigade Concentration Area at RAF Barkston Heath, near Grantham. On Sunday 20 June, under the direction of 33 Sig Regt (V), the deployment developed into work-up training (NBC and weapon handling), technical preparations and a Plug Up. Meanwhile back at EXCON in Deverell Barracks, Ripon, SO2 Log Sp **Maj Phil Daisey, WO1 (YofS) Graham Pardew, RQMS Steve Sadler** and **SSgt Baz Roberts,** were finalising the administration and communications build. That evening the Brigade deployed from the Concentration Area, North over two Main Supply Routes (MSR), each crossing the Humber via different Bridges to a refurbishment area near Driffield. Under the direction of 34 Sig Regt (V), all of the Brigade successfully replenished water, fuel and rations before deploying into the first field locations in the Yorkshire area. Some of the Units had already undertaken their own unit-level training for one week prior to the Exercise, this added to the intensity of the first 48 hour period, which was spent conducting work-up training and communications tests. This period provided a real challenge for the TA and Regular soldiers alike. All the units had to do now, was establish a robust Integrated Ptarmigan and Euromux Network, linking nine Trunk Nodes, five Euromux Access Nodes (EANs), nine Secondary Access Nodes (SANs) and ten Single Channel Radio Access (SCRA) Centrals, no mean feat! The Exercise was very high profile. Apart from the many Unit invited visitors, their Mayors, Honorary Colonels, local Newspaper reporters, we had visitors from Industry and Media Ops. Additionally, the CinC, **Gen Sir M. Walker,** GOC 2, **Maj Gen R. D. S. Gordon,** GOC 5 Div, **Maj Gen R. V. Searby, The Master Of Signals** and ACOS G6 LAND, **Brig J. M. Shaw** also took time out of their busy schedules to visit the Exercise.



GOC 5 Div to SO1 Comms (V) Lt Col Steve Potter
'I'm not being briefed by your Chief of Staff again am I?'



The Master and Commander respond in military fashion to the cry of 'Cheese'

The Commander was keen to ensure that the Soldiers gained the most from this culmination of the years training. Therefore, **Capt Richard Carter** was 'borrowed' from 30 Sig Regt. He, with elements of the West Midland Training Team and an enemy section also from 30 Sig Regt, added the military skills training to the scenario. During the week they carried out low-level training (first aid scenarios, peace-demos and NBC to name a few), building up to Operations In a Built Up Area (OBUA). Extra realism was added by the numerous over-flights, courtesy of **Flt Lt Farid Khan**, our SO3 Ops/CIS, and intense enemy activity with armoured support from 19 Mech Bde HQ and Sig Sqn, centred on the Catterick Training Area.

The Exercise provided the Brigade Headquarters Staff and Units with an ideal opportunity to carry out realistic military and communications training. Lessons learned from the deployment can now be used to enable the Brigade to update Standing Operating Procedures, at a time when some 40% of the Corps are deployed on Operations and where the chance of TA and Reservists being called up for mobilisation is ever-more likely. The Exercise was definitely a success, but we have to ask ourselves, was this down to the excellent 'Portaloo Plot' produced by **Maj Phil Daisey** and Visitors Plan being supervised by **Maj** 'I want my own mobile phone on the next deployment!' **Peter Williams**. Well done to all involved from the Brigade Headquarters, outside Agencies and units. We look forward to the Millennium and to Ex Able Condor (Germany) working alongside our partners 1 Sig Bde.

MEANWHILE BACK AT THE RANCH

Meanwhile back in barracks a holding operation was in place. **Maj (Retd) Rollo Rumford** acting as sheriff sat in solitary in the West Wing watching over the half full car park and contemplating the panoramic views of the Donnington Ordnance Depot. **Capt Jim Sykes** was also alone in the Ops Room busy answering telephone calls, (well it was your idea to have all telephones plugged through to you) from those on exercise. **Jean Vince**, the Commander's PA, had at long last, time to catch up with her work but busiest of all was **Roberta Bragg** who was standing in for everybody else; doing mail, typing, filing, answering the telephone, looking after visitors and even checking trailer numbers. One has to ask when she is around, do we need anyone else? We, of the Rear party, have to note that the coffee room has never remained so clean and tidy and the Orderly room so neat, with the uniformed staff away.



SO2(V) G1 Maj Andrew Cornish,
at the Bird Table explaining the nuances of the Portaloo Plot to SSgt Baz
'We're the enemy - single sheet and a shovel'
Roberts and WO1 Dave
'Thank you but we use Service Stations' King REME

HAIL AND FAREWELL

During the period we have said farewell to a number of our officers. **Maj Phil Daisey** who has departed to be QM 36 Sig Regt. It is the measure of the man that as a parting gesture he volunteered to run the Concentration Area at next year's Ex Able Condor - just joking **Phil** We wish him and his wife **Gerry** all the best and hope he has time to get his handicap down to single figures! He replacement is **Maj Rab Young** to whom we offer our warmest welcome both to him and his wife **Kim**. We wish them an enjoyable and entertaining tour in Shropshire. Also leaving after a very short tour is the SO2 Ops **Maj Graham Addley** who leaves us for Staff College. **Graham** has been very busy in the short time he has been here, so has his wife **Claire** who recently gave birth to **Rebecca Catherine**! To our congratulations we offer our best wishes for the future and a longer tour next time.

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TRAINING

11 SIGNAL REGIMENT

EXERCISE TRAILWALKER 1999

Ex Trailwalker (UK) is a 100km, 4-man team charity run which takes place every year in the south of England. It is organised by the Queen's Gurkha Signals and the money raised from the event supports the Gurkha Welfare Trust directly.

On the gloriously sunny morning of Saturday 26 June, the Chairman of the Gurkha Welfare Trust, **Col Comdt Gen Sir Sam Cowan KCB, CBE,** opened the event with a short welcome speech. This year, amongst the 185 teams competing including teams from both the US and Australia, there was two teams for Gurkha trainees from 11 Sig Regt led by **Sgt Nirmal** and **Sgt Dharma**.

The winning team, Team 'A', completed the race in 11hrs and 35mins. The leading team, 258 Sig Sqn from 30 Sig Regt was 15mins ahead of us until check-point 10. No doubt it was the morale and backing we received from our Officers and SNCOs that gave us the spirit to secure first position. Our 'B' Team completed the race in 12hrs and 8mins achieving third position.

Indeed, all the credit for this goes to our support team. Without their excellent administration and morale boosting support, we would not have achieved what we did.

Jai Queen's Gurkha Signals.



Trailwalker winners 1999
Front Row (L-R): Sigs Amritman, Ramesh, Nirakal and Ratna
Back Row (L-R): Second Runner-Up Sig Pitamber, Sig Pikendra, Sgt Dharma (Team Manager), Lt Col T. W. Canham (CO 11 Sig Regt), Sgt Nirmal (Team Manager), Sigs Dipak and Bharat

1 SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj Jeff Drummond, Royal Canadian Signals**
SSM **WO2 Andy Harriot**

KOHIMA TROOP

Tp Comd **Capt G. K. Bowdler**

This has been an exceptionally busy time for the Troop, and has been the culmination of many projects simultaneously. The first big event was the Morrison Cup, for which the Troop was solely responsible for setting up. Fortunately the weather on the day of the set up was very good (unusual for June!) and despite having to wait for the tents, which arrived 11 hours late, the Troop worked brilliantly and got the job done in double quick time. Especially impressive due to the fact that for the majority, it was the first time they'd even seen a 9x9, let alone an 18x24!

No sooner than the Morrison Cup had been torn down and forgotten about when the preparations for the Royal Signals Association parade resumed at full pace. Soldiers from across the Regiment, who had already been practicing for several months, began to realise the fruits of their labour as the parade format finally began to come together. The day of the parade itself turned out to be a real scorcher, and despite the heat, everyone coped well. The old comrades thoroughly enjoyed their weekend, and praised the soldiers for their hard work.

The days of a rest room full of unemployed SATTs (Soldiers Awaiting Trade Training) are thankfully becoming a thing of the past. The number of opportunities available for the young men and women of Kohima Troop are greater than ever. Groups of soldiers have been detached to working units to help backfill gaps causes by the Kosovo troubles, including 14 Sig Regt, 21 Sig Regt, 3 (UK) Div Sig Regt and 2 Sig Regt. These attachments have proved of immense training value and in the maintenance of morale.

Finally, many thanks go to Troop Commanders Course 44, who showed particular style by presenting the Troop with a framed collage in thanks for the soldiers hard work and assistance during their course – good luck in the real world guys!

RHINO TROOP

Tp Comd **WO1 Pete Griffiths**

May saw the arrival of **SSgt** 'Working Weekend' **Lindsey Manktelow** from Kohima Tp who used her interior design quals immediately to 'TAZ' the office which really impressed the Troop Corporals. In July (after lots of training) we competed in the Inter Troop Volleyball competition which was well fought with strong players such as **Sigs Paul Daniel** who even after injuring his leg continued to play well. Thanks to **Gavin** 'I love myself' **Denham, Karl** 'How much sport can I play' **Scott, Daz Jones** and **Chris Turnbull** who only came to the Gym to do some weights and ended up making the team and last but not least **Sig Nat Whelan.** Unfortunately, 2 Sqn played two Gurkha teams and with it being their national sport we didn't really stand a chance. Thanks 2 (Gurkha) Volleyball Sqn**.** Congratulations go out to **Sigs Stratton** and **Jacques,** and to **Sigs Taylor** and **Kinzett** on their recent marriages**. Pte Tom Grady** and **Sig Lisa Wiles** for being chosen to represent the Army in Athletics, and **Sig Hutton** for being awarded Regimental colours for Swimming.

CHARITY PARACHUTE JUMP IN AID OF 'WHIZZ KIDZ'

On June 6 a total of 18 members of Blandford Garrison, Civilian and Military, took to the skies above Netheravon to raise money for the local charity Whizz Kidz. The weekend was organised by **Sgt Dom Graham**, and the aim was to try to raise enough money to buy a motorized electric wheelchair for a disabled child. The following personnel took the plunge: **Capt Bowdler, Sgt Davey, Sgt Graham, Mrs Nixon, Mrs Morrison, Mrs Chambers, Miss Innes, Miss Summers, Sigs Carlaw, Taylor, Hunspberger, Lambert, Johnson, Robinson, Pricket, Burrows, Holland** and **Manifield**. With the exception of **Sgt Graham**, who had jumped before, all the military personnel opted for the 3,500 feet static line jump, obviously preferring to take their lives into their own hands rather than trusting to others. Despite all the earlier bravado, all the lads taking part went curiously silent during the brief flight up to jump altitude, but all managed to overcome their fear and do the jump. Overall, the group managed to raise £2,500 for the charity, and proved themselves to be slightly braver than they had previously thought!



11 Sig Regt Parachute Jumpers
doing their impression of the British Bulldog

2 SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj L. V. Tomkins**
SSM **WO2 J. R. Thomas**

BEAUFIGHTER TROOP

Tp Comd **WO1 M. D. Elliot**

ARMY FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION - YOUTH CHALLENGE CUP

On Friday 16 July 1999, 18 members of the Regiment set off for the weekend to take part in the Army Football Association Youth Challenge Cup tournament at Arborfield. Travelling with them was manager **WO1 Mark Elliot** and coach **Cpl** 'Alfie' **Alford**. Coach **Sgt Dave Hukin** unfortunately could not attend though his efforts in the weeks leading up to the tournament were invaluable to the squad.

After a relaxing night in Aldershot transit accommodation it was up and off to Arborfield to book in and see which other teams were competing. There were five teams plus us and we were split into two leagues of three. One league comprised of Army Apprentices College Arborfield, Army Foundation College Harrogate and School of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering (SEME). We were in the other league with School of Electrical and Aeronautical Engineering (SEAE) and Depot Training Regiment RLC. After watching SEAE beat the RLC 3-0 we had a good idea of the challenge that lay ahead. Our first game was against SEAE and everyone knew it was a chance to strike early against the team that has won the cup for the past two years. 90 seconds into the game and we were 1-0 up. **Sig** 'Gilly' **Gilmour** thumped a screaming shot into the top right corner of the net to give us just the start we needed and settle the side. Another goal stolen by **Sig** 'Crazy Legs' **Hayes** before half time coupled with an injury sustained by their influential central defender meant the team went into the interval on a high. The game was rounded off in the second half by a strong run and good finish from **Sig** 'Scotty' **Scott** to complete a resounding 3-0 victory. The next game was against the RLC and again the team went into the interval leading. **Sig** 'Scotty' **Scott** scoring the all-important first goal. A penalty awarded early in the second half to the RLC was magnificently saved by **Sig** 'Hans' **Seager** only for the referee's assistant to judge that he had moved off his line just before the kick was taken. The re-taken penalty went in off the post to level the scores at 1-1. The game got a bit scrappy after that until once again **Sig** 'Scotty' **Scott** used his strength and pace to outstrip the RLC defence and seal a 2-1 win for the Regiment. Having won our league, we would be playing SEME on Sunday in the semi-final.

The game kicked off and straight away it could be seen that their tactics were to stop our two front men from playing by defending in depth. It was a tactic that worked well for them, assisted by the loss through injury of our central defender **Sig Steve Gee**. They scored soon after his departure and then soaked up a lot of pressure, throwing themselves in front of anything that went goalwards. Being 1-0 down at half time did not sit well with the team and coupled with a roasting from the coach everyone entered the second half determined to set the record straight. Once again things did not go to plan and SEME got a goal early in the second half to go 2-0 ahead. Despite endless pressure the team could only manage a consolation goal in the final minute from **Sig** 'Macum' **Mckinnell**. The obvious disappointment felt by the team was tempered by the fact that six players were selected to attend Army Youth Team trials in September, good luck to **Sigs** 'Mac' **Mckenzie**, 'Gilly' **Gilmour**, 'Gillie' **Gillard**, 'Clarkie' **Clarke,** 'Scotty' **Scott** and **Steve Gee**. Watch this space next year for the winning team's report.

HARROGATE CUP VOLLEYBALL COMPETITION

SSgt Gaz Cole, being all clued up on the sport (not), 'volunteered' to run the Regimental Harrogate Cup volleyball competition on behalf of 2 Sqn. Tuesday 6 July was the date chosen for the first round of matches to be contested between Rhino, Beaufighter and Lightning Tps. Beaufighter Tp ended up winning the league after some closely fought games. Lightning finished runners-up and secured their place in the semi-final.

Thursday 8 July saw the second league matches between Kohima, Iron and Ulster Tps. Kohima were first on against Ulster who were quick to settle in and won the first game 25-13. The second game was a lot closer and for a long time it looked like Kohima would level the scores. Alas, Ulster proved too strong and won with a late surge 25-22. Bolstered by their win, Ulster's spirits were high for their next match against Iron. This was short lived as Iron ran out easy winners by two games to nil, 25-9 each time. The final match of the evening saw Kohima take on Iron. Two well-contested games took place with Iron showing their superior skill winning 25-13 and 25-15. This left Iron top of the league with Ulster securing their place in the other semi-final.

The semi-finals took place on Tuesday 27 July. The first match on was between Beaufighter and Ulster. Beaufighter were straight into their rhythm and easily won the first game 25-10. A spirited fight-back in the second game saw Ulster narrowly defeated 25-17 by a technically gifted Beaufighter who were now into the final. The second semi-final was a much closer affair but once again Iron showed their will to win. Scores of 25-18 and 25-24 were enough to see Iron clinch the other final spot. This left Ulster and Lightning to play off for Third and Fourth places. The all-2 Sqn final opened with a stunning game which Iron narrowly edged 25-24. This sparked Beaufighter into action and they wrapped up the match by taking the next three games 25-19, 25-13 and 25-20. The Regimental 2IC, **Maj P. A. Brown** presented the prizes with special thanks to **SSgt Gaz Cole** for organising such a smoothly run competition, **Cpl** 'Compo' **Compton** and **SSgt (FofS) Tye Sanderson** for some excellent umpiring.

IRON TROOP

Tp Comd **WO1 K. A. Fisher MBE**

EXERCISE RIDGE IRON - *by Sig Greville*

Ex Ridge Iron was a two-day training Exercise held in Snowdonia nature reserve in order to enlighten thirteen young trainees from Iron Troop, 2 Sqn, on the finer points of mountaineering before Ex Lettersteig Grid-Iron later in the year. Those taking part from 2 Sqn were **Sigs Booth, Cullern, Fox, Gautres, Granville, Greville, Hunter, McGraw, Podester** and **Twizzle**. The Exercise was based at Capel Curig, where we were warmly welcomed by the local insects! Early Saturday morning we headed of to Pen-Y-Pass where we had a quick brew before heading up Crib-Goch for a spot of ridge walking. Many of the trainees soon discovered they could negotiate the ridge while keeping four points of contact with the rock much to the amusement of **SSgt Butler**. Now and again the cloud would clear just to remind us how exhilarating Wales is from 923 feet! On arrival at the summit we were amazed to find a bar. We gratefully quenched our thirst before making our descent via Y Hiwedd. After a quiet (!!!) night at the local night-spot, we tackled the north face of Tryfan which proved a slightly more vertical ascent than the previous day, much to the joy of **Sig Elizabeth Fox**. At times the route was challenging though the views from the summit were spectacular. Our original route would have taken us over Glyder Fach but due to inclement weather we were forced to abandon the rest of the expedition and retire to the nearest cafe before heading back to sunny Blandford. I would like to take this opportunity to thank **Maj McNeill** and **SSgt Butler** for this valuable experience.

3 SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj Andy Duncan**
SSM **WO2 Pete Tasker**

LIGHTNING TROOP

Tp Comd **WO1 Tony Sartorius**

It has been a pretty hectic time in Lightning Tp with a new batch of potential technicians arriving and a change in the cadre. Farewell to **WO1**

Bob Banner who will be starting a new life in 'civi street' and a welcome to **WO1 Tony Sartorius** and **SSgt** 'Chippy' **Chapman**. Congratulations to **Cpl Mick Delaney** and his wife **Debbie** on the birth of their son. Trade Training seems to have increased threefold, however, outside activities have continued and indeed flourished with the 11 Sig Regt female Lanyard Trophy team gaining first place, which included **Sig's Jackie Davies, Verity Gough** and **Liz Burley**. Early June saw another Squadron day out at the ranges introducing the soldiers to the LSW, First Aid and NBC. Luckily the rain managed to keep away the whole day. **SSgt Richie Plummer** once again excelled as a NBC instructor and coined the famous line, 'Hey, don't worry about it, you're gonna die sometime.'

EXERCISE GRID IRON 6-11 JUNE 1999 - *by Sig Stockdale*

Sunday 6 June - We all paraded outside the cookhouse at 0745hrs which was somewhat of a feat as Sundays and 0745 do not usually go together. After breakfast, we made our way from the South coast out of England and into Wales, eventually arriving in Capel Curig Training Camp. We settled in before going for our first briefing where we were informed of the dos and don'ts before being instructed in hill-craft as our first two days were to be spent in the mountains of Snowdonia.

Monday 7 June – Tuesday 8 June - Following an early rise and breakfast, we all paraded out on the road ready for our trek. The instructors checked we had fitted our bergans correctly and that we were carrying only the essential equipment. We drove a short distance into the mountains before de-bussing for the start of two hard but enjoyable days. We took a turn each in map reading throughout the day with our instructor, **Cpl Tony Brown** correcting and clarifying points. The first morning was a long hill slog up Helgi-Du, traversing the ridge, which scared **Sig Nik** 'I've just been hit by the vertigo cricket bat' **Hollis,** before ascending further up to Carnnedd Llwellyn, which is only 20 metres short of Snowdon. We stopped here for lunch before continuing along the ridge to Carnnedd Dafydd and Pen Yr Ole. At last we could see the intended campsite in the valley below. We descended tired and complete with blisters to pitch our tents and get a brew on. After tea we were instructed in security on steep ground which entails many methods of ensuring you are safe at all times on steep terrain. We were woken early by our instructor who ensured we were all up and getting some breakfast. We broke camp, packed and were away by 0800hrs for the long walk back off the mountains and back to the welcoming sight of the mini-bus. We arrived back at Capel Curig camp at 1400hrs and I thought that was it for the day, but was informed that all the kit had to be cleaned and put back in the store, the only thing on my mind was bed, but still it had to be done.

Wednesday 9 June - Today we went climbing on the side of a mountain called Tryfan. On arrival I thought 'You must be kidding, who do you think I am, Chris Bonnington?' After some expert tuition by **Cpl Dave Allen,** the whole group was either climbing or belaying and overcoming for some of us, our worst fears. The whole day was excellent and this is something that I would really like to try again.

Thursday 10 June - This was the day I had been dreading all week, canoeing. After being issued with the equipment, we drove up the road to the local café. Our instructor was trying to put our minds at ease by talking us through the day. He was asking us questions about previous canoeing experience; I had none and that was the way I wanted it to stay. Unfortunately, that wasn't to be the way. We arrived at Plas-y-Brenin lake and got a brief on the equipment and clothing that we would be using before going through a few warm up exercises. It was now time to get into the canoes (or kayaks as I now know them to be) and get on the water. We were taught some of the basic strokes and played a few games. **Sig Bob** 'Frilly' **Morley** looked like he had been doing it his whole life, and most of all I was starting to enjoy it. We stopped for our packed lunch (YumYum) and chatted about how it was going. After lunch we did Eskimo rolls which required you to go upside down and grab hold of your mate's boat to pull yourself back upright. This was scary but good fun watching everybody worry about it.

Friday 11 June - Day to go home. I am not sure if I am happy or sad to be leaving. I've had an excellent week but my body is starting to ache, Blandford and the weekend off are calling. I hope that it won't be too long before I get the opportunity to do this again. Many thanks to all the staff of Whitespear Tp for an excellent week.

11 SIGNAL REGIMENT VOLLEYBALL TEAM IN EINDHOVEN
by Cpl Compton

After getting both the men's and women's teams through to the Army finals, and resulting in the women's team becoming the current Army champions, the decision was made to find stronger opposition. We decided on the Eindhoven International Outdoor Competition, where we would play against and meet 3000 competitors from 14 European Countries. As I was the only member of the team to have previously attended the event, I was more than aware of the problems that would be encountered in organising a team to attend the competition. After a few mentions of long legged female volleyball players and lots of sunshine, **SSgt Bill Butler** volunteered to organise everything himself if I bought him a beer…DONE!!

We arrived in Eindhoven on Friday evening after opting for the scenic route around London. **Sig** 'GI Jane' **Hampton** got the blame for that one. Putting up the tents was amusing as **Sigs Natalie Whelan** and **Jo Gill** gave us a demonstration of jujitsu tent building. We then scoured the centre of Eindhoven trying to size up the opposition, only to find they had gone to bed at 2am.

Saturday morning started with a PA system welcoming us all to the University where the competition was being held. We all struggled into sports kit and made our way to the volleyball courts only to find out nobody could understand Dutch. The Team Captain, **Sgt** 'Tosh' **MacIntosh** soon had us organised and we found ourselves referees in the first game. This gave **Sig Emma Brown** an opportunity to score at an international event, which she managed very easily! We played three games on the first day, and scored two draws and a win, which left us feeling happy. The outstanding player was **Sig** 'The Jazz Man' **Jasprasadale** who really knocked the stuffing out of our opponents with some quality spiking. On Saturday evening the tournament organisers arranged a function in a massive marquee with a live band, food and refreshments. We used this event to foster relations with our European friends. **Sigs** 'GI Jane' **Hampton** and **Sophie Giles** didn't need much encouragement on the interacting side of life.

Sunday morning started in a similar way to Saturday, but the weather and the competition was hotting up. However, that was no problem for our 'Cool Kids on the Block', alias **Sigs** 'I'm a Linie' **Denham** and **Danny Daniel**. We played two more games, winning the first and losing the second due to exhaustion. Just to join in with the occasion we felt it necessary to try the other event taking place. This involved running from a pontoon on the local river along some loosely tied floating mats and taking a leap for a suspended bottle quickly followed by the inevitable Big Splash! Nobody succeeded in reaching the target, but we all had good fun trying and managed to amuse everybody watching. All that was left was to pack up and start the drive back. This gave us time to reflect on an outstanding weekend made up of good competitive sport, fine weather, good fun, enjoyable atmosphere, sound administration and some determined individuals, who made this the highlight of the year so far. I would like to pass my sincere gratitude to all those who made the effort to attend and everyone who assisted us in the preparation and to those who allowed us to take part in the event. The teams consisted of the following personnel:

SSgt Bill Butler	**Sig Natalie Whelan**
SSgt Lindsay Manktelow	**Sig** 'Jazz Man' **Jasprasadale**
Sgt 'Tosh' **MacIntosh**	**Sig Bishnulimbu**
Cpl 'Compo' **Compton**	**Sig Rizza**
Sig 'GI Jane' **Hampton**	**Sig Aitken**
Sig Emma Brown	**Sig** 'Linie' **Denham**
Sig Sophie Giles	**Sig Danny Daniel**
Sig Jo Gill	

A special mention must go to **SSgt Bill Butler** who did the entire organisation in his own time. Without his efforts it would not have been the success it was…. I don't think anybody will need convincing next year!

EXERCISE COCKNEY TRIANGLE - *by Sgt Gleadow*

Ex Cockney Triangle was a combined TA and Regular diving expedition to Bermuda where the aim of the Exercise was to do a survey on a sunken freighter that was carrying munitions. Our task was to map all ordinances that were lying on the seabed so that the Bermuda Defence Force could remove it at a later date. 11 Signal Regiments contribution to the expedition was in the form of qualified divers. The members of the regiment attending were **Maj Nick Walker, Maj Mark Thurlow**, and **Sgt Phil** 'Disco' **Davies**. **Sgt Shawn Seraphin** and **Sgt Chris Gleadow**.

We set of from Blandford to meet the rest of the party in London on the evening of 23 April. After an eventful journey and getting geographically misplaced in London we eventually arrived at the TA Centre to meet the rest of the expedition. After having our documentation checked we were introduced to the rest of the team and promptly wrapped ourselves around several beverages. The following morning we were up early to load all our equipment (thick heads included) onto the transport and set of for Heathrow airport. On arrival in Bermuda, we made our way to the Maritime Museum which is situated in an old fort, which we were to make our home for the next three weeks.



In the grounds of the National Maritime Museum Bermuda (L-R): Sgt Shawn Seraphin, Maj Mark Thurlow, Sgt Phil Davies, Sgt Chris Gleadow, Maj Nick Walker

The following morning we were introduced to Clifford the director of underwater studies and briefed as to what we were going to do and allocated jobs. We then all went for a shake down dive and to check our equipment to make sure everything was working properly. Those of us that were to drive the boats were subjected to a boat handling test as getting the boat out of the museums keep pool was at first no easy task. We then went and orientated ourselves in the local area and found the best place to amuse ourselves in our spare time, which turned out to be a small hostelry called the Frog and Onion which was also the main attraction for the passengers of the cruise ships that regularly called. After being trained in the intricacies of how to complete an under water survey we set off to map the wreckage. The journey out to the wreck took almost an hour, and with a large swell running by the time we reached the wreck several members of the party were not feeling too well. **Clifford** then briefed us on the dangers of working with munitions that had been under water for a long time and not to jolt or jar the shells that we would find. We then went to moor up, and to our horror **Clifford** then threw two huge anchors overboard into the middle of the wreck. Fortunately they didn't hit anything nasty, as we had been on site for half an hour and the people that had been unwell were now definitely seasick. The wreck was well broken up with large artillery shells and canisters that could have been depth charges all over the place, and mapping them was to take us two weeks diving.

When we were on our rest days we did a little sight seeing by hiring motor scooters. This was to prove to be a mistake for **Maj Mark Thurlow** as he contracted a severe case of gravel rash when assisted from his scooter by a passing car. A little more than his pride was hurt and he still has the scars to prove it. Also on our days off we carried out some charity work, this took the form of painting the outside of the seamans mission which took us four days and by the end of it we were local celebrities as we were filmed and interviewed by the local TV station. Unfortunately all good things have to end and it was time for us to depart. As our flight was due to leave early in the morning an early start was required, and it was decided that we would all get up at 0400 clean up and depart for the airport. How ever this did not quite go according to plan. One of the London TA members of the Expedition, **Otto Flack** managed to walk off one of the gun emplacements falling about twenty feet whilst taking the rubbish to the tip in the dark. When he was found the emergency services had to be called as he had broken his thigh and could not be moved. After he had been taken to hospital we were by this time late and had to rush to the airport at the other end of the Island. By phoning ahead we were able to have the flight held and boarded the plane with minutes to spare.

We have since found out that **Otto**'s injuries were more serious than we realised. He had in fact broken his thigh, shoulder several ribs, three vertebrae, and ruptured his spleen. I am happy to say that he is making a good recovery and we all wish him well.

THE PIPES AND DRUMS – RSA WEEKEND 1999

The Pipes and Drums arrived in Blandford during the early hours of Saturday morning after a very successful training week held at 14 Signal Regiment in Brawdy. Under the watchful eye and enthusiastic leadership of **WO2 D. Y. Smith** and **Pipe Maj John Taylor**, the band was 'raring to go'.

Bright and early on Saturday 26 June, **Pipe Maj Stout** had the lads and lassies on parade, eagerly waiting to get the weekend's events under way. There was the one minor hitch where the arena display rehearsal happened without the pipes being present (!), but unperturbed by this the Pipes and Drums show went on. With the assistance of all the good work carried out at Brawdy, **Pipe Maj Stout**'s task was relatively easy, and before long, the melodic sound of the bagpipe could be heard resounding from the back of Whitespear Tp. There were a few nerves from **Sigs Burrows** and **McPhee** from 11 Sig Regt who were about to embark on their first 'Big Job' with the Corps Pipes and Drums. The Pipes and Drums participation commenced with the presentation of a set of bagpipes, donated very kindly to the Corps by the Dorset Branch of the RSA. **LCpl Glen MacDonald** received them on behalf of the Pipes and Drums from **Maj P. Lafferty**, the Chairman of the Dorset Branch. It was then straight into the parade and the first tones of Great Highland Bagpipe could be heard floating over Blandford Camp. The remainder of the afternoon's performance passed without any hiccups and was viewed as a success by all. Even the Pipe Majors were satisfied.

Saturday evening was free time for all but one. **LCpl Macdonald** was called into action to play the new pipes in the Sergeants' Mess. The remainder of the band set off for the bright lights of Blandford as **LCpl MacDonald** piped the RSA members into the mess. A few drams later and the pipes could be heard resounding all over the Mess, very much appreciated by all. Sunday saw the Pipes and Drums performing once again as they participated in the RSA march past on Hawke Square. Although sporting the customary hangover, the Pipes and Drums performed to a high standard under **Pipe Maj Taylor**. A very successful weekend came to a close as the Pipes and Drums prepared to head off to Germany and Canada to entertain and fly the flag in other climes. Many thanks to all who participated in and so helped to make such a successful weekend.

THE ROYAL SCHOOL OF SIGNALS

RADEX TROOP
Tp Comd **SSgt Jon Heaton**

PROMOTIONS

Radex Tp have had a very successful season with the following people being selected for promotion: **Cpl** 'Tiny Taff' **Hamblin, Cpl Tim Vanandel, Cpl Tim Gamble, Cpl Pete Emsen, Cpl Nigel Brewin, LCpl Clay Austin, Sig Jackie Kidd, Sig** 'Blades' **Casey, Sig** 'Steve thanks but no thanks' **Jarrett** and **Sig Gaz Whetlor**. Yes, we know that amounts to about 25% of the Troop being promoted but who says being in a Training Unit isn't good for your career!



The successful candidates congregate for a photo Radex Tp bookmaker Sgt 'Chas' Fox pays out the dosh from the sweepstake to lucky punters Sgt Jim Harvey and SSgt Jon Heaton. The next sweepstake will be on how long Sig Gaz Whetlor keeps his tape for this time!

HELLOS, GOODBYES, BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES

Hellos - to **Cpl Ed Lockwood, Cpl Mark Passfield, Cpl Dan Hitchmough, LCpl Sophie Morris, LCpl Rich Eveliegh, Sig Gaz Whetlor, Sig Dave Burford** and **Sig Kev Johnson**. Welcome to the elite Radex Troop – Blandford will either make you or break you! Goodbyes - to **LCpl** (now civvy) **Phil Webster** to CTI Ltd, **Cpl** (now Sgt) **Tim Gamble** to 36 Sig Regt, **Cpl** (still Cpl) **Elliot** to the RSME at Minley and **Sig** (now LCpl) **Jackie Kidd** to 11 EOD. Births - Congratulations to **Rich** and **Lisa Woolley** on the birth of their second daughter **Georgina** and to **Dan** and **Shirley Hitchmough** on the birth of **Aaron**. Deaths - Deepest condolences to the family of the deceased weasel that has picked **Sgt Chas Fox's** top lip as it's final resting place! Marriages - Finally, belated congratulations to **Cpl Kim Leonard** and **LCpl Jase Kent** for tying the knot recently.

TROOP SUMMER CAMP

The last few months have been very hectic for the whole Troop and everyone was looking forward to **Timmy Vanandel**'s Summer Camp in Weymouth – however next year can we have something further afield than 25 miles down the road! Summer Camp was a gruelling torturous week, not only did we have to participate in several adventure training pursuits during the day but the training plan also included spending our evenings in Weymouth conducting 'local familiarisation training which involved fraternising with both the locals and the tourists! It was a hard week for all especially our new Tp Comd, **SSgt Jon Heaton** who really struggled to keep up with the pace of his SNCO colleagues, choosing to spend nights asleep on corridor floors (he said it was for medicinal reasons as he has a dodgy back – we think not!). Special thanks to **Tim Vanandel** for organising an excellent week.

CCF CENTRAL CAMP 1999

Once again the Troop selected it's finest and deployed the Signals Training Team to Penhale Camp in Newquay for three arduous weeks of Cadet Training. This year saw the team train over 1500 cadets from all over the country. As always the intrepid bunch of volunteers made the most of the local amenities. When not engaged in the serious task of training, **LCpl Martin Gillett** managed to sprain his ankle on the second fairway (the biggest improvement to his game for a long time); whilst **Sig Steph Brownless** was often mistaken as a cadet and could be seen most afternoons racing along the field with a 9x9 under her arm and ten cadets trailing in her wake. Finally this year saw the end of an era with the departure of **Tim Vanandel** who has handed over the reins to **Cpl Al Parker**.

RADEX TROOP GOLF OPEN

Cpl 'Any excuse for a day off' **Emsen** organised our annual event this year, which co-incidentally he won (strange that) ably supported by his other bandits **Cpl Ted Heath, Cpl Tim Vanandel** and **LCpl Mark Cozens**.

TROOP BBQ

In June we had our summer BBQ and of course being in Blandford the weather was good and the atmosphere great. Everyone was in high spirits and beers flowed freely. A big shout to the organiser **Cpl Rick Woolley**, the chefs (term used loosely) **Cpl Ganga** and **Cpl Al Parker** and the barman **Cpl Cal Hewitt**. There was plenty of entertainment with bouncy castles, baseball games and golf challenges, which of course were won by Command Training. An enjoyable afternoon was had by all.

TROOP SPORTING SUCCESS

The following have shown Regimental level prowess in the following sports **LCpl Jase Kent** (Athletics), **Cpl Ted Heath** (Sailing), **LCpl Mark Cozins** (Hockey), **SSgt Jon Heaton** (Du/Triathlons), **Cpl Andy Lane** and **Cpl Pete Emsen** (Golf). Lastly **LCpl Sophie Morris** who has represented the Regiment, Corps and Army at Athletics.

ROYAL SIGNALS LEADERSHIP COURSE

by Sgt Sid Barrass

It a common misconception throughout the Corps, that the Royal Signals Leadership Course no longer exists. If you were to ask any of the thirty four students who completed the courses run in February and June, they would tell you that the course is as strong as ever.

The new OC, **Capt Richard** 'Toddy' **Todd**, is keen to dispel any misinformation about the course. **SSgt** 'Chippy' **Pomfret, Sgt** 'Sid' **Barrass** and **Cpl Robbie Kirk** complete the four-man team currently based in Blandford.

The team, pictured, has just completed two Welbeck Courses. Each of ten days run in the summer months, giving the potential Officers of tomorrow the opportunity to put their abilities to the test and perhaps start them on the road to becoming better officers in whichever Corps they choose to join.

The Royal Signal Leadership Course is open to all Royal Signals personnel from the rank of Signaller, up to and including Sergeant. It is a very demanding four weeks, both physically and mentally. The course is designed to provide leadership training, in the broadest sense, for Senior NCOs and below. It is intended to develop the leadership ability of potential Yeoman and Foreman of Signals, and to provide Commanding Officers with assessments of soldiers' leadership qualities. Bids are now being accepted for February 2000.



Still up and running The Royal Signals Leadership Course Team (Comd Trg Gp RSS)
On location in Brecon, at the base of Pen-y-fan
(L-R): Cpl Rob Kirk, Capt 'Toddy' Todd, Sgt 'Sid' Barrass, SSgt 'Chippy' Pomfret

263 (HARROGATE) SIGNAL SQUADRON
ARMY APPRENTICES COLLEGE, ARBORFIELD

Sqn Comd **Maj Steven France**
SSM **WO2 Mick Senior**

The week the total eclipse of the sun was to take place was also the final week of term for the College. The solar eclipse notwithstanding, this of course meant the usual dashing around like the proverbial headless chickens time! The Quad Games, March and Shoot, final review boards, passing out parade rehearsals, Basic Leadership for the Junior term, more parade rehearsals, administrative preparations for the parade, the parade itself – nightmare! Nonetheless, the Squadron managed to pull through yet again with flying colours. Having won the Quad Games, an inter-sub unit sports competition, our two junior term Troops, Scott and Rawson Tps, came second and third respectively in the College March and Shoot Competition, in which Scott Tp was only just pipped at the post by one of the RE Tps.

This term the successful selection of four of our Corporals in the last Corporals to Sergeants promotion board was indeed a high point. Our heartiest congratulations go to **Cpls Colin Brotherston, Paul Millington, Muz Murray** and **Mick Yendell**, who all get their third on posting this year. Also this term, we said goodbye to the Apprentices of Intake 99A, who report to Blandford in September for their Phase 2 (trade) training. Our best wishes to them at RSS ('None of you better let us down!'). We also bid farewell to **Capt Darren Cooper** and **LSgt Glen Still** WG from Rawson Tp, **Cpl Paul Millington** from Scott Tp and **Cpl Jim Ayton** LI from Penney Tp. **Capt Cooper** leaves us to join the instructional staff of Radio Gp at Blandford (hopefully to put his degree in CIS to some use), whilst **LSgt Still** returns to his Battalion, 1WG in London. **Cpl Millington** meanwhile will have joined 1(UK) ADSR as a Sergeant by the time this edition of *The Wire* is out, and **Cpl Jim Ayton** rejoins his Battalion, 2LI in Bulford. In their places, we warmly welcome **Lt Colin** (AKA **George**) **Alexander** from 30 Sigs, **LSgt James** from 1WG, **Cpl Harmer** from 37 Sig Regt and **Cpl Wheeler** LI from 2LI. We hope they all have a successful tour with us. So much from SHQ; this article features news from Rawson Tp (Sqn 2IC's comment – 'for a change'.)

NEWS FROM RAWSON TROOP

Tp Comd **Capt DarrenCooper**
Tp Sgt **Sgt Tosh Hodgskins**

NETTLE WARRIOR – TOUGH GUY CHALLENGE

'No doubt this is the toughest five miles you will ever meet. Last year's winner's time was 01:51:20. Rated as the toughest small endurance course in Gt Britain, consisting of wild jungle, 6ft high bracken, nettles and brambles and all this followed by twice round the killing fields carrying a 10lb log and then pushing it through a freezing swamp with your nose, twice round the obstacle course consisting of 'A' frames, a high wire confidence course, pits of burning straw, freezing plunge pools, water crossings, a barbed wire crawl, 'Viet Cong' drainage tunnels, and a 12m swim under a swimming pool cover .... ANY VOLUNTEERS?

Thirty from Rawson Tp raised their hands and we were on our way to what has become one of Gt Britain's toughest endurance events. Time to prepare was short, so we began training straight away under the watchful eye of our SSM, **WO2 Mick Senior**, and Tp Sgt, **Sgt Tosh Hodgskins**. These involved long runs out to the bondu interspersed with swimming and rope training sessions and **AT** 'Tove' **Tovar** could often be heard grunting in the dead of night as he beasted himself to the limit! The number of volunteers dwindled until two days before the event was due to take place, when a video of the previous year's competition fell onto the doormat and, after being censored by the SSM, the team were shepherded into the cinema to see what was expected from them. Afterwards we were left with the 'hardcore' 20 (5 females and 15 males) who would attempt the tough guy challenge.

The day started well with the entire Troop boarding a bus to Wolverhampton dressed in Corps tracksuits (guaranteed not to make you stand out in a crowd!). **AT** 'Head full of slammin' doors' **Whitson** turned up in a rugby shirt with the sleeves, neck and hem cut off in an attempt to 'lessen wind resistance'. It turned out that the bus driver didn't have a clue where Wolverhampton was, let alone where the event was due to take place; so we rolled the dice and set off in the general direction of Best bitter, whippets and racing pigeons much to the delight of **ATs** 'Panface' **Taylor** and 'Happy' **Williams**.



AT 'Brick' Wall at the start

The atmosphere at the start line was electrifying with almost 500 competitors crowding the start line until the starting pistol was fired...500 screaming banshees shot over the top of an embankment shrouded in smoke and began fighting their way to the beginning of the pack in order to complete a 1.5 mile sprint to the start point of the slalom race – 200m downhill followed by 200m uphill, followed by 200m down hill - you get the picture? Onwards to Brambly Woods following a piece of string through brambles, bracken, nettles and pointy sticks, under fences, over gates and through hedges until the competitors emerged bruised and scratched to confront the assault course. The course consisted, amongst other things, a number of very high 'A' frames. It was on one of these that **AT** 'Brick' **Wall** tore two of her finger nails off and was forced to withdraw from the race. We then encountered what was known as 'the Murder Mile'. This involved negotiating pits of sludge which sucked your trainers off, barbed wire crawls and water obstacles. So far none of this was causing **AT** 'Scottie' **Scott** any problems as she launched herself ahead of the main pack leaving other members of the team in her wake.



AT 'Scottie' Scott negotiates the moat

We swam lakes, crawled through twisting tunnels, swam under a 12metre swimming pool cover and numerous submerged logs until we staggered to the finish only to be told that we had one more lap to go!

Straight after the event we all piled into the communal bath, to wash away the muck and mud before meeting up with **Cpl** (soon to be Sgt) **Mick Yendell**, who had hidden himself away under the pretence of 'doing some admin'. Special mention must be made to the following members of the Troop, who despite some really stiff competition achieved notable placings: Winner of the female 'LAST MAN STANDING' and Second fastest female overall-**AT** 'Scottie' **Scott**. Ninth fastest male time - **WO2 (SSM) Mick Senior,** Sixteenth fastest male time - **AT** 'Tips' **Tipper,** Seventeenth fastest male -**AT** 'Head full of slammin' doors' **Whitson.**



AT 'Japanese taxi driver' Reilly having a whale of a time



AT 'Woody' Wood in the swamp

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NEWS FROM THE BALKANS

226 SIGNAL SQUADRON GROUP

OPERATION AGRICOLA
Sqn Comd **Maj Rob Meinertzhagen**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Al Jenkins**

Since our last update, a lot of water has passed under the bridge; in fact the bridge has been washed away! A large part of the Squadron were dragged kicking and screaming on to planes under a programme of enforced repatriation to the UK, how sad they all were. **SSgt (SQMS) Glen Kitchen** was seen to have a tear in his eye as he waved them goodbye, he having selflessly volunteered to go in their place. But it wasn't long before the call of the drums could be heard and our recently departed comrades rushed back to join Her Majesty's Armed Forces in their hour of glory, pride beating in their hearts. Alas, our chariots of war had been tactically redeployed to the Mediterranean. But thanks to the efforts of **SSgt Al Grundy,** operating from a hastily established HQ in a small bar in Corsica, they were returned, just in time to miss crossing the border into Kosovo with the rest of the British Army. Ah well, you can't have everything.

Those that remained in theatre were kept busy with various recces, training, barbecues and cheese and wine parties. The Queens' Birthday Barbecue was a resounding success; thanks go to UKNIC for the invite. One of the recces seemed to follow a bad rewrite of the script from 'Where Eagles Dare', however, it did allow **LCpl Lyn Gray** to get her first flight in a Helicopter. TACSAT training under the YofS went well and there is no truth in the rumour that it was just an excuse to lie in the sun all day.

The Squadron is now well and truly established in wonderful Kosovo, which has all the appeal of Macedonia without the stone throwing. All Dets are deployed and yet again **Sgt Andy Davies** and his crew have managed to find the biggest hill around, what is it with those guys? **Sgt Jace Roberts,** having swapped dets (and not a moment too soon as **Cpl Mac McMullen** and **LCpl Pete Sykes** will testify) penetrated deep into enemy territory for a while. However, the locals were not happy with them in their area so they are now back with the British and co-located with a TN from 2 Sig Regt.



LCpl Lyn Gray in a scene from – 'Where Eagles Dare'



Sig Jamie Pateman struggles with TACSAT Training

Down at Ech, after fighting hard for some space, things are up and running, well walking at a reasonably quick pace. Although things have gone quite smoothly, I wouldn't ask **SSgt (SQMS) Glen Kitchen** for a 'smoke' or take **Sgt Mick Dullaghan** out for a drink. No wonder naphtha is in such short supply. Welcome to **Sig** 'Freddy Mercury' **Russell** and **Sig** 'Homer' **Daniel.** Goodbyes goto **Sgt Jez Ward, Cpl Adie Browne, LCpl Ritchie Kear** and **LCpl John Blowes.**

BEWC - HEADQUARTERS 4 ARMOURED BRIGADE

Down at Brigade the BEWC lives! **YofS Dick Rutherford, SSgt Mark Wilson, LCpl Lyn Gray, Sig Richie Cranswick** and **Sig Jamie Pateman,** gladly left the hardships of HQ KFOR to return to the field, well a car-park. Having been left behind twice, interviewed by Radio 4 and filmed in his boxer shorts by the worlds press, **YofS Dick Rutherford** and **LCpl Lyn Gray** finally managed to make their way over the border into Kosovo without an escort. Following one or two moves the Brigade finally set up in the middle of the only thing NATO did manage to bomb completely, mainly due to the fact it is hard to hide a VJ barracks in the woods.

SSgt Al Grundy returned after personally guarding our western flank, cheers **Al. Maj Rob** 'Call me MZ' **Meinertzhagen** and **WO2 (SSM) Al** 'Has anyone seen my…' **Jenkins** are now also members of this merry band, and after a quick meet and greet the OC soon remembered our names. Also joining us following a brief tour with the LEWT is **Lt Fraser Reid.** Our latest and hopefully finally location is that well renowned seat of learning, the University of Pristina. There is no running water but the cleaning staff has to be seen to be believed! The pace of life has now slowed considerably, the main point of interest being whether the YofS who looks like an extra from 'Viva Zapata' can get away without having a haircut or his moustache trimmed before R & R.

Hellos go to **Lt Fraser Reid** from the LEWT, **LCpl Davie Kerr** from a shortened R & R and **Cpl Jez Callander** who joins us ftom KFOR to cover R & R. Goodbyes go to **Capt** (yes its true) **Crapper** who returns to the UK, **SSgt** 'Nobby' **Clarke** who returns to the fold of his own Troop, **LCpl Lyn Gray** who returns to her own Det with a well deserved promotion and **Sig Jamie Pateman** who joins 'Bravo Two Zero' Det.

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214 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj D. W. Somerville**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Forshaw**

A turbulent period for all within the Squadron as we now find ourselves deployed into the various areas of Kosovo – Pristina, Mitrovica and Pec. After an extensive warned off period, the squadron have finally made it through Thessaloniki. The processing into theatre went very smoothly with no major problems. Once all the vehicles had been located, a large packet (well over 60 vehicles) deployed to the Greek and then Macedonian border. An very long journey when sleep was at a precedent and the majority had already been on the go for over 24 hours. The Squadron were given a short respite at Skopje before being ushered on and into Kosovo itself. Another long and arduous drive found us on the outskirts of Pristina and liaison with the Squadron Commander, who had deployed a week earlier with **SSgt (YofS) Wright**. Keen to get the assets on the ground as quickly as possible, CP7 deployed Tornado Tp just east of Pristina and Roman Tp further north to Mitrovica. Viking Tp had already established itself in Pec with the Italians. They have settled down quickly and OSC 132 (co-located with Tornado Troop) were ready to take on the CAOR responsibility within the first week of August. We look forward to the coming months, the opportunity to assist the local population as much as possible with productive G5 projects, to see 229 Sig Sqn withdraw from theatre, for the relocation of Roman and Viking on the Goles feature and preparation for the onslaught of a possible harsh winter.

The Squadron wish to welcome to the fold, **SSgt (YofS) Parkins** and **SSgt (FofS) Leach** still wet behind the ears, fresh from their relevant courses in Blandford. We must say our goodbyes to **SSgt (YofS) Wright** on his promotion, posting to 19 Mech Bde and his getting married in mid July - see you out here in the very near future. Also, our congratulations to **SSgt (FofS) Oliver,** also on his promotion and subsequent posting to RSS.

TORNADO TROOP – SPOT HEIGHT 1097 PRISTINA
Tp Comd **2Lt Graham Wills**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Neil Cooper**

At last, after a long wait, a hardened drive and a short stay at 7 SR A Echelon, it was time to deploy to our final destination. A hill top site had previously been recced by the Squadron Yeoman on spot height 1097 just east of Pristina. The first vehicle up with our illustrious Recce Sergeant, **Sgt Dave Uttley** was **LCpl** 'Scotty' **Scott** in Radio Relay Bravo to test the water as they say. After forty minutes of 1st gear low ratio they finally reached the summit. What greeted them at the top of the hill was what used to be a fixed Serbian communications site with its underground bunker still intact. The hill top had been completely obliterated thanks to a successful bombing campaign and all that remained were the craters that the 2000lb bombs had left.

After several shunts of both 'Scotty' and Bravo Det, we managed to manoeuvre them into location and then off to pick up the rest of the Relays. All of the vehicles were eventually placed in their positions to cries of, 'You call this home for the next six months Sarge.' **Cpl** 'Slacky' **Slack** taking longer than the rest to ensure maximum comfort. Once all of the vehicles were in location, dug in and settled, the hard work started and the whole of the node set about clearing and filling areas of the site to make it habitable. After just a month, the location is already looking like home from home. It is really amazing what you can make from some sand bags, hessian, cam poles and string. 'Big Mac Mountain', as we have ceremoniously named it is very well fortified thanks to the minefield the Serbs kindly left behind for us. All are coping in the sun with the exception of **LCpl** 'Jinksy' **Jinks** who has only to think of the sun and turns into an 'undernourished lobster'. With one month gone, morale is high and R+R is just around the corner.

Just a few goodbyes to say in the coming months and most notably it is that of our aforementioned Recce Sergeant, **Dave Uttley**. He is off to Blandford as an Adventurous Training Instructor. Also departing, after serving nearly four years with the Squadron, is **Cpl** 'Scotty' **Burman** who is off for his T1 course. **Sgt Cassidy**, recently joining us from 219 Squadron, is also off on promotion to 40 Sig Regt NI. We would like to take this opportunity to wish all leaving the best of luck for the future.

ROMAN TROOP – MITROVICA
Tp Comd **Lt Adam Honor**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Chris Symonds**

At last, the Squadron finally got its date of departure for war torn Kosovo. It was good to meet up with the vehicles and more importantly, the Japanese Karaoke King, **Sgt** 'Bad Hair Cut' **Harvey** and **Sig Jeynes** after their escapades as boat guard on the illustrious Tokyo Highway merchant ship. The guys were obviously 'chomping at the bit' and desperate to join what seemed to be the rest of the Corps already up country. The drive to Pristina was a lengthy one with much 'window licking' done by all. After the hospitality of 7SR A Echelon we had to adjust quickly to the searing temperatures of Kosovo. Finally the Troop moved to its present location of Mitrovica to co-locate with the French Brigade. The Troop were first stuck into a coal bunker and were expected to dig it out. Eventually, it was accepted that the Node Home could co-locate with SAN 870. There would be enough room for 26 vehicles, if they were Match Box in size! We shoe horned our way in and finally managed to establish a good location. The 'good working relationship' with the French continued as it was finally accepted that the excellent shower and laundry facilities could be used. Comms were quickly established as was the routine with the quality of food helping morale enormously thanks to **Cpl Galletly,** an exceptional chef. The relationship with the French improved with time and now there is much thigh slapping and sharing of war stories taking place. On the subject of war stories, it must be said that the location is prone to sporadic fire and the odd hand grenade on the perimeter fence. The guys have taken it all in their stride and reacted very calmly except **Cpl** 'One Eye Open' **Finlay** who sleeps with bayonet fixed. The Troop now look forward to co-locating with TN 030 on a feature overlooking Pristina. Roman Tp have already got some of the troops half way home with **LCpl** 'Dusty' **Millar** and crew sat at 1500m above Skopje providing a radio relay relay.

The Troop say a fond farewell to **SSgt Mo** 'we are all doooommmed' **Morrison.** This man was a true Roman who worked extremely hard for the Troop and will be sorely missed and we wish him all the best as SQMS HQ Squadron. Another sad farewell goes to **Sgt** 'Bad Hair Day' **Ramsay** who is off to serve with 16 SR. Alas another true Roman leaves our Legion! He has served the cause admirably and we wish him and his wife **Angie** (plus rug rats) all the best for the future. However, the Troop does welcomes possibly the smartest man in theatre, **SSgt Chris Symonds** as he takes over the helm and is already drilling the soldiers into shape. A real baptism of fire for the newly promoted Troop SSgt, but we would like to take this opportunity to welcome his wife **Lisa** and children **Eleanor** and **Madeline** to 2 Sig Regt and hope they enjoy their stay here. Congratulations go out to **Cpl Mark** 'Randy Wild Blood' **Parr** who came off the Cpls to Sgts Board first time and who is off to pass his YofS course. 'Congrats' and farewell also goes out to newly promoted **LCpl Rachel Howarth,** who is off to join an EOD team.

VIKING TROOP – PEC
Tp Comd **Lt Peter Hale**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Terry Shiels**

After Trunk Node 030 had been on, what seemed, the longest 24 hours standby in history, we finally deployed to Kosovo on 9 June and arrived in Skopje. Pathfinders **Sgt Andy Lloyd** and **Sig** 'Jock' **Dourley** arrived in Skopje six hours before the rest of the Troop (we'll never live that one down). Our first night was to be spent at the shoe factory, although we were unaware of the welcome committee, which consisted of a drive through stone alley on the way in. The first deployment was a relief in place at a location known as TV Towers with TN 011 giving the Troop the opportunity for a good shake out and to get acclimatised. On the morning of 16 June, we were then to deploy across the border into Kosovo. Our destination was Pec, to the west of the country, which proved to be an eye opener for those who had not served in the Balkans before with the sights of burnt villages and deserted cities. As we were setting up in our new location, a fire fight in the main street made everybody aware of just how volatile the city was. **LCpl Dibbert** had an abrupt welcome to Kosovo with a Serbian insisting that he give him a welcoming hug and protection from a large group of UCK. The fun started when **Sgt Andy** 'mine prodder' **Lloyd,** on suspecting he had found a mine near to where the vehicles had been located and the Italian EOD team were called. Fortunately, it turned out not to be a mine but, of all things, a water sprinkler. Good call **Sgt Lloyd,** we just hope your lessons on mine recognition in TA centres do not have a 'soggy end'. To establish some form of routine a quiz night was introduced on a Wednesday night. The first was won by the technicians - **Sgt Paul** ' I can skip' **Richards, Cpl Brian** 'pie eater' **Maher, Cpl** 'Jock' **McKeown** and



SSgt Neil Cooper and Cpl Billy Morrison get to grips with the local way of working



Signaller Loach
finds her first helicopter ride a hair raising experience – literally



Cpl Mandy Foster 'brushes' up on her Karaoke skills

last but not least **LCpl** 'Taff what quiz' **Livesey** – to prove that from four techs you can produce 'one' brain cell or so they say.

The Troop was subject to its first RTA when 30B was forced off the road by an oncoming HGV. Thankfully **Sigs John** 'Coolboy' **Sherwin** and **Gaz** 'not a pretty boy' **Mazzey** were not seriously injured and managed to walk away with a few cuts and bumps. **LCpl Hinchliffe**, the Det Commander was later heard to mumble, 'I leave you alone for five minutes and look what happens.'

It has been a time of great change in Viking Tp and a few special mentions need to be said. Congratulations to **Cpl Del Parkinson** for his selection for promotion to Sergeant and subsequent posting. From all the guys in the TN, we would like to say a fond farewell to **Sgt Andy Lloyd** and his wife **Karen**, on promotion to 35 Sig Regt (V) and **LCpl Bill Murray**, who is also posted and going back for his class one. Farewell also goes to **Sig Daniel Lynch** on his decision to leave the Army.



Relays Pax – the relays are making good of a bad thing

7 SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO **Lt Col D. A. H. Jones**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) S. Smoothy**

It has been a news making time for 7 Sig Regt having finally crossed the border into Kosovo, established the network that is now to be commercialised and begun the move home in time for Christmas. The highlights have been the advance, the Regiment's 40th Anniversary Dinner and the visit of **HRH The Princess Royal**.

CP7

The Regimental Ops team consists of Operations Officer - **Maj Tim** 'Scarface' **Allen**, Tech Adjt - **Capt Martin** 'Admin' **Bever**, Traffic Officer - **Capt Gary** 'PVRO hmmmm' **Stratton**, TOT - **Capt Dave O'Brien**, **WO1 (YofS) Lee** 'G5' **Keily** and **Sgt Teri** 'The Gripper' **Lees** and the REMF (all ops teams need one) **Sig Nicki** 'Stay behind Op' **Fallows**.

The deployment of CP7 was much the same as any other department in the Regiment - i.e. off the back of three weeks ARRC Exercise in Germany in January/February, a month hot planning flitting between Krefeld and Rheindahlen and the inevitable deployment on 'Ops' to FYROM over 3-9 March 1999 (we actually did not deploy on 'proper' ops to Kosovo until 12 June 1999). The day before deployment saw lots of frantic packing of comfort boxes in the RHQ corridor; Ops - rugby ball and guitar. Tfc - Ron Hills, floppy hat and neoprene sleeping bag. TOT - lots of paperwork including everything there is to know about TACSAT. Tech Adjt - nothing. YofS - a box full of running kit. **Sgt Lees** - two Flak jackets (one for each side). Soon after deployment and a number of moves of location - 7 Sig Regt inherited the Ptarmigan network from 16 Sig Regt which contained a couple of clusters and a few standalone centrals. CP7 concurrently moved from the Shoe Factory (AKA the slipper factory) to the Metal Factory (there's one in every good scenario) and after a few good nights in the 'Sandbag Inn' soon became re-christened 'The Red Wine Commandos'.

It wasn't until going over the border in to Kosovo on 12 June 1999 that the CP considered themselves on a proper operation. All the hard preparation in the planning of the move of the communications assets was finally going to come to fruition. Whilst a plan had been nurtured and honed to a satisfying finished product over the previous three months it was still a flexible plan and indeed needed to be, which was proven on the move north especially with the unexpected occupation of Pristina Aport by the Russians. There was a lot of activity and much to see on the initial phases of the Kosovo element of the deployment, much of which was not very nice. A number of dead or injured animals, lots of wrecked and burned out cars with personal belongings scattered everywhere (discarded by or removed from fleeing refugees). Some of the team were unlucky enough to discover corpses. The smoke rising from burning houses could be seen all over. The fleeing Yugoslavian Army (VJ) were under remit to move out of specific areas by certain deadlines. The evidence of the NATO air strikes was also very apparent with the accurate bombing of VJ barracks and other specific targets.

CP7 was set up initially in the same location as the TAC HQ in Pristina, subsequently moving to the KFOR Main HQ at 'Film City'. Many hours were put in to the clearance and recce of communications locations and planning to stabilise a solid trunk network, which, on reflection was achieved very quickly. After one month work started on the repatriation of some of the Regimental assets back to Krefeld. CP7 and elements of the Regiment remain deployed, the focus now on assisting HQ 1 Sig Bde in the implementation of a Commercialised System to replace as much Ptarmigan as possible and thus releasing the remainder of the Regiment. The tour has been busy and very rewarding and has left everybody in no doubt as to the worthwhile job they have been involved in

229 (BERLIN) SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj Chris Robinson**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Stevie Bovan**

Kosovo or bust !! - Finally the order to move came, and with a great degree of hustle and bustle the OSC group and the two Trunk Nodes began the push North. The push North, inevitably, began with a push South - to Echelon in order to re supply. By this stage the Boss had already moved forward with **LCpl** 'Taff' **Phillips** and **FofS Sutton**. They were on a mission to find a site for OSC and TN 011, preferably without VJ prior occupation or excessive mine or UXO threat. The remainder of us, still at Echelon, were preparing for the long road move ahead. Eventually the order came, and off we went with our convoy of 30 or so vehicles. On passing Brazda Camp we were cheered by thousands of Refugees chanting NATO, a truly moving experience and one which none could ever forget. The road move to our RV south of Pristina was long (totalling some 18 hours), and thus many of the drivers and passengers turned into sleep monsters, every stop resulted in the 2IC, **Capt A. J. Smith**, running the length of the convoy waking up the drivers (including

Sig Riches, his own driver). None the less, with the usual excellent REME support from **Sgt McGovern** and **LCpl Kinghorn**, all of the vehicles and soldiers arrived on time and in the right place. The OC then met us and moved us all to KFOR TAC, to enable further Recce to take place for a suitable site.

The GOLES, a commanding hill to the West of Pristina, was soon identified as our new home. On arrival we found a veritable selection of mines and Cluster Bombs, hence our major concern was not comms, but safety. Very swiftly though, comms came in and the Network in Kosovo began it's growth. For the next few days, EOD cleared and we attempted to communicate through the constant vehicle movements and EOD explosions. Within three days the comms were all in and working. The initial, indeed over all, success of the Communications was as ever thanks to the excellent work put in at all levels from each and every operator, Node Command and though some would disagree OSC Group. We were truly honoured to have **HRH The Princess Royal** visit us on the hill. **Her Royal Highness'** level of interest (and knowledge) made for a fantastic visit which none of us present would wish to have missed.

WHISKEY TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt Andy Wilson**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Paul Robson**

After moving around FYROM for three months, working sometimes on our own, once with the Americans and twice with the Germans, Trunk Node 012 entered Kosovo with the 12 German Panzer Bde, and headed for Prizren in South West Kosovo. We were very impressed with the German set up in Tetovo and felt sure we were with the right Brigade, to look after our creature comforts and security.



Lt Bruce demonstrates technology to the Germans

The radio relay site was initially receced with armour support and EOD clearance. The hill was a Serbian communications post and the building on it had been heavily bombed by the Allies. During the recce the EOD found several devices, including a 500lb Mk 82 Bomb, and disposed of them, site cleared, or so we were told. The relay site was established by 012 and German Signals followed then came PTT and UN/Motorola repeaters, a very busy hill top. After living on the hill for over a month inquisitive soldiers reported a 'large object' in the house, which some had assumed to be a boiler. On checking the object the German EOD cheerfully announced that it was a 2000lb US bomb! and that the hill should be evacuated immediately. They then sat down and ate BBQ'd steaks with a few cans of beer, while the hill was evacuated, and then detonated the bomb, which was quite an explosion!

The tour has been plagued by rumours regarding the end of tour date, one week we were going to be here until October, the next it was a year tour, then we were going home early. The Squadron has finally received conformation that we are in fact going back to Krefeld after five months in theatre, a month early. Everybody is now busy preparing the vehicles to return to Germany and the mood is one of relief, after a very strange tour.

231 SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj Paul Boscher**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Ward**

KFOR FORWARD
OC **Lt Howarth**
2IC **SSgt Gemmell**

When KFOR TAC deployed with the Sqn Comd 232 Sig Sqn and KFOR Forward advance party we knew that we had 48hrs to line up and complete all final checks. As we formed up at the Metal Factory, Skopje the dust bowl began to fill as we received vehicles from ARRC Support Bn and communications vehicles from the Dutch Army. The final convoy of almost 100 vehicles set off at 0030hrs on what was a 90km drive. This took almost 8hrs due to the amount of military vehicles heading the same way and the refugees returning to their homes. We finally arrived in Pristina and headed to KFOR TACs location. As we drove in the Serbian soldiers were driving out in the other direction. By their hand signals they were not too happy about the situation.

On arrival we split into two shifts and set about guarding the film studios that would become the HQ location. It had literally just been vacated by the Serbians and while we cleaned it out it had to be aggressively guarded as the Serbians were still in the local vicinity. Eventually it was time to vacate a site for a major Access Node that would support KFOR MAIN HQ. The site was on top of a hill overlooking the film studios and once it had been cleared by the Royal Engineers and Canadian Lumberjacks the vehicles we had were placed and we awaited reinforcements. First to arrive was SW&FC 096 led by **Sgt** 'Capo' **Carpenter**, closely followed by SW&FC098 under the guidance of **Cpl** 'Nearly' **Burke**. He sported a huge smile as he had just discovered that he had come off the promotion board. Congratulations are in order but he is still waiting to wear his third stripe so his smile has waned somewhat.

KFOR MAIN MAN SITE
OC **Lt** 'Mrs Merton' **James**
2IC **SSgt** 'Archie ' **Gemmell**

As the last vehicles were manoeuvred onto our final resting ground at the KFOR Main location in a Film Factory at Pristina we soon realised that if something was not done quickly the whole area would become an ankle deep quagmire. It was then that the Chain Gang was formed. A lot of hard labour resulted in the 'Shale Party' creating mud-free gravel tracks to every vehicle although some doubt the tactical implications of white gravel paths!

The locals in Pristina have been entertaining themselves and brightening our nights by lighting bonfires in each others houses and turning an arsenal's worth of live rounds and tracer into empty cases. During daylight hours they are more friendly, which was demonstrated at the 7 Sig Regt G5 project to renovate a Kindergarten school. A hoard of kids turned up all clamouring to help and literally taking the brushes out of our hands. Unfortunately much of what had been achieved through hard work and co-operation had to be repeated the following day because the school was looted and ransacked during the night.

The Admin area was officially opened by the CO of 7 Sig Regt on 9 July 1999. Throughout the day there was an inter-section sports competition involving football, volleyball, Tug-of-War and boxing (on the play-station). Prior to this the Monopoly village was being completed with each tent being a place on the board. From the SNCOs at Mayfair (£320) to the Driver Linemen at Old Kent Road (£60) and the Officers at GO TO JAIL. The Canadian Lumberjacks helped build a wall which we then painted in the Corps colours and the 7 Sig Regt spear. It was a mad rush to complete it all before the Grand Opening but we could relax after as the bar was opened (Hurrah!). This was perfect timing for **LCpl** 'Timmy' **Mullett** to celebrate after the CO presented him his first stripe in front of the new wall. Congratulations also go to **LCpl** 'Mark' **Wright** who is also wearing his new stripe with pride.

SYSCON
A-Shift Comd **Lt Howarth**
B-Shift Comd **Lt Byfield**
C-Shift Comd **SSgt Saunders**

The main part of the Headquarters build was performed by the Fwd team which included **Lt** 'Gen' **Howarth**, **Sgt** 'Drew' **Drewett** and **LCpl** 'Jock' **Taylor**. Now that the rest of the team has arrived in theatre the daily routine of conferences and maintenance is the norm. The Lineys workload has settled down now that the staff users have finished trading places and swapping rooms. The staff have resorted to the old sport of SYSCON baiting with some of the questions they have asked recently. Some of the classics include:

Q. Will the chopper land over there?
A. Yes Sir that's the hele-pad.

Q. Could you add me back onto the conference?
A. We don't have one running at the moment Sir.....Oh

Q. Lei paventosa umilimente pascea?
A. What....

SRG AND RADIO
Tp Comd **Lt Jones**
Tp Sgt **Sgt Wilson**

20 June 1999 saw the remaining radio and SRG assets deploy to theatre. Many buildings were still standing and most of the people were actually glad to see us. Once established in Film City, KFOR Main we were joined by six SRG detachments from 1 ADSR. So now we have a fleet of nineteen SCRAT vehicles, two Radio-Rebros and seven RATT detachments in theatre. Hello and congratulations to **Sgt Wilson** on posting and promotion from 249 AMF(L) and goodbye to **Cpl Clark** and **LCpl Woodall** who are posted to 2 Sig Regt and JCUNI respectively. And finally a special goodbye to **Sig** 'Matty' **Mathews** who believed he was going to 2 Sig Regt to play Rugby but instead he is going to the Falkland Islands to count penguins. Tough luck!

4 ARMD BDE AND SIG SQN ATTACHMENT 5-9 JULY 1999
by LCpl Ricky Curran

On 5 July 1999 I was attached to 204 Sig Sqn for five days to patrol Slivo and the surrounding villages. It was a huge change to my routine work, but the chance to patrol around Serbian villages in a GS Rover and 436 Radio det whilst the UCK were living nearby seemed too good to miss. The locals were under the impression that the 436 was a tank

because it was tracked. The fact that it is only an armoured vehicle with a GPMG mounted on the front was immaterial because it made them feel safe and happy and that was all that mattered. Our mission was to patrol the villages in the area in order to give the Serbians peace of mind that they are protected from the UCK. We also had to check cars and people for illegal arms and munitions. Everyone complied with our requests to search cars and trailers but unfortunately we never found anything. The Albanians were very keen to proclaim that they were members of the UCK, but when we asked them for their weapons none of them had any! At night, however, you could hear them shooting rounds off, probably to let both us and the Serbians know that they were still armed and capable of inflicting revenge. It was an extremely enjoyable five days and a worthwhile job that the locals appreciated. This was demonstrated by the fact that when we arrived there were only two Serbians living in the village and by the time we departed sixteen more had felt it safe enough to return to their homes.

232 SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj Alan G. Stringer**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Hughes**

The Squadron Headquarters and Tac Troop have now returned to Krefeld having arrived first finished their job but leaving the SANs behind to be looked after by 231 Sqn. 7 Sig Regt has provided the manpower for the French and Italian SANs with 16 Sig Regt manning the Germans and 3 Div Sig Regt looking after the Americans and the APOD but they are being relieved by 2 Sig Regt.

DELTA TROOP - SAN 876 - *by LCpl Rhodes and Sig Barrett*
Tp Comd **Lt** 'Pierre' **Farrimond**
Tp SSgt **SSgt** 'Stef' **Newton**

Times have changed from scorching Katlanovo, Macedonia and we have made the news and history here in the Balkans with NATO's first victory. We may not have seen the newspapers but we have lived with the journalists here in the HQ of the Multi-National Brigade West in Pec. It is, however, still very Italian and we at SAN 876 prefer the title the Garibaldi Brigade. The Troop says a big hello to **Sig** 'Where's the Bar?' **Cragg** and **Sig** 'Where's my Bed?' **Gallard** and the newest member of Delta Troop **Sig** 'Rick' **Anderson** on their recent arrival into Theatre. A welcome back to **Sig** 'I didn't start the fire honest' **Moffat** on his return from Albania. Attached to our SAN is an RAF SATCOM Detachment which is trying to adjust to the Army way of life.



Sig Roberts provides a service with a smile to the Italians

Some in theatre R & R to Lake Ohrid was organised and it was worth the three hour journey to watch **SSgt Angove** being thrown into the lake by **Sig** 'Scouse' **Dowell**. It was just what the Troop needed. What started out as an innocent boat trip around the lake turned into a jet-skiing-adrenaline-pumping extravaganza. In the meantime **Lt** 'Has anyone seen my Beret?' **Farrimond** was damaging his rear by sitting on sharp objects in the accommodation.

After a three day fling with a car factory, the HQ settled in and around the town square of Pec which was deserted, devastated and still in flames. There were interesting incidents including manoeuvring the SAS/MC and the Italian's HF antenna around the back of the hotel. We accidentally took it with us in the dark and they were not too impressed. We have expanded up to a total of 76 British Troops in our location due to the arrival of the 2 Sig Regt TN 030. The SAN and SATCOM manpower has changed, although the Delta Troop name will survive in both Krefeld and Pec. Even the resilient **Lt Farrimond** is now leaving for a job in Pristina as Press Officer before he grows a beard, wears sunglasses on parade and becomes too Italian.

This *Wire* entry would not be complete without a mention that we overtook Tac Troop and CP7 to become the first SAN over the border and set-up. Finally, congratulations to **Cpl Wilson** on the birth of his bouncing baby boy **Kit**, **Sig Laverick** on his engagement and **Sig Carroll** on his miraculous recovery.

SAN 870 AT THE FRENCH BDE
OC **Lt Noakes**
SSgt **SSgt Ironside**

Time changes all things and life at the French Brigade has certainly changed. SAN 870 is subject to many changes but those remaining include **Sig Brown** who call to duty is never-ending and the French endearingly call the 'Iaarrcizz spesializzt'. **LCpl Cooper** who was determined not to let any dirty 231 Sqn hands on her detachment, and **Sig Adam** who arrived back flush faced from her R&R to find things weren't quite as they had always been. Finally the OC, **Lt Noakes,** who is convinced that she will need surgery to remove the smile from her face when she returns to Germany having earned the dubious accolade of Mademoiselle Ptarmigan.

It was the Extraction Force in February, the Immediate Deployment Force in March, the French Framework Brigade in April the French Brigade in May, the Leclerc Brigade in June, and finally in July Multinational Division North. Positively a name for all seasons, its a good job that **SSgt Farrar** has only just joined the SAN otherwise we would have destroyed an entire rainforest trying to keep our notice boards up to date.

For some of us we had been longer there than in the Regiment in Germany. French D-Day saw the biggest thunderstorm the mountains could throw at us and the unfortunate loss of **Sig Evans** due to an injury. At least this provided the OC the experience of translating for **Sig Evans** in the French hospital while he was wearing his underpants and jungle hat. They obviously don't see this sort of underwear at Sandhurst. The SAN was sorry to see old faces depart. Goodbye to **SSgt Ironside**, **LCpl Challand**, adieu to **LCpl Hughes** and **LCpl Musgrave** the twins, au-revoir to the radio detachment **LCpl Day**, **Sig Schafer**, and **Sig Nicholls** and also the terrible twins on the radio relay **LCpl** 'Taxi for Smith' **Ablott** and **Sig** 'Taxi for' **Turner**. Life with the French just isn't the same without you. Enjoy a well deserved post tour leave! **Sig Burton** elected to stay on for further challenges and moves to the Italian Brigade SAN in Pec to be detachment commander...congratulations, thoroughly earned! The new faces at the SAN include **LCpl Ryall**, **LCpl Gauchi**, **Sig Garrett**, **Sig Holt**, **Sig Collins**, **Sigs Kingshot** and **Howard** from 1 Div, **Sig Constable**, **Sig Garside** and **Sig Maskel**.

SAN 884 PRISTINA APOD
OC **Lt Fawcett**
SSgt **SSgt Howes**

The SAN deployed earlier then the rest of Masirah Tp, 3 Div Sig Regt, ie: no leave, flying into theatre on an urgent mission, earmarked to supply Ptarmigan to the Russians! The MT driver assured us he knew the route and finally we arrived at RAF Lyneham. The five hour flight on a Hercules had the usual in flight entertainment and we arrived at 2100hrs local to a still hot and humid Petrovec Airfield in Skopje. We tagged along with 2 Sig Regt and arrived at the metal factory to be met by **Capt** ' Where's the football?' **Newton**! The, soon to be familiar, cry of 'Not sure why you're here, there's no task yet' rang in our ears. **Sig** 'Chumly like' **Warner** temporarily had a job up TV Towers on a Rebro det, and was very nearly forgotten when we finally received our task. 'How fast can you be ready to go? Two hours! Excellent! You're going with Main.' Across the border, with anticipation of a job, finally! 98kms and six hours later, we reached KFOR TAC only to hear that oh so familiar phrase. Park up there and wait out.

Two weeks later and finally we get a task, for real this time. Move to the APOD and provide comms, Yeah! The Russians are across the car park from us so things become interesting. It's not long before the old faithful football is brought out and a quick 'friendly' is struck up against the Russians, we win of course and even manage to persuade their best player to play for us. Life continues in the heat.

3 DIVISIONAL HQ & SIGNAL REGIMENT RADCON

Our task was to augment 7 Sig Regt's deployed radio dets and provide firm command and control over the KFOR command net. Fine words. It all went slightly pear shaped when our OC, **Capt Alex Fennell** was immediately deployed to help set up Brazda refugee camp, and 7 Sig Regt realised that we had brought no equipment or vehicles with which to build RADCON. Our three RRBs were immediately deployed to help the two 7 Sig Regt's Rebros and provide an all informed net.

Albania was an excellent opportunity to look at a country that had been cut off from the rest of the world. Two dets, one from 7 Sig Regt and one from 3 Div, **LCpl Andy Bennett** and **Sig Bob Rankin** commanded by **Sgt Jim Watt** were despatched to the badlands of **Kukes** in north Albania for a two to three day tasking, five weeks later having helped build an airstrip and start a Mafia bread war, the independent Radio Troop was extracted back to Macedonia in time for the entry into Kosovo. The plan was written, tried, changed, tried again and worked. **LCpl Kenny Irwin** deployed to the border and provided the link forward. **Cpl Guido Giddens** went forward with 7 Sig Regt Tac and deployed almost immediately to a high point above Pristina going four way-made 'for the spotters' and providing coverage over all of Kosovo. RACOON's vehicles arrived from the UK, went forward and established at film city. **Capt Phil Newton** and **Cpl Mick Preece** having reached their peak in their training and tanning have gone home and the Radcon grouping now about to be OPCON 231 Squadron wiped the floor at the Inter Squadron Sports.

VIKING TROOP – PEC
Tp Comd **Lt Peter Hale**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Terry Shiels**

After Trunk Node 030 had been on, what seemed, the longest 24 hours standby in history, we finally deployed to Kosovo on 9 June and arrived in Skopje. Pathfinders **Sgt Andy Lloyd** and **Sig** 'Jock' **Dourley**, who arrived in Skopje six hours before the rest of the Troop (we'll never live that one down). Our first night was to be spent at the shoe factory, although we were unaware of the welcome committee, which consisted of a drive through stone alley on the way in. The first deployment was a relief in place at a location known as TV Towers with TN 011 giving the troop the opportunity for a good shake out and to get acclimatised. On the morning of 16 June, we were then to deploy across the border into Kosovo. Our destination was Pec, to the west of the country, which proved to be an eye opener for those who had not served in the Balkans before with the sights of burnt villages and deserted cities.

As we were setting up in our new location, a fire fight in the main street made everybody aware of just how volatile the city was. **LCpl Dibbert** had an abrupt welcome to Kosovo with a Serbian insisting that he give him a welcoming hug and protection from a large group of UCK. The fun started when **Sgt Andy Lloyd**, on suspecting he had found a mine near to where the vehicles had been located and the Italian EOD team were called. Fortunately, it turned out not to be a mine but, of all things, a water sprinkler. Good call **Sgt Lloyd**, we just hope your lessons on mine recognition in TA centres do not have a 'soggy end'.

To establish some form of routine a quiz night was introduced on a Wednesday night. The first being won by the technicians - **Sgt Paul Richards**, **Cpl Brian Maher**, **Cpl** 'Jock' **Mckeown** and last but not least **LCpl Taff Livesey** – to prove that from four techs you can produce 'one' brain cell or so they say.

The Troop was subject to its first RTA when 30B was forced off the road by an oncoming HGV. Thankfully **Sig John Sherwin** and **Gaz Mazzey** were not seriously injured and managed to walk away with a few cuts and bumps. **LCpl Hinchliffe**, the det commander, was however, later heard to mumble ' I leave you alone for 5 minutes and look what happens.' It has been a time of great change in Viking Tp and a few special mentions need to be said. Congratulations to **Cpl Del Parkinson** for his selection for promotion to Sergeant and subsequent posting. From all the guys in the TN, we would like to say a fond farewell to **Sgt Andy Lloyd** and his wife **Karen**, on promotion to 35 Sig Regt (V) and **LCpl Bill Murray**, who is also posted and going back for his class one. Farewell also goes to **Sig Daniel Lynch** on his decision to leave the Army.

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj Wally Drain**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Tony Barry**

After four months of waiting, the orders for the move into Kosovo came at very short notice, causing a flurry of activity as the Forward Echelon prepared to advance to its new location at Pristina. Meanwhile, back in Krefeld the Echelon Main Body implemented the plan for a sea and air move to Thessaloniki, Greece, followed by a road move through Greece, Macedonia and on into Kosovo. All elements of Echelon were married up at our new home, The Kosovo Auto Club by 16 June. The boys and girls of the Forward Echelon had done a superb job of transforming a former car lot, bulging with stolen and scrap cars into a home from home, allowing the Main Body to slip seamlessly into place and continue with the never ending task of keeping the Regiment and its attached elements Fed, Fixed, Fuelled and Watered.

MOTOR TRANSPORT
MTO **Capt Phil Clifford**
MT SNCO **SSgt Dave Mitchell**

Life for the Regimental MT in Pristina is hectic. Supplying all the fuel requirements for KFOR Main with only two UBREs is a non stop task leaving **Cpl** 'GWA' **Bowman** with an accounting nightmare and a manpower headache, especially when **Sigs Lee** 'Parker' **Manton** and **Dave Watson** decide to go sightseeing in Down Town Pristina in the fuel trucks! We would like to say goodbye to **Sgt Les** 'Airborne' **Tobbell** and wish him and his family all the best at Leconsfield. Also a sad farewell to the Old Git of the Troop, **LCpl** 'Clem' **Clement**. We hope you enjoy 21 Sig Regt for your last year and wish you and your family good luck for the future. Moving on to the 'Hellos' – **Sig Kate Knight** from 14 Sig Regt, **LCpl** 'Scotty' **Witts** fresh from a stint with the TA and **Sig** 'Jackie' **D'Lasselle**, fresh meat from the factory. Finally, congratulations on forthcoming marriages go to **Sig** 'John Boy' **McMahon** and **Monica** and to **LCpl** 'I've signed for it' **Christian** to **Sig** 'Chocolate' **Clayden**.

ECHELON - *by SSgt (SQMS) Steve Behan*

After nearly two Months in the Tito Metal Factory (TMF), Skopje, waiting for news of the advance to Pristina, the light at the end of the tunnel began to shine. I was assisting 229 (Berlin) Sig Sqn with a military skills competition, when news came through that a political settlement to the conflict in Kosovo was drawing near. I stayed for the duration of the evening, which consisted of a BBQ and a few small beers, ably hosted be **SSgt (SQMS)** 'Taff' **Webb** and **SSgt Matt Wakeling**. I awoke on Sunday morning, my head filled with 'corned beef', and the sound of a Subset ringing in my ears. It was a message from **Capt Phil Clifford**, OC Echelon and MTO instructing me to return to the TMF. Stores needed to be identified and re-sorted for a possible move into Kosovo. During the subsequent five day period we sorted out stores, refreshed incoming Squadrons and detachments. An enormous pile of stores was chucked at **SSgt (SQMS) Pete Griffiths**, 232 Sig Sqn, causing him to start pulling his hair out with the amount of ammunition, morphine and other war fighting materials placed outside of his vehicle. Eventually TAC and FORWARD moved north with the initial deployment force into Kosovo. We at Echelon humbly watched the advance on TV, the main coverage being the insertion of the Airborne forces and armour into Kosovo. Whoops of 'yeah' and 'kickbutt' came from our own airborne children **WO2 (RTWO) Carl** 'The Bishop' **Weaver** and **Sgt Les Tobbel**. Intermittent screams of 'RED ON!' and crashes from falling GS tables as these two practised their landing techniques, overshadowed all sound from the TV. Echelon was told that D+4 would be our deployment day. For this we prepared by packing all non-essential equipment and vehicles, leaving the cookhouse in all its splendid glory to the last possible minute. D+4 was brought forward two days, and then delayed three days and brought forward again, until the OC, **Capt Phil Clifford** declared 'OK lads, we're on four hours notice to move'

Tuesday, 1500hrs - the OC called a briefing: 'That four hours notice to move has been shrunk in the wash, we leave at 1620hrs'. This raised a few eyebrows, a few smirks, and then looks of sheer horror as the reality sank in, the cookhouse needed to be torn down and packed away. As with all Echelon moves, the heavens opened up with such intensity that even Moses would have been confused. This led to the swift 'Chucking On' of the cookhouse equipment with recitations from the film 'Forest Gump' of 'this is big ol' fat rain'. The final briefing came from the OC. 'I don't know how long it will take us to reach Pristina as the roads are full with approximately 10,000 refugees and the journey could take up to eight hours, so be patient'. The packets rolled out on time, the OC's rover followed by the airborne chariot (RECCE Vehicle) of **WO2 (RTWO) Carl** 'The Reverend' **Weaver** and **Sgt Les Tobbel**. Unfortunately, having run short of towing hooks, the Recce vehicle containing the 'Ace Warriors' was required to tow the No 4 cookset trailer. This brought grunts of disgust from our infamous two, but roars of laughter from others, as the vehicle was splattered with stickers, made by yours truly, proclaiming 'Egg Op's' and 'Operation Omelette'.

TECHNICAL MAINTENANCE TROOP- *by LCpl Todd*

Just like to say a big hello to **SSgt Phil MacKenzie**, keeping things going back at the troop and to **Sgt 'Spence' Ord**, **Sgt Ian Glover** and all those other tour dodgers back there in Krefeld. Things are good out here, having a laugh. **Sig Jim Brampton** keeping us going with his comical lisp (Dwiving the Padwe's wover). **Sgt** 'Middy' **Middlemiss** has been to the opticians, something about not being able to look at direct sunlight because his head has been stuck somewhere else for the last few month's. He is acting FofS at the moment as **WO1 (FofS) Tommy Steele** is on R&R so he is happy. We are all wondering whether **Cpl Bobby Hill** is really Albanian because he has done more moving than the refugees. **LCpl Gordon Campbell** is swanning it back in Krefeld, unable to come back out as the airlines refuse to carry pets! We can only assume that our boy's on the trunk nodes are enjoying themselves because they don't seem to stay here longer than five minutes.

QUARTERMASTER'S DEPARTMENT
QM **Capt Ray Cory**
RQMS **WO2 Ged Keane**

The move north from Macedonia to Kosovo coincided with a change of personalities within the department. So it's goodbye to **Maj Pete Doherty**, Atilla the CD man has noticed remarkable drop in sales already, farewell also to **Sgt Joey Castle** and **Cpl Cooke**. We must also not forget to say farewell to **Sgt Howard** who popped out for a couple of weeks from 2 Sig Regt. **Capt Ray Cory** has done so much travelling round Kosovo that we are thinking of changing his appointment to Dr Who. **SSgt Kev Scott**, **Sgt Si Booth** and **Cpl Kev Abbott** are all looking like the walking dead as they beaver away on the accounts (there are now six Regiments on the Equipment Table). **WO2 (RQMS) Ged Keane** has been uttering those famous words, 'We counted them all out so we'll count them all in.' We think he is chuntering about his 276,000 loose rounds with no boxes that he has to count daily. Tributes this month go to the gang at the sharp end, **LCpl** 'Bossy' **Boswell** we promised we wouldn't mention your demand for rags. If anyone reading this is getting dues out responses to demands for rags now you know who to blame! **Sig Kerry Johnston** who's been here since mid Feb and needs to go back to civilisation soon to fix her split ends. Last but not least a warm welcome to the departments heavyweight Champion from 3 Div, **Sgt Alan Macdonald** who thinks his purpose is to give everything away to anyone with a 3 Div Tricorn flash.

232 SIGNAL SQUADRON RETURN FROM KOSOVO

On Friday 16 July 1999 the soldiers of 232 Sig Sqn, 7 Sig Regt returned from Kosovo to Bradbury Barracks, Krefeld. The first Signal Squadron from ARRC to deploy on Op Agricola on 22 February 1999, they are now also the first to return. The Squadron deployed to Macedonia by air last February as the Vanguard of 7 Sig Regt expected to move quickly into Kosovo to provide Commander KFOR with his Tactical Headquarters and also to run communications at the Multi-National Brigade. As it turned out they had a long wait in Macedonia during which they undertook a great deal more than they expected. Not only did 232 Sig Sqn run communications for all the Brigades in Macedonia, they also provided all the ARRC radio and tactical satellite communications. At one point there were 240 soldiers from nine Royal Signal's units in the Squadron.

In April some of the Squadron deployed to Albania along with other members of the Regiment and soldiers from 3 (UK) Div Sig Regt for six





SSgt and Mrs D. Griffiths with the children

weeks to provide communications to the NATO force carrying out humanitarian relief there. In the six weeks in Albania they provided the only means of command to run the huge relief effort. Detachments were based right across the rugged and inhospitable country, including one at Kukes on the Kosovo border that handled the influx of hundreds of refugees. It was here that soldiers met **Tony Blair** and **Paddy Ashdown**. When **Gen Jackson** met the Serbian's for talks it was soldiers from the Squadron who provided his communications to the Prime Minister, SACEUR and the President of Finland. **Cpl Mark Gibbs** even leant the General the pen to sign the agreement.

Moving into Kosovo on D-Day the Squadron was turned back from the airport by the Russians and set up KFOR Tactical Headquarters in Pristina. This gave **Gen Jackson** the initial foot on the ground to show the world that NATO was in town. The next nine days were the culmination of months of waiting and practice as the Squadron ran the Headquarters without losing communications for one minute. During that time soldiers were surprised to see the hierarchy of the Serbian Orthodox Church turning up for talks, and the General in charge of Russian Forces, bringing with him a chance to look at a former Soviet Armoured Personnel Carrier close up. Talks continued to be the theme with the whole of the KLA high command visiting late at night to sign the agreement with KFOR. **Sgt Steve Pulman** was given a number by **James Ruben** of the US State Department who asked to be put through to the **President** and **Madeleine Albright** used to such things by now, he did so without fuss. Those soldiers who served with the French and Italian Brigades have many stories to tell. In the Italian Sector they provided a protection party for the Brigadier and deployed to the sites of mass graves. Those working with the French have seen their share of the action around Mitrovica and Podujevo.

As the Squadron returns the rest of the Regiment remains in Kosovo providing all the KFOR communications across the theatre of operations. 231 Sig Sqn has taken over from 232 Sig Sqn and are also running KFOR Headquarters. 229 Sig Sqn are providing the area communications and Headquarters Squadron is based in Pristina supporting the Field Squadrons. Everybody in 232 Sig Sqn feels proud of a job well done. The experiences the soldiers have had have exceeded anything they could have expected and they are now looking forward to some well earned leave.

ECHELON SKOPJE - FYROM

On the 14 April 1999 the annual R Signals Quartermasters Convention was held in the Corps Mess at Blandford. Being unable to attend that convention due to deployment on Op Agricola and not to be outdone **Maj Walley Drain** put together the SKOPJE convention. The following attended:

Lt Col A. Powell MBE, R Anglian (Guest)
Maj R. C. Yeomans MBE, R Signals
Maj P. Doherty MBE, R Signals
Maj R. O'Hara, R Signals
Maj W. J. Drain, R Signals
Capt P. Ladds, RE (Guest)
Capt M. Smith MBE, R Signals (Absent on Duty).

After a hearty meal, toasts to absent friends and much operational putting the world to rights all participants left with a warm glow. The photo shows all participants before the dinner.



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16 SIGNAL REGIMENT

OPERATION AGRICOLA - SAN 872 'WE ARE GOOD TO GO'

by Sigs Armitage and Perry

It was 0505hrs on 12 June and the moment NATO troops had been anticipating for months was finally upon us. H Hour had arrived! SAN 872 listened with bated breath as we heard on TacSat the words 'PEGASUS; we are good to go,' and the world watched in awe as 5 AB Bde took Pristina by storm. From that moment on mayhem reigned; the phone was constantly ringing, plans were made and then changed again, and our well-established set up was dismantled bit by bit. The SAN crew worked long into the night and early the next morning, until we were formed up within a single packet of 360 German vehicles, including tanks, amphibious and soft skinned vehicles. By 1830hrs that day, last minute alterations had been made and the German convoy and SAN 872 were also 'good to go!'

The journey began at a speed of 30kph. On reaching Skopje we were greeted by thousands of local people chanting 'Britannia' and 'NATO'. This all went to **Sig** 'Pez' **Perry's** head (as most things do) but he was soon brought down to earth with a bang as a fragmentation grenade exploded in front of his soft skinned SAS/MC shattering the windscreen and causing minor injuries. This was not the only vehicle to be damaged as more stones were hurled, one of which shattered the windscreen of the SCRA(T) sending a splinter of glass into **Sig** 'Bad hair day, every day' **Kenyon**'s eye, thankfully causing no major damage.... to the Rover! By 140035(L) June1999, the massive convoy had reached the Kosovo border - a 60km journey which had taken five hours. There was a short halt before we set off on the next stage of the journey into Kosovo itself. No one knew what to expect and a silent fear had spread across the whole convoy, which was not helped when we had to halt whilst a mine on the route was cleared. Luckily for us **Lt** 'Abbreviations' **Bruce** jumped out of her Rover and ran to each vehicle putting her life in her own hands to warn us not to step out of our wagons. The stress and strain of the long journey began to take its toll on **Sig** 'Blonde' **Evis**, luckily **Sig Perry** was alert, and calmly pointed out that there was a tank 20m ahead on the road, to which she replied 'your side or mine'! We then proceeded to play wacky races with the Germans as they sped off in their Mercedes soft skinned vehicles, leaving a panicking and bewildered **LCpl** 'Jurassic' **Stark** the arduous task of trying to catch up in a heavily loaded Radio Relay (luckily his pacemaker held up!) Bridges on route had to be, (time consuming), crossed one vehicle at a time. Whilst waiting to cross one such bridge, **Sig** 'Taff' **Powell** took the opportunity to check his eye lids for holes but was rudely awakened by a stray round flying past the windscreen, which had been discharged from a UCK soldier's weapon - he woke up pretty sharpish!!

Whilst we went through the front door, **Sgt** 'All right youth' **Hudson** had sneaked in through the back door of Albania the day before with the first German BG to recce the new HQ. He met up with us the next day and led us into our location. We then proceeded to prove the months of exercises around Germany and Greece had paid off, with SAN 872 being the first 1 Sig Bde SAN in Kosovo to establish comms. Ending on a serious note some SAN members have been able to visit war crime sites, and what they have reported back has made us realise why we are actually in Kosovo, and has made this long and arduous tour well worthwhile.

THE SCHOOL PROJECT - *by Sgt 'Chalky' White*

It was during one of the round trips to visit the out-dets that **Lt** 'Two can' **Connor** and **Sgt** 'Chalky' **White** received a phone call from OSC137. They wanted to know whether there was anything that the troops could do to help out the locals during this perilous time. As it happens the dynamic duo drove past a school, just outside the village of Matjce, everyday with around 50 children always outside awaiting their drive past, this was the children's cue to run out and chant 'NATO, NATO' over and over again whilst giving the victory sign.



There's always one who has to ruin the School photo! Sgt 'Chalky' White looking younger than some of the children of Matjce

The school was put forward as an idea and ten days later the go ahead was given to approach the school and ask what we could do. After acquiring the talents of **Mia** the friendly interpreter we visited the school and it didn't take long to see what needed to be done to the school just to make it safe for the local children to be taught in. With the ceiling falling in, the roof leaking and loose floorboards being uneven just to name a few things, this looked more like a job for 'Challenge Anneka' never mind a bunch of Signallers whose total skills in the building trade accumulated to a hod carrier and some labourers. After a few more visits with the interpreter it became apparent that a Royal Engineers perspective was required with regards to what work was required and in what order it should be done. Enter **Capt Howard** of the Royal Engineers, who looked around the school and promptly wrote out the 'Statement of Requirement'. Exit theatre **Lt** 'Three Can' **Connor** (he'd been upgraded by a can during the previous week) on his extended R 'n' R. During the following week the skills of **WO2 Scott** from the Royal Engineers were required with the drawing up of the plans and a listing of all the materials that would be required.



The young faces of the children of Matjce watching their school being rebuilt

It wasn't long after the plans had been drawn up that **Sgt** 'Chalky' **White** was doing his own planning, his escape from theatre. So after passing all the information on to the unsuspecting **WO2 RQMS Jim Alger**, introducing him to all the relevant people followed by a visit to the school to be accosted by all the children, **Sgt** 'Chalky' **White** left theatre with the RQMS champing at the bit. With the signing of the Peace Deal and the RQMS returning to JHQ for a well earned rest, it seemed that the project had been put on the back burner. That was until the Commanding Officer **Lt Col James** found the unsuspecting **Capt Glynn**, 'look at my Boxter' **Buxton** who, it is alleged will be taking on the project. Good luck Sir; I think you might need it.

SATISFIED SOLDIER SCHEME

- *Are you a satisfied soldier?*
- *Would you like to be attached to your home town ACIO for 5-10 days?*
- *Would you like to visit your old school and ACF to tell them about life in The Royal Signals?*
- *Would you like to help in recruiting soldiers into The Royal Signals?*

YES!!!

Then contact your Troop Office for details of
THE SATISFIED SOLDIER SCHEME

NEWS FROM NORTHERN IRELAND

XV HEADQUARTERS NORTHERN IRELAND & 15 SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO **Lt Col G. J. T. Rafferty**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) A. Balsdon**

The last couple of months have seen a busy time for the Regiment with the annual Province marching season. However, as you will see, we have still managed to fit a lot of activities in. The Province is still in a state of flux and training is still ongoing to combat every eventuality.

THE BIRTWISTLE PENNANT

HQNI & 15 Sig Regt are the proud winners of the 1998/99 Birtwistle Pennant, awarded to the Unit who has had the most outstanding sporting achievements over the previous season. The Unit was not expecting to be awarded the pennant, especially due to the restrictions imposed upon us due to our operational commitments. Regardless, we have still managed to send our sportsmen and women to many competitions and the Regiment has been represented in Northern Ireland, on the Mainland, in Germany, Denmark and also in Switzerland over the last year. The combined efforts of the Regiments' sportsmen and sportswomen have brought us not only trophies, but also recognition from the Corps and the Army that HQNI & 15 Sig Regt are not a team to be ignored, whatever the event may be. A brief summary of the sports participated in and results achieved is listed below:

Athletics:	Female runners up in NI, qualified for the Army Championships.
Basketball:	Female runners up in the NI Competition.
Cricket:	Winners of the NI League and Cup.
Cross-Country:	Winners of the Male and Female NI League and relay championships. Female winners of the NI half marathon team event. Individuals deserving mention are **Capt Guy Benson**, the reigning Service Half Marathon **veteran** champion, **Cpl Louise Phillips**, the NI female champion and **Sgt Dave Killgallon**, who was selected to Captain the Corps Team.
Golf:	Winners of the Corps Championships in the autumn meet at Blandford.
Lanyard Trophy:	The Regiment's Female team achieved second place.
Orienteering:	Male and Female runners up in the NI League and the NI Championships, the female winner being **Maj Jean Ebling**. The Male team were runners up of the Royal Signals Championships, where the Female team were the winners.
Rugby:	Winners of the Army 7's Plate.
Sailing:	Winners of the Royal Signals Yacht Club (Germany) Regatta. Runners up in the Army UK Regatta and the Army Sailing Association (NI) Regatta.
Skiing:	**Capt Liz Dallyn** was Second in the Corps Skiing Championships and **SSgt Rob Allen** was the Corps Veteran Champion at the Kaprun Ski Camp.
Soccer:	Runners up in the NI League, the NI 6-A-Side Competition and the Royal Signals 7-A-Side Competition. The female team was Tenth in the Army Championships.
Squash:	**SSgt (FofS) Swift** was the winner of the Corps Championship Plate in November 1998.
Swimming:	NI winners, **Capt Jules McColl** was Fifth in the Inter-Services Long Distance Swimming Championships and first within the Corps.
Swiss Patrol Competition:	27th out of 72.
Tennis:	Female runners up in the NI Championships.
Tug of War:	Winners of the Morrison Cup, Silver medals from the Royal Tournament, Army Championships and NI Championships.
Triathlon:	Second in both the Army Olympic Distance Championships and the Army Sprint Distance Championships.
Waterpolo:	Army Champions.

In summary, the Regiment has had an outstanding sporting year. Congratulations go to all sportsmen and women who were involved in the winning of the Birtwistle Pennant.



Sports men and women from HQNI & 15 Sig Regt

KEEP IN TOUCH – PUBLISH IT IN THE WIRE



Front Row: Capt Bennett, Lt Col Duncan, Lt Col Rafferty, Capt Lamb, WO1(SSI) Shaw
Back Row: SSgt Peal, Sgt Benson, WO2(FofS)Jenkins, Sgt Bradley, Sgt Newman, Sgt Bremner
Absent on duty, Capt Hargreaves, Sgt Wood

WATER-POLO CHAMPIONSHIPS(A) *by WO2 (FofS) A. G. Jenkins*

Following the success of the 1998 season which saw HQNI & 15 Signal Regiment win the UK Army & Army Water Polo Championships, a lavish prediction was made by team captain, **Capt Chris Lamb,** Int Corps; 'We'll win all three next year' meaning the NI Water-Polo, UK Army and Army Championships, a challenge which was quickly taken up by the CO. Training began back in March with the team members assembling every Tuesday night for our weekly torture from team trainer **Sgt Roger Bradley.** The Squad was pretty strong, having lost a couple of players from the previous year, through posting, we had gained a couple of experienced players in their place. On paper we had quite a strong team with seven or eight Corps/Army standard players. Training went well and we were eager to get under way.

NORTHERN IRELAND SWIMMING & WATER POLO CHAMPIONSHIPS - 24/25 MAY

The NI Championships began with the Swimming on the 24th. We weren't very hopeful as the average age of the team was closer to 40 than 20, however, the training had obviously paid off and a victory in the medley relay sealed an unexpected win. The Water-polo Championships took place on the 25th, in the format of a round robin league system. It became quickly evident that ourselves and 2 Regt RMP were the two strongest teams in the competition and the game between the two sides would ultimately decide the championships. When the game did come it was not as close as expected, some superb defending by **Capt Chris Lamb,** Int Corps and **Lt Col Duncan,** Int Corps ensured that 2 RMP's key players were unable to make any impact on the game. Goals from **SSgt Andy Peal,** RE, **WO1 (SSI) Shaw** and **WO2 (FofS) Jenkins** ensured a 12 - 5 victory. This ensured a place in the UK Army finals at Aldershot. One down two to go!

UK ARMY WATER POLO CHAMPIONSHIPS - 14/15 JUNE

Accommodated in what was by then 'Ghost town Aldershot' due to Kosovo deployments, the venue for the UK Army finals had been switched and they were now held at RESE Minley Manor. The Water-polo was held on 14 June and with eight teams entered, a round robin league system was again used. Again two teams quickly emerged as strong favourites, 11 Signal Regiment and ourselves. The game between the sides was an eagerly contested affair, which we eventually ran out 13-5 winners. With a couple of games then played against weaker opposition we finished the tournament having played seven and won seven, two down one to go!

ARMY WATER POLO CHAMPIONSHIPS - 23 JUNE 1999

The Army finals are meant to be contested by the winners and runners up of the UK Army and the BFG Army Water polo Championships. However, due to operational commitments the first three sides from the UK Army Championships contested the championships. It is true to say that this did take a little away from the proceedings but the three teams concerned entered and provided an excellent competition. The teams involved were, HQNI and 15 Sig Regt, 11 Sig Regt and 1 QLR. It was decided to hold a round robin competition again, we played the QLR first winning 12-3 and then 11 Sig Regt beating them 8-4. So the scene was set for a Royal Signals Army final. 11 Sig Regt had drafted in a number of old war horses (notably all FofS) and were much more competitive than at the UK finals. However our strengths proved to be superior again and we ran out 12-7 winners. Again notable performances from **SSgt Aidy Peal,** RE and **Capt Chris Lamb,** Int Corps shored up the defence and ensured a good supply of goals. So that was it, all three competitions successfully won, a testament to good training, preparation and pre-match Donar Kebabs with extra chilly sauce! Army call ups followed for **Capt Chris Lamb, WO1 (SSI) Shaw** and **WO2 (FofS) Jenkins**, and HQNI and 15 Sig Regt are the first ever Royal Signals team to retain the Army Water polo Championships, see you next year.

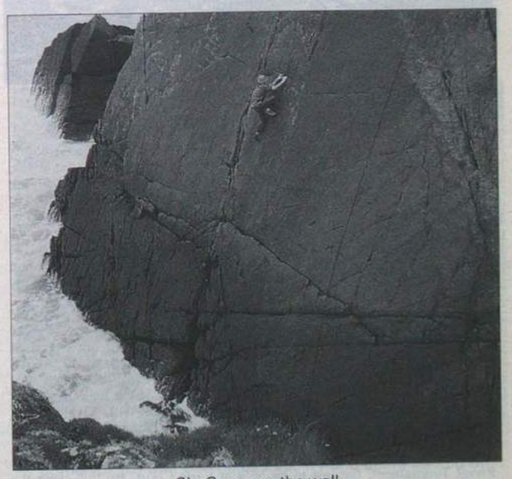
EXERCISE MERCURY FINN 1999

The Regimental Adventure Training Camp for 1999 was based at Brawdy, deepest Wales, with everyone enjoying (most of the time) the delights of trekking in the Brecon Beacons, sea kayaking, climbing, mountain biking and coasteering. The trekking phase was only 2½ days long but most people were fairly exhausted by the end of it and felt like they had been walking for days. The hills were steep, the weather surprisingly hot and teddy launches were in full bombardment. Camping was of a rudimentary nature, basically a field, shared with a significant number of sheep, although it was the midge swarms which were the most testing aspect of the site. Short straws had to be drawn as to who would be first out of their tent in the mornings as they were instantly ravaged by swarms of ravenous insects.

The sea kayak, with a night spent on a remote beach, proved to be challenging and exhilarating. Lots of exploring of caves, riding water shoots and praying that a capsize would not happen were the order of the day. Being about as stable as sitting on a greased pole, the kayaks needed willpower to stay upright. On the first week the seas were rather larger than expected in the morning, resulting in a mass of capsizes, tired arms and pounding hearts, and that was just to get off the beach! The climbing was performed on sea cliffs, giving a dramatic backdrop and a significant incentive to getting back up the rocks. A couple of people were almost caught out at the bottom and many had 'disco leg' on the way up, even some riggers! The climbing theme was continued with the coasteering. This was, without doubt, the highlight of the exercise for all those who took part. The sea was bitterly cold, but 'character building' and many tested their nerve with the jumps into the sea. Even a couple of non-swimmers could not resist the temptation to leap lemming like from the rocks.



This is normal?!



Sig Green on the wall

RACE THE SUN 1999

This year's Race The Sun was to be a bit of an 'on the buses' affair due to the uncertainty caused by the developing situation in Kosovo. In true Signals style 2 Sig Regt came up with a compromise in the form of a reduced 8-leg event rather than the usual 16-leg race. Being one of only two Signal Regiments not involved in Kosovo getting a team together did

not present too many problems, however, getting there and finding somewhere to stay did. After much time spent on the phone **SSgt Bri Gillies** turned down the kind offer of 2 Sigs Gym floor in favour of 5 star en-suite accommodation (not quite) provided at Ripon and the use of the cookhouse. Many thanks to **WO2 Dunn** and **Donna McLeese** at HQ Ripon Station. With the team arriving safely in Ripon and settled into the accommodation, it didn't take long to get familiarised with our surroundings (check out the pubs). The recces were complete, everyone knew what they were doing and we were eager to get started.

Race day and things could not have been better. There was no daft o'clock start, the weather was perfect and one of our team hadn't turned up for the half marathon! The Adjt **Capt** 'Guy' **Bennett** and **Cpl** 'Plod' **Wardle** were first up on the arduous tab from Sutton Bank on a day that was getting warmer by the minute. The heat took its toll and both looked extremely relieved to see the end. **Capt B** finishing ahead of the much younger **Cpl Wardle** - more effort please! Next up was **Cpl** 'Knuckles' **Nichols** who set a good time running across the Yorkshire countryside, handing over to our stand in marathon runner, **Sgt** 'Ginge' **Davey,** who 'volunteered' at the eleventh hour to fill in. This turned out to be a good move as he finished in first place five minutes ahead of the nearest competitor!

SSgt Bri Gillies and **LCpl Aide Field** were astonished to see **Sgt Davey** so soon and set off trying to maintain the momentum on their trusty (but expensive) steeds, finishing the course in a creditable 5th place. It was now the turn of **Sgt** 'Stu' **Murray** and **Cpl Louise Philips** to do their best on the moor run. This they completed with no major problems and in good time to hand over to **SSgt** 'Bri' **Wilkins** and **Cpl** 'Sunny' **Hardy** for the daunting fell run. Both completed the run with **Cpl Hardy** picking up an injury to her knee, rumoured to have occurred the night before involving a hole in the road on the way back from the pub, but that's another story. **Cpl Tim Rigby** set off for the cycle orienteering on his mountain bike and no amount of persuasion could get him to change to a road bike. This would later prove to be a saving grace as the marshals sent him the wrong way up the farm track to the end, instead of to the start of the swim, which cost precious minutes. At least he didn't tell the other competitors on his way back down the said track! The final unenviable leg involving jumping into the Great Lake went to **Sgt** 'Stu' **Murray** completing this years attempt in a total accumulated time of 8hrs 15mins. In the end the team raised £500 for charity and was placed sixth overall, a big improvement on last year. All said and done everyone enjoyed themselves immensely and are hoping to get involved again next year.



The Race the Sun Team

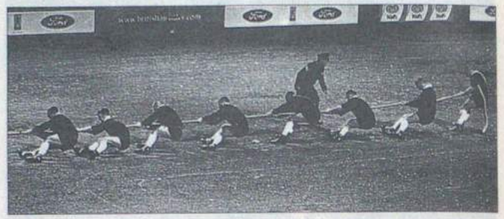
15 SIGNAL REGIMENT TUG OF WAR

The 15 Sig Regt Tug of war team have had a successful season, mainly due to the leadership of the coach, **Sgt Jimmy Fox**. A motivated coach, he controlled our food and alcohol intake to ensure that the team did not lose or gain any weight, unfortunately this was a 'do as I say and not as I do' rule. The season started with the winning of the Morrison Cup in Blandford, after a close run battle with the team from 14 Sig Regt (EW). This was followed by the Northern Ireland Championships, where the Regiment gained Silver Medals in the 600, 640 and 680kg events and also qualified the team for the Army Championships at South Cerney where the Regiment gained a Fourth place in the 680kg competition.

The entire squad, under the wings of **SSgt Jim Duncan** was sent to the Corps Tug of War trials at Bulford. Under the auspices of **Sgt Pete Halsted** and **Cpl Matt Cowlard**, there was some hard but excellent training carried out. Two weeks of hard training soon paid off and the whole of the 15 Sig Regt squad was called to represent the Corps in at least one of the four weight categories. For some of the team members including **LCpl Robson, LCpl Kenny Haliday, Sig Kev Orr** and **Sig** 'Paddy' **Grills** this was their first season at Tug of War and to be selected to represent the Corps was a major achievement.

The highlight of the season so far, has been the participation in the Royal Tournament, the last to be held at Earls Court. By this stage the team had been reduced due to operational commitments and the posting of a number of more experienced team members. Regardless, the team was undaunted and accepted the invitation to the tournament, where there were a record nine teams taking part, including 17 Port and Maritime Regt RLC who has Corps, Army and Inter Service championships. After much hard work and determination, the team managed a 5th place in the 600kg class and a gold medal in the 620kg competition. This was an excellent finale as not only had we won a gold medal in the final Earls Court competition but the Regiment had gained nine silver medals over the previous four years and this was our first gold.

The Regiment would like to pass on its thanks to those who filled the empty places in the squad, left due to operational commitments, in particular **WO2 (SSM) Tony Manktelow, Sgt Brian McRacken, Cpl Lance Beaton** and **Cpl Daz Mordecai.**



15 Sig Regt winning the Gold Medal for the 620kg at Earls Court

233 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj Richard Giles**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM)Dunseith**

EXERCISE BARNACLE FINN

Ex Barnacle Finn was an India Tp Adventurous Sail Training Exercise held off the Danish coast as part of the annual Royal Signals Yacht Club (Germany) Sail Training Week (STW).

The Exercise was to start and finish at Kiel, using the Najad 33ft Yachts chartered from the British Kiel Yacht Club. Prior to our arrival at Kiel, we had to conduct our own minor exercise, which was the transiting of Northern Ireland, Scotland, England, France, Belgium, Holland and finally, Germany. After a pleasant 27hr drive (broken up with a night in transit accommodation kindly supplied by 1 (UK) ADSR in Herford) we finally arrived at Kiel and met our Skipper for the next 11 days, **Maj Mark Butler** or 'Skippy' as he was to be known. The first activity was an introduction to the boat and her safety equipment, including the very basic points (the bow is the pointy end, the tall thing is the mast etc) for our novice sailors. Once this had been completed, our next task was to have a quick introductory sail around the entrance to Kieler Fjord before returning to stock the boat with its essentials - bread, water, milk, cereals and a beer or two.

The STW involved four other yachts, with participants from 1 (UK) ADSR, 30 Sig Regt, 11 Sig Bde and 7 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn in addition to ourselves. The next day was a training sail from Kiel to Sonderborg, during which the basic principles of sailing and lessons on how to manoeuvre the boat were carried out. Although the sea was relatively smooth the mate, **Capt Gareth Oliver** and two of the crew soon felt that they decided that the fish were hungry and that it was feeding time. In the best traditions of army life, a great deal of sympathy was issued out, in particular to **Sig Nigel Green** and **Cpl Martin-Woodgate** both of whom were feeding the fish on a regular basis throughout that first day. We arrived at Sonderborg all feeling tired from a day at sea, during which we had noticed that our mast was attempting to dislodge itself from the yacht and a number of securing bolts had sheared off. A new boat was to be sent up from Kiel overnight and we all headed ashore refreshed in the knowledge that it was a Saturday night and that Sonderborg was a lively town.

Sunday morning came around with a number of sore heads that had not anticipated a bright and early start and the transfer of all of our equipment to the new Yacht. From this day and until the end of the STW, each voyage was to be a race. Today's leg would take us to the town of Middlefahrt. With an initial poor start to the race, which we blamed upon being unfamiliar with our new yacht we soon started to work our way through the fleet, finishing a creditable third out of five. Over the next four races, we repeated this performance, starting last and finishing third on each occasion. One of the best days throughout the STW was the full day spent at Horsens Yacht Club. For some unknown reason, the visit of the Royal Signals Flotilla has become an annual date in their diary and they kindly organised a full day of racing 'round the cans' for us. Their hospitality and kindness was much appreciated by all of us.

As we were all having a great time, enjoying the days sailing, combined with an occasional run ashore the week soon flew by. Before realising it, it was Thursday morning. To qualify as an adventurous training expedition, we had to complete a full sail through the hours of darkness. We decided to complete this, departing from Arhus for a voyage to Svendborg, a trip of approximately 80 nautical miles. Our ETA was to be approximately 0900hrs the following morning. Although the Baltic is not tidal, it still possesses many unusual current flows, but for once, they were on our side and pushed us towards our destination at an additional two knots for the majority of the journey. This allowed us to navigate our way up a narrow and shallow channel into Svendborg at 0300hrs on the Friday morning and to spend the remainder of the night at anchor.

The next day was unusual in that although the weather and the wind were similar to previous days, the 15 Sig Regt yacht actually won a race and by a large margin. This was followed by a final race from Marstal to Kiel, where sadly our performance returned to its previous form. The following day was the worst of any Exercise, the dreaded hand back of the boats. Once again we faced the long drive back to the Province. After a mammoth 28 hour drive we finally made it back to Lisburn.

40 (ULSTER) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO	**Lt Col A. P. R. Roberts MBE**
RSM	**WO1 (RSM) C. G. McGinley**

Congratulations to **2Lts Lindsay Docherty** and **Wayne Nickels** on passing the TA Commissioning Course in July and to **Lt David Wilson** on his promotion.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

The Regiment was assessed as a unit of 107 (Ulster) Brigade on 23 May. We are very happy to report that the Brigade has passed the assessment. Congratulations all round, but don't let up on the good work, the next assessment, or 'healthcheck' is in about 15 months time. There is still much to improve!

DEPARTURES & ARRIVALS

There has been a massive turnover of personnel and the sad loss of a number of stalwart attendees as a result of SDR. We say farewell to **WO2 (SSM) George Cook, SSgt Harrow** and **Sgt Andy Leishman** on discharge from the TA, and to **SSgt** 'Herbie' **Johnson** on his move and promotion to 152 Regt. **Sgt Welch** has left on posting, good luck in the new job and **WO2** (now WO1) **(YofS) Paul Rose** has moved on promotion (but we'll be back to haunt him). **SSgt Barrass** and **Shani** have moved to Blandford, good luck to them both (and to Angus and Robbie), and **Sgt Charlie Rigg** has also moved on posting but into a new trade as well, so good luck as well. Our new arrivals are not quite so plentiful, however, welcome to **WO2 (YofS) Eddie Yates** and **SSgt John Voss** (our new Tiffy). Good luck at 40.

SUPPORT SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj V. Beggs REME (V)**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Lynda Whitley**

ANNUAL CAMP 99 - 12-26 JUNE

Annual Camp for 1999 was in two phases. Firstly we had the field exercises at Altcar, Ex First Try, and then Ex Able Condor, and secondly we had the trade training element at Altcar. Ex First Try was the brainchild of the Regimental Yeoman, **WO2 (YofS) Paul Rose** and his Ops Team. This was designed to practise and shake out the Regiment in preparation for Able Condor. It covered all aspects of military and command post training. The Regiment returned to one of its old hunting grounds - Altcar Training Camp near Southport. We welcomed many new personnel, who transferred from local TA units that were disbanded under SDR. The trade training was a vital part of our Annual Camp programme as we endeavoured to retrain the new members of the Regiment and the squadron in particular. Altcar is ideal for what we wanted to achieve. It also provides excellent training facilities. More importantly it is only a short train ride to Southport and Blackpool, both excellent nights out!



The Regimental Echelon



QM(V) Capt Maurice Stanley inspecting the damage to the OC, Maj Victor Beggs's leg while Capt Tom Dick looks on!!

On Ex Able Condor, held on the East side of England, between Grantham and Catterick, the Squadron was to be split into two echelons, something we had practised briefly in 1998. The Squadron received credit for its efforts from the staff. It was a case of all change in CP Ech as all but the outgoing SSM were new to the job, however, everyone settled in quickly. **Capt Tom Dick**, late of 74 Fd Sqn RE(V) must have thought he had joined a madhouse, things being so hectic at times. The Exercise proved to be quite hectic for many of our new recruits and even some of our more established soldiers. **Sigs Leslie-Anne** and **Janine Dougan** arriving in Week Two barely got a chance to catch their breath, such was the pace of the first four days.



The Dougan's find the pace a wee bit heavy

On completion of the exercise the Regiment were to recover to West Freugh camp near Stranraer via Warcop, a place many old hands remember from their R Signals SSgt courses. The MT SSgt, **SSgt** 'Ginge' **Coburn** must have thought that all his nightmares had come at once, when his chosen RV for the rolling deplen at Warcop was found to be full of Challenger tanks. All in all Annual Camp 1999 was a great success with just about everyone getting something out of it. The only sad note is losing so many of our members on posting and discharge.

66 (CITY OF BELFAST) SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj R. G. Butler**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Irvine**

Capt Andy Woods is to star in a new film after the final attack on the FIBUA village at Altcar. The film is to be called 'A Blistered Hand on a Smoking Barrel', the film so named after **Capt Woods** decided to disarm the enemy by wrenching a rifle from one adversary with a strong hand. The rest is history.



Comd 107 (U) Bde visiting Ex First Try and being briefed by Lt Ian Craig

EAN 557, an attachment from 85 Sqn, decided that the combined communication assets of 11 Bde was not enough to complete the task set for them. Using a Band II they enlisted the considerable might of the local taxi firm. Not receiving any tips for their trouble **2Lt Sam Burgess, SSgt Clasper** and company issued a statement declaring that it's not FARE! **LCpl Hanna** turned 30 during this camp. EAN 554 were in the

field at the time but this did not deter them from putting on a party for him that was second to none. **Cpl Lyttle** and **Cpl Small** must have been out of wind blowing up so many balloons. The same balloons were spotted hanging out of the back of a landrover as it made its way up the A1 towards Scotland after Endex.

The most emotional moment during camp was the long awaited and most deserved promotion of **Cpl Herridge**. In time honoured tradition on Regimental parade the CO stated that a soldier on his parade was improperly dressed. He called on **Cpl Herridge** to break ranks, march out to him and receive her third tape and rectify the situation. On hearing this command **Cpl Herridge's** jaw dropped, her face went a bright red colour and her eyes filled with tears. Meanwhile the rest of the Squadron were fighting back the tears, so much so that Acting SSM, **SSgt McClean** has earned the nickname 'tiny tears'. Now that there are two Sgt Herridges, the other one won't be able to blame the RSM so often!!

66 (City of Belfast) Sig Sqn would like to wish **SSgt Barrass** and his good wife **Shani**, and their wee babies **Angus** and **Robbie** all the very best in their new posting. During his three year stay, **Mark Barrass** proved himself invaluable to the Squadron.

3 INFANTRY BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (203)

OC **Maj S. K. MacRostie MBE**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) S. Cheslett**

COMMUNICATONS TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt F. D. Guthrie**
Tp SSgt **SSgt R. Wallace**

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION - THE SENDERS

Prior to the annual chaos which is Drumcree, the members of the COMMCEN and Syscon had the chance to let their hair down at the Squadron Summer Function. The theme for the evening was officially Italian, however judging by the dress of some individuals the unofficial line was a 'Gangsters and Molls' night. Some very commendable efforts were made on the fancy dress front, especially our very own 'Muddy Funkster' **Sig** 'Slick' **Frost.** Robert De Niro hasn't a thing on the man! However, a special hearty round of applause must go to the Troop OC, **Lt Forbes Guthrie** on his send-up of 007's old enemy, Ernst Stavros Blofeld. A fetching shower cap accompanied by a haggard old dead ferret strapped to his wrist. Outstanding effort Sir. The caps of the Troop are tipped in your general direction! An all round thanks must go to **SSgt Andy James** of the Bde HQ for the organisation of an excellent function, thoroughly enjoyed by all. For those of you in the Corps without a TV, the widely anticipated problems of Drumcree never really surfaced and a relatively smooth operation ensued. It was however, a good insight into the functions of Syscon/COMMCEN for the many newcomers amongst us. Hopefully the learning curve wasn't too steep. The Brigade Commander praised us for our efforts, leaving us all feeling that we had completed a successful operation. As a reward for the effort put in by all members of the Brigade, the Sqn OC generously arranged for a BBQ in the Whynge Inn. The night also gave us the opportunity to integrate the new arrivals in Syscon and the COMMCEN. These included **Sig Kerry O'Connor** and **Sig Warren Adkins,** fresh from Butlins Garrison. Also **Cpl Si** 'Missing' **Link,** fresh from mothering the future of the Corps at ATR Bassingbourn.

TECHNICAL MAINTENANCE SECTION - THE MENDERS

TM Section has been busy with the build up, the event, and the scale down of radio comms for Drumcree 1999. However, some of us did get out of camp and down to some action. Namely the 'P4' crew, **Cpl Gaz Hobson, Cpl Dean** 'You'll never take me alive copper' **Morgan** and **Cpl** 'Sally' **Webster.** We deployed with different Infantry Companies and can chalk up two confirmed operational brickings on Galvachy Road; do we get an extra medal?? Life goes on and so does the maintenance schedule.

POSTINGS IN & POSTINGS OUT

Sig Jim Wright, Sig Gordon Pyrah and **Sig** 'Scan' **Brock -** IN.

Cpl Cec Mason aka **Miss Cecilia Mary Mason**, who leaves us upon promotion to Civ Div, **Cpl** 'Brummy' **Baker** and wife **Elaine**, who are posted to 1 Div, 211 Sig Sqn upon his retrade to Driver 1ights on, lights off' Electrician. 'Brummy' has said he will be earning his Line Belt. **Sgt** 'Nobby' **Noble** leaves TM Section to go across the road to Ops where he takes up the post of Sites Manager with local SSgt, congratulations. Out of the frying pan into the fire! Lastly, **Cpl** 'Sally' **Webster** also defects across the road to become Assistant BTLO as a Sgt in the Royal Corps.

SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS
Admin Offr **Capt P. T. Connors**
Chief Clerk **SSgt R. Evans**

We have a couple of new additions to the staff. A warm welcome to **Cpl Will Bennett** from HQNI and to **Pte Charmaine** 'Are you talking to me' **Frazer** straight from training. We all hope that they enjoy their tours with the Squadron. We must also say a sad farewell to **Cpl Andy Sneddon** who leaves us for civvy street after 12 years. We wish him a happy and successful second career. On a lighter note, the golf bug has hit SHQ with the Chief Clerk, **SSgt Rob Evans**, and the 'pay bloke' **Sgt Stu Adair** grabbing every opportunity whilst the weather is reasonable. The RSM, **WO1 Stu Cheslett** has not so much caught the bug as caught a virus which he can't get out of his system, if he's not in his office he must be playing golf. We must say thank you to our **Trg Sgt Paul Coates** for organising an excellent Ladies Dinner Night recently. A great night was had by all. This was proven by the amount of people who turned up for work the next day!

CORPS ORIENTEERING CHAMPIONSHIPS

After the usual thorough preparation and intensive training, we bomb burst from Armagh and made our way to sunny South Wales. It was hard to believe, but all team members managed to meet up at the start of Day One: the individual event. As you would expect for a Bank Holiday combined with Wales, the setting was wet and grey. It had obviously followed us from Ireland to make us feel at home. Unperturbed and ignoring the rain, the team, consisting of **WO2 (FofS) Mick** 'Lets take this seriously' **Cowie, Sgt Chris** 'Slow but sure' **Bailey, Sgt Billy** 'I'm not an alcoholic' **Boston** and **Cpl Sally** 'Lets drink some more beer' **Webster** headed of into the woods. We all managed to get round, some faster than others, with no one confessing to have had a brilliant run. However, at the start of Day Two, don't ask us how, but we held a slight lead. Fresh from the previous night's carbo-loading and Public Relations with the locals, we set about maintaining our slender lead. **WO2 (FofS) Mick Cowie** led us off, and although not first back he had given us a good start. Looking slightly worst for wear, **Sgt Chris Bailey** headed off next. He caused most concern, taking longer than expected to complete his leg. He wanted to make sure he didn't miss a checkpoint! Last off on the pressure leg was **Sgt Billy Boston.** He started off at breakneck speed - more of a jog and almost finished at a crawl, but had managed to cross the line in first place. This was a great result and completed a treble of Northern Ireland League, Northern Ireland Minor Unit and Corps Minor Unit Champions. This may prove a hard task to defend next year, but we have already started training in the Squadron Bar.

8 INFANTRY BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNALS SQUADRON (218)

Sqn Comd **Maj Jake Thackray**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) Paul Flemming**

THE SQUADRON CHALLENGE - 1999
by Sgt D. Blair

Earlier in the year I was tasked by the Officer Commanding to organise a 'Krypton Factor' style competition for members of the Squadron. The competition would run over a series of weeks and culminate in a grand final held in the Squadron bar. Phase 1 of the competition ran on a knockout basis. In order to ensure maximum participation in the initial phase all events were run on three different days in the last three weeks of April. The competition was designed to test physical and mental agility, hand-eye co-ordination, general knowledge and Province specific skills. The aim was to have a fun but

69 (NORTH IRISH HORSE) SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj W. B. Houston**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) McKnight**

Congratulations go to **LCpl Sims** and his team for coming third in the basketball as part of 107 Bde's summer sports competition held at Lisburn at the start of June. The Squadron deployed with the rest of the Regiment to Summer Camp on the 12th June. The Squadron provide two detachments to 11 Bde and provided a very successful net throughout the Exercise, using KIPLING properly for the first time. You can keep the trends, we'll keep the KIPLING!

WO2 Billy Lyle, Cpl Moore and **LCpl George** along with EAN 547 got the short straw, as on the last night and morning of the exercise the EAN was attacked by our own enemy, and soldiers from 19 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn with armour, blanks and pyro. After the battle was won! and the prisoners had been returned we made our way back to Warcop to refuel and deplen on the way to West Freugh prior to catching the ferry home. Our two PSIs **SSgt Harry Harrison** and **Sgt Dave Evans** stayed at Altcar (too rough in the field for them) and trained eight new members of the Squadron to become operators and technicians.

challenging competition that would also provide an excuse for a few social evenings in the Squadron bar.

Phase 1 consisted of five events. The first was a driving competition that required competitors to control a Saxon around a pre-set course both as a commander and driver. The second test examined competitors hand-eye co-ordination using a racing car simulation exercise on a computer. The third test was a pistol shoot, the fourth a general knowledge quiz and the fifth a BPFA. The first phase was a great success. The Saxon drive proved to be fairly difficult for most, the MT, not surprisingly, put in a fine performance. The computer car racing proved quite taxing with some spectacular crashes. The average score for the general knowledge quiz was around 50% which was a good result considering the difficulty of the questions and contrary to popular belief none of the questions were repeated. Most of the scores in the pistol shoot were fairly low but points were gained in the excellent BPFA results. The top ten competitors from Phase 1 were transported to a local training area to compete in the semi-final.

The ten semi-finalists arrived with some trepidation as they had little idea of what lay ahead. Their first event was designed to test mental agility and memory so the Weapons Intelligence Section gave a presentation on four weapons in the terrorist arsenal. The competitors were expected to memorise five facts about each weapon without making notes and without knowing when they would be questioned. The second test was an individual shoot using an unfamiliar weapon, a FNC 2000. Generally the standard of shooting was very high, although the penalty points deducted for completely missing a target resulted in most competitors receiving negative scores. The competitors were also given 100 logic problems, courtesy of MENSA, which were to be completed before lunch. The afternoon concentrated on physical tests which included a navigation exercise and an assault course. Out of the ten semi-finalists four would go forward for the grand final which was held that evening in the Squadron bar.

The evening's proceedings began with a summary of the day's events and the announcement of the following finalists: **Maj Jake Thackray, Sgt Kev Cooney, Sgt Eddie Porter** and **LCpl James Bond.** The final started off with questions on the four weapons from the semi-final round and then a general knowledge quiz. The finalists were tested on their observation skills, on a short piece of film, and their fitness on the rowing machine. After a hard fought contest the results were: in first place **Maj Thackray,** in second place **LCpl Bond,** third was **Sgt Cooney** and finally **Sgt Porter.** The OC decided he was 'too old' for the first prize, Sony playstation, so he passed it down to the second prize winner and so on, therefore **Sig Steve Baxter** who was in fifth place was also awarded a prize. Well done to all those who participated and well done also to those who helped in the organisation.



Sig Steve Baxter firing the FNC2000

EXERCISE LADY WARRIOR - JUNE 1999
by WO1 (RSM) Flemming

It was a dark rainy morning and Shackelton Barracks resounded to the sound of marching feet. The sound, however, was not generated by the soldiers of 1 RWF, but the ladies of 8 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn on Ex Lady Warrior. The Exercise is a unique opportunity for the wives of those serving in 8 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn to have a little fun and experience aspects of army life. The Exercise began with some drill. We could not have the ladies starting on the wrong foot now could we! The ladies executed a myriad of drill movements under the watchful eye of the RSM. It was then onto the minibuses and off to the first of the five stands organised for the day.

Stand One was on the range firing the SA80 rifle and 9mm pistol under the guidance of **WO2 Tom (MTWO) Hair.** After gentle coaching from **Cpl Al** 'Mac' **MacDonald** and **Cpl** 'Brummie' **Flute** the award for best shot went to **Lynn Duncan.** It should however be mentioned that **SSgt Tony Taylor** challenged his wife **Andrea** to a shooting match and lost; it just shows that behind every good man there is an even better woman. Stand Two was in the Small Arms Trainer and after engaging the enemy in a number of scenarios **Caroline Snowdin** emerged as best shot. At Stand Three the ladies were put through their paces behind the wheel. Under the expert instruction of **LCpl Amanda Rowland** the wives learnt and practised the art of skid car driving. By Stand Four the weather had improved and the ladies under the watchful eye of **Cpl Dave Rabbage** and **Cpl** 'Johnno' **Johnson** were taught how to command and drive a Saxon Armoured Fighting Vehicle. This stand required co-ordination and a loud voice, both of which very evident in **Vera Hair.** Stand Five was the RSM's Mystery Stand and on cue a Puma helicopter landed. After the initial safety brief it was time for the ladies to board the helicopter for a trip up and around the Giant's Causeway returning only after the pilots had performed a few tricks.

To allow the ladies to relax and a chance to dine in style Menus A and D from an ORP were produced. **Cpl Flute** explained the contents of each menu and how to cook them. It was the 10 Lambert and Butler cigarettes and salt and vinegar crisps that made a few of the ladies suspicious. **Jackie Harkness,** the Chief of Staff's wife complained that, 'We never got this in a 24hr rat pack when I was in the Army'. After a pleasant evening it was time for the night navigation but unfortunately the weather had deteriorated to torrential rain. The phrase, 'If it ain't raining, it ain't training springs to mind!

Day Two proved to be an opportunity for the natural born leaders to come to the fore. Command tasks were the order of the day under the critical eyes of **Cpl Rabbage** and **Cpl Johnson.** The second event of the day was a personal security brief and then on to the EOD demonstration. The last stop was the Bubble gym, where the ladies were confronted by **Sig** 'Watch my hair' **Prigmore,** to sample the delights of an indoor assault course and circuit training. Then it was unfortunately time to change from DPMs to aprons and meet the families in the Beeches Bar for a well earned drink and buffet. The general consensus was that they had all survived a great weekend and wanted to know when the next one was!



The Ladies
Front Row: Lynn Duncan, Sally Cheetham, Tina Pringle, Caroline Snowdin, Jennifer Johnson, Vera Hair, Heather Fleming
Back Row: Karen Williams, Jackie Harkness, Rachel Thackray, Anita Coupland, Liz Cooney, Karen Oliver, Andrea Stanley, Andrea Taylor

QUARTERMASTERS DEPARTMENT - *by L Cpl Shillito*
RQMS **WO2 (RQMS) Kev Tunstall**

The department would like to welcome **LCpl Mick** 'Gwar' **May,** who has joined us from 23 (V) SAS Regt and also a big QM's 'Hello' to **Cpl** 'Offle' **North,** who joined us from the Airborne Storeman Regt.

The happy bunch of worker ants in the RQMS Department have been busy redecorating the offices. Out went the magnolia and we are now coming to terms with quite a radical sky blue. Happy and revitalised after the painting **LCpl** 'Spaced out' **Shillito** and his side kick **Pte Morris** were ordered to man a sanger in the middle of the loyalist marching season. All that was heard from the sanger was the sound of giggling. So much so, that they put the Apprentice Boys off their flute playing. The Department has also opened a dog sanctuary and kennels for members of the Squadron. **LCpl** 'Galli' **Gallimore** is rarely seen without 'man's best friend'. The RQMS has been helping out **Sgt Karl Duncan** and his dog's slim fast plan. We are currently taking bookings for dogs, cats and lizards in our newly painted 'R kennels' Department.

MOTOR TRANSPORT TROOP - *by Cpl Mark Guest*
Tp Comd **WO2 Tom (MTWO) Hair**
Tp Sgt **Sgt** 'Stan' **Stanley**

Despite a relatively quiet marching season, it has been another busy period for the MT Tp. Our hierarchy seem to have managed to desert us in our hours of need! The MTWO abandoned ship and fled to Spain for a holiday. To top things off **Sgt Stanley** had to have his appendix removed and then had the neck to take four weeks sick leave. That left **Cpl Mark Guest** to run the Troop, which I might add has never run so smoothly. Congratulations to **Cpl Mark Guest** on his promotion to Sergeant. Congratulations also to **Pte Paul Lawler** and **Pte Nathan Reed** who were selected for promotion to Lance Corporal, not forgetting **Pte** 'Pompey' **Pearson** who recently departed, also on promotion, to sunny Cyprus. We say farewell to **LCpl Frank Howarth** who leaves us for 3 CS Regt in Abingdon. We wish **Pte Steve Collins, Pte** 'Gaza' **Morn** and **Pte** 'Taff' **Tanner** all the best as they leave the Army. We also welcome **Pte Steve Wilson** who has recently arrived from 23 Pioneer Regt.

EXERCISE TRIDAY FINN - *by Sig Sidorowicz*

Ex Triday Finn is an adventure training weekend which is organised once per month. It is open to Squadron and Brigade personnel and up to ten can attend on each weekend. On Friday 18 July we all jumped into

the minibus and headed off to Coleraine. Unfortunately the weather was overcast with torrential rain so the long distance mountain biking organised for the first day was shortened slightly. The evening's activities consisted of a few cheeky pints in Portrush. The next day we rose early, ate breakfast and preceded to get ready for the day's activities. The activities consisted of canoeing, Canadian boating and banana boating. It was a brilliant but wet day. To top the day off we spent the remainder of the afternoon go-carting.



Sig Rob Passey, Sig James Sidorowicz, Cpl Ian Taylor
Boogie-Boarding in Portrush

On the last day the activity was boogie boarding. **Cpl Ian Taylor** enjoyed it so much he decided to swallow half of the Atlantic ocean. Three hours later and soaking wet we headed back to the centre. All in all it was a brilliant weekend and I would recommend it to anyone.

COMMUNICATIONS TROOP - *by Sig Parish*
Tp Comd **Lt Jo Stewart**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Tony Taylor**

It has been a busy period for Comms Tp as we are preparing for the period of increased tension: checking stores, deploying extra equipment, forward mounting teams and planning for addition shifts. However, some of the Troop were fortunate enough to attend the adventure training in Coleraine. Good luck to **Cpl** 'Soon be airborne' **Stojanovic** who has been running around like a madman training for P Company, however, he can still be seen keeping up appearances in the Squadron Bar. **SSgt Tony Taylor** has put in a lot of time and has lost a considerable amount of hair trying to improve the Juniors' bar and the facilities available to the Squadron. The Squadron now has film nights every three weeks where new releases are screened. The Troop have to say a very sad farewell to **LCpl** 'Noo Noo' **Mier** who is posted shortly to civvy street where he takes up his full time job as a languages student at Stirling University. Goodbye also to **LCpl Daw** who is also seeking employment outside the green machine. Welcome to the following who have arrived in the last few months: **Sgt Al Chester, Cpl Andy Ward, Sig Mary Anderson, Sig Danny Critchlow, Sig Phil Parish, Sig Peter Crieth.** Finally congratulations to **Sig Gibson** on his recent marriage to **Katrina.**

NEWS FROM THE REGIMENTS

1 (UNITED KINGDOM) ARMOURED DIVISION HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL REGIMENT

201 SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj Colin Lawrence**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Kevin Simmons**

SUPPORT TROOP
Tp Comd **2Lt David Spencer**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Kevin German**

A lot has been happening over the last few months with many members of the Troop deployed in Kosovo or on pre Bosnia/JCUFI leave. The remainder have been hard at work with other commitments such as the Station Summer Fair, Beating the Retreat and a few inspections of the vehicles and gene's thrown in to ensure that we are still ready for the 'Big Push'. RSIT is now well under way, and soon all the hard work and effort will have paid off and we can all get down to enjoying the good things in life; Summer Leave.

We've managed to have the odd celebration along the way for the usual births, marriages, hello's and goodbyes. Firstly the Troop would like to congratulate **Sgt Gaz Ward** and wife **Michelle** on the birth of their son **Henry**. The Troop has gained two much needed Sys OP's from Blandford. Hello to **Sig's Gaz Parham** and **Carl Vickers**. Also from Blandford is **LCpl** 'Taff' **Ellis** and **2Lt** 'Spence' **Spencer**. The Troop would also like to welcome **SSgt John Ainsworth** and his family. Oh! and not forgetting 'I'm hard as nails 216 PARA' **Sgt Conlan** and his lovely wife **Jacqueline**. As with every hello there is always a goodbye, firstly goodbye to **SSgt's** 'Chippy' **Chapman** and **Ian Lee** who are off to Blandford to beast a few new recruits, and a sorrowful farewell to **SSgt Jeff Clarke** and his wife who are off to sample the outside world. The Troop has been experiencing a contagious illness called 'under the thumb'. **LCpl Steve Loates** started the epidemic when he got married and then **LCpl** 'Say that slowly' **Dorrian** thought he would quietly go on leave without telling anyone that he was going to get married. Last but by no means least we say good luck to **SSM Kevin Simmonds** who is off to Jamaica to marry **Claire.** Support Tp would like to wish them the best of luck and happiness for the future.

EAGLE TROOP
Tp Comd **Capt Pritchett**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Greenwood**

Since Eagle Tp was formed back in April of this year, the Troop has been through a lot of changes. With operational tours under way in Kosovo we lost four members of the Troop **Sig Carrol, Doran, Smith** and **Mann**. Despite the ever increasing workload placed upon the Squadron, there is still light to be seen at the end of the tunnel, this being Summer Block Leave. Due to the recent heat-wave here in Herford some members of the Troop thought they had sunstroke when they thought they saw **SSgt Greenwood** who like our illustrious leader **Lt Pritchett**, hasn't been seen for quite some time (Mulder and Skully please investigate!) Investigations revealed that **SSgt Greenwood** had just returned from the BAG football tour in Zimbabwe and **Lt Pritchett** has been doing her part in the recruit drive on a recent KAPE Tour obviously having done the job well as she got promoted on her return and posted to 3 Div. Other members of the team including **Sig Lara** 'Leave those boys alone' **Brixey, Sig Kenny** 'Nice but weak' **Smith** and **Sig** 'Trigger' **Jenkinson** who was overpowered by a 12 year old!

The Troop said farewell to **Sgt** 'Woody' **Wood** at his favourite establishment Hanky Panky's Cowboy Bar and was last seen heading off into the sunset complete with spurs, 10 gallon hat and chaps in the direction of 280 Sig Sqn Yeeeehaa! **LCpl's Lee Chamberlin** and 'Larry' **Lamb** finally finished their escape tunnel and are off to pastures new. Good luck! The Troop welcomes **Sgt Gerry McGachy** and his lovely wife who joined us from the CTT in Scotland but has yet to be seen at work. **LCpl Steptoe** joined us from 4 Armd Bde Sig Sqn just in time to sign for the green fleet. **Sig** Kenny **Smith** joined us from the armoured element of the Regiment after a stark reality check and finally not to forget **Sig Mark Ridgwell** fresh out of the wrapper. Congratulations go to **LCpl Chris Glennard** and wife **Kerry** on the birth of their son **Jamie**, also to **Sig Mat Hulbert** on his engagement to **Melanie**. Finally congratulations to **Cpl Halliday** for being the first Senior Citizen to pass the RSCC.

HAWK TROOP
Tp Comd **2Lt Aylward**
Tp SSgt **Sgt Gutteridge**

First of all, there was all the excitement and drama of the expected deployment to Kosovo. A select few of highly trained operators were chosen for the task of spearheading the British Army's main thrust into Kosovo. However, on arrival at RAF Bruggen, with everybody hyped up and ready to go a signal was received back in Herford to come back. Towards the end of June, about half the Troop embarked on a voyage of discovery on the Corps Yacht *Quicksilver*. Ex Cut-Throat Diamond was a weeklong sailing expedition from Kiel. The Exercise was aimed at those members of the Troop who had never been on board a boat before. The sailing was a great success and no one managed to fall over board, despite the best attempts of **Sig Lofthouse** and **Sig Armstrong**. The month ended with the RSIT inspection, which thanks to everyone's hard work went very well. The troop would like to say goodbye and thanks to **SSgt Kev German** who has deserted us and moved to Support Tp.

KESTREL TROOP - *by Sig Elcock*
Tp Comd **2Lt Foote**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Cooper**

The past few months have been very hectic in the Squadron with a lot of people being places on standby for Kosovo and being sent back to the UK for training. This left all of the Troops widely undermanned but with the same level of commitments, which hasn't been an easy task. Despite the workload, a reduced version of the Squadron Battlecamp still went ahead much to everyone's disappointment! The first day consisted of moving into the harbour area, digging in, patrolling and recces, and a few lessons in the field, where everyone could refresh a few field skills. It also meant that **2Lt** 'Cricket Mad' **Foote**, our new Troop OC was able to brief us on the various types of ambush and harbour areas. The second

day was a range package in which the Troop got to carry out live section attacks and fire a few hundred rounds through various weapons which was a welcome change from the APWT. The next few weeks were spent busily in the garages preparing vehicles and kit for the dreaded RSIT in which the Troop did very well.

Well done to **Sig** 'Dizzy' **Brown** who came first in the Inter Services Highboard Diving Competition and second in the Combined Services back in the UK. Another well done to **Cpl Steve Pengelly** who has come off the Sergeants Board, and a farewell to our resident PTI the Kosovan refugee **Sig** 'Lips' **Hewitt** who's of to 7 Sig Regt. On a final note a big good luck to **Sig Andy Gallagher** who is getting married over the summer leave.

EXERCISE BISLEY BULLET

Four members of 201 Sig Sqn, made the journey back to Bisley at the end of June, to compete in Ex Bisley Bullet, the National Rifle Associations annual shooting competition. The four team members were **LCpl Warnes, Sig Gallagher, Sig Human** and **Sig Whitelock.** After meeting up with the 11 Sig Regt team, we got down to some training and practice shoots for us younger guys.



LCpl 'Wilf' Warnes, who earned an 'Army 100' badge at Bisley

We practised various types of shooting, from FIBUA to Gallery shooting. This was a more than welcome change to the standard APWT format and gave us all chance to brush up on our weapon skills. After a weeks praticing two of our team entered the Queens Medal Competion, to go for a chance at their 'Army 100' badge. Congratulations go out to **LCpl** 'Wilf' **Warnes** on his good shooting, and becoming only the twelfth member of the Corps to have earned this accolade.

Commiseration's to **Sig Human** who narrowly missed out. There's always next year!! The third week saw us competing as a team for the nationals. Two days shooting went in to make up our total scores, giving us a finishing position amongst the middle of the field. Congratulations again to **LCpl Warnes** who collected two medals for his efforts, and to **Sig Gallagher** who also collected one. The last day saw us helping out the Corps Team, working in the butts, as they shot the 'Methuen Cup'. The team managed a good fifth position with **LCpl Warnes** collecting yet another trophy, this time a tankard, for managing to do his maths, not actually shooting! Thanks go out to **WO2 Merrie**, 21 Sig Regt, for the loan of weapons and magazines for the duration of the competition. Cheers sir!!

IT'S A KNOCKOUT

This year's long awaited Herford Garrison Summer Fair took place at Wentworth Barracks on Saturday 12 June. Along with the usual stalls, displays, and vehicles to clamber all over comes the most physical mental and humiliating competition known to mankind, IT'S A KNOCKOUT. The event takes the form of the long loved well known TV programme of the same name. The teams, all in fancy dress have to complete a series of obstacles all testing the team at different levels of skill luck and pure ingenuity. Last year's cup was won by another Squadron, so we were keen to win the trophy back. From a Squadron of about 120 we managed to wittle it down to an elite six consisting of **LCpl Doe, LCpl Glennard, Sigs Ashcroft, Hoskings Fisher,** and **Grossmith**. Training had been hard and demanding but we did have the added boost of our very own cave man outfits. These were designed and made by **LCpl Doe,** which ultimately helped the team move onto another physical level.

The day started of at 1000hrs and right from the beginning we felt strong and confident, our first blow came to us when on the trampoline obstacle. **Sig Hulbert** broke his ankle, fortunately for us **Lt Alyward** stepped into the wounded cave man's clobber and filled the gap. Our second blow came to us in the form of the beer tent only selling crates of Becks instead of Bud Ice. However, it all had the desired effect (courage) as we had yet to complete the Gladiators Gauntlet Run!! A few beers later and a few extra bruises our third and final blow took the form of **LCpl Woosnam**, who made sure we adhered to all the rules on his stand. After ten events all the scores were added up, and with a slight margin of 15 points gained by **Sig** 'Micky' **Ashcroft** for riding on the Joust backwards, 201 Sig Sqn emerged victorious. As for **Sig Hulbert** he's been bedded down for four weeks unlucky..... or not !

211 SIGNAL SQUADRON
COMMAND TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt Jeeves**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Innes**

The last few months has been a tumultuous period for Command Tp as fifty percent of the Troop deployed on Op Agricola to augment 204 Sig Sqn and 7 Sig Regt. The lads and lasses are deployed to a number of locations assisting various units in a variety of roles. As expected the Troop is conducting itself in exemplary fashion as the Troop OC can vouch for after his own three week sunshine jolly to theatre. A big congratulations to **LCpl Lannie** for a thoroughly earned promotion, received whilst on duty in 4 Bde HQ in Kosovo. Also well done to **Sgt Dixon** who leaves us on promotion to 7 Bde. For those that have remained behind a big well done for a first class RSIT report and for generally holding the fort whilst others disappeared off around the world.

COMMUNICATIONS TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt Morton**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Leach**

First of all congratulations to **LCpl Horseborough** on his recent promotion to LCpl. Congratulation must also go to **Cpl Smith, Cpl Wilkinson** and **Cpl Howard** on their promotion to Sergeant. Goodbye to **Cpl jelly Smith** on his posting to 204 Sig Sqn, Osnabruck, we wish him and his family all the best. A big Hello to the latest lucky people who have had the good fortune to join Comms Tp, **Sig Becky Hamilton, Sig Danny Smith** and **Sig Chris Kellet** all fresh from the factory.

RRB TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt Shakespeare**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Cox**

The end of May saw some of the members of the Troop deploy on Ex Premier Link, while others were attached to Command Tp to supply them with the 432 expertise they so desperately required. When we returned the Troop formed part of the Kosovo Sqn and went back to the UK for UNTAT training along with 3 DSR. After UNTAT the leave applications were flying thick and fast but only a selected few were lucky enough to book a place on Op Agricola. **LCpl** 'Dangerous Dave' **Wallace** has just returned missing out on his medal by just one day. I am sure you will be back soon! July saw the majority of the Troop heading south to Bavaria for adventure training, where the Troop OC, **Lt Shakey Shakespeare,** found it quite hard to tell the difference between UEL and JSMEL routes! The Troop would like to say goodbye to **SSgt** 'Scouse 'Is that going spare?' **Wharton** who has moved into the cushy TA life soon to get his WO2 (yeah right!) and **Cpl Andy Allen** who is posted to Hohne. We also would like to welcome **SSgt** 'Deano' **Cox** from 12 Regt RA.

RURAL PROTECTION DUTY IN SUPPORT OF HCR
by Sig Ford

I was fortunate enough whilst on tour in Kosovo to be involved in what only can be described as a hearts and minds, rural, patrolling, protection exercise in support of the Household Cavalry a few miles East of Pristina. During our tour of duty this was a joint operation involving 1(UK)ADSR, 4 Bde and 7 Sig Regt personnel. Our mission was to protect a Serb village by means of an overt presence and show of strength in order to convince the local population that it was safe to return home and to feel secure once they were home. Our secondary task was to patrol the local area, ensuring that the local population were complying with COMKFOR's mandate and listening to the fears and concerns of both ethnic groups in the region.



Just returned from a particularly dusty patrol.
(L-R): LCpl 'Mal' Mallaburn, LCpl Ricky Curran, Lt Karl Jeeves, Sgt Richy Richardson and Sig Fordy Ford

Our impartiality was, at times, almost ironic as we waved goodbye to our Serbian hosts to drive the five kilometres to the nearest Albanian village. It all sounds relatively straightforward doesn't it? Not so, the next five days were to prove to be tiring, exciting and extremely rewarding. The 10 man patrol was made up of one officer, **Lt** 'Bad Boy' **Jeeves**, three seniors and six OR's. The element of continuity was provided by the tireless **Sgt Smith** who was both medic and interpreter, he was the only permanent member of the patrol. Our base was in the small Serbian village of Slivovo and very quickly we slipped into a routine making full

use of our mountain spring home-made shower and crudely constructed bashas. This tranquil existence was disrupted by the continuous noise of the local farmyard animals, the cockerels crowed 24hrs a day and the piglets running all over our sleeping bags, whilst we were in them.

We conducted two patrols a day, six men in a patrol with four guarding the patrol base. We generally headed north using a Rover and a 432APC to the mass of Albanian villages in the area, some with as few as 15 inhabitants and in many cases we were the first NATO troops they had seen. How we found these villages was by chance, unlisted tracks and bad mapping. In no way can our dubious navigation be blamed on the OC, no Siree! I will look back on the five days I spent patrolling in Kosovo as some of the most rewarding of my career. During our time we helped instil a large amount of goodwill in the local Albanian and Serb communities and by the time we left more and more Serbian's were pouring back into the village of Slivovo including one family to whom we gave a personal escort!



LCpl Dave Wallace and Sgt Mick Hanson with the children of Busijne

2 SIGNAL REGIMENT YORK

CO **Lt Col C. Wakerley MBE**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) S. C. Keilty**

HEADQUARTER SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj J. Walker MBE**
SSM **WO2 A. Terry**

Providing a staging post for those passing in and out of theatre and trying to fulfil Regimental commitments with a single Squadron is keeping us very busy. We cannot possibly give a personal mention to all those coming and going but a special mention must be given to the OC and SSM, the 2IC has burnt them out and wants new replacements. **Maj John Walker** is leaving on promotion to take on the onerous task of moving 7 Sig Regt, 16 Sig Regt and 280 Sig Sqn into Bruggen. Also jumping ship is **WO2 (SSM) Andy Terry**, on promotion to WO1, he is off to show future generations of soldiers the light as he takes up the appointment of Troop Commander at 11 Sig Regt. We wish him and his family the very best, don't break too many soldiers.

EXERCISE SWEEPING EBOR 18-23 JUNE 1999

It would just not have been cricket if those who missed out on Adventurous Training to the Pyrennes and the Lake District earlier in the summer were not treated to the great outdoors. **WO2 (SSM) Andy Terry**'s solution was Ex Sweeping Ebor; hill walking and sight seeing on mountain bikes.

Mountain biking, organised by **SSgt 'Jez' Ratcliffe** (REME) proved to be a popular event, meanwhile the SSM produced a cunning plan to cover 54km of some of the Lakes most challenging peaks in 36 hours. The group led by the SSM survived the first day, completing Keswick to the base of Scarfell before a night under canvas. Unfortunately **Sigs** 'Nobby' **Clarke**, 'Spice' **Cinnamond**, 'Chris' **Blundell** and 'Tham' **Tham** quickly discovered that a 4-man tent was not as spacious as they had hoped, especially after a body cramping days walking and all their kit to fit in. Day Two started with Scarfell, although the SSM did soften to allow the Team to drop their packs at the bottom of the summit, followed by Helvellyn before tea. Not a bad achievement for two days.....

As the walking wounded returned word spread throughout the Regiment, so that by the time the second group were due to depart it had somewhat depleted in numbers. **Capt Beanie Lloyd** was left with two soldiers, but undeterred they set out on the same challenge. Not in the game of breaking soldiers, the route was shortened, well it was a Friday finish and **Cpl Pete Preece** and **Pte Robert Docherty** survived the ordeal and returned with aching muscles and some good stories to tell.



(L-R): RSM (WO1) Keilty, Maj Riley, Sigs Cinnamond, Clarke, Blundell and Tham

REAR DETAILS OUT OF USE TROOP
Tp Comd **WO1 (FofS) Mark Hardy**
SQMS **SSgt Angus Macpherson**

With the Kohima Veterans Reunion fast approaching we have enlisted the help of 16 soldiers awaiting training (SATs) from 11 Sig Regt, Blandford. They have provided invaluable assistance with installation maintenance and will undoubtedly return to Blandford better prepared for a future serving in the Royal Signals. The soldiers' willingness is very much appreciated by the Regiment and we wish them well for their future within the Corps.

With the constant turnover within the Troop it is not possible to mention all arrivals and departures but we recently said farewell to **SSgt** 'Al' **Keen** who is posted to 30 Sig Regt at Bramcote, allegedly you now have a job and a choice of hats to wear. If this mention doesn't force you to get the beers in we will congratulate you on your promotion to Sergeant Major and wish you well. Welcome to **SSgt** 'Pete' **Curtis**, Al's replacement, but Pete when the OC mentioned that he didn't really have a job for you at present and to chill, I don't think he quite meant pack your bags and go to Cyprus and play Rugby for two weeks!

Five members of the Troop recently presented the Wilberforce Home for Multiple-Handicapped and Blind with a cheque for £500. **SSgt** 'Al' **Keen** and **Sigs Martin Sleight, Shaun Robinson, Steve Blight** and **Matt Howland** visited the home in York on Wednesday 23 June to hand over the cheque. The money was donated from the Regimental charities fund which had received a boost following this years 'Race the Sun' event. Wilberforce Home has been established since 1968 and provides its residents with a comfortable, caring and supportive home. There are currently plans in the pipeline for some major improvements at the home.



SSgt Al Keen presenting a cheque for £500 to a member of Wilberforce Home

QM DEPARTMENT
QM **Maj B. J. Dalton**
RQMS (Gen) **WO2 K. R. J. Smith**
RQMS (Tech) **WO2 D. G. Simpson**

As usual, the QM's department is the busiest department in the Regiment (FNARRR, FNARRR). Since the last *Wire* there have been a lot of comings and goings. 214 Sig Sqn have now deployed to Kosovo together with three of our stores accountants. We wish **LCpls** 'Chippy' **Williams, Mark Dunnachie** and **Sig** 'Ollie' **Oliver** all the best and hope to see them in the not too distant future (preferably back here). Thanks must be given to all our civilian staff who have worked just as hard as the rest of the department ensuring 214 Sig Sqn deployed without problems. Lastly, warm wishes to (LSgt) **Cpl** 'Rocky' **Mountain**, our resident stores Corporal who is at last coming to the end of his attachment to 219 Sig Sqn in the Falkland Islands. See you at work in September! The rest of the department is now settling into the silly season of veteran reunion weekends. Manpower shortage is such that our new MHE storeman **(Maj (QM) Dalton)** was seen helping move pallets of chairs around the compound, (are you MHE qualified we ask?)

Some of the Department needless to say have managed to swan off and bask in the sunshine. **Sgt Steve Howard** and **Sig Emma Clayton** managed a two week sunning session in the Pyrenees on Adventure training. No sooner were they back when **Sgt Howard** decided to top up that tan with a two week handover of equipment to 7 Sig Regt in Kosovo. Welcome back also to **WO2 (RQMS) Dave Simpson** from a week in Bosnia. Apparently his CD collection needed updating.

On the arrivals front we must say a warm welcome to **WO2** 'Kev' **Smith**, his wife **Helen** and son **Charlie** on promotion from 280 (UK) Sig Sqn and to **Sigs** 'Crawford' **Scott** and 'Louise' **Chandler** from that very large factory down south. Welcome to a different kind of busy. Sad farewells must be said to **LCpl** 'Tracey' **Stubbs** who has decided to navigate the civilian flight path all the way to Manchester. Good luck and our best wishes to you and all you do in civvy street.

EXERCISE CHATURANGA 1999
BELGIUM ASSAULT COURSE COMPETITION
by LCpl Gittens, Sigs Cinnamond, Clarke, Clayton and Scott

After dragging our weary bodies out of bed very early on Friday, 25 June, just to make the minibus on time, we pondered the next few days ahead. For the next ten hours we sat cramped in the minibus our destination Tournai in Belgium and the infamous Chaturanga Competition. A competition dreamt of by Satan himself. The Regiment entered two teams, one male which consisted of **WO2** 'Kev, he's raving mad' **Smith, Sgt** 'Graham, quiet ones are the worst' **Stephenson**, and **Sigs Mark** 'Spice' **Cinnamond** and 'Gaz, it's the hardest thing I've done in my short life' **Clarke**. The mixed team consisted on **Sgt Brenda** 'I used to be Signals' **Berry** (nee Cooper) (APTC), **LCpl** 'Gil GQ' **Vogue** and any other model magazine' **Gittens, Sigs** 'Crawford, I like to spray things' **Scott** and **Emma**, I'm not going' **Clayton**. Both teams were ably backed up by **Sgt Sean Humphries** and **Cpl** 'Bill' **Mill** who could beat David Bailey at photography hands down and **Cpl Andy**, 'Is that a man' **Williams**.



WO2 (RQMS) Kev Smith, Sig Mark 'Spice' Cinnamond, Sgt Graham Stephenson, Sig 'Gaz' Clarke

On arrival in Tournai we were given a walkthrough/talkthrough demonstration of the course, which through experience should never be attempted in Italian slip on shoes as **LCpl** 'Gil GQ' **Gittens** found out. That evening the team relaxed with a quiet Chinese meal in the town centre and retired early for the event ahead. However, thanks to **Cpl Mill**, whose snoring can be measured on the richter scale, a good nights sleep was not had. The next day arrived and a lot of solemn faces were seen as we attempted the two passing in tests, a 50m cat crawl on a rope 30ft off the floor followed by a 150ft death slide accessed by an unstable metal ladder. Once on top of the structure the teams started to congest as **Sig Emma Clayton** refused to make the jump. As the team stood there on the swaying tower 100ft up, **WO2 Kev**, thoughtful' **Smith** gave a reassuring word to those less comfortable at height, in the form of 'its got to fall down sometime so if you don't jump after three, I will push you'. Needless to say everyone passed the tests.



Sig 'Gaz' Clarke, mastering the 50m cat crawl

Soon we were off, and on speaking to both teams afterwards, we remember it as a course of never ending obstructions and obstacles. None of the team members realised how bruised they were until the next morning. That evening was the competitors' barbecue combined with the prize giving. Then it was onto town and the infamous Le Bush night-spot where all the seniors showed the younger soldiers how it was done in their day. All in all a memorable weekend which all the teams would like to repeat next year, however, asbestos underpants should be included in the kit list for the cat crawl!!

MOTOR TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT
MTO **Capt Hitman Gurung**
MT SSgt **Sgt Swan**

Along with the rest of the Regiment the MT is experiencing a shortage of manpower and is extremely busy with commitments. **Cpl Amrit, Findlay** and **Man** have deployed to Kosovo on Op Agricola. **Sigs Amav** and **Wilkinson** are still in the Falklands on roulement tour. **LCpl Davision** came back from Ex Able Condor and is now on UNTAT training and will shortly be going to Kosovo. Those not deployed on Ops are busy on driving details, servicing the fleet, or on guard duty. Due to the number of operations in various parts of the world, the driving details to Brize Norton and Lyneham have been quite regular. The welfare run is normally carried out by **Sig** 'Autoroute' **Jaruszek**, who thinks he should be in Corsham! We say farewell to **LCpl Lee Middleton** who moved on to civvy street, good luck to him in his new career. Hello to **LCpl's** 'Billy' **Davidson** and **Nick Adams** welcome to the fun in the Regimental MT.

TRAILWALKER (UK) 1999 - *by WO1 (RSM) Sean Keitly*

On Friday, 25 June, **WO1 (RSM) Sean Keilty, SSgt (SQMS) Angus Macpherson, SSgt Paul Jude** and **SSgt** 'Chippy' **Wood** departed south for Trailwalker (UK) 1999, 100km Race across the South Downs.

The journey south was uneventful, if a little drawn out (8hrs). Upon arriving at the Queen Elizabeth Country Park, Petersfield, tents were pitched and several thousand calories were stuffed down the neck prior to a good night's sleep in preparation for the morning's activities. Up with the larks early next morning. Renewing old acquaintances, exchanging race tips and discussing some of the, ' all the gear, no idea' competitors. After a final brief to the admin support of **LCpl Aungar** and **Sig Laird**, i.e: miss a meeting point and you're dead. The RSM, a vet of last year's race gave the team an in depth brief consisting of, 'Under 14 hours and I'll be dead chuffed, let's %$%**ing do it lads!'

0900 hours and we were off, looking resplendent in our orange, 'Race the Sun' T-shirts (2 Sig Regt, who else?). No probs, we flash through CP 1 at Harting Down after 53 minutes, up to Hilltop Farm by now well warmed up. With a race with the Nottingham Runners Club on the cards we strode purposefully on to CP 3 Littleton Farm, then up and over to CP 4 Amberley, or as we have come to call it, the devil's armpit. Luckily an old friend **SSgt Jane Lawrence** greeted us, smiles and drinks along with all the Gurkha cheers we were soon on our way.

The leg to CP 5 is the longest in the race, it is also the first marathon length barrier. Excellent views and top team morale soon saw us through this part of the race. The sight of CP 6 Beeding Bridge did not curtail our efforts, we pushed on up the killer hills to CP 7 the food stop at Truleigh Hill. Upon arrival we met the old enemy from Nottingham preparing to leave. Their departure was held back by one of their number regurgitating his lunch over the barn floor, much to the consternation of the other diners. On seeing this a delighted RSM remarked 'we've got them now'. After a quick meal we were off. At this stage the average age of the team (37.5 years) was beginning to show. **SSgt** 'Chippy' **Wood** had particular cause for concern as his knee was doing a very convincing impression of a watermelon. Undeterred by this he again gave our morale a shot in the arm, by placing mind firmly over matter he pulled on the tubi grip and battled through. Even with our feet mummified in zinc oxide tape, the blisters were by now out in force and popping with painful regularity. The much promised cloud cover finally came. The heat eased but driving rain followed, making us a sorry sight upon arrival at CP 8 Pycombe. A quick T-shirt change and we set a punishing pace to CP 9 Ditchling Beacon then down to CP 10 Houndean Bottom.



Taking Tenth Place
(L-R): SSgt 'Chippy' Wood, SSgt Paul Jude, SSgt (SQMS) Angus Macpherson, WO1 (RSM) Sean Keilty

After a photo call to commemorate the two-marathon stage we pushed on to CP 11 at Woodingdean. Dusk was falling and with 'That hill I told you about' still to climb we finally left the Nottingham Team behind. The final 8.5 km leg saw us give everything. In the darkness Brighton loomed, with the racecourse in our sights we made our way to the 100km finish in a time of 14hrs 13mins, to be informed we had gained tenth place overall complete team place from the 190 teams who started. The team would like to thank the event organisers for an excellent challenge. The Gurkha enthusiasm and pride is alive and well. For those of you out there unaware of Trailwalker (UK), it is an opportunity to assist the Gurkha Welfare Trust that is not to be missed. See you on the last weekend in June!

QUEEN'S MEDAL COMPETITION AND CENTSAAM 1999
by WO2 (FofS)Yambahadur Rana

Due to heavy operational commitments the Regiment was unable to compete in the 2 Div SAAM as a team this year. However, two members of the Regiment managed to qualify for the Queen's Medal competition. **WO2 (FofS) Yam Rana** took part in the 2 Div SAAM as a individual firer and qualified for the Queen's Medal competition as one of ten firers from the Division. **Sig Devprakash Gurung** also qualified from 143 Bde before he was posted to the Regiment.

The Queen's Medal competition is the premiere event for service shooting and it is every marksman's dream to win it. This year it took place on 30 June and 1 July on Bisley and Pirbright ranges. The first day started with the Roupell match, I scored the highest (156 out of 160) and won the Roupell Trophy. After FIBUA, Whitehead and Moving target matches, the first day finished. I was in 30th position and **Sig Devprakash** was in 60th position. On the final day, firers were to contest Match Two, the Association Cup, also known as the Army Hundred Cup. The overall result of both days would decide the Queen's Medal. Out of 127 firers I finished the second day in 25th position and **Sig Devprakash** finished in 52nd position. This was a good result considering we only had two days limited training prior to the competition.

The following week we were both selected to represent the Corps in the Metheun Cup which is contested amongst all the other Corps. The Royal Corps of Signals finished in a respectable Fifth place winning Woolwich Bowl after beating the Royal Engineers and Royal Artillery.



WO2 (FofS) Yambahadur Rana winner of the Roupell Trophy

EXERCISE MONTARDO EBOR - *by SSgt A. MacPherson MBE*

It was two weeks prior to Xmas 1998 when **SSM Andy Terry** mentioned that OC HQ Sqn, **Maj John Walker,** was looking for a budding SSgt to organise an Adventurous Training Exercise to the Pyrenees in late May 1999. After waiting several days and hearing of no nominations I quickly stepped forward into the unknown. Some five months later, after many sleepless nights and a couple of minor heart attacks, we were ready for the off. The Expedition Party consisted of 19 personnel, 2 Officers, 1 WO, 4 SNCO's and 13 OR's.

Monday 24 May - At 1130hrs we departed from Imphal Barracks and drove in two mini-buses to Portsmouth to catch the overnight ferry to St Malo. The food on the ferry was excellent and well worth the advance group booking at £8 per head.

Tuesday 25 May - We finally arrived at the campsite at 2200hrs. After quickly meeting-up with our guide, **Mr John Howie** it was all hands on deck, erecting tents and making ourselves comfortable for the night.

Wednesday 26 May - After a fairly restless night, (as to be expected in the circumstances) it was reveille at 0700hrs, followed by a smashing breakfast expertly prepared and cooked by our admin team, **SSgt Alan Yeaman**, **LCpl John Clarke** and **LCpl Claire Haslam**. After breakfast we met up with our guide to start our first day's introduction walk. We set off from *Pic du Lis* (1149m) with light packs, the opening pace as I can remember was a shock to everyone's system, (was this to be CFT 2?). After an hour or so it settled down into a nice trekking pace and most people were breathing normally again. We took several photos on route, passing by Lake de Graues (2152m), eventually stopping for lunch at Lake Vert (2001m). The sun was out and off came the T-shirts for the duration of our stop. The lake was still frozen so we were unable to paddle. After lunch we made our way back to the start passing Station de Prat-Long and de la Coume. Once at the bottom we all enjoyed a small beer before returning to the campsite for evening meal.

Thursday 27 May - Up bright and early after a better night's sleep, we started from Hospice de France (1385m), again with light packs for the final warm-up prior to Spain. We were going at a steady rate for 1½hrs all uphill, when we reached the point (2113m) where we practised snow and ice axe techniques. We spent several hours on the snow practising and it was a spectacular show from **Lt Julie Richardson** falling some 100ft, demonstrating how an ice axe arrest should be done. The use of our guide's dog lead also came into great effect to assist **Sig Emma Clayton** traversing across some steeper snow. We then headed up to the Refuge de Vanesque (2200m) took a group photo and started our descent. We got about ten yards when the heavens opened and it was time to try out those nice Gore-Tex waterproofs from Thatcham. They did the job and it was a lesson to most, just how fast the weather can change in the Pyrenees. Once at the bottom it was back to the campsite for dinner. The remainder of the evening was spent packing and preparing for the start of tomorrow's expedition into Spain.



Enjoying a quick waterstop (1714m)
Sig Henry Young, Sig 'Ray' Reardon and Mr John Howie (in the background)

Friday 28 May - Breakfast at 0730hrs, packed lunches made a quick final check of personnel equipment and documentation, rucksacks loaded into both minibuses and we were off on our expedition. The admin team dropped us off at the start point, end of Vielha tunnel. At 1030hrs with packs on (weighing a ton) we were on our way, every now and then glancing over our shoulders waving goodbye to our admin team below. Heading steadily along GR11 route, trying to find our mountain legs we came to our first stop. **John Howie** and the boss, **Maj John Walker** gathered everyone around for a quick look at the map, (it was going to be a long day). The first two hours were really tough going with steep climbs, it was a pleasure to see the top and get back onto fairly level ground, (if you didn't already know, there is not much level ground in the Pyrenees). The going was getting tough for **Sig Jim McEwan** but after some TLC and some old school encouragement he was off and running again. We stopped for a welcome lunch by Lake de Rius then continued, this time our ice axes were required. The route was interesting and we managed to see many Isards, marmottes and a female (very rare) capacille. We reached Refuge dera Restanca (2010m) at 1600hrs. It was a great relief to see the refuge, which would turn out to be the Ritz of all refuges, apart from the food, (seafood pasta dish) which was certainly an acquired taste.

Saturday 29 May - The refuge was very noisy throughout the night as people were arriving as late as midnight. After breakfast we set off at 0815hrs in sight of our next refuge. It always takes the first 30 minutes of each day to get those mountain legs going again, (maybe an hour or so if you sampled the local vino). We were going some ten minutes when **Sgt Sam Faulds** remembered that he had left his gaiters in the refuge. He headed back to retrieve them, however, unbeknown to him our guide had them in his rucksack. On route we stopped for a break at the bottom of Coret d Oelbacrestada, eight members of the team donned light packs and headed for the summit of Mount Montardo (2833m). It was a good steady pace and the team was at the top within one hour. The view from the top of Montardo was spectacular and after several photos it was time to return to the rest of the party. Our descent took 15 minutes and it was

brilliant fun going down in the deep snow. A quick lunch, (with a trickle of Glenmorangy for the selected few) more group photos, then we set off to Refuge Joan Ventosa (2220m). We saw more Izards along the way and **Sig Hazel Sibley** screamed as **Maj John Walker** produced a large slithery frog from out of no-where. The sun was still shining on our arrival at the Refuge and provided the perfect opportunity for a spot of sunbathing and drying out wet kit. **WO2 Andy Terry** ever keen for more exercise, decided he would take his camera to get a couple of exclusive shots from in and around the refuge. On his return, about one hour later, he was spotted trying to dry out his camera, (which bit of water did it fall in!). After dinner we celebrated **Sig** 'Ray' **Reardon's** 18th birthday will a couple of sociable beers.



'We made it' - At the top of Mount Montardo (2833m)
(L-R): Maj John Walker, WO2 Andy Terry, Sgt Steve Howard, Mr John Howie (guide), Sgt Sam Faulds, Sig Bryan Jones, Cpl 'Woody' Wood
Photographer: SSgt Angus MacPherson

Sunday 30 May - Knowing today was Sunday, we thought that there might be the odd chance of a little lie-in. Wrong, we were up sharp at 0600hrs, had breakfast and we were off on another day's adventure. The Boss and **John Howie** were worried about the weather closing in so it was best to get off early. Today would prove to be by far the hardest day's trek of the expedition. Our main aim was to go over two cols, ending up at Refuge de Saboredo (2310m). The day started fairly well, just like the previous two and after the first hour everyone was back into the swing of things. So far the weather was holding out, packs still feeling heavy, we had reached our first col, Port de Colomers (2604m). It was a steep climb to reach the top, and all our previous snow work came into good use. We had a well deserved twenty minute break before heading on to lake Obego. We reached the lake at 1115hrs and **John Howie** said we were making good time. Yet again the weather was on our side as the sun came shining through, (more sun cream required). On the way to lake Obego we had a slight incident as **Sgt Steve** 'kamikaze' **Howard** slipped and slightly bruised his chest with a pearl of a slide down the snow. After a thirty minute break with some food and water inside him (and a little attention from **Sgt Sam Faulds**, our first-aider), **Steve** had recovered and was fit enough to proceed. The second col, Port de Ratera (2600m) proved to be twice as tough as the Port de Colomers. Standing at the top watching people come over, one by one, was quite a sight. (As tough as it was, I recall **Cpl Pete Longworth** shouting, 'Is someone trying to kill us!') **Pete** very quickly got over his ordeal and it wasn't long before he was lighting another cigarette. After a well-earned rest we rattled onto the refuge. It was a grand sight to see the Saboredo hut immediately in front of us. As we were sitting outside the hut, sinking a nice cold (and thoroughly deserved) cerveza, watching our boots and gaiters dry out in the sun; we could see the weather changing, this time it would not escape us. The rain came and lasted several hours.

Monday 31 May - After a good night's sleep feeling a bit sore from yesterday, today (as we had been led to believe) was going to be pretty easy going. We set off just after 8 o'clock with a gradual climb that seemed to go on forever. We passed lake Glacat before scrambling up to the Del Lac Glacat Col, then proceeded to head due south to the Amitges Col. This had taken us 2½hrs which according to our guide, was fairly good timing. The weather was closing in again but **John Howie** thought we had enough time to reach the summit of Pic de Amitges (2851m). So without packs, seven of us set off for the Pic.

Once at the top we had a spectacular view of the Amitges Needles which was a great bonus as the col was not part of the original plan. The wind at the top was very strong so photos were taken sitting down. On the way back down **John** reminded us of the importance of taking back bearings, and recalled the story about the two chaps who got lost on top of Ben Nevis without their compasses. **Sig Bryan Jones** hurt his knee slightly when a loose rock landed on it. At the bottom we re-joined the group, with packs back on we headed due south towards Estany Grande Amitges which was all down hill in thick snow. We eventually arrived at Refuge de Amitges (2380) and as we looked back up towards the Pic, we were all proud of what we had achieved. This refuge proved to be Ritz 2 of all refuges, we settled down for the night (after a well-deserved shower and wonderful food) playing board games and socialising.



On the summit of Pic de Amitges (2851m)
Back row (L-R): SSgt Angus MacPherson, Sig 'Ritchie' McConville, Sig Bryan Jones
Front row (L-R): Mr John Howie, WO2 Andy Terry, Sgt Sam Faulds, Cpl 'Woody' Wood
Photographer: Maj John Walker

Tuesday 1 June - We set off at 8 o'clock for our final journey (all down hill) where we would meet up with our admin team, 9km away. The pace was nice and relaxed for the first 30 minutes then things started to heat up. Myself, **John Howie, Sgt Steve Howard, Sgt Sam Faulds** and **Cpl** 'Woody' **Wood** all found ourselves tabbing/running at a great pace of knots. (Was this to be CFT 3?). The pace got faster and faster and it was a great sight to see **SSgt Alan Yeaman** and his admin team at the end in Espot. It was also a very great pleasure in seeing **John** sweat for the first time since the expedition began. Once everyone was down we headed for a cafe and had cold refreshments and ice creams. It was a two hour drive back to the campsite in Luchon. Once back we freshened up and headed into the town centre for some souvenirs. Later in the evening the heavens opened and for the rest of the night we were stuck with roaring thunderstorms.

Wednesday 2 June - In spite of the thunderstorms most of us slept well and after breakfast we headed off white water rafting, expertly organised by the admin team. After the rafting we headed back to the campsite, (tents now fully dry) to pack everything away and prepare for the return journey to York. After saying our final farewells to **John Howie** and his family, we departed.



A photo of a rather nervous group prior to the white water rafting

Thursday 3 June - We arrived in St Malo at 6 o'clock in the morning, making the return journey quicker by two hours, (12 hours). We had breakfast in MacDonalds followed by a duty free visit to the local supermarket prior to boarding the ferry at 1045hrs. We landed in Portsmouth at 1830hrs. Back on UK soil, all in sombre mood, this was the beginning of the end. **Sig** 'Mitch' **Mitchinson** had finally succeeded to wind up the SSM and was transferred to the rear minibus. The final drive landed us back in Imphal Barracks at 1 o'clock in the morning.

SUMMARY

It was a great experience stepping into the unknown and organising my first expedition. I have benefited tremendously from it all, and the group all agreed that it was an enjoyable yet hard, five-day expedition (thanks **John**). The Pyrenees come highly recommended and I would like to thank everyone who helped me in any way with the planning of this expedition, making it an overwhelming success.

3 (UNITED KINGDOM) DIVISION HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL REGIMENT

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS
CO **Lt Col N. D. Couch**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) G. J. Stoker MBE**

With the CO deployed on Op Agricola it was left to the Regimental 2IC, **Maj Adam Ewell** to lead the way through a succession of parties disguised as a Regimental Weekend. **Brig (Retd) Nigel Wood** was the guest of honour as the Representative Colonel Commandant. The Regimental Reunion Club were well represented with **Brig Ronnie Stonham** taking the salute on the march past to church assisted by Ex-RSM, **Mr John Templeton**. Members of the club who attended the weekend included **Brig Johnny Clinch, Jean Brett**, widow of **Brig Bertie Brett** and many characters too numerous to mention. As in previous years the oldest member **Mr Pedlar Palmer** who at 95 still stole the show with his mouth organ display on stage in the Sergeants' Mess.

202 SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj R. J. Quinlan**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) S. G. Jackson**

Once again the time has come to report on the Squadron activities over the past month, and once again these have proven to be both challenging and diverse. The main activity has been the lead up training for Ex Lion Sun, which will take place from 7 July to 5 August. This is an Exercise based at honing basic infantry skills, with the added bonus of utilising the excellent adventurous training facilities available Cyprus. The full report on Ex Lion Sun will follow in next month's *Wire*, together with some predictably entertaining pictures! On the operational front, the Squadron continues to provide key manpower for Operations in Bosnia and Kosovo. This has resulted in the surrendering of many bodies, which makes for both a challenging and exciting time for the Squadron. We look forward to receiving those persons deployed back safely into the Squadron over the next few months. Due to the busy nature of the Squadron there have been a variety of postings in, and out, of SHQ in the past month. We sadly wave goodbye to **Capt Lee** 'Jimmy' **Hendricks** who moves onto pastures anew with 5 Airborne Brigade in Aldershot, and give a warm welcome to **Capt Eric** 'Beckham' **Warren** who joins us from RMCS Shrivenham. We also sadly say goodbye to the SSM, **WO2 Steve Jackson** who leaves on promotion to WO1 (RSM) to 5 AB Bde at the end of the month. We wish them the best for the future.

OVERLOON TROOP
Tp Comd **2Lt K. J. Grice**
Tp SSgt **SSgt A. J. Crawford**

It has been another hectic month for Overloon Tp with the arrival of several new faces. Firstly we welcome **Capt** 'Patricia' **Pritchard** from 1st (UK) Div & Sig Regt who will take over command of the Troop later this month, also a big welcome to **LCpl** 'Horizontal' **Standing** who arrives newly promoted from 5 AB Brigade. We hope you enjoy your time with the Troop. Overloon have spent the majority of this month on military and adventurous training on Ex Lion Sun, a sweaty and refreshed Troop will report back to *The Wire* next month on their antics – minus jet skis and banana boats of course!!

BUSSACO TROOP
Tp Comd **2Lt P. Simpson**
Tp Sgt **Sgt M. Brown**

We welcome fresh from trade training **Sig** 'Flightless' **Bird, Sig** 'Student' **Grant** and **Sigs Elston** and **Wagstaff** (who will have achieved suitable nicknames by this time next month!). As we are away on Ex Lion Sun eager readers will have to await our exciting return at the end of the month before discovering the continuing hectic lifestyle of Bussaco Tp.

206 SIGNAL SQUADRON (REAR)
Sqn Comd **Capt R. J. Odling**
SSM **WO2 S. Archer**

Since last reporting from sunny Bulford a lot of water has passed under the bridge. Radio/Access Tp or Kosovo Tp as it became known finally disbanded having spent four months on 72hrs NTM without fully deploying. Everyone moved onto 14 days notice to move with the rest of the Regiment. The elements from 202 went back to the Armour (your welcome to it boys), thanks a lot for all your hard work.

Having spent all of 12 hours on 14 days notice the goal post moved to four hours notice only this time all those that had not been warned off to go were now going. We would just like to thank **WO1 RSM Chris Hymas** for being so understanding when we had to deploy members of the wedding reception including the best man **LCpl** 'Geordie' **Cairns** from his daughter's **(Rachel)** wedding to **LCpl** 'Dougie' **Douglas.** Congratulations on a wedding to remember. With the Squadron command team deploying and running around packing personal kit including **YofS Paul** 'But I am posted in four weeks' **Mehan** and the 2IC, and SSM having a good time in France it was left to the capable hands of **SSgt Steve** ' Which phone shall I answer next' **Bartleet,** with his team to send the Squadron on its merry way with the SQMS, **SSgt Chris Lloyd,** covering himself deeper and deeper in 1033's. With the dust finally settling with the deployment of HQ BRITFOR, the deployment of the 5 Bde SAN group followed the next day under the able command of **Cpl** 'Smooth talking' **Richards**. The Squadron Techs would just like to say ADMIN DISASTER to **FofS Joe Docherty** who managed to deploy a week before most of his uniform, it was a good job **Sgt Mandy Korchel** packed some spare kit along with her leg waxing kit, curling tongs and all those other little comforts. While the majority of the Squadron have been topping up their sun tans the rear party have managed to fit in guards, det maintenance, guards, summer camp, the Dunker Tank and yes more guards. Time has now moved on and people have now started to return to Bulford in dribs and drabs just in time for summer leave and to show off their tans. Finally farewells, hellos and a few new arrivals. Farewell and good luck to **YofS Paul** 'Gunny' **Mehan, Sgt** 'Bes' **Beswick, LCpl Rich Eveleigh,** and **LCpl** 'Tommo' **Thompson** who all leave us on postings. Hello to **YofS Simone Rouse** who deployed straight out to Kosovo (lucky girl), **SSgt Shaun** 'Where's my Troop' **Fairfield, Sgt John Batts, Cpl** 'Jenks' **Jenkinson, LCpl Wikely** and all the new arrivals out of the sausage factory (too many to mention) enjoy your tour boys and girls. Last but by no means least congratulations to **Cpl** 'DJ' **Corcoran** and his wife on their new arrival – the sleepless nights start here.

SQUADRON SUMMER CAMP 4-9 JULY 1999

Much effort was placed into arranging a full week of activities for the Squadron Summer camp at Browndown Camp, Gosport. With Portsmouth situated just across the water, the location proved to be an excellent venue for a summer camp. Unperturbed **SSgt Sean Fairfield** set off with a vague idea that it was near Gosport and with a little nervous navigating by **Pte** 'Compass' **Strattford**. Once the camp was 'found' and everyone was accommodated it was down town for a quick recce of the local Nightlife. **Sig** 'Where am I' **Bibby** was found the next morning still asleep in the back of the minibus. Activities included Sailing with the aptly named **Cpl** 'Windy' **Gale**, Horse riding led by **Lt** 'Olly' **Gardner**, Rockclimbing with **Cpl** 'Taff' **Roberts**, Mountain Biking with **WO2 (SSM) Stu Archer**. Hillwalking led by **SSgt Sean Fairfield** and Windsurfing with **SSgt (SQMS) Chris Lloyd**. Much fun was had by all, with many gaining much throughout the week. **SSgt** 'Mr. Windsurf' **Lloyd** had his patience pushed to the limits, when his protégé **(Sig** 'I like to swim' **Yates),** failed to stand upright on the board let alone sail one. **Cpl** 'John Wayne' **Hilton** must have thought that he was a actual cowboy, as he managed to go Horseriding three times, each time he did so he was given Jupiter (The barely controllable ex-drum horse of the Household cavalry). **Sig** 'Carrots' **Holdern** had a momentous time mountain biking, culminating in her sending her bike through a boy scout camp, writing off a couple of bivvies. The three water babies, **Cpl** 'Jenks' **Jenkinson, LCpl Kirsty Kidd** and **Sig** 'Bracks' **Bracken** couldn't be stopped whilst out sailing. Each time the boat weighed anchor, no sooner had the anchor hit the water the three water babes followed. **SSgt Sean Fairfield** managed to find many pubs along the South Downs way but it didn't compare to the amount found by the Mountain bikers. All in all a very good wind down after the recent hard work endured by the Squadron due to the recent deployment to Kosovo. Ex Dunking Rhino was organised by **SSgt Steve Bartleet,** and it took place, on the first day back from summer camp. **SSgt Steve Bartleet** found it hard to stop from throwing up whilst in the Dunker Tank. (He'll not be so keen to organise another trip to RNAS Yeovilton)! **Sig Ross Ainslie** decided to put his lungs to the test by going back for more at least six times, much to the enjoyment of his fellow cabin members. **Sig** 'Head Banger' **Mawer** thought he'd test the first aid skills of the tank divers, when he managed to knock himself out. One or two other members of the Squadron (who shall remain nameless), decided to be too scared to even attempt to try it out. The Dunker Tank proved to be of invaluable experience and perhaps will ensure trained personnel's survival if ever placed in a real time situation.

222 SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj M. Billingham**
SSM **WO2 F. Roberts**

June proved to be an eventful month for SHQ Tp. With three quarters of the Squadron deployed in the Balkans most of us were beginning to feel the pressure of fast balls and regular duties. The month began with a well deserved week of adventure training in Weymouth. The Troop were largely involved in the annual Regimental weekend. Well done to the tug o war drag queen team who decided to turn up dressed as women, apart from **SSgt Jase Meek** who looked more like a camp Robin Hood. We would have won but where was the 20 stone anchor man?? He was last seen talking to a tree the night before! The weekend closed with a church parade for the old comrades, followed by a quiet social event in the Sgt's Mess where NVQ's were presented to **Cpls Adam Burman** and **Chris Boden**. Next time don't put your arm around the Brigadier for a photograph **Cpl Burman** Well done to all the seniors who went to Blandford for the day to enhance their communication management skills on the Osprey suite. Extra congratulations must go to **Lt** 'Banana Man' **Johnson** for being unable to move his Trunk Node all day (next time close down properly Sir!).

Congratulations to **LCpl Hayley Moore, Chris Boden** and **Mick Brown** for their promotions to Corporal. Farewells go to **SSgt Pete** 'I'm sure I've already left' **Curtis** who has left the troop for 2 Sig Regt to play even more rugby, **Cpls Kyle Dickinson, Roger Teasdale** and **Nick Campbell** who have all left for Blandford (good luck on your T1 lads) and finally, yes finally, no really, for the last time, to **YofS Eddie Yates** who's tour in Kosovo was cut short for his posting to Ireland, and missed out on a medal by eight days so that he could get his leave in. A special mention must go to **Cpl Stevie** 'I'm never here' **Pilmer** who has managed to spend more time at Corsham hub than in the Troop since he arrived here last September.

Hellos and welcomes go to **Cpl Karl Peters** who has come from Blandford to see what a real Regiment is like after spending his six years in the Army training recruits, **SSgt YofS Tom Moran** and **Sig** 'Leonardo' **Elston** who made an explosive arrival. Next time remember on your arrivals form leave the pen picture blank, don't draw a picture of yourself! First operational deployments for **LCpl Kev Limbert, LCpl Turner, LCpl Prowse** and **Cpl Hayley** 'Crusher' **Moore** who whilst day dreaming behind the wheel about meeting her fiancée 'Billy boy', in theatre, inadvertently crushed **Sig Jones**. Our thoughts are with you guys.

SHARJAH TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt A. S. Johnson**
Tp SSgt **SSgt R. Lang**

This month the Troop has been getting on and off that proverbial bus. 'Are we ? or Aren't we going to Kosovo?' Along side that was the annual party cunningly disguised as Summer camp. The Regimental Weekend went off successfully, with everyone getting into the spirit of the event. The Squadron Stall was run by **Cpl's Stu Ireland, Paul Lester** and **Sig Richie Mace,** (I've noticed that whenever soldiers are encouraged to wear fancy dress, all the girls frocks, frilly knickers, stockings and suspenders come out of the closet!) It took the shape of stocks and soggy sponges, the Squadron Personnel of Spongerbility got a good soaking by all accounts.

MASIRAH TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt E.J. Fawcett**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Baker**

Although currently deployed on Op Agricola we are able to bring you an exclusive extract from '*The Scaley News*' produced in theatre by SAN 634.



A Few Good Men of the Masirah crew on Op Agricola
Sigs 'Ernie Bailey' Carvin, 'Billy' Watt, 'Jock' Miller, 'Jock Two' Muir and 'Eager' Beevor

' 'Well the week has gone fast with one thing and another. After our little (not) move across the road and the hours of digging cables in we thought we were here for the next six months. We didn't reckon on **Cpl** 'Punchy' **Punchard** and his axe wealding antics. Cpl P decided he wasn't happy with the cable layout and decided to dig some more of the cable in. **Sig** 'Scraf' **Scafton** started swinging mercilessly at the ground with a pick. Cpl P concerned for the safety of the cables took the pick and continued the job, only to slice straight through a seven quad. In frustration he then threw the pick at the post office just as the posties were coming out . . . . suffice to say Punchy didn't get any mail that week and the rest of us spent the day digging up all the cables to replace the faulty (cut!) cables. He doesn't know yet but he owes us a few beers for that one.'

MAN TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt I. V. I. Hemy**
Tp SSgt **SSgt S. E. Littlefield**

Well, more changes for the Troop – but at least we're used to it. Not only did the OC, **Lt** 'In need of a tan' **Hemy** disappear for the majority of June and plenty of July, but she also left the Troop to welcome **SSgt** 'Justin' **Littlefield**, and the wannabees from Sharjah and Masirah!. Back from Kosovo we got **LCpl** 'Feet up in the Sportsman's Bar' **Cooper**, and from across the road **Sigs** 'Returned' **Drake**, 'Chaquille O' **Hemming** , 'Manc' **Murphy** and 'Unbelievable Surname' **Mortiboys** from Sharjah.

Congratulations! Welcome back to the Troop to **LCpls** 'Ginge' **Wheeler** and 'Now not going either' **Johnson**, **Sigs** 'Baz' **Barry** and 'Lucky' **Carter.** At least we gave Sharjah Tp a few vehicles in exchange! By way of celebration, most of the Troop disappeared promptly to the Dunk Tank for a bit of specialist training – an event that would have been well received at the Regimental weekend. The Troop had a week of sun and fun at Wyke Regis, adventure training without the hierarchy, and have even managed to shake them off for a week at Penhale (suspiciously near Newquay).

At time of going to press, we bid farewell to **Sig** 'Sideways' **Murphy** and are especially pleased to welcome back **Cpl** 'windsurfing again' **Hoggart**. A reluctant farewell to **SSgt** 'Bullet' **Hogg** and family, moving to pastures greener (well 1 Div at least). Look forward to seeing you on Ops! Eventually the OC turned up again, no tan but knowing the words to the Canadian National Anthem. At least she has something to show for Ex Iron Rundle.



On the boat, off the boat ? Sitting on the dock of the bay with Sigs 'Ernie Bailey' Carvin, 'Billy' Watt, 'Jock' Miller, 'Jock Two' Muir, 'Idle banter' Danter, 'I suppose' Vose, 'King' Carlise and 'Eager' Beevor



Lt 'Hempster' Hemy tries to sit on her invisible chair during training for the Nijmegen marches

14 SIGNAL REGIMENT (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj Glen Harwood**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Mark Rouse**

TECHNICAL MAINTENANCE TROOP
CAPEL-CURIG 4 - 9 JULY 1999

On Monday 4 July, sixteen eager and excited technicians began the long drive to Capel Curig; Training Centre, Betws-y-Coed, for five days away from work, taking part in a round-robin of hill-walking, climbing, and mountain biking. The weather was fantastic for the whole five days, and everyone became tanned and healthy looking, although there were gripes about scaling the almost vertical mountains in such hot weather. Purely by chance, most of the activities finished at the Ogwen Reservoir cafe, which did a roaring trade in ice-creams and cold drinks. An extra activity organised by **Sgt Smith**, hill-walking, was a confidence test which involved crawling through a ten metre long fissure in some granite rocks, with barely enough room for standing, let alone breathing.

The nightlife in Betws-y-Coed was sadly lacking, according to all concerned, and it was a great disappointment to find that even the chip shop closed at 2100hrs. To remedy this, the Troop searched further afield for entertainment, and found Llanwrst, a town producing chilli kebabs of such intense heat that even **Sgt Scott** struggled to eat one. Perhaps the only disappointment of the week was the mountain biking, which was not so much riding, as pushing the bicycles up some of the steepest cycle-paths that any of us have encountered before. Leaving that aside, it was a wonderful week, and everyone enjoyed it.

REGIMENTAL MOTOR TRANSPORT
EXERCISE DRAGON'S TALON

The MT deployed with HQ Squadron on Ex Dragon's Talon on Sunday 6 June 1999. The first night was spent on the airfield to quickly test our skills before deploying to 21 Sig Regt (AS) in Colerne the next day. Our duties included laying the local lines and providing POL when required. The cobwebs were blown out and for some of the new lads there was a chance to see how things should or should not be done. Everything seemed to go well and before we knew it we were packed up and on our way to sunny England and Colerne. Well most of us anyway. **Sig Carl** 'Frank Skinner' **Slater** made ten miles before overheating but the short distance record went to **Cpl Andy** 'Have you seen my bike yet?' **Dawson** who could only manage six miles before a fan belt problem delayed him for a day. At 1500hrs on Monday 7 June 1999 the first of four packets started to roll into Colerne and were more than happy to be located inside one of the hangars. Once the urban cam was dropped we set to work on the local lines where **Sig Paul** 'Scouse ... etc..etc' **Caddick** came in to his own showing a willingness to work, to think for himself, to use common sense and his fear of heights-all of which were promptly stamped out after a couple of hours. Once set up, our duties quickly changed to manning the guard post and the Exchange. A busy four days followed. Our next move took place on Friday 11 June 1999 to Salisbury Plain where we would lose such luxuries as showers, urban cam and a good roof over our heads. Once set up in our new location we quickly resumed our guard duties, only to be dragged off them on Saturday morning to take part in some well organized events such as vehicle reversing and manoeuvring. **Sig Scott** 'Ernie' **Wise** simply would not be beaten by the 'reversing a trailer into the garage' test, until he was physically beaten and pulled from the landrover so others could try! In the afternoon the event was cross-country driving organized by **Sgt Jim** 'Shamus' **McNabb** where the, 'Whose got the muddiest rover?' competition obviously began. After some scary moments from **Sig Carl** 'two wheels' **Slater** we decided to return to our Echelon while we still could, to exchange stories and mutual praise.

On Sunday a five mile map reading and patrol test was organised much to the JOY of the lads. That night a successful rolling replen was carried out by the POL team led by **Cpl Andy** '2 wheels are better than 4' **Dawson**, where **LCpl Andy Hawkes** answered this question; 'What is the immediate action on pulling into a rolling replen?'

a) Don helmet, weapon and webbing and proceed to fill your vehicle, then move on.
b) Grab your gun, scunter to the conveniently parked NAAFI wagon and order a bacon butty. (Answers to:- N.O. Clue@sorehead. ouch.).

Needless to say, **LCpl Andy** 'I've earned this!' **Hawkes** got it wrong! Monday came and clay pigeon shooting was the event of the morning. Initial worries of not having enough clays were soon thrown aside after watching the first set of shooters, though **Sig Carl Potter** surprised us all by reaching the finals, only to come second to 'the dashingly handsome and highly intelligent' **Cpl Jason** 'Line Commander' **Dukes**. In the afternoon the chefs were busy supervising the three teams taking part in a master chef competition where the MT team only managed a disappointing third place, but 'Who cares?', no compo in sight. Monday soon turned in to Tuesday and at 1100hrs a hasty move was called and successfully carded out. We were racing towards our ERY only to be greeted with the sweet word 'endex', and some 'top grub' from our chefs, and then in was straight down to Bulford camp for some hard earned rest before the long drive back to Brawdy.

QUARTERMASTER'S TECHNICAL DEPARTMENT
QM (T) **Capt Neil Turnbull**
RQMS (T) **WO2 (RQMS) Daz Newton**

Firstly we would like to bid farewell to **Maj Tom Dean** who has recently moved across to take the post of QM (G) (easy life)! Welcome to **Capt Neil Turnbull** who has recently arrived from 40 Sig Regt, Belfast. We would like to wish **LCpl John Blowes** and **Helen** all the best for their future in marital bliss. Congratulations to **Sig Becky Connor** on the recent birth of baby **Rhys**. On the 3rd July the Department set out on their yearly (well first in a long time) adventure training week. This year's destination being The Royal Marine Barracks Chivenour Water Sports Club, including a sight-seeing tour of the local area with our own personal guide, **Sgt Tony Bland** RLC. The first day we took kayaks, surfboards and bodyboards to the local beach. On arrival the waves were looking agreeable for surfing. **SSgt Dave Marchment** and **SSgt Darren Abson** had a different idea and took out the kayaks - wrong idea; this they found out after being washed up, upside down, heads in the sand beneath a wave. That was the last time **SSgt Dave Marchment** got in a kayak again all week, will he over come the fear next year? **Cpl Dai Lewis** soon got to grips with surfing, well in straight lines anyway, but didn't quite master the fine art of turning as **Sig Caz Baddeley** found out as he rode over her head whilst she was trying to bodyboard. **Cpl Chris Coward** and **Sig Paul Caine** managed to sink their Canadian canoe; the mystery was why they felt the need to hang on to the canoe's side for safety when only in chest deep water.

226 SIGNAL SQUADRON (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)
Sqn Comd **Maj MZ**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Jenkins**

SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS TROOP

Hello from the newly formed SHQ Tp, born from the various Troops in 226 Sig Sqn. At last we have all the support trades under one roof. Our Troop motto is now, 'No job too big, no job too small, with SHQ Tp on call!'. A big hello to our new boss **WO2 (FoS) Huw Phillips** who has just come from the Army Technical Support Agency (ATSA), Malvern. Also to **Cpl Andy** 'I am not small' **Paul** from 16 Sig Regt, **Cpl** 'Your joking aren't yer' **Lewis** from 280 Sig Sqn and **LCpl** 'Give her no money' **Ward** from 1 (UK) ADSR. Also welcome to the real world to **Sig** 'Barrier tech' **Lloyd** and **Sig** 'Cheese and Owen' **Jones** who are both straight from Blandford. Fond farewells to **WO2 (FofS) Briers** who has gone to 4 Armd Bde. Also farewell to **Cpl** 'Pete Joey Morris' **Byrne** who is off to 640 Troop. Last but certainly not least good luck to **Sig** 'Butch, there's nothing wrong with gwar' **Chester** who has made the big step and became a civilian. The Troop celebrated its formation with a day out karting/Wacky racing at Letterston. Cheating prevailed for **LCpl** 'Doc Dastardly' **Dixon** who had a dodgy win and basically stole the chequered flag from **Cpl** 'Penelope pitstop' **Lewis**. At least if Penelope had won he would have shared the bottle of bubbly, unlike **LCpl** 'Scrooge' **Dixon** who said the champagne would make an ideal present for his wife.

640 SIGNAL TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt Ben White**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Frank Flaherty**

A relatively quiet period for the Troop in the way of Operational and Exercise commitments, the only major deployment being to Carmarthen for a day out go-karting. Congratulations to **Cpl** 'Dale' **Denton** for hurtling his way into first place and stealing it from many overawed racers. A couple of sporting events to be mentioned, firstly, the Regiment organised the Royal Signals Corps Orienteering Championship 1999 at Pembray. **WO2 Andy Jensen** and 640 Tp shouldered most of the logistical and administrative support task. The Regiment recently entered a tug of war team in the Morrison Cup, 3 & 5 Div, Army and Inter Corps Championships. If this was not enough, they then took part in the tug of war competition at the Royal Tournament. Those who took part included **LCpl Jamie Young**, particular congratulations should be extended to **Cpls** 'Lance' **Beaton** and 'Simmo' **Simpson** who represented the Royal Corps of Signals and successfully won a silver medal in the 680kg class.

A few hellos to be mentioned, firstly to **Sgt Dave Scanlan,** who proved the Intelligence Corps are aptly named when attempting to put on his racing helmet back to front on the go-karting day, to **Cpl Pete Byrne** on an inter troop posting, **LCpl** 'Matt' **Gerrard** from WUN1 and **Sig Gaz McDonald** from Blandford. Farewells to **Cpl Richie Bretherick** who went to the LEWT and subsequently off to Kosovo, congratulations on being pre selected for promotion to sergeant and also to **LCpl** 'Smudge' **Smith** who will be promoted to Corporal on posting to 16 Air Assault Bde. Socially the Squadron has just had a barbecue at Nolton Haven, enjoyed by all those who went. Congratulations to **Sig Steve Woodrow** on his recent marriage to **Diana,** and good luck this month to **LCpl Phil Foyle** with his marriage to **Beverly.**

ROMEO TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt Hervoire Scott**

A fairly hectic period for the Troop started with the Regimental exercise to RAF Innsworth, however, for the Northern Group this was a lot less arduous than for Southern Group. The Exercise was intended to test HQ Squadron's ability to resupply troops in the field over distance. We fulfilled this commitment by performing a rolling resup at Ashchurch in the dead of night and requesting nothing. Following a weekend off the Troop headed off on their annual pilgrimage to RAF Waddington to cover the air show. Beady Eye again showed its true colours by deciding not to work and refusing to be fixed when it was most needed. Joking apart we did actually improve the operators knowledge, especially for the newer operators from Hotel Tp. On the social front the Troop enjoyed a day out at Hetherton to go paint balling. On approaching the gaming area and with the warning 'Don't fire at someone unless they are wearing their mask' still fresh in their minds, **LCpl Dave Drummond** (245 Sig Sqn) loosened off a single round with deadly accuracy and struck **Sgt Chris** 'I'm not fat, I'm festively plump' **Dunn** squarely on his rather rotund rump, causing much hilarity. One kill and the game hadn't even started. The leaving do for **SSgt Steve** 'I wish I'd stuck to coke' **Jacklin** at the Waterfront Mexican was a roaring success even if he couldn't remember much about it. Goodbyes go out to **SSgt Dave White** on his impending trip to Bosnia, **Cpl Nikki Dawson** who is off to Kosovo and **Cpl Lee Holmes** who has managed to get a nice long course complete with a ticket to freedom. A hearty welcome back to **Cpl Mark Hopkins** back from Bosnia and **Cpl Paul Browne** from Kosovo. Finally on the sporting front, two outstanding performances by **Cpl Mark** 'Defend the wicket' **Hopkins** and **Cpl John Pankliurst** couldn't rescue the Squadron who lost a tight and keenly contested cricket final to 237 Sig Sqn.

237 SIGNAL SQUADRON (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)
Sqn Comd **Maj John Dakin**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Dean Richardson**

SQUADRON OPERATIONS

There have been several comings and goings with the Sqns Ops team. **SSgt (YofS) Phil Tonks** leaves us on promotion and we welcome **SSgt (YofS)** 'Taff' **Thornas** to the busiest job in the Corps. Also recently arrived is the new Ops WO, **WO2** 'Micke-e' **Osborne** and **SSgt** 'Shuggie' **Hughes** - a Tech Staffy doing a good impression of a FofS. Also in the cell are **SSgt** 'Edmund' **Blackadder** and **SSgt** 'Resettlement' **Gordon** who between them spend more time away from the Squadron than in it. The Ops Team have just returned from an Exercise recce to Kenya where they have been planning weird and wonderful EW scenarios.

VICTOR TROOP
Tp Comd **WO Bob Matthews** Royal Australian Signals
Tp SSgt **SSgt Tony Watters**

Farewells and congratulations to **Cpl Paul Petrie**, who is off to Chicksands on promotion to instruct in the wonderful world of Optec. Hello and farewell to **Sig Willie Hayes**, just back from a tour in Bosinia and now off to Northern Ireland and congratulations on his engagement to his girlfriend of about five minutes. Finally, farewell to **Sig Brian Martin**, who has moved eastwards to 30 Sig Regt. Welcome to **Sgt Stan Buxton**, INT CORPS, on arrival from 9 Sig Regt and straight in as the new SQMS. Welcome also to **Sig Mick Reeve** on arrival from training at Blandford. Do not fear, it will get better! Welcomes back to the Troop after an arduous tour on the hill tops in Bosnia for **Cpl's Zoe Wainwright** and **Danny Wilkins** who were also promoted in theatre. And an extra congratulations to **Danny** on his engagement to **LCpl Emma Dobbs**, formally of 226 Sig Sqn. It just goes to show that everyone wants to be a part of 237! Also, welcome back to **Cpls Mick Haltam** and **Mark Wright** on their safe return form Kosovo as part of General Jackson's Hit Squad.

The Squadron held the Summer Do at The Mariners in Nolton Haven on Thursday 1 July. The majority of personnel turned up in fancy dress, which was as characters from tacky Australian soaps. There was an excellent turn-out, especially the Troop OC who just came as himself. **Willie Hayes** decided to get extremely emotional about leaving all his friends behind and later attempted to break the world record for the longest time on a gyroscope. Unfortunately he ended up in Withybush A&E department with burst blood vessels in both eyes. Never mind **Willie**, I'm sure you will be missed. A big thank you and well done to **Cpls** 'Sven' **Gronn** and 'Foxy' **Slater** for organising the event.

A two day trip up the mountain for the Troop started as it was destined to carry on. **Sgt** 'Taff' **Willumsen** turned up for his first day in the Troop, packed his kit in ten minutes and was off. The Exercise started after the 'Spec Op malia' proved they do spend all day in the MT playing darts by beating the 'Down-trodden Linguists' by an overwhelming score. While the Troop assembled in the local haunt **SSgt** 'Gucci' **Watters** was nowhere to be found. It became apparent that when geographically challenged somewhere near Snowdonia the responsible UEL had reached for his mini Magellen but had lost the instruction manual. At this stage I think it is safe to say that our illustrious leader was lost!

KILO TROOP

For those who may have served with Kilo Tp in days distant, the demise of the Bromure has seen the disbandment of the Troop. Contributions should be forwarded to **WO2 Jimmy** 'Bromure' **Speirs** or to the Royal Signals Museum Jamming Section.

TANGO TROOP
Tp Comd **2Lt Phil Waddell**
Tp SSgt **Sgt Del Woods**

Hellos and farewells: first of all we would like to say our hello's to our new Tp OC, **2Lt Waddell** who I'm sure will enjoy his stay here as he did volunteer to come to the Regiment, and to **Sig Hancock** who has seen the error of his ways and transferred from the infantry to our beloved Corps. We are also entertaining **Sig Slater**, one of the SAT's (Soldier Awaiting Training) who is here to learn about the real Army. We have lost a few of the Troop due to Regimental commitments in Kosovo, **LCpl** 'Spik' **Lane, LCpl** 'Clubby' **Clubb** and **Sig** 'Big Dave' **Terron,** not forgetting all those in Bosnia - we hope those sun tans are coming along a treat.

LEWT
Tp Comd **Capt Craig Thomson-Smith**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Ollie Campbell**

A hectic few months for the LEWT which saw the troop deploy at the beginning of June in support of 5 Airborne Brigade on Op Agricola. After initial preparations in Macedonia, the Troop advanced with the lead elements of 5 Airborne Brigade through Kosovo and were the first to reach Pristina airport. On arrival the Troop was boxed in by the Russians and after two days of intense negotiations, the Troop were tasked with subsequent operations. During this time **Cpl Mick Haltam** showed off his trade skills to the full as he translated between the local Russian commander and the Brigadier of 5 Airborne Brigade. Both teams and the command post had their fair share of excitement which included the finding of some graves, numerous UXO's and a few barstool contact stories. Amongst many other memorable moments **SSgt Ollie Campbell** used various unorthodox hand signals to indicate the route home for a Serb T72 Convoy. In addition **Sgt** 'Blue Watch' **England** managed to set fire to his rover which **Cpl Mick Haltam** sorted out for him. After thirty days of tasking, LEWT were relieved by other assets and returned via Thessalonika to the UK

Congratulations to **Sgt** 'Fireman Sam' **England, Cpl** 'Uncertain' **Burton** and **Cpl** 'Greek God of Comms' **Mount** on selection for promotion. Congratulations also to **Capt Craig** 'Diplomacy' **Thomson-Smith** on his promotion and good luck in his posting to ATR Bassingbourn. The Troop is now busy preparing and training for Ex Bright Star 1999 in Egypt and apologies to those loaded on the planned LEWT cadre course which was cancelled for operational reasons. Plans are afoot to run a cadre early in the Millennium.

MOTOR TRANSPORT SECTION
MT Sgt **Sgt Dave Keenan**
MT Cpl **Cpl Stanley-Jones**

The Troop would like to welcome **Sig Keith Barrows** into the fold after a short spell at Her Majesty's displeasure. A sad farewell to **Sig** 'Billy' **Buist** who is off to pastures greener, he hopes, in Scotland. Thanks for all your hard work and good luck. **LCpl Seth Campbell** has been away more than he has been here, having just completed the DDI course at Leconsfield and is now ready to continue training the Squadron boxing team. **Sgt** 'Skull' **Keenan** is also away on another course and in his absence **Cpl Clark Stanley-Jones**, with a hyphen assumes control with a rod of steel and three darts.

245 SIGNAL SOUADRON (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)
Sqn Comd **Maj Guy Owen**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Fisher**

More changes in the Lines. We say farewell and the best of luck to a Brawdy institution... **Maj Guy Owen**. After three years here in Haverfordwest we wish all the best to **Guy, Charlotta, Georgia** and **Timothy**. Also welcome to our new Troopie **2Lt Ian Rodger** fresh from Blandford. Congratulations go to **Sgt** 'Scoobie' **Beckett** and **Gwen** on the birth of their daughter **Abigail**. Other notable events in the last few months included a sound effort from the Regiment Dinghy Sailing Team. At the Army Sailing Association Inter-unit Championships at Netley Sailing Centre the team succeeded in making it through to the finals only to be pipped at the post by 42 Regt RA. The team of three Bosun Dinghies were crewed by **Capt Graham Ingram, WO2 (YofS)** Taff **Owens, Sgt Thorpe, LCpl Green, Sig Milner** and **Sig Waters**.



Sgt Thorpe, LCpl Green and Sig Waters
Launch a Bosun for the ASA Inter Unit Championships

WHISKEY TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt Stewart**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Clarke**

June saw the Troop deploying to RAF Innsworth on Ex Dragon's Talon, where a vigorous week of military training was undertaken. The majority of the Troop managed to achieve marksman on the 7 iron, the preferred weapon of choice on the Innsworth 9 Hole Training Area. Welcome back to **Lt** 'Marm' **Stewart** who rejoins the Troop from skiing training in Switzerland on a flying visit. The Troop bid a farewell to **Capt** 'Caveman' **Crapper** who has moved on to greater things at ATR Bassingbourn, and **Sgt Rob** 'Chinny' **Tubbs** and **LCpl** 'Moon face' **Kelly** who have both now traded in their uniforms to become civvies. Hello's go to **LCpl Karen Gunn** who joins our merry bunch from 1 ADSR and **Sgt Carl Elliott** who joins us from Cyprus. Congratulations go to **Sgt Bernie** 'Roundabout' **Topham** on the birth of his son and on his marriage to **Carol Anne**.

ZULU TROOP
Tp Comd **2Lt I. Rodger**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Si Donnelly**

Finally the Troop managed to deploy out of Wales on Ex Dragon's Talon. We were let loose in our armour on SPTA. On our return to Wales we once again began the hum drum process of preparing our armour for its stay in the out of use Troop. The Troop would like to congratulate **SSgt Si Donnelly** on his recent marriage to **Nicky, Cpl Jase Quilter** on being selected for promotion and **Sig Sarah Musson** on being promoted to Lance Corporal. The Troop bids a sad farewell to **Cpl Jase Quilter** off to sunny Cyprus and to **LCpl Tony** 'YO' **Gallagher** to 30 Sig Regt. The Troop would like to extend a hearty welcome to **2Lt** 'Wodger' **Rodger** who takes over the reins (we hope you last longer than the last one, Sir!) and to **Sigs Garth Crooks, Martin Pearce** and 'Alton' **Towers**, all of whom are fresh out of the factory.

REGIMENTAL CRICKET TOUR - 12-16 JULY 1999
by Cpl D. Whatmough

This tour saw a half-experienced, half-thrown-together squad of 15 men embark on a tour encompassing five games in four days, using Bulford Camp as our base. 12 July and 13 July saw 14 Sig Regt win games against ATSA(M) at Malvern and Upavon Support Unit comfortably. On 14 July, despite beating 158 Provost Coy RMP at Tidworth in the morning, we lost to 11 Sig Regt by 25 runs in the afternoon. Despite this loss on paper, we had still won the moral -victory a last minute 'ringer' not on the initial team-sheet **(J. Sullivan)** being thrown on as seventh batsman. (their sixth Corps player on the field). On

15 July we went on to beat 3 Fd Wkshp REME at Tidworth Oval, coming back from a very shaky batting innings to make it a total of four victories from five games in four days.

Special mentions must go to Team Captain, **Cpl John** 'Whirlwind' **Winwood** for excellent coaching, motivation and all-round cricket skills, **Capt Rich** 'David' **Bailey** as tour and team photographer, **Cpl Dean** 'Sledger' **Mills** for legspin bowling the Aussie way and good solid performances, **WO2 Nigel** 'Pastie Hands' **Watton** and **SSgt Frank** 'Admin-Monster' **Flaherty** for bravely keeping the wicket facing **John Winwood, Sgt Stan** 'Dead Swan' **Buxton** for his perfection of the 'dying swan' impression, **Andy** 'Fashion Police' **Loveridge** for being such a wholehearted player (copyright the Western Telegraph), **WO2 Julian** 'Angry' **Axhorn, Cpl Craig** 'ysl' **Hall** and **LCpl Daz** 'Stella-Butt' **Edge** for consistent fielding and bowling; **LCpls** 'Brummie' **Brumfield** and **Jamie** 'Bleeding' **Young** for consistent morale boosts, and **Cpl Daz** 'I've got an average of four now' **Whatmough** for simply turning up! Special thanks must go to **Capt Rich Bailey** as OIC tour and token Intelligence Corps officer, **SSgt Frank Flaherty** for his infallible admin and organisation, **Andy Loveridge** for taking a paid week off work, **John Winwood** for his boundless enthusiasm, encouragement and ability to break the oppositions' fingers, **WO2 Julian Axhorn** for his 'controlled' (or was it?) aggression on the pitch, and last, but by no means least, the five teams who hosted us for the four day duration.

EXERCISE GOCH DRAGON
ADVENTURE TRAINING IN THE COLORADO ROCKIES
by Sig Danny Watson



The group roughing it in the Lost Creek Wilderness
(L-R): Sig McGeachy, Sig Watson, SSgt Watters, Sig Jones, Cpl Roach, Sig Parker

On the 11 July 1999, seven members of 14 Sig Regt (EW) departed on Ex Goch Dragon to Colorado, USA. The aim was to climb Mount Massive and Mount Elbert - both peaks being over 14000 feet above sea level. Once we arrived in America we proceeded to Fort Carson, an American Forces' base, which was to be our base camp and home for the Exercise period. The initial acclimatisation period was carried out in a mountain region called the Crags, with the highest range being between 10000 and 11000 feet. During this period the group got to know each other, especially **Cpl** 'Skippy' **Roach** and his stories from around the globe. The next phase of the Exercise over the period 15-18 July was spent in an area called Lost Creek Wilderness, where we spent on average six hours a day hill walking, passing such things as old derelict gold mines and wooden shacks. Over the 40 miles covered during these four days we met numerous strange people including one man who thought he was Davey Crockett, and a wide range of other local groups.

On finishing the four day trip we returned to base camp where we replenished stores and cleaned equipment ready for the six day expedition which was the next phase of the exercise. We departed on the 21st to climb Mt Massive which took the group three days and two nights. Some of this first climb was quite hard due to the altitude difference, but **Sig** 'Jonah' **Jones** and **Cpl Kev Roach** kept morale high. We could always rely on them for a laugh. On reaching the peak at 14421ft we immediately did the British thing - **Sigs** 'Baz' **McGeachy** and **Ryan Parker** had the kettle on for a brew. We could see our next objective Mt Elbert from the top and realised it would be a long walk. We proceeded on the ten mile trek before setting up base camp. In this area we passed an area called Twin lakes which was very picturesque, this is where Americans come for a 'VACATION'.

The next day we walked just up to the 12000ft point, being kept amused by **Lt Ben White**'s knowledge of rock formations. We passed a river on the way to get to our camp site, in which **SSgt Tony Watters** decided to have a bath even though the water temperature was just above freezing. Next morning we packed up and prepared to go up and over Mount Elbert at 14433ft. On reaching the peak, it was just like getting to the top of Snowdon as there were many people admiring the view and taking pictures. From where we were stood you could see Leadville, the highest town in America which is also where the programme South Park was based. We then proceeded back to camp on the 26th. We also found the time to visit the local town Colorado Springs where the locals were more than friendly, and some of the group went white water rafting before we flew back to England on 27 July.

14 SIGNAL REGIMENT (EW) FEMALE ATHLETICS TEAM
by Cpl Z. Dolan

14 Sig Regt kicked the athletics season off with the Army Inter-Units competition held at Blandford. where they put the training into practice, with **LCpl** 'Shadie Adie' **Farley** doing exceptionally well by winning the javelin. With plenty of enthusiasm 14 Sig Regt girls made it through to the Army Semi Finals. Despite the noticeable lack of teams due to operational commitments, the competition from those who attended made up for it. **JT** 'Jek' **Westley** kept the morale up for the girls by putting some excellent effort into the 1500m. **WO1 Harry Few** also did well with plenty of support on the discus. After a fulfilling day the girls went back chuffed to know they were in the Army Finals. At last the nerves settled down when turning up to the very plush Aldershot Military Stadium for the Army Finals. The competition was buzzing with pro-athletes, although there was still a friendly atmosphere. **Sig** 'Lanky legs' **Milner** made an ace third place in the high jump, **Sig** 'Midget' **Quinn** stuck out the 5000m under the blazing sun. There was great support and sportsmanship from all the girls including **Cpl** 'Chunk-a-lunka' **Dolan** who finally managed to improve her technique at the 100m hurdles to come fourth. All in all, it was again a brilliant year for athletics and hopefully next will be even more successful.

16 SIGNAL REGIMENT

PRINCESS ROYAL DAY - REGIMENTAL TREASURE HUNT
by SSgt (SQMS) King

By way of marking Princess Royal Day, it was decided to hold a Regimental Treasure Hunt and this was superbly organised by **Sgt Jase Goldsworthy**. The basic idea was that teams would have to navigate their way around a set route of approximately 70 miles in their private cars, and on the way answer set questions and solve problems, all within the legal speed limits. Well, it sounded easy enough! At the allotted times, teams were given their navigation packs consisting of a set of instructions; some traces, a whole host of grid references, 20 or so seemingly random questions and a rather ominous DM5 piece. We then had an hour to sort ourselves out before embarking on the great adventure.

We were seen off under the watchful eyes of **Sgt Jase Goldsworthy** and **Cpl** 'Tommo' **Thompson**, who watched in wonder as **Cpl Wayne Stainthorpe** and crew managed to turn in the completely wrong direction out of camp, his hour of preparation had obviously been well spent! After only two miles the next sight to greet the competitors was that of **WO2 (SSM)** 'Dusty' **Miller** and **WO2 (RQMS) Jim Alger** clad in leather standing at the side of the road in a scene reminiscent of a Village People video. **WO2 Miller**'s role was to point a speed gun at approaching traffic with an expression and stance that gave the impression he wished it was a real gun. Meanwhile **WO2 Alger** just touted for business in the background with a red and white hanky protruding from the appropriate pocket, well that is what it looked like anyway!

Out of the 23 competing teams, 21 received a 10 minute penalty, one went within the speed limit and the other under the navigational skill of **Cpl Jules Portlock** had decided on a completely different route which



Maj Jonathan Turner
waving off the competitors in true 'Top Gear' fashion

avoided speed traps and, rather unfortunately, check points. The speed trap firmly behind us we were free to get lost at what ever pace suited us, many teams were able to practice their three point turns with alarming regularity, but progress was made, by most at least. At the half way point the River Rhine loomed large without any sign of a bridge but an obliging car ferry steamed into view. It soon became apparent what the DM5 was for, which would have been fine, if that is what the cost of travelling on the ferry was. Waiting for the ferry also gave the slower teams a chance to catch up with the likes of **Sgt Adi Haslain,** who had set off first from camp, now finding himself tenth in the queue, having taken the scenic route. After the ferry, we finally had a stretch of Autobahn with no speeding restrictions. **Maj Taylor** got his first taste of what it is like to travel in excess of twice the national UK speed limit, he also got a taste of what its like to be travelling at 140mph when a truck pulls out without warning and can say with conviction how effective ABS breaking really is!

After some three hours of driving the first of the teams were arriving back at the Regimental Club, the *Wall and Willow*, on JHQ trying to make sense of their answer sheets before handing them in and stopping the clock. There were the inevitable debates about exactly what the answers should have been and there was a surreal discussion about when is a flag not a flag, but such trivialities were soon forgotten as the beer flowed and the barbecue devoured. With all the teams bar one returned, we had a phone call from the PMS team, (**Pam, Melanie** and **Sam**) who were already at the car ferry, they were instructed not to bother with the rest of the route but to make their way straight back. In the meantime it was decided to have the prize giving. Second place went to **Cpl Mick Beeson** ably navigated by **Sig Edwards**, their claim to fame was achieving the highest speed on the Autobahn section of the course, their other claim was that they got lost in Düsseldorf, somewhat negating their first achievement. The winners were 'The Old Gits', brilliantly driven by **SSgt Ray King** (the author), navigated without fault by **Maj Taylor** (his OC) and the odd word of encouragement from **Sig Paul McIntyre** who had been neatly folded on to the back seat. The consolation prize, for the most miles done, went to **Cpl Jules Portlock** and Co. The beer continued to flow as much as the tales of what might have been, 'If only we hadn't missed that turn!' As the bar closed and people walked home, the PMS team returned. Navigating a direct route back to camp from the outskirts of Düsseldorf, for a team that had spent four hours or more to reach the half way point on a three hour route, was never going to be as easy as it sounded. At least they tried!

LOMBARDIA PATROL COMPETITION - *by Cpl Nuttley*

The Lombardia Patrol competition is an annual event held in Luino, Italy. The aims are to:

a. Maintain strong relationships between reserve and units of the Italian armed forces.
b. Maintain strong relationships between reserve and units of the armed forces of allied and friendly countries.
c. Exercise units in peace support operations, specifically that of peacekeeping.

It was indeed a very early start to the day on the 17 June 1999 that the team, comprising **of WO2 (SSM) Miller, Cpl Nuttley, Sig Edwards** and **Sig Parry** assembled at Krefeld Lines. Accompanied by **LCpl Dickenson** who had volunteered to be the team's driver for the event, knowing that he would have to do nothing more strenuous than sit in a driver's seat, he was a very contented man. After a quick check that all necessary equipment and documentation was loaded onto the transport we departed. After a good ten hours travelling and several stops en route we found ourselves in Luino a small town near Lake Magdioro surrounded by some magnificent mountains although our immediate thoughts were of the tab commencing within the next 24 hours.

All too quickly Friday morning was upon us and we busied ourselves booking in with the competition organisers and finding our feet. After the orders group and briefing during the evening we went back to our hotel and went through the mass of information regarding the competition. It was indeed some hours later that we all got our heads down in preparation for the next day. Saturday started very early with a wake up call at 0400hrs and a start time of 0455hrs. The initial phase consisted of checking that we had the right equipment and understood the orders. All went well. From there it was on to Stage 2, a short bus ride to the firing range for some CQB where all the team managed to hit all of their targets. From then on we were on foot tabbing up the mountains. The remaining stands, a total of ten took the team eight hours to complete the whole competition having climbed several large hills/mountains and some 35-40km in distance. Our military knowledge was tested in just about every conceivable way from tactics to NBC and first aid. At one point even **Sig Edwards** broke into a sweat! The competition was totally enjoyed by all participants and was a good mix of both learning equipment that we had not touched before and putting into practice what we already knew. The day ended in a rather large party in the main square, where just about the entire town turned out. Much fun was had by all despite being in Service Dress. Sunday was spent recouperating having completed the final parade and not really understood how the presentations could be made, when the final results had not yet been compiled? However we managed sixth out of 73 and had the best time for the tabbing phase. We all managed a little sight seeing, a cultural visit to Milan and time in the town of Luino.

EXERCISE FAST TRACK 1999 – The Regimental Cadre Course

The time had arrived again to find the 'best of the best of what was left!' The Regiment's best junior ranks that had not deployed into Theatre were to take part in Ex Fast Track 99, the Commanding Officers Cadre Course. The Ex was spread over two arduous weeks consisting of 80 40-minute teaching periods and two field exercise phases. The aim was to assess junior ranks within 16 Sig Regt for selection to the next highest rank. The course began with three intake tests for the whole course. After some 'interesting' results the tuition began. The first week was mainly held in the Training Wing, covering a variety of subjects such as NBC, First Aid, Leadership Principles, Tactics and Map Reading.

As well as the class work, the course was put through their paces on the Drill Square. After a morning No2 Dress inspection by **WO2 (SSM) Miller** the course spent two periods practising drill. Everyone performed well, but **LCpl Kismul** stood out as the next 'RSM' with an outstanding drill voice. Also thrown into the packed programme for the first week was one PT period every day. Starting at the Gym the PT normally consisted of a testing 5km run carrying webbing and wearing boots. The end of the first week saw the start of the exercise phase deploying to Arsbeck Training Area to put into practice what had been taught in class. The first phase ended with a 4km log race and well done to Sect 2 who were the clear winners. We all deployed to Haltern Training Area for the testing phase of the exercise. Each course member was given a command task to complete and was assessed on how they achieved their task, their orders given and how they performed during the whole Exercise. On the whole the course performed extremely well under the test conditions, considering the lack of sleep. Among the tasks given were harbour area set up, ration resupply under fire and close target recces. The course then went back to the classroom to take their final exams, First Aid, NBC, Map Reading and Tactics, before practising their Final Pass Off Parade, which was to be held on the last day of the course. Well done to every one involved. The final results were as follows:

Overall Top Student	**Sig Teasdale**
Top Field Soldier	**Sig McGuckin**
Best Academic	**Sig Jenkins**
Best Endeavour	**Sig Horton**



'Laurel and Hardy' – the Directing Staff giving direction?
WO2 (YofS)Hartshorne and WO2 (SSM) 'Dusty' Miller

EXERCISE GREEN GAMBIT 1999
THE REGIMENTAL PATROL CAMP

Ex Green Gambit is the Regiment's annual military exercise, run this year in the Sauerland region. The basis of the exercise was a Patrol Competition, with ten sections and ten checkpoints. The checkpoints were permanently manned and consisted of a command task which was either physical, mental, or a combination of both. Sections would start at separate checkpoints at the beginning of the Exercise and then march/navigate two checkpoints a day. The competition was scored on time taken between checkpoints and points scored on each command task. Sections completed legs of around 20kms a day in good time as confidence and experience was gained in map reading. However, a small detour of approximately 15km by one section, and a short cut which added 40mins to another Section's time were hard felt. Stands included a command task, canoeing, recognition, vehicle recovery, 'sheep herding' over an obstacle course, first aid, a weapons stand using NVGs, observation, stalking, and a Radio Relay mast run and set-up. And if that wasn't enough, there was night navigation, some early morning starts and a couple of Mensa tests thrown in.



'What do you mean another three days?'
Sig Sandy and Sgt Oldroyd
see the funny side whilst the others avert their eyes

After a few days of hard graft, slogging the distance each day a one team had a little brain wave 'why carry our Bergens?' So after finding a child's cart their efforts were greatly reduced, even though the rough terrain that was being crossed meant the cart didn't last that long! Good idea lads but no cigar!

A week later and on completion of all ten stands, sections moved to their pick up points where they were driven to EXCON, which was located in a German Kaserne. All sections had a well-earned shower, and a barbecue, where the prize for the best section overall was awarded by the 21C Regiment. Hearty congratulations to **WO2 (YofS) Stu Hartshorne** and the Stand DS for providing a superb exercise, everyone is leaping at the thought of what will be conjured up next year.

OVERALL STANDINGS

1st Place - Section 2

Sgt Nevens (DS)	**LCpl Fatchett**
Sig Bashford	**Cpl Campbell (IC)**
LCpl Kismul	**Sig Joyce**

STAND 10 CANOEING - THE STAND ON EVERYONE'S LIPS

by SSgt Hawkins

'Stand 10' was situated by the side of the impressive Lake Biggesee, in the beautiful surroundings of the Hock Sauerland Kreis. The original brief was to set up a task that would 'get the soldiers wet' and include the use of canoes or boats. Given this wide-ranging scenario, it was decided to develop a role-playing theme for this stand. This involved **SSgt Nick Hawkins** 'Jacques' and **SSgt (FofS) Jamie Harper** 'Pierre' of the French Resistance briefing the visiting sections as to how to obtain the grid reference to the Resistance HQ, all done with truly authentic accents, NOT, (the next command task).



'Pierre and Jacques'
explaining the test in Pigeon English

The grid was locked in a BDS container secured with a combination lock; the numbers of which were scattered about the area of the lake. Under the guidance of the Resistance, sections paddled off in two's to obtain the numbers, once located they would return to the BDS located on the shoreline and use the numbers hopefully in the correct sequence, to crack the code and successfully open the BDS. The winning section being the one who opened the box the quickest. Due to the nature of the stand, it was extremely successful and enjoyed by all those who attempted it and although most stayed dry, **Sig Sadler** managed to go in the drink not once but twice!

EXERCISE TARTAN VENTURA - VISIT OF MANCHESTER ACF

by Cpl Mick Durrant

The Regiment hosted a group of enthusiastic Army Cadets from the Manchester area for a two-week summer camp in Rheindahlen. **Cpls Mick Durrant** and **Dave Sawyers** were appointed to be guardian angels for their stay. After a day's orientation around the camp, we deployed in the field for three days, learning different subjects from navigation to tactics. The cadets were at various levels of ability: the four stars had a good knowledge of many of the subjects taught, however, the survival stand set up by **SSM** 'Grizzly Adams' **Miller** and **YofS** 'Crocodile Dundee' **Hartshorne** was of great interest to them all. One Cadet in particular impressed the DS. **Cdt Wood**, the youngest and least experienced of them, under the guidance of **Sgt Kit Knight** became the best shot out of the group. **Cpl Chris Binnington** also noticed his ability to take on board any and all information thrown at him – **Cdt Wood** was an information sponge! On completion of the Exercise the weekend was spent at Phantasialand, and the Garrison Blue Pool.

Monday, Week Two, was spent at RAF Bruggen. Where they went through various lessons and command tasks although the standard of some lessons was poor. For example, according to the RAF, the aim of camouflage and concealment is to blend in with your surroundings and look like a tree: well, you the reader decide.

A day of canoeing under the instruction of **SSgt Nick Hawkins** had, for some reason, rather a lot of DS visitors? I won't say why but it had nothing to do with the weather, although it was very hot! Due to the sun many of the cadets were a little red and a little lethargic for the last couple of days which were spent learning a little about the Radio Relay Detachment, and then completing any last minute shopping. Although the Regiment is on an operational tour in Kosovo we managed to give the Cadets a great time, and they are keen to return next year. The enjoyment, interest and excitement of the Cadets makes any attachment extremely worthwhile and rewarding. Every unit should take up the opportunity to promote our Corps to a wider audience.

252 SIGNAL SQUADRON

The Squadron would like to say a fond farewell to the following people – Good luck and thanks:

Maj 'Alf' **Thomas** – OC Sqn	**WO2 (SSM) Sykes**
SSgt (SQMS) Maw	**SSgt Hewson**
SSgt Patrick	**SSgt Evans**
Sgt Knowles	**Cpl Stoneman**
Cpl Brooksbank	**Cpl Jon Grant – (Civ Div)**
Cpl Elsworth	**Cpl** 'Don' **Brennan**
LCpl Paul	**LCpl McMahon** – (deserting the AGC!)

LCpl Thompson, Sigs Underwood and **McMahon** – to 255 Sqn

We would also like to welcome some new and not so new faces to the Squadron:

Capt 'How many jobs?' **O'Rourke** – 2IC	**Capt Stoddart**
WO2 (SSM) Hood	**SSgt (SQMS) Dixon**
SSgt Crossing	**SSgt** 'Loud' **Youd**
SSgt Cameron	**SSgt Holloway**
SSgt Bain	**Sgt** 'I don't like cricket, I love it' **Glean**
Sgt Colbeck	**Sgt Cox**
Sgt 'swim like a fish' **Taylor**	**Sgt McGuire**
Sgt Bell	**Sgt Laird**
Sgt Partridge	**Cpl Ayling** (Again!)
Cpl Edwards	**Cpl Robson**
LCpl Lawrence	**LCpl Glover**
Sig Watson	**Sig Jackson**
Sig Unwin	**Sig** 'Mo' **Beck**
Sig Dickeson	**Sig McGrouther**
Sig Berry	**Sig** 'Horny' **Horton** from HQ Sqn
Sig Dennison	

We hope you enjoy your tour with us!!



21 SIGNAL REGIMENT (AIR SUPPORT)



REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS

CO	**Lt Col John Terrington**
RSM	**WO1 John Williams**

POST-SDR REORGANISATION - 21 SIGNAL REGIMENT (AS)

During September 1999, the Regiment will have undergone the first changes to its ORBAT following SDR and R SIGNALS restructuring. 220 Sig Sqn in Germany disbanded, in Germany, with a formal parade and the transfer of personnel to 16 and 30 Sig Regt, to form two new deployable Telemech troops. The Squadron reforms in Colerne, in its new Air Support role, providing the second (of three) Air Support Signal Squadrons. In addition, on 1 September 1999, 81 Sig Sqn (V) will formally transfer to 2 (NC) Sig Bde, under CO ACISG. At the time of writing these *Wire* notes, these events have not yet happened! A full report will be included in the next edition of *The Wire*, with photographs of the parades, marking this significant phase in the history of the Regiment.

REGIMENTAL 40TH ANNIVERSARY

by WO2 (SQMS) Mead-Male

Saturday 10 July 1999 was the day 21 Sig Regt (AS) celebrated the 40th Anniversary of the formation of the Regiment and the 60th year since the antecedents of one of our territorial units, 81 Sig Sqn (V), landed with the British Expeditionary Force in France.

Do we celebrate? *Have we the resources? Have we the manpower?*

All questions that we as a Corps are familiar with but, with only six weeks to the planned date, remained unanswered. Eventually the

deployment of the majority of the Regiment on Op Agricola was complete and the decision was taken for those left behind - the Open Day goes on! With more than half of the Regular Unit deployed on operations in the Balkans, the RCWO, **WO2 (SQMS)** 'I'm only a Chef' **Mead-Male** had planned to put his feet up, while **Maj Chas Dale** intended to work on his angling skills. Both should have known better, as they were chosen to head up the Open Day Team whilst sustaining support to those on their summer holiday in the Balkans.

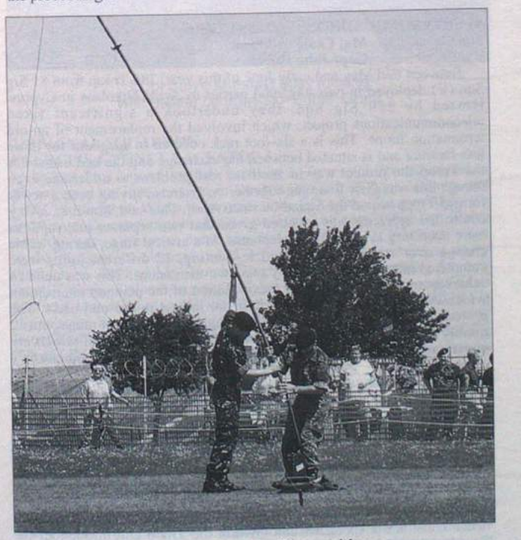
Anyway, full steam ahead, six weeks to go and nothing planned, and a shortage of budding volunteers to assist. Push the letters out and invite some punters in was the order of the day. Out of the 50 or so letters, most replies flooding back followed the standard, 'Sorry mate, if you would only have given more notice we would have loved to help, maybe next year!' **SSgt Phil Fluck** came to the rescue (again) with the words, 'I can get you a few arena shows to get this event off the ground'. **WO2 (RQMS) Paul Williams** and 2IC, **Maj Bruce Avison,** organised the White Helmets and we were up and running. OK said the Boss, build me an arena and don't spare the horses. **WO2 (AQMS) John Wallace** stepped into the breach and set about organising the tentage and arena plan, just in time to hand it back to the RCWO and disappear on adventure training!

At last the day was upon us, the sun rose and the rear party were on parade … we were ready! The static display holders started to arrive and display their wares. The immortal words were heard, 'Hang on a minute, this is beginning to look like we might just pull it off'. 10am and the gates opened, the first few turned into hundreds and by 11am the public were streaming through the gates. The sun was beating down, the smiles on the children's faces said it all, we were onto a winner.



Capt Noddy Baugh, OC 220 Sig Sqn presents the 220 Sig Sqn Pennant to Lt Col John Terrington, CO 21 Sig Regt (AS)

The first arena display set the standard for the day with the antenna erection competition. After much furious activity 43 (Wx) Sig Sqn (V) overcame and beat Alpha Tp, 244 Sig Sqn. The Band of 34 Sig Regt (V), in true military fashion, marched into the arena adding a dash of colour to the proceedings.



The Mast Erecting Competition

The afternoon was a roaring success with a fly past from an RAF C130 Hercules and the White Helmets display of danger and daredevil stunts (despite the odd fall). The CO, **Lt Col John Terrington** closed the proceedings by accepting the 220 Sig Sqn Pennant from **Capt Noddy Baugh**, as a prelude to the Squadron rejoining the Regiment in UK on its return from Laarbruch in September. The show closed at 4pm, but that wasn't the end of the day. The celebrations continued with the Officers Mess 40th Anniversary Dinner Night to which a large number of previous Commanding Officers, Officers Commanding 81 Sig Sqn (V) and various other dignitaries were invited. The remainder of the unit had an open-air function, which consisted of a live band, disco and barbecue, and an impromptu karaoke from **Sig Dawn Bailey**. The Chefs and bar staff not content with working all day, carried on until the early hours of Sunday morning to ensure success, with not one murmur of complaint.

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj Chas Dale**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Organ**

Due to operational commitments HQ Sqn is currently the only regular squadron left in Colerne, now that 244 (we were once a Squadron) joined us as a Troop. The pace of life whilst normally busy is now frantic as we provide the support to soldiers abroad whilst ensuring that their families are looked after and normal commitments are met. The success of the Open Day and our recent visit by the IIP accreditor, on top of all other commitments, speaks volumes for the morale of the soldiers and their will to succeed.

ADVENTUROUS TRAINING CAMP

The HQ Squadron Adventure Training Camp got off to a flying start with the advance party consisting of a vast amount of personnel. **SSgt Mark Sala** and **Sgt George Rahman** took over the accommodation at Fremington Training Camp in preparation for the arrival of the troops. The weather on Day One was so good that the DS decided that the troops should be introduced to surfing at Woolacombe Bay. Many sunburnt faces later everyone returned to Fremington to prepare for their introduction to Barnstaple.

The following day Group 1 went climbing under the expert tuition of **SSM Nick Organ** and **Cpl Speed** and Group 2 went surf canoeing with **WO2 (QMSI) Gary Pither** at Woolacombe Bay and were quickly introduced into capsize techniques. The Aerial Slide at Fremington Camp was next on the programme and the instructors were **Sgt Jackie Herbert** and **SSgt Mark Sala**. The students thoroughly enjoyed the activity although a couple of students suffered from ladder rash and white knuckle fever. The third day was a coastal walk that started at Minehead, with an overnight stop at a selected campsite in Lynton and on to the finish point at Combe Martin.

The last day of the week was a free day and the troops had the choice of activities. **Sgt Rahman** took **Capt Whitaker**, **Sgt MacDonald** and **SSgt Mark Sala** on a sea fishing trip in Illfracombe. It wasn't long until the mackerel were being reeled in but **Capt Whitaker** could not understand why he was not catching any. After swapping rods he did eventually catch two small ones much to his delight. The week was rounded off nicely with a Clay Pigeon Shoot, barbecue and to finish a social visit to the town.



Adventurous Training Coastal Walk - Group photo near Lynton

REGIMENTAL MOTOR TRANSPORT

MTO	**Capt Dave Whitaker**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Mark Sala**

It has been a busy period for Regt MT with the deployment to the Balkans followed by the Regt Open Day. **Cpl** 'Eski' **Eskdale** has successfully completed his DDI LGV and even managed to get a very good grade. **Cpl** 'Popeye' **Doyle** has managed to fit in some work between his diving exploits in America and Plymouth and Adventure Training in Bavaria. Congratulations to **Sig Craig Chilvers** who has spent two weeks driving for Bristol UOTC in Barrie Buddon and returned with many commendations for his time there. Farewell to the MTO, **Capt Guy Richards**, who has returned to 216 Para Sig Sqn and has been replaced by **Capt Dave Whitaker**. Good luck to them both.

TECHNICAL MAINTENANCE TROOP

Tp Comd	**WO1 (FofS) Ady Knight**

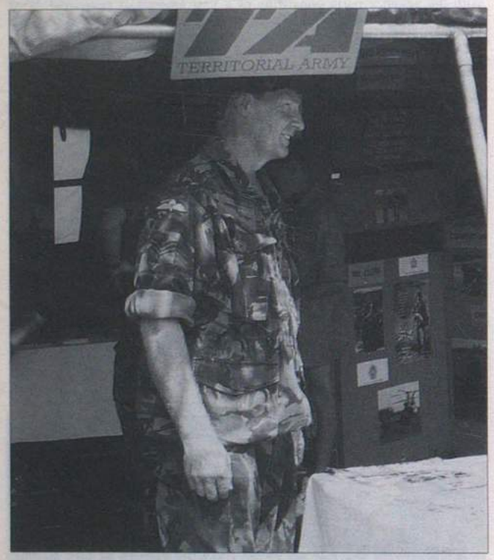
The last couple of months have been very busy for the Troop with the focus being the preparation of equipments and the deployment to Kosovo, of two ERVs and the ESV with six Technicians. We hope that **Sgt** 'Polly' **Poulson, Cpl Bobby Sands, Cpl Dave** 'Why Kosovo' **Clayton-Batty, LCpl Dave** 'Where are my Boots' **Bentham** and **Sig**

Nicki Ryan enjoy the break and come back fully refreshed soon. The Troop has also said farewell to **WO1 (FofS) Martin Drake** on discharge and **SSgt Nigel Roberts** on promotion to RQMS(G). A big welcome goes to **WO1 (FofS) Ady Knight** and his wife **Marion**, the first accompanied Regt FofS in over five years. Congratulations to **Sgt Polly Poulson** on his promotion, well overdue but we hope he stops talking about it before the next lot of *Wire* notes are due.

43 (WESSEX) SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)
Sqn Comd **Maj David Sleigh**
PSI **SSgt (YofS) White**

For the Regimental Open Day the Squadron set up a recruiting stand with HQ Sqn (V) which had a constant stream of people wishing to find out about the TA. The REME section made a set of stocks which were manned by **Lt Karen Jones**, **SSgt Graham** 'Full Monty' **Peet** and **SSgt (YofS) Paul White** who had all 'volunteered' to have wet sponges thrown at them for the day - all in the name of charity. The highlight of the day for us took place in the arena where a challenge had been laid down by 244 Sig Sqn, (via OC HQ Sqn, **Maj Chas Dale**), that they wanted a mast race. **LCpl Dan Shepherd** and **Sig Sid Reynolds** made up the TA's team and once again the 'weekend warriors' beat them hands down much to the 'Regulars' disappointment - better luck next year. The Squadron has said farewell to **Maj Craig Treeby** who has left the services for pastures new. All members of the Squadron wish him good luck in his new chosen profession. Also farewell to **WO2 Fred Smith** and **SSgt (FofS) Chris Riley** who are both entering 'civvy street'.

Congratulations go to **Capt David Sleigh** on his promotion to Major which in itself is quite a feat given that seven years ago he joined the Squadron as a Signaller.



SSgt Mick Franks advertising the TA with his new designer beret



SSgt (YofS) Paul White wishing he hadn't volunteered

244 SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj Ian Walton**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Paul Williams**

These are busy times for the Squadron as it finds itself with a substantial number of personnel deployed on operations in the Balkans. The remainder of the Squadron have transferred to the watchful eye of HQ Sqn for the duration of the deployment to Kosovo, but look forward to being re-united with the remainder of 244 Sig Sqn once the commitment reduces. Amongst the turmoil of preparation for Ops, the Sqn has said goodbye to a number of key personalities. Firstly farewell to **WO2 (SSM) Steve Dickson**, and **SSgt (FofS) Andy Moore**, who both managed to jump ship just in time to avoid the tour in Macedonia, best of luck in your new jobs. Also best of luck to **Capt Matt Graham** who departs for the Army Junior Division of the Staff College.

ALPHA TROOP (AMF(L))
Tp Comd **Capt Steve Abram**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Sheerin**

The Troop would like to extend a warm welcome to **Cpl Nick Hill** from 17 Port and Maritime, **LCpl Chris** 'Scouse' **Alston** from 7 Armd Bde and **Sigs Laura Cooze** and **Lee Southernwood**. Also congratulations to the OC Troop and his wife **Liz** on the arrival of their daughter **Eve Lois**.

EXERCISE ADVENTURE EXCHANGE 1999

At the beginning of March, the advance party from Alpha Troop departed Colerne for the Winter Exercise of this year, Ex Adventure Exchange. With our arctic kit firmly packed, we left under the steady leadership of **Capt** 'New Boy' **Graham** (Sqn 2IC) and **SSgt (YofS) Scott Logan**. After many delays at South Cerney and some companionable socialising with Force Arty in the NAAFI, we assembled at Brize Norton for the flight out to Italy. On our arrival on Italian soil we speedily departed to the coast to collect the vehicles under police escort - flashing blue lights and sirens wailing. The journey to location, was long and laborious, but the locals managed to lay on road-side entertainment for the lads all the way. As always Alpha Tp soon came to grips with the extreme weather conditions which were encountered. With constant sunshine and temperatures averaging 25 degrees every day, the skis and mitts soon became redundant. Award for the best suntan was judged to a dead heat between **Cpl** 'Wills' **Williams** and **Cfn** 'This is hard work' **Cooke**. At Main and Alt, Villa Santina, much hard work was undertaken with our international counterparts, the Americans, Canadians, Germans and Italians, to name but a few. **Sigs Kerrie Haines** and **Ruth Mackenzie**, enjoying their last exercise with the Troop, braved the Italian rail system and spent a pleasurable day in Venice. This exercise was also our final goodbye to **Sig John** 'Tabs' **Marlborough** and **LCpl Neil Cogram**.

A final farewell to **2Lt Martin Willis**, who has endured a SSLC posting to the Regiment, the Troop would like to thank him for his efforts of the past ten months in what has been an eventful posting and wish him well as he moves to Leeds University to embark on his degree course. Last, but by no means least, the Troop says farewell to **SSgt (YofS) Scott Logan** who has endured almost a year with the Troop. Having eaten all the pies, he leaves to take on the equally demanding role of YofS for 220 Sig Sqn, when they reform at Colerne later this year. Welcome to **Capt Andy Arthurton** who takes over the reins as Troop OC as **Capt Steve Abram** moves over to become the 2IC Squadron for a well earned rest having spent two years in command.

81 SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)
Sqn Comd **Maj Craig Tillotson**
PSAO **Capt John Harris**

Between mid May and early June of this year, 786 Troop from 81 Sig Sqn (V) deployed in two staggered parties to Ayios Nikolaos in Cyprus. Hosted by 259 Sig Sqn, they undertook a significant fixed telecommunications project, which involved the replacement of an old termination frame. This is a six-foot rack covered in spaghetti for those less familiar and is situated between the exchange and the end users. For the Troop the project was in itself no real problem to undertake even though this was their first time together on Exercise having been a newly formed Troop within the Squadron since April. This said, however, a very controlled approach was required given that two separate interruptions were necessary to each fixed telephone. At a critical stage, during 'cable change over' - cable cutting and re-jointing, 17 different joints were completed in a 24 hour period by two, two-man teams. This was quite an achievement in itself, allowing maximisation of the planned interruption windows, such that there was little or no impact to the end users. The project cell, blended the various skills ranging from project management, quality control, frame jumpering and cable jointing. All of which are contained within the Troop and replicated throughout the Squadron's other Troops.

By the very nature of a TA Troop deploying on Exercise, there is only a finite amount of time available. For the project cell this imposed major constraints resulting in the troop being pushed very hard to ensure delivery of a successful project - incomplete projects are not an option! During the year, each member makes available a two-week period for camp in which they either deploy on exercise or complete Army courses. Additional days throughout the year are also set aside to complete military training. The vast majority of members are employed, throughout their civilian careers within the telecommunications arena and hence constitute a specialist unit. Within the Troop and throughout the Squadron, there is a high level of commitment which is common place.

Additionally there is a wealth of experience which on occasions is quite unbelievable. This combination forms the basis of a professional approach which allows successful deployment and completion of enjoyable projects such as the one this year at Ayios Nikolaos.

Sig Kevin Hamilton from Manchester, a Customer Services Engineer with BT, at work on Exercise Aphrodite in Cyprus during a project to upgrade the telecommunications infrastructure at Ayios Nikolaos. **Kevin** has been with the Squadron for three years. He is assisted by **Sig Andy Pope** from Hitchin, Herts. **Andy** also works for BT and is on his first camp with the Squadron.


Sig Kevin Hamilton and Sig Pope hard at work

LCpl Steve Marshall (hatless) a BT Technician from Chiddingfold, Surrey and **Sig Eddie Grant** from Merseyside, a network engineer for Vodafone jointing in a new cable at Ayios Nikolaos in Cyprus. **Steve** has been with the Squadron for five years, **Eddie** joined in February this year, having left the Regular Army from 15 Sig Regt in 1998.


LCpl Steve Marshall busy jointing with asistance from Sig 'Eddie' Grant

220 SIGNAL SQUADRON
EXERCISE CYGNET BACKSTOP 3

In late June a joint venture between L Tp and H Tp undertook an adventurous training exercise in Bavaria, staying at Haus Magnus, the UKSC(G) lodge in Wertach, Bavaria at the foot of the German Alps. We spent a week canoeing, mountain walking and rock climbing. These activities were a welcome break from the daily routine of briefings, much to the pleasure of elements of H Tp and everybody seemed to enjoy themselves. We had **Sig** 'Butch Dingle' **Richardson** starting the new sport of 'Sumo Slalom' on what little ice remained atop the mountains, as well as a near death case of hypothermia from a new addition to H Tp **Sig** 'I'm alright, honest' **Neill**. Big **Cpl Dave Cascarino** shoehorned himself into the hollowed out shell of the HMS Invincible to go canoeing and **Sig** 'Chief ' **Burness** kept all of us amused with his 101 'True Stories' (which weren't very!)

The social highlight of the week was a pub quiz during which **SSgt John** 'Disco' **Williams** team's ability to answer any questions relied heavily on the knowledge of **Sig** 'Ike' **Love**. Much to the displeasure of **LCpl** 'Jap Sniper' **Emmison** this was to lead to **SSgt** 'very smug' **Holmes'** team recording a famous victory.

Thursday was a day of 'RnR', so we divided into two groups, the majority shooting off on a day trip to the PX in Garmisch and returning via a go-karting track where **Sig** 'Fishboy' **Peart** demonstrated his potential as a future F I driver. The other group, which consisted of **Cpl Dave Cass** and **LCpl Neil Emmo** took a day trip to the famous Hofbrauhaus in Munich where they were rather predictably robbed and beaten about the head by the lesser-spotted beer fairy. Many thanks to **SSgt John** 'I've never been adventure training in my whole career' **Williams** who jacked up the expedition and to all who helped the week go smoothly, particularly the staff at Haus Magnus Lodge.

H TROOP

H Tp have had a busy and occasionally turbulent few months that have seen numerous people come and go, so firstly some hellos and goodbyes:

Warm welcomes to the new OC H Tp, **Capt Gary Johnson** and his family from 30 Sigs, **Cpls Dec Maher** and 'Kip' **Fisher**, **LCpl's Jim Dryden, Neil** 'Jap Sniper' **Emmison** and **Helena** 'Witch' **Southwick** and **Sigs Grebby, Neil, Hitchins Lake** and **Peart**. Fond Farewells to **SSgt Carl Hindson,** who leaves us on promotion to 3 Inf Bde, **LCpl Al Cathcart** to 16 Sig Regt and **Sigs Leather, Dear** and **Richardson** who have gone on to panzers greener. Also many congratulations to **Cpl Gaz Jordan** on completing the first Installation Tech Course as top student, **Sigs Favill** and **Deacon** on passing their PTI Course. Future Congratulations to **Sigs Dick Danby** and **Haley Winder** who tie the knot in August

WORK

As ever we have our fingers in a number of pies to keep ourselves occupied. At present we have some 20 personnel deployed around the world on different tasks, ranging from Installation work in Nepal (Jammy Beggars) to roulement tours in the not quite so glamorous Falkland Islands. Further to this we have just finished supporting RAF Bruggen throughout the air campaign over Kosovo. Now the bombing has stopped it looks like the Telemechs from 220 and a crew from 259 Sig Sqn will be going to Kosovo to install the new HQ and try to rebuild the communications infrastructure shattered by the RAF.!

SPORT

We've have had a good year on the football pitch, culminating in the team finishing as runners up in both the Station League and the Station plate. The latter was lost on penalties 5-4, after a hard game that ended 3-3. Congratulations to **Sig Neil Taylor** who deservedly earned man of the match. We lost the league by just one point! however a big thank you goes to all the players and supporters who have made the season so successful. In athletics the Troop was heavily involved in the Morrison Cup and achieved a credible Third place ahead of some larger units. Thanks to all who gave so much on the day, and a special thanks to **SSgt Sean Bryants'** wife **Amanda** for redecorating the inside of their new car (she knows what we mean). The BAG Swimming Champs saw the troop OC, **Capt Gary Johnson** lead the Squadron team to the Minor Units Title. **Sig Peart** went on to swim for the Army, and **Sig Hendry** who only got involved the night before because **Cpl Lee Palmer** wimped out would like to thank him…. NOT !!!.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Station Fete - A blistering Saturday the 10 July 1999 saw all the Troop working hard to keep the RAF Bruggen station fete flowing with beer. A few adventurous people even tried Bungee jumping from a BIG crane. Thanks to **Sgt** 'Scouse' **Deegan** who jumped and reportedly didn't stop bouncing for two hours and to all who worked so well in extreme heat to aid in the raising of some DM45000 for local charities, a job that every one on station appreciated.

Troop Functions - The Troop has held a few functions recently, the two that stick in the mind most being theme nights. **Cpl** 'The King' **Walker** laid on a 70's night that was enjoyed by all, especially the old and bold in the Troop, such as **SSgt** 'Taff' **Bryant** who knew the words to all the songs, sad man. **SSgt Gary Tinsley** then put on a Caribbean night that saw all the Troop and the TA guests in summer wear and dreadlocks, all went well, and we hope the next one is as good.

SDLT (Whatever That Means) - *by LCpl Les 'Pass the Pies' Welsh*

Since you last heard from L Tp, things in Laarbruch have certainly changed. From March 1999 the various Squadrons have been leaving Laarbruch like rats deserting a sinking ship. Now all that's left are a few Telemechs under the watchful guidance of our two resident techs formerly of Support Tp, **SSgt Chris** 'Pink and Fluffy' **Holmes** also known as O/C SDLT, (we should add at this point that nobody knows what these initials mean but they must be important because he got a new car out of them), and **Sgt Lee** 'I am not being funny but I'm loaded' **Coffill** who has the cleanest car on station. The reason for this is that the real workers, i.e: The Telemechs are all away on tours or have been poached by H Troop at Bruggen. Overseeing the crews is **Cpl Steve** 'Uncle Bulgaria' **Mesmer**, who spends his days restoring abandoned mountain bikes and anything else he can get his grubby hands on, and then tries to sell them to the singlies. Unless you're the Troop SSgt in which case you get given a freshly serviced bike for free - creep.

The Closure Team consists of four main crews:

Maintenance crew - is run by **LCpl Les** 'Lethargic' **Welsh** who has the enviable job of watching **Sig Sean** 'Cold Turkey' **Mitchell** getting in and out of some extremely festering cable pits, which are (allegedly) as in need of a clean as the singlies block.

The Works Orders crew - is run by **LCpl Marc** 'Danny Zuco' **Quinn**. What with everyone leaving Laarbruch there's precious little installation work to be done, which is just the way 'Quinny' likes it. As he sits in Syscon hitting ten over par on PGA Golf, up and coming **Sig Jesse** 'Where's my tape' **James** is out doing all the work. The hardest working crew is **LCpl Matt** 'Look at my new bike' **Stowell**'s drawdown

crew. He has the pleasure of working with **Sig** (or is that civ) **Dave** 'Well nobody told me lads' **Butler.** We nearly forgot about **Sigs Darren** 'Kiddy Fiddler' **Richardson** and **Derek** 'The Greasy Turk' **Burness** who are around in body **(Darren** is particularly round in body) but somewhat absent in mind. We are looking forward to the return of **Sig Johnny** 'Killer' **Miller** from his APTIs course and expect beastings all round - if only we could understand a word he says. Creating a lot of noise at the moment with his new Caterham 7 is the Squadron 2I/C, **Lt Jim** 'Little Lord Fontleroy' **Lambeth.** He and his rotten feet are posted to Colchester at the end of August, which will be a welcome relief for those of us not inclined to spend all day running round the airfield. We also have to mention our pay Sergeant, **Sgt Andy** 'Can't Get a Girlfriend' **Draper.** Let's just say some drastic measures have been taken, but the purchase of a flash new car and a Honda Fireblade seems to be having little effect on the situation. We also have to say goodbye to **Cpl John** 'More Badges Than a Boy Scout' **Walsh** who along with the Ch Clk, **Sgt Rob** 'Pull Up a Sandbag' **Fuller**, is posted to the Regiment, after a short holiday in slipper city. We have said farewell to two of our civilian helpers **Michelle** and **Linda** who have accompanied their respective husbands back to the U.K. We all wish them a happy and rewarding future. A big hello goes out to **Cpl Dave** 'When am I not on detachment????' **Cascarino, LCpl Martin** 'The Ferg' **Ferguson, Sig Liam** 'You're Gonna Get Some' **Lee** and all the other mechs on det. Last but not least we have to congratulate our acting SSM, **SSgt John** 'Butler!!!!!!' **Williams** who has knotched up the Big 40 this month. Apparently life's supposed to start at forty - but not while he's acting SSM.

SUMMER 1999 - ON CLOSURE
SQUADRON NEWS

SSgt Adrian Jones and some 27 members of the Squadron, ably supported by the operational experts from the Communications Projects Division and colleagues from 81 Sig Sqn (V) have recently completed an excellent 'Summer in Ascension'. In some six 2-3 week phases, a massive CIS overhaul and upgrade has been undertaken, right across the whole Military estate on Ascension.

In addition under **SSgt Les Chapman** and **Sgt Billy Lilburn,** teams have deployed to support current Operations and major CIS Infrastructure



Sig Dave 'What goes up must come down' Butler gets to grips with the rudiments of his trade up a pole in Ascension Island



'Time for a quick break and a pose for the cameras' 220's Telemechs in Ascension. L-R: LCpl's Sean 'Arnie' Renforth and Al Cathcart, Sigs Liam 'Spud' Lee and Dave 'Billy' Butler and LCpl Matt 'Why haven't you got any shorts Billy?' Stowell

builds to the military HQs at Petrovac, Skopje and Thesalonika. There are many more tasks on the drawing board and the Sqn is only restricted by the number of experienced SNCO planners constantly available and equipment available. Sqn FofS, **WO2 Guy Lewendon** left his comfy chair in ACPO, signed out some shiny new combats, and became a deployed medal hunting warrior, dragging **Sgt Harry Harris** along for company. **Harry** is struggling to come to terms with the Staff Officers Directive, 'If I've made a plan, I'll change it in the next five minutes'.

Even **SSgt Sean** 'Taff' **Bryant** has extracted himself from behind his H Troop desk to take **SSgt Mark** 'ACPO New Boy' **Sherwood** for a sight seeing trip to the Balkans.

SQUADRON CLOSURE IN GERMANY, THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

As this edition of *The Wire* is published, 220 Sig Sqn (AS) will have closed in its primary role, providing communications support to the Royal Air Force Main Operating Bases (MOBs) in Germany. The Squadron formed in 1959 at Sundem, serving RAF units 'East of the Rhine' and adopted the Scorpion as it's motif. It was absorbed into 21 Sig Regt (AS) in 1961 and was re-titled 3 Sqn. Many internal unit ORBAT adjustments were made over the years and the 3 Sqn SHQ relocated to RAF Laarbruch on 1 June 1992 under the command of the then, **Maj Glen Bartliff** Royal Signals. On 5 January 1993 it reverted to the title 220 Sig Sqn comprising SHQ, Oscar Tp and Lima Tp at RAF Laarbruch, Hotel Tp at RAF Bruggen, November Tp at RAF Gutersloh and the Airfield Communications Planning Office (ACPO) at JHQ. Following the closure of RAF Gutersloh, November Troop disbanded and Oscar Tp was relocated to Colerne, thus we entered 1998 with only SHQ, Lima Tp, Hotel Tp and ACPO within the ORBAT. This still made for a significant sized Squadron with a manpower level of 111 military and 10 civilian staff, as closure approached.

The impending closure of RAF Laarbruch as a MOB and the relocation of the RAF Harrier Force to UK had focussed minds on the future of the Sqn. The SDR announcement of an additional CIS Sqn within 21 Sig Regt, similar to the present 244 Sqn to support the new Joint Helicopter Command (JHC) has given the Sqn a new lease of life in an alternative 'Air Support' role. Since **Maj Bartliff,** the Sqn had a further four OC's, namely **Majs Mark Edwards, Ken Jones, Andy Williams** and finally **Capt Noddy Baugh MBE.** The predominant manpower CEQ throughout this period has been the 'Telemech' however, they could not have operated without the capable support of the many other trades within the Squadron, mainly the technicians and Stores specialists. So what does the future hold for the Squadron's present manpower? Within Germany, ACPO and the Static Tp (supporting RAF Bruggen until 2003) have been transferred to 16 Sig Regt. As a result of SDR, the Corps will form two deployable 'Telemech' Troops to provide CIS infrastructure support to Military tasks worldwide, whether they are Operations, Exercises or Projects. This deployable capability has been informally operational within the Sqn for some time. In the past year planners and teams have deployed on Ops Upminster, Palatine and Agricola, not to mention numerous Exercises and a major four-month SWS project to upgrade the CIS infrastructure on RAF Ascension. In fact, these days it is very difficult to find a planner at ACPO but you may meet up with them in Skopje, Banja Luka, Pristina or on a Tristar bound for the South Atlantic.

By the end of September 1999 the two deployable 'Telemech' Troops will be formally established within the ORBATs of 16 and 30 Sig Regts. Within Germany this allows some 60 Corps tradesmen to remain based at RAF Bruggen, with the full support of the RAF and the Station Commander, providing a skill set that can be projected worldwide on a task by task basis whilst still undertaking close support to RAF Bruggen. Taskings through the chain of command are planned and executed by the present Airfield Communications Planning Office (ACPO). This Office was originally established to control, plan and co-ordinate the Royal Signals technical effort on the then four Airfields in Germany. It has since re-focussed much of its present effort. ACPO remains an RAF staff cell, however, tasks can be generated by PJHQ, HQ LAND, HQ 1 Sig Bde as well as RAF Strike Command. The name and future location of ACPO may be revised in months to come. One suggestion is the 'Communications Infrastructure Planning and Implementation Cell' (CIPIC). We will see !!

To the many who have served with 3 Sqn and 220 Sqn in the Airfield Support role over the past 40 years, and those who serve today as the Squadron closes in Germany, we wish you well. To **Maj Jim Forrest, Capt Kyle Barker** and the few who immediately start at Colerne, raising the 220 Sig Sqn pennant and 'Scorpion' motif again, in a new role, good luck!

Publish it in

The Wire

The Editor is always pleased to receive interesting articles



Capt Noddy Baugh MBE and WO2 SSM Ged Robinson with 220 Signal Squadron (Air Support) at RAF Bruggen, 1 July 1999 prior to the Squadron's move back to the UK

31st (CITY OF LONDON) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS - SOUTHFIELDS
CO **Lt Col Linda Harrison TD**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) John Gibson**

The highlight of the last couple of months has been Annual Camp. During 10-24 July 1999 the Regiment managed to cover most of the UK as well as establishing links to the USA, the Falklands and various ships in exotic locations. The Regiment converged on Norfolk for a couple of days before moving en masse to Folkstone for a mil skills competition and a battlefield Tour to Ypres. The exercise was a storming success and the Squadrons have submitted various reports on different aspects of the fortnight. Three members of the Regiment travelled to the US during Camp on an exchange visit to the 1108th US Sig Bde. **Maj Steve Baker, LCpl Tia Snell** and **LCpl Jo Ogle** all thoroughly enjoyed the hospitality of the Americans.

REGIMENTAL HELLOS AND GOODBYES

Welcome to **Sgt Alderson** who arrives from SHAPE to bolster the number of technicians. He will be under the watchful eye of the new Foreman, **WO2 Jamie Harper,** fresh from JHQ and 16 Sig Regt. Farewell to **WO2 Bob Wymer,** who moves on to 600 Tp at Corsham. The Trg Maj, **Maj Alfie** 'wee bloke' **Brand** is off to HQ LAND – good luck to you and **Lynn.** The final farewell goes to **WO2 (RQMS) George** 'Rude Boy' **Coffin,** who moves on to Warminster where hopefully his somewhat depraved sense of humour will be just as welcome as it has been here. The leaving lunch to ensure this rabble actually depart was a rousing affair. Some excellent speeches were delivered, most notably the RQMS with his view of regimental life through the eyes of Ma'am Bear (CO), Alfie Bear (Trg Maj), Baby Mel bear (Adjt), Grumpy (RSM) and Toto the Lapdog (RAOWO) – all very amusing. The less said about the antics of the permanent staff along the Kings Rd the better. Suffice it to say that **LCpl** 'Disco' **Dave Wynne** seemed to be having a great time aided and abetted by 'the old gits' in the form of **WO1 (RSM) John Gibson, SSgt Roy Smith** and **WO2 Jim McMahon.**

BUFFOON OF THE WEEK AWARD

There were a number of contenders for the award; **Cpl North** for trying to knock down walls with his head! (we all hope that you make a speedy recovery in hospital); the Adjt for being too hung over to realise that she had received French Francs and not Belgium ones on the way to the Ypres battlefield Tour!; **Sig Coleman-Browne** for having a fight with a land rover which resulted in a dislocated knee; **WO2 (RQMS) Coffin** for ending up in Salisbury when he should have caught the train to Southfields at the end of his leaving lunch – only a minor mistake **George** and one I'm sure the tramps at Salisbury station didn't appreciate as you spent the night with them!!

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj Julian Carmichael**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Chrissie Stanton**



Members of the LAD and the RAOs team enjoying Mussels and fine wine on the day trip to Ypres!

CONGRATULATIONS

Well done to **LCpl Okon** who was awarded her first tape on Camp this year. Congratulations to **SSgt** 'Spotter' **Mick Johnson** who was awarded a distinction on his EFP2 course. Well done to the Foreman, **WO2 Bob Wymer** for winning the RSMs essay writing competition.

DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER'S CUP – FOLKSTONE 22 JULY 1999

This years' Inter-Squadron Military Skills competition was held during Annual Camp at Napier Barracks in Folkstone. All Squadrons fielded two teams as well as the necessary directing staff to ensure the day's proceedings went smoothly and professionally. The morning stands consisted of a Golf/NBC stand ran by **Sgt Dick Travis,** an abseiling stand devised by **SSgt Alfie Kirkham,** a 'swimming pool' river crossing executed by **Capt Sarah Street** and **SSgt Wullie Loch** and a bungee rope command task ran by **SSgt Craig Bruce BEM.** In the afternoon the activities took the form of a March and Shoot competition with the assault course thrown in for good measure. **SSgt** 'Dez' **Eldridge** along with the Regiments' quota of PTI's ensured all the troops were fully briefed and monitored at all times. All the teams performed exceptionally well and put in a tremendous amount of effect to produce excellent results. Special mention goes to **Sgt Casperez** who overcame her fear of heights to complete the assault course and **Sgt Matt Cahill** who battled

successfully with his loathing of water to complete the river crossing. The winning team was 83 Sig Sqn, led by newly promoted **Capt Liz Fitzpatrick** who was aided and abetted by the most competitive officer in the Corps **Capt Dave Thomas**. The Regiment was visited during the day by a long list of VIPs including the Lord Lieutenant of London, Mayors from our local boroughs, MPs, TAVRA Reps, DComd LONDIST, and many more besides. A large number of members of the Regiment Association also visited and it was great to see them all. The whole day was a tremendous success – well done to **WO1 (RSM) John Gibson** and his PSI's for the work in organising the day which was enjoyed by both competitors and spectators alike.

41 (PLK) SIGNAL SQUADRON - COULSDON

Sqn Comd	**Maj Baker**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Watson**

EXERCISE COURAGEOUS COMMUNICATOR II

The first weekend in June had seen the Squadron deploy on Bounty Training, to try out the new IDTs. By the end of the month, the Squadron were deploying to Hawkinge on Ex Courageous Communicator II a Comms Ex. It didn't bode well when certain members of K Tp decided to choose their own route to the Troop RV, but the recce and move in eventually went smoothly. An Inter-Tp network was established which enabled a final testing/shakedown of all comms equipment before Annual Camp. It was also a good opportunity for some of our newer recruits to come out and see the Squadron in the field – hopefully some things might begin to make a bit more sense now!

SUTTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL CCF CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

Members of the Squadron attended an Open Day at Sutton Grammar School as part of the centenary celebrations of the CCF. **Field Marshall The Lord Bramall**, who opened our RHQ building at Southfields in 1986, was the guest of honour. The cadets were inspected by the Field Marshall in the morning, and then took part in a number of stands in the afternoon – one of which was provided by the Squadron. They were all interested to see our new Lanward equipment, and we will hopefully now have a few more budding Royal Signals Recruits in the future.



2Lt Paul Ukpai of HQ Sqn with cadets from Sutton Grammar school CCF

ANNUAL CAMP 1999

Annual Camp this year was a great opportunity for the Squadron to prove that it can operate effectively in its CROST role. With the Sqn Comd, **Maj Steve** 'Yee ha' **Baker** away on an exchange with 1108th US Signal Brigade, the Squadron deployed to its locations at Troop level. We were given our orders at RAF Lyneham, from where **Lt Beth** 'Crack On' **Pollard** conducted her recce of Driffield, Yorks by helicopter, and **Lts Paul Owen** and **Jill Montgomery** set off for sunny Nottinghamshire. K Tp under **Lt Pollard** soon established itself at Driffield, and even managed to give the Royal Marines a few off road driving lessons! **LCpl** 'Elvis' **Presley** made all feel at home with his home cooking, ably assisted by **Sig** 'Better at shopping than a woman' **Fisher** whenever he was allowed near the cook tent.



Lt Beth Pollard and 2Lt Debbie Speakman in the Tp CP at Nesscliffe

Meanwhile J and N Troops deployed to Fulbeck, and then Altcar. **Foreman** 'Mine's bigger than yours' **Byrne** proved that size does matter, when finding himself in a tete a tete with a Renault Clio. The Foreman's 4 Ton truck came off much the better of the two, leaving 'Nicole' in her Clio to run home to 'Papa'….J and N Tps then moved to Swynnerton via Nesscliffe (**Lt** 'assault team' **Owen** dropping in early morning by helicopter to see N Tp on his last recce - hands up all who thought he was the CO!)

The Squadron then converged on Watton Airfield to create a full strength A type Troop for the Visitors' Day. The Squadron was visited by **Brig Hughes, Brig Verey, Brig Burton, Col Lawrence, Col Storie-Pugh, Col Acda, Maj Wenlock, Maj Whittle , Maj Kelly** and **Maj Hill** who all seemed to leave impressed by what they had seen. We then moved to Napier Barracks to take part in the Duchess of Gloucester's Cup, and a games night where Squadron members put up a very fine challenge against other teams in the Regiment and went on to win the prestigious trophy.

CONGRATULATIONS

The Squadron have had two promotions recently. **LCpl** 'Odie' **O'Driscoll** and **LCpl Pearl Sethna** both received their first stripe last month. Congratulations to **LCpl Sethna**, who was awarded the 'Soldier of the Year' award on Camp. Well done – these bar rounds are going to start getting expensive…. **LCpl O'Driscoll** was the 'Soldier of the year' last year, so these two are definitely the pair to watch. Let's hope they both go far!



LCpl Pearl Sethna with the Innholders Soldier of the Year Trophy

56 SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS) – EASTBOURNE

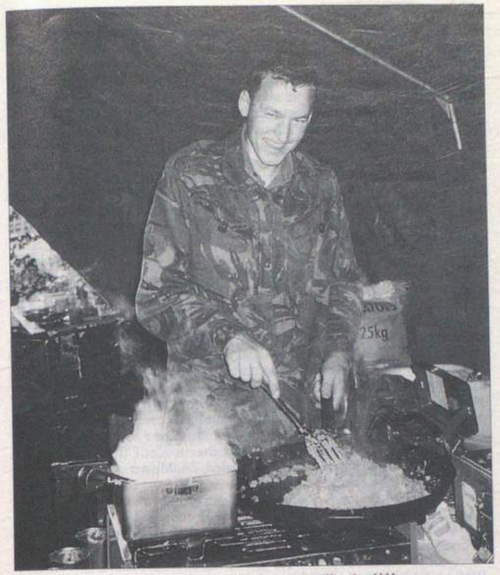
Sqn Comd	**Maj Brian Howe**
SSM	**WO2 Godden**

ANNUAL CAMP 1999 – EXERCISE MERCURY SWORD

The Squadron all felt that Ex Mercury Sword was a huge success and that 1999 was one of their best Annual Camps. Fifteen days of excellent training, with glorious long, warm summer evenings – even the teachers managed to deploy this time!

After the MOBEX and journey to RAF Lyneham, 859 Radio Tp set off for Longmoor Trg Area and set up under the relative shade of the trees. **Sgt Kyle Manns** was promptly despatched to organise showers for the Troop and in true style, he arranged for them to have a daily hose down at the local fire station in Bordon!

Meanwhile, 858 Radio Tp moved from their first location to Yardley Chase and were then 'exposed' to anthrax. On came the 'noddy' suits and respirators, not particularly comfortable in the heat of the day but at least their Tp Comd, **Capt Tony Potter** has first hand experience of the agent in his civvy job. Whilst the 'terrorist activity' was hotting up in Europe and the UK, 859 Tp travelled to Bramley Trg Area. **Sgt Martin Cooper** had to be restrained from providing the cook with fresh rations of pheasant, venison, snake and rabbit to replace the minced beef and stewing steak that **Sig Steve Spilsted** prepared continually. After all, it is extremely difficult to make either of these taste interesting, night after night!



Sig Spilstead – Chef extraordinaire!!!!

Suddenly, news came through from RCP 31 that a red transit van was being used by the terrorists and who would believe it; one was seen shortly after this cruising around the location. The QRF leapt into action and captured the van. Twenty minutes later, a very irate SQMS from 21 SAS (V) arrived to reclaim his vehicle and did not take kindly to the guard, **Sig Williams**, threatening to shoot if he took another step forward. After some discussion, ID cards being flashed and some hasty apologies, the van was returned. Imagination continued to run wild and after hearing that 21 SAS (V) were due to train that evening, everyone was convinced (or perhaps hoped) that they would be attacking the position. To restore some sense, **SSgts Willie Loch** and **John Atherton** put paid to all ideas of a dawn attack. Both Troops had set off on camp with their newest piece of kit, Lanward. Throughout the Exercise, all the soldiers had an opportunity to learn how to operate the equipment under the det comds, **Sgt Mike Dowds** and **LCpl Jo Butler**. Everyone welcomed the new kit until it was time to dismount everything at Nesscliffe! It did take considerably longer than anticipated! Nesscliffe provided more excitement for the soldiers as they were attacked by the enemy and had a chance to fire off some rounds. Following this, there were numerous offers from **LCpl** 'GI' **Jo Reader** and **Sig** 'Beam me up' **Scott** to go and patrol the area every time the guard reported something suspicious, despite the real need for sleep!



Sgt Cooper in his element but what is he doing with that string?

Whilst the soldiers endured a 7hr road move to Watton in Norfolk the Tp Ocs, **Capt Sarah Streete** and **Capt Tony Potter**, were fortunate enough to make the journey by helicopter. Terrorist activity began to cease and the troops continued with their next task, making a building resemble an underground bunker and then dismounting all their radio kit into it. Throughout this phase, they were supervised from above, literally, by their OC, **Maj Brian Howe** who looked down from the Control Tower, keeping his finger on the pulse.

There are many amusing memories from Camp '99 such as **Sig Baggs** not recognising and then 'challenging' his Tp OC; the golden blanket award won by **2Lt Kieron Francis; LCpl Renaud**'s cheerful disposition (not); 859 Radio Tp ready to practice a 'Stand To' when in fact they were being told to set up for Stand Two on the Visitors' Day, **OCdt Wood** shouting 'Come on 57 Sqn' during the assault course; the Regiment in place for the Camp photo, with no photographer in sight and of course the interesting sights outside the swimming pool prior to the 'River Crossing'!



859 Tp with the Mayor of Eastbourne and the Chief Exec of Eastbourne Council after completing the Duchess of Gloucester's Cup

BATTLEFIELD TOUR OF THE YPRES SALIENT

130 members of the Regiment travelled to Belgium early on 23 July for a Battlefield Tour of the Ypres Salient. The trip was the culmination of two weeks of Annual Camp and a chance to relax and unwind after a hard but enjoyable Exercise. Reveille at 0430 hrs proved to be exceptionally difficult for those who had 'pushed the boat out' at the Inter Squadron Games Night the night before! The Channel crossing was an ideal chance to sleep off the previous nights excesses!!

2Lt Keiron Francis had organised the itinerary and arranged for local guides to meet the Regiment in Ypres. The first coach arrived on time and was taken away by the guide. However, the CO's coach was an hour and a half late due to a skirmish on the French Border with the French police – enough said! Visits to Tyne Cot Cemetery, Hill 60 and Hill 62, Sanctuary Wood, Hellfire Corner, The Menen Gate and a host of the other infamous names followed. A stop at Sanctuary Wood museum, brought home the tragedy, waste and carnage of WW1, to all of us. For members of **41 (PLK) Sig Sqn** a trip to a small cemetery just south of Ypres was an even more poignant moment as they visited the graves of three members of 1/13 Kensington Regiment. (They were one of the first TA units to be mobilised in the Great War and were the forerunner to the present 41 (PLK) Sig Sqn as it is now.) The Padre, **Maj David Crawley** carried out a small service of Remembrance and **Sig Helen Matthews** read out the poem 'In Flanders Fields.'

To finish off, we had a quick recce of the Cité de Europe shopping centre in Calais for presents for the family!! (Well booze and fags in many cases. **Cpl North** how did you get all that beer back on the coach, and are you sure it was for your own personal consumption?!) An enjoyable but moving day had by all, and then it was back to the UK in time for tea and medals and another night in the Mess.

EXERCISE PHOTO PLOD – 26 JUNE 1999

Ex Photo Plod was held over the night of 26 June. It is a forty mile walk starting at midnight, in aid of Save the Children and is sponsored by various photographic companies. 56 Sig Sqn not only entered a team, but they also provided breakfast for 160+ in a field kitchen on route and all the comms needed for safety. Our team, consisting of six walkers, two in support and two individual walkers who met up with the other teams at the White Horse Public House in Steyning, W. Sussex. The forty miles followed the South Downs Way to Birling Gap and at various intervals, the walkers were plied with bananas, energy drinks, sweets, Mars Bars and hot or cold drinks by their ever supportive admin team! The team, led by **2Lt Kieron Francis**, kept up with the leaders and the two females, **LCpl Reader** and **Sig O'Sullivan** strode ahead much of the time, unbothered by blisters unlike **Sig Bishop and Sig Hulin** who nobly carried on despite the pain. Breakfast at 4.00am was gratefully received. Following the compulsory team photo and rebandaging of feet, the walkers set off for the second half, now in daylight. Meanwhile, the support team was not idly sitting in lay-bys waiting, but was driving around the countryside in pursuit of items such as oak leaves, phone numbers, postcards and bus tickets. **Capt Sarah Streete** dived in every bin between Newhaven and Seaford before triumphantly appearing with one of the latter! When the walkers ran out of fluids, **OCdt Wood**

flagged down a passing milk float and bought a few pints from a friendly milkman. First over the line and in a record time was our PSAO, **Capt Ian Murray**, who insisted that it was his last appearance in the event (watch this space) and despite literally crawling over the finishing line, the TA team finished a creditable Second and raised nearly £800 for Save the Children.



Sorry how much did you say it was for the pint?
OCdt Wood, Sig Bishop, Sig Hulin, Sig O'Sullivan LCpl Reader, 2Lt Francis

CONGRATULATIONS AND FAREWELL

Congratulations to **Sgt Sandra Burns** and **Jack** on the birth of their son, **Kristen** and to **WO2 Jim Paine** and **Viv** on the birth of their daughter, **Beatrice**. The Squadron sadly say 'goodbye' to our 2IC, **Capt Jackie Blake** who decided that it was time to hang up her beret, she will be greatly missed. **SSgt Paul Hattemore** who retired from the TA after 26 years valuable service and also to **LCpl** 'Bunny' **Warren** who is going to concentrate on his teaching career.

83 SIGNAL SQUADRON – CHELSEA

Sqn Comd **Maj Mike Jackson**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Jim McMahon**

The most important announcement first:
83 Sig Sqn are the current holders of the Duchess of Gloucester's Cup – well done to the whole team!!



Capt Liz Fitzpatrick receives the Duchess of Gloucester's Cup from the Lord Lieutenant of London – The Lord Imbert

BOUNTY TRAINING WEEKEND

83 Sig Sqn provided the administration support for the first Bounty Training weekend of the current training year. PSI **SSgt Dez** 'If that's alright with you' **Eldridge** worked tirelessly to organise a comprehensive package of military training. This included the Regt's first shock introduction to the CFT, run by **LCpl Ian** 'Is that a lemon?' **Bryne.** All members of the Regiment achieved a pass, and should congratulate themselves on a creditable result. Also introduced to the Regiment was the new pocket sized Battlefield First Aid Memoire which were all snapped up in a rush of shiny kit syndrome. The Squadron Officers ensured that the evening events remained DRY! **Sig Clive** 'boogey' **Knight** wins the TA anatomy prize for his brilliant demonstration of treatment for a sucking chest wound! Once the casualty had the FFD removed from his groin he agreed that it had definitely taken his mind off the chest wound!

OFFICERS' MESS SUMMER BALL

The Regimental Officers Mess enjoyed an evening of good food, good wine and great company at its annual Summer Ball held at RAMC HQ Mess, Millbank. The evening organised by **Capt** 'Do I have to do everything?' **Dave Thomas** was an outstanding success. The grand setting of the RAMC Officers Mess was the perfect background for several Cocktails followed by a sumptuous 5-course dinner. The CO was the star of the evening by refusing to make an after dinner speech on the basis that it would waste valuable drinking time. **2Lt Kieran** 'footloose' **Francis** displayed a previously hidden amount of co-ordination with his ability to highland dance his way around the floor. **2Lt Debbie** 'William Hill' **Speakman** managed to clean up at the Roulette Table, the next drinks on you then! The party only ended when the DJ, **LCpl Colin** 'Wheels of Steel' **Anderson** left to catch the first train home.

RECENT PROMOTIONS

Congratulations to the following members of the Sqn on their recent promotions, **Cpl Sid** 'Rottewiller Jnr' **Ahluwalia, Cpl Mark** 'Jaffa cake king' **Bell, LCpl Jay** 'Clint' **Eastwood, LCpl Richard** 'daf' **Leyland, LCpl Tia** 'Have I told you where I'm going on camp?' **Snell, LCpl Bobby** 'Golden Blanket' **Donor**

REGIMENTAL SHOOTING TEAM

The Regimental Shooting Team, with minimal training entered the Corps SAM run by QM 19 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn and supported by 32 Sig Regt (V) at Pirbright Range Complex. The team consisted of **Capt Guy Bewsher, Sgt Matt Cahill, LCpl Colin Anderson, LCpl Juliet Jarvis, Sig Richard Leyland** and **Sig Angela Morris.** The competition started early on Saturday morning and consisted of the following shoots; Gun match, Pistol match, Roupell Cup, Combat snap, Fibua and Falling plate competitions. **Sig Richard** 'I've got to run how far!' **Leyland** came second in the gun match. The falling plate team managed runners up in the Corps falling plate and **Capt Guy** 'just one more cream cake' **Bewsher** was carried by his team at the head of the Corps to the presentation stand where he was awarded TA Master at Arms for best over all shot.

FAREWELL

Goodbye to the OC Sqn, **Mike Jackson** who is now moving on to pastures new. Good luck to you and **Glynnis**.

BREAKFAST IN AMERICA
THE MARYLAND TOUR 13-17 MAY 1999
by Major Brian Howe



The CO and OC 56 Sig Sqn enjoying the view in the US

The tour party to visit the 1108th USA Sig Bde and the 1110th and 1111th Sig Bns, consisted of Comd 2 (NC) Sig Bde, **Brig Gordon Hughes**, CO 31 Sig Regt (V), **Lt Col Linda Harrison** and myself. The aim of the visit was to gain further knowledge on both the role of 1108th Bde, and for **Brig Hughes** to be fully briefed on all the strategic communications provided by the US Army Signal Corps. The friendship link between the two Brigades and 31 Sig Regt was forged through the efforts of the Comd 1108th Sig Bde, **Col David Titus**, who, on taking over command of his Brigade, decided he would find out first hand what the monthly link up (Ex Long Haul) to the UK was all about. He enjoyed a successful visit to London in November 1998.

Ex Long Haul is a monthly 24-hour Exercise; conducted between 31 Sig Regt and 1111th Sig Bn. It is also conducted for a seven-day period annually, to coincide with the Regiment's Annual Camp. Operators of both nations exchange posts over this period. It was therefore, with some considerable curiosity that I went 'across the pond' to try and discover just what my soldiers had done when they themselves visited. This visit also coincided with a 24 hour Ex Long Haul exercise controlled by **WO2 (YofS) Tyler** back in Southfields TAC, London.

Day One -The journey by Virgin Atlantic was uneventful with neither the Bde Comd nor the CO suffering from a bout of 'Air Rage'. I was able to relax after a hearty in flight lunch and enjoy some of the in flight entertainment. On arrival at Washington, Dulles airport we were met by **Mr Dave Graham** the Brigade Operations Officer, and **Lt Andy Rogers**, who was to be our escorting officer for the next five days. Both **Dave** and **Andy** were superb hosts and on discovering that both **Brig Hughes** and **Lt Col Harrison** were harbouring a burning desire to go 'line dancing', carried out the required recce and arranged for a Saturday night visit. (to be continued!!) We had already been sent the tour itinerary and had some ideas about how the tour was going to unfold. We were particularly interested in the numbers and variety of places we were going to be eating in as the names listed sounded very enticing. Our base was to be the town of Frederick - Maryland, a small town roughly two hours north-west of Washington and home of the 1108th Sig Bde based in Fort Detrick.

Day Two-The tour proper started at 0800hrs on Friday 14 May 1999 and on driving through the main gates of Fort Detrick **Brig Hughes** was delighted to see his name and appointment flash up on the electronic welcome board. (Such are the marvels of modern technology!) The formal welcome and brigade briefing got under way, with excellent presentations on both the brigade and battalions' role. Prior to lunch in the Appalachian Chapter of the Signal Corps Regimental Association, **Brig Hughes** talked to the Officers and Senior NCOs about his experiences with SFOR whilst being the Chief CG6 (CIS) SFOR. His talk was very informative and extremely well received by all. The remainder of the day was spent touring the 1110th Bn whose main role is the provision of The US Defence Dept strategic communications and includes Defence Satellite Communications Systems (DSCS) or 'Diskus' earth Stations, and two HF gateway stations. Interestingly the US Army is also blighted with cost savings to the defence budget and as a result, is in the process of externalising these two HF facilities to contractors. We met a number of ex-military now working for Industry on government contracts during our tour of both the 1110th and 1111th Sig Bns. The 1110th Sig Bn are also responsible for the so-called Washington – Moscow 'Presidential Hotline' to the former Soviet Union, now known as the Direct Communications Link or DCL. This in fact was established in 1963 as a Teletype circuit and has since evolved into a broadcast system that includes dual satellite connectivity. In 1987, the DCL also added the US Nuclear Risk Reduction Centre to its mission; this was required to support the verification process of nuclear weapons destruction. We were told intriguing stories about the nature and tone of the dialogue between American and Russian technicians over the link, and how in the wake of the end of the former Soviet Union, questions about job prospects and salaries were regularly raised, funnily enough only by the Russian technicians! Day Two ended with an evening social in the Carriage House, Emmittsburg, PA, a country restaurant (billed as the opportunity to 'party with the Brits') with the Brigade Officers, partners and what, in true American PC language was termed as 'significant others'. Day Two also ended with NO line dancing and an early night. America it seemed had a culture of eat early, retire early, get up early, start work early.

Day Three-Saturday started with an early moving drive to Waynesboro, Pennsylvania for breakfast in a charmingly named Chestnut Logs diner prior to a tour of site 'R', home of the 1111th US Signal Bn. They are known somewhat euphemistically as 'The Signal Masters of the Rock', the rock referring to near the Blue Ridge Summit into which they are burrowed. The whole site is designed to withstand a nuclear attack and has an elaborate system of tunnels and gates to protect against an onslaught from 'who-knows-who' in this modern day era, though it is somewhat obvious who the original aggressor was perceived to be! The 1111th's mission (amongst many others) is the provision of operations and maintenance personnel in support of the Alternate Joint Communications Centre (AJCC), the transmission systems for HF radio and Information Systems, predominantly the Defence Information Systems Network or DSIN. We were given a presentation by **Sgt Morton** of the 1111th US Signal Bn on Operation 'Longhaul' the monthly and two weeks annual HF exercise between Site R and 31 Sig Regt. We were also given the opportunity to witness the Bde Comd's faultless typing skills as he merrily 'chatted' to the Brigade Yeoman somewhere in deepest Pirbright. After a thorough briefing and tour around the many underground facilities it was good to see daylight again and move onto the National Military Park at Gettysburg. Our tour guide was to be the plans officer and unit Historian, **Leo S Prottsman**, an extremely knowledgeable man who made the whole tour come 'alive'. **Brig Hughes** and **Col Titus** decided to do their own re-enactment of the famous tour by President Eisenhower and Field Marshall Montgomery and discuss tactics from a vantage point on the summit of Little Round Top. The evening duly arrived and after a superb meal courtesy of **Mrs Titus**, surely this was the night for line dancing? The arrival of **Liz,** the Bde Comd's good lady wife during the afternoon gave the perfect 'get out' for him not to partake. The CO decided that it would be inappropriate to 'up-stage' the Brigadier and it was left to yours truly to prove to our host that us Brits were game for anything. **Lt Andy Rogers** took me to what he described as the 'hottest' line-dancing pub in Maryland. From my point of view he was entirely right, as I witnessed eighteen year olds doing disco dancing in line dancing formations, not quite what I had imaged and certainly not what I intended to try and emulate. I had however got the closest to the action of all the touring party!

Day Four-Sunday was the day planned for the tour to Washington. Some favours by way of former members of the 1108th Bde, now working for the US Secret Service, were called in on our behalf to ensure that we were treated to special tour of both the communications section of the Secret Service and the White House. In a packed day the Washington Memorial Park was visited, the Pentagon City shopping mall via the Metro and the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum before in American parlance, 'handing off' the Bde Comd and Liz to the British Embassy.

Day Five-Now leaderless (the Bde Comd having left us) there was no one to pose the intelligent questions as we were shown around both Sites R and C. But in the event we were given a much relaxed final day and a lot of the time was spent chatting informally about our two nation's different approaches to military etiquette, before a final luncheon and an exchange of military regalia. A memorable trip for me and our hosts were absolutely first class; I very much look forward to being able to reciprocate in the not too distant future.

32 (SCOTTISH) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO **Lt Col J. K. McKee MBE**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) A. B. Hilborn**

CO's DINING OUT

All change in the ivory tower as **Colonel Jim** arrives from MOD and we wave farewell to **Lt Col Lapsley TD**. We also say a sad farewell to our bookings clerk. **Tracy**, as SDR begins to bite. The Trg Maj, **Maj Gus** 'I'm not grumpy - it's just my Scottish accent' **Colville** disappears to play golf somewhere in Germany. He will be sadly missed by one and all. **Maj Gordon Anderson** moves from one ivory tower to the other as he is shortly due to arrive from HQ ROYAL SIGNALS

The CO, **Lt Col Allan Lapsley,** was dined out by the Officers Mess on 29 May 1999 by 80 officers and OCdts. The Scottish great and good came to the dinner included TA Colonel Scotland, **Col John Thomson** and 'SOinC Scotland', **Col David McDowall**. Sadly ACOS Reserves, **Brig Andrew Durcan,** was unable to attend. The 2IC, **Maj David Harvey,** was nervous about the dinner knowing the CO's penchant for fire and expolosives. In an effort to tie the CO to a desk he presented him with an antique oak desk from the CO's office on the grounds that the CO had never seen it before! The CO then made a 'serious' speech of thanks reminding the junior officers of old fashioned values and not a blind arrogance in IT. He also pointed out the importance of people, the meaning of Territorial and his pride in being part of the Brigade (52 Lowland). Just as the audience was starting to slumber the Junior Dorm, **Capts Steve McBride, David McBride** (no relation) **Lt's Milne Weir, Ewan Weir** (brothers) and **OCdt Stuart** (broken ribs) **Wilson** and **Louis Velasco,** donated some explosives covering the top table in gold sequins. The CO made his presentation to the Mess. This was a 4 inch 50 kilo mortar. To conclude his presentation he fired a complete 'fruit salad' over the junior dorm using the presentation mortar. We know what is meant by grapeshot. Revenge was taken by abseiling the CO from the top of the Drill Hall to a waiting rickshaw. To get value for money from the 'Coolie', **Capt Ian Blower** accompanied the CO. After much Mess rugby the night finished. Life will be a lot quieter when the **Lord Lapsley** moves to HQ Scotland.



'About to fire'
The Hon Col, Col Colin Cunningham and the 2IC stand by!

RETIREMENT OF MAJOR (QM) GUS BOAG

Maj (QM) Gus Boag retired from the Corps in April 1999 having completed a long and successful career. He enlisted in May 1959 and underwent trade training with the All Arms Junior Leaders Regiment in Wales. As a TG Op he served in Catterick, Cyprus, Germany and Singapore before being posted to AAC Harrogate as an instructor. It was

there that he embarked on an RD career which culminated in promotion to WO1 (RSM) and a posting to 31 Sig Regt (V). This was followed by an RSM appointment in the Falkland Islands with 266 Sig Sqn prior to commissioning and an appointment in 1 Div Sig Regt in Verden. During the four year tour he was promoted to Major and had the rare distinction of commanding a squadron. In March 1987, he was posted to Cyprus (again) as the Garrison Adjt in Dhekelia before returning to Harrogate (for the third time) as a Sqn Comd. In April 1992, he assumed a QM appointment in HQNI & 15 Sig Regt followed by a third tour in Cyprus with 9 Sig Regt. He completed his 40 year career as the QM of 32 Sig Regt (V) and has now moved onto greener pastures in the APC Reserve Wing. **Gus Boag** made many friends during his career and will be remembered for his contribution to the rugby fraternity, sense of humour, wilco attitude and friendship over the years. We all wish him every success in his second career.

EXERCISE EXECUTIVE STRETCH

The Regiment sponsored an Executive Stretch on Dreghorn Training Area in Edinburgh during the period 20–23 May 1999. Months of planning paid off as the Exercise ran smoothly with barely a glich. The logistical aspect was enormous but **WO2 (RQMS) Dave Inman** made light work of it and has declared that he can easily deputise for the QM when he goes for a holiday in Banja Luka. The RSM was given the opportunity to exhibit her talents as a compere; Chris Tarrant look out! The Foreman, **SSgt Ally Duncan**, took over the Yeoman's job and organised the comms. He and his tech team are also adept a putting up tents – we won't mention the big bottom lips on show. The weather wasn't particularly kind over the weekend but the Executives enjoyed the variety of tasks and produced superb 'skits' on the Saturday night, much to the chagrin of the Foreman and other PSIs who didn't get an invite to the show. The TA played a large role in preparing for and implementing the exercise and there are far too many names to mention in this article. However, some are worthy of special mention; **Capt John Lynch** and **WO2 John Wren** for providing excellent cuisine, as ever. **Capts Domhall Dods, Dave McBride (REME), Lts Ewan Weir, Milne Weir, Patricia Baird, Lewis Smith** and **OCdt Stuart Wilson**, who escorted the seven teams. **Cpl Debbie Carruthers** and **LCpl Annette Fair** who sorted out the executives' kit, more than once. Last, but not least, the **Training Major, Gus Colville**, who had many a sleepless night worrying about nothing.



Changing a wheel without a jack

REGULAR AND TA CORPS SAAM 1999

On Tuesday 6 April the Advance party from the Regiment travelled down to D Lines, Pirbright, to commence the admin support preparations for both CORPS SAAMs. In the ten days that the party were there the weather rotated through the seasons in that short period of time - 'Thank you Lord!' The Secretary Corps Shooting **Capt Graham Reith** thanks all the Admin Support Team for their sterling work throughout the period (it would not run so smoothly without you). It would not be fair to single out any one individual but a particular thank you goes out to **Sgt Heidi Peebles** who, as always, was the 'Carol Vorderman' of the week. **Heidi**, unfortunately has now resigned from the TA and we all wish you good fortune for the future.



OCdt Wilson, Sgt Dooner, Sig Borland, WO2 Smith and Brig Verey

Many congratulations to both teams who took part in the Corps SAAM. Happily we came away with some silver. 32 Sig Regt 'B' Team won the Combat Snap, **Sig Borland** won Best Female (Rifle) and **Cpl Dodds** received medal and bar for third place. Well done to all.

51 (HIGHLAND) SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

Sqn Comd **Maj Morna Strachan**
Sqn SSM **WO2 Crockett**

CONGRATULATIONS

Very many congratulations go to **Sig James Reeve** and his wife **Angelina** on the birth of their son **Benjamin** (on the first of April – it's no joke) our best wishes to your new family. Our photograph records well deserved recognition of valuable service to the Squadron by **Cpl Linda Richardson** with the presentation of her long service medal presented at Jardine Street by the Master of Signals. Well done to our Falklands veterans **Cpls Rory Milne** and 'Zig' **Jamieson** on their recent promotion.



Cpl Linda Richardson with the Master of Signals

FAREWELLS

The Squadron has reluctantly said farewell to our stalwart **Sgt Maj Donald Webster**. **Donald** was a valued Squadron member for more years than he cares to remember and will be sadly missed. His wife **Sylvia** should see a bit more of him now - but she keeps up the family tradition with her son **Sig Scott Webster** representing the family interest in the Squadron. Cheerio again to our Bosnia rep **Sgt** 'Scouse' **Allen** on his posting back to the sharp end - he knows Serbo -Croat for 'Beer' now so he should be OK.



WO2 Donald Webster and Sqn OC, Major Morna Strachan

ARRIVALS

The Squadron welcomes our new arrivals in the form of our cousins from the RE with **CSgt Shand** and **Sgt Tervit** from the Highlanders. Welcome all to 51 Sqn.

52nd (LOWLAND) SIGNAL SQUADRON)

Sqn Comd **Capt D. Gordon R SIGNALS (V)**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Swan**

A busy time for the Squadron as it completes its move to its new TAC and provides manpower support to the Castle Guard and to various Regimental exercises. The Sqn says a sad farewell to **SSgt** 'More Pies Please' **Lamont**, the Squadron PSI who leaves the Squadron on promotion. Good luck in your new job - even though you missed your surprise party!

61 (CITY OF EDINBURGH) SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj Brian Shankland**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Gary Garland**

EXERCISE LAPSLEY`S LAST

The months of June and July saw the Squadron enter into its summer break but not before having a last Highland Fling for the outgoing CO, **Lt Col Allan Lapsley.** The 'fling' took the form of a nail-biting NCRS Exercise aptly named 'Lapsley`s Last'. (NCRS is not an acronym for 'not a complete radio system' but that's close enough at times.) A limited Regimental sponsored Exercise it was an opportunity to blow away a number of the NCRS cobwebs that had gathered over the intervening months. The Exercise also, as it turns out, was our last opportunity to make our farewells to **Lt Patricia Baird** who has decided on a career swap from Royal Signals to the Royal Army Medical Corps. She will be sadly missed for her constant smile (it's a beaut) and her common sense approach. We wish her well in her new career. The medics gain is definitely our loss.



CALEDONIAN CHALLENGE

It was at fairly short notice that the Squadron was tasked with check point communications for Ex Caledonian Challenge. This Exercise is set become a major event in the calendar of those who take delight in walking the length and breadth of the land. Briefly there was something in the region of eight hundred walkers on the West Highland way of Scotland trekking from North to South. The walk was scheduled over two days. Our task was to provide check-point communications. There was a fairly heavy Army in Scotland presence too with elements of the UOTC and RLC providing crucial feeding and resting services to the weary walkers. As it turned out the weather could not have been less favourable. It chucked it down non-stop for almost 24 hrs. Communication was entirely HF and was managed commendably by our PSI, **Sgt Ian Stallard.** For a Tech he did 'no bad' as they say. The Exercise also drew a few old salts out of the woodwork with even the venerable **Maj** 'Mayhem' **Brian Murray** operating a link with **LCpl** 'Victor' **Robertson** (although the necessities of a quiet B&B with restaurant facilities had to be supplied), so well did it all go that there is a serious danger that the Squadron will be similarly tasked next year (Aw Naw!)

CONGRATULATIONS

Miracles never cease and it was with delight that the Squadron is pleased to congratulate **Cpl Fraser** 'Smiler' **Allan** on his taking the plunge into wedlock. Congratulations are also in order for **Sig Ilona Borland** on her promotion to OCdt and to **Cpl Jane Chisholm** on at last reaching exalted portals of the Sergeants' Mess.

CHARITY ABSEIL

On Saturday 8 May a team of intrepid souls from the Squadron abseiled for a local blind charity 'Visses' from the top of the Edinburgh Holiday Inn. Tech PSI **Sgt Ian** 'Twist & Shout' **Stallard** organised the whole event on behalf of the Squadron much to the delight of his daughters who were watching below. The ten members of the team (**Sig Lowe, Sig Henderson, Sig Darans, LCpl Robertson, Cpl Fair, Cpl Maclean, Sgt Taylor, Sgt Stallard, Lt Baird** and **Capt Dods**) raised just short of £1000 between them.

Sig Robert Lowe confessed once he was on the roof that he was petrified of heights and had not abseiled since primary school when he was apparently 'too young and stupid' to know any better! The ex RM instructors were amazed at his novel way of starting the abseil (crawling over the edge and then hanging on to the building with both hands) but he soon overcame his nerves and dropped eight storeys to the ground. Only after the event did the rest of the team find out that there was a prize of a meal for two at the hotel for the person raising the most money - and the Squadron entry was all down as one lump sum under the name of?..... **Sgt Stallard!** He has promised to bring back a doggy bag if he wins.



Lt Baird going over the top



Charity Abseil Team
Back Row (L-R): Sgt Stallard, Lt Baird, Sig Henderson, Sig Lowe, Sgt Taylor, Capt Dods
Front Row (L-R): Cpl Fair , Sig Darans, Cpl McLean, LCpl Robertson

DEPARTURES & WELCOMES

A warm welcome goes out to all the transferees from the Royal Engineers and the Lowlanders. A fond farewell to two of the Squadron's staunch members, **WO2 (SSM) Gary Garland** and **SSgt Dave McGuire.** The SSM is leaving for family reasons ('er indoors') to spend a bit more time with his young family. 'Mad-dog' **McGuire** is finally hanging up his spanner after many years of vehicle maintenance, (there are rumours that he once worked on chariots!) Goodbye and good luck for the future.

PROMOTIONS

Congratulations to the following people on their recent promotion to Lance Corporal:
Ilona Borland
Sharon 'Milly' **Woods AGC**
Stu Gordon
Wes Florence REME.

32 SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS) PERFORMS CEREMONIAL PUBLIC DUTIES AT EDINBURGH CASTLE

The Regiment offered to undertake a weekend of Castle Guard at Edinburgh Castle during July 1999. The event was successful beyond all expectations and those who took part should be congratulated for the effort and determination they put in to ensure that the event went so well. As can be expected there were many fraught moments throughout the preparation and training phase, not least of which was the task of obtaining No1 Dress. The QM, **Maj** 'Whistler' **Ted Dudding, WO2 (RQMS) Dave** 'Come to my flat warming' **Inman** and **WO2 (RQMS) (V) Norma** 'I'm not saying the Adjt is fat - but ..' **Sproul** are to be congratulated on their bulldog like tenacity in acquiring No1 Dress. It is exceptionally rare that the Regiment is given the opportunity to perform Ceremonial Duties and there were no shortage of volunteers for this event. The RSM, **WO1** 'Marvellous' **Hilborn** and **WO2s Kelly** and **Crockett** shared the drill instruction. After many weekends of training, don't we know it RSM, the soldiers put out a performance worthy of a Guardsman. It is said Edinburgh Castle attracts approx 6000 visitors a day during peak season, so there should be thousands of people around the world showing 32 (S) Sig Regt (V) (and the Jimmy) on their photos.

33 SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO **Lt Col R. J. Steed MBE**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) R. D. Cowan**

The Regiment deployed onto Ex Able Condor and Ex Northern Warrior as part of its Annual Camp during June/July 1999. During this intense period of Regimental communications and military skills training we also saw the hand-over and take-over of RSM's. Outgoing was **WO1 (RSM) Kev Hallett** and incoming was **WO1 (RSM) Rod Cowan**. The hand-over took place in the field in Otterburn with the new RSM being shown around all of the Squadrons deployed into the field. During their travels the two RSM's managed to get stopped by the Military Police on three occasions and checked for their FMT 600's and correct vehicle documentation. The final week of Annual Camp included auditions for 33 Sig Regt's 'Girl Power' pop group. The Commanding Officer was not successful.



42nd (CITY OF MANCHESTER) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)
EXERCISE ABLE CONDOR (UK) 20-25 JUNE 1999

Annual Camp 1999 was unusual in that it took place over a three week period commencing with a full scale Brigade FTX and continuing with a fortnight's trade training in two different locations. For the first six days the Squadron, along with 1000 other members of 11 Sig Bde, took part in Commander 11 Sig Bde's Annual Exercise. This was to practise the deployment of Communications and Information Systems (CIS) in support of the Joint Rapid Reaction Force (JRRF), Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) and the command posts of subordinate formations. Units were then to utilise the remaining period to conduct their own field training. Able Condor provided 'Total Training' for all involved and in addition to practising communication and IS skills the Exercise included range work, first aid, NBC, recce training, FIBUA, a live enemy and vehicle recovery.



The 'Sisters of Kestrel' of Trunk node 31 putting away their make-up after repulsing some heavy enemy advances!! (L-R): Sgt Debbie Alford, LCpl Sam Hickson and LCpl Helen Carden

EXERCISE NORTHERN WARRIOR 25 JUNE – 12 JULY 1999

33 Sig Regt(V) deployed directly from their last field locations on Ex Able Condor to commence Ex Northern Warrior. The Exercise was based initially at Otterburn TC for a week with the final week taking place at Whitburn TC near Sunderland. This proved to be a valuable time during which literally many lessons were learnt and qualifications gained.

Before commencing Ex Northern Warrior, a day's R and R was enjoyed with the majority of the Regiment descending on the flesh pots of Newcastle. An alternative tour to visit the ancient town of Hexham and see Hadrian's Wall was sadly under-subscribed and the short wheel base landrover provided by the MTO was more than sufficient for the job of transportation.

Most of the Squadron returned to Manchester after the Otterburn week having completed their camp commitment while the remainder deployed, along with the regular staff, to sunny Whitburn by the Sea, near Sunderland. This last week on camp completed the Northern Warrior trade phase of Camp 1999 and concluded a thoroughly comprehensive period of training which the Regiment, as a whole, can take great pride in.



PSI Sgt Chris Glover flanked by two of his star pupils on the Tele Op Sys course, LCpl Helen Carden and Sgt Debbie Alford. Also pictured is SSgt Dave Coussons who was promoted during the exercise by Comd 11 Sig Bde, Brig Jonathan Cook



SSgt (FOS) Gas Clapham on the extreme right with his T3 technicians course at Otterburn. Just in frame far left is Sig Charles Vincent who has just gained a high grade pass from the Regular Commission Board to attend Sandhurst



The power behind the thrones'. A posse of PSAO's with the Adjutant, Capt John Harrington, under their feet, during Ex Northern Warrior
(L-R): Capt Bob Dobson (55 Sqn), Capt Geoff Downey (59 Sqn), Capt Gerry Whelan (42 Sqn) and Capt Chris Hopkins (80 Sqn)

SQUADRON FOFS HANDOVER/TAKEOVER

The Squadron said goodbye to **SSgt (FofS) Colin Hamilton** early in June this year. **Colin** 'Pieman' **Hamilton** had arrived on promotion fresh from his Foremans course and proved right from the start to be an inspiration to all members of the Squadron. Not only is he an outstanding Foreman, but also a great motivator in other areas of Squadron life. A familiar sight on Squadron adventurous training weekend, towing his speedboat with his 4x4 Landrover Safari, he lives life to the full and gives much of his own time to benefit others. He left on promotion to WO2 and a dream posting to 9 Sig Regt (Radio) in Cyprus. All members of the Squadron wish both him and **Wendy** an enjoyable and successful tour. He is replaced by **SSgt (FofS) Clapham** who was thrown in at the deep end with all the inevitable pre-camp preparation and planning to contend with. However, he took to this like a duck to water and has soon filled the boots left behind. As seems 'de rigueur' these days for Foremen, he too has a 4x4 jeep and arrives at work on a very slinky Suzuki 600. Needless to say all ranks wish him and his family an interesting and rewarding time with the Squadron.



SSgt (FofS) Hamilton passes over the secret to his success, plenty of Boddingtons bitter, to his successor SSgt (FofS) Clapham

55 (MERSEYSIDE) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)

For our ardent readers who are still not quite clear this Squadron has been renamed from HQ Squadron to 55 (Merseyside) Signal Squadron. This reflects the demise of 55 Squadron in Aintree and the move of most of its members to Huyton and Deysbrook Barracks. However, the change of name does not mean any change in its role or taskings from our great neighbour RHQ!

The Squadron's main effort during this period has been the work up to and then the execution of our Annual Camp 'Ex Able Condor'. What appeared to be a fairly straightforward camp soon became increasingly more confusing. Our responsibility for the move of the Brigade to its concentration area took most of our resources and drivers! Also the dreaded numerals 711 reared their ugly head again as we were tasked to field 11 Sig Bde HQ. This task was ably undertaken by the Troop Commander, **Lt Lyn Reardon** supported by **WO2** 'Thank God I've been reprieved' **Daniels** and **WO2 RQMS** 'I'm not really that old' **Harry Harper**. The first week of camp was a field communications exercise in the East of England with the majority of the Squadron spread out over Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, with the second week in the ever welcoming barracks of Otterburn Camp.

The Otterburn phase was for trade training and what seemed to be as many visits from outside agencies as possible. Amongst the list of dignitaries was Comd 11 Sig Bde, Comd 42 (NW) Bde, the Mayor of Halton and the Mayor of Knowsley. All of which required various forms of dinners, lunches and drinks. Add to that the change over of RSM's and you can see how diverse our week was. We also managed to fit in an officers Mess Dinner night as we dined out **Capt** 'I tell the worst jokes in the world' **Range** and the **Padre John Williams**. As is the way nowadays only one of them will be replaced and it would seem that our spiritual needs are far more important than our need for a Tech Adjt. So we welcomed **Padre Rex Buckley** to our flock and only hope he can remember the words of our Regimental Grace.

Not content with the standard vehicles issued to the Regiment the PSAO **Capt Bob** 'I'm only going to camp if I can take a motorbike' **Dobson** somehow managed to get hold of two Harley Davidsons. Well not really Harleys but the standard issue motorcycle given to RLC Regiments. The plan was to enable members of the Regiment to familiarise themselves with motorcycles, however, it was more commonly thought that the PSAO was internally recruiting for the Huyton Chapter of the local Hells Angels! The bikes were regularly used and you could often see the RAO on one having made some weak excuse to ride one.

Without a doubt the Exercise was a success for the Regiment. Plenty of lessons were learnt and in some cases re-learnt, but the most important thing was that everyone enjoyed themselves and returned home safely.

59 (CITY OF LIVERPOOL) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)
EXERCISE ABLE CONDOR

Ex Able Condor was the name given to the Brigade FTX which began with the squadron moving into a concentration area at Grantham. We began this phase with a PACEX to confirm equipment and manpower availability and serviceability.



Sig 'Bambi' Roberts and Sig 'Slug' Patterson doing what they do best

After the PACEX we moved North through a concentration area which was soured by a road traffic accident but we can report that **Cpl Paul Asquith** is now up and walking with no long term injuries. The Exercise began in earnest and as always there would be no success without a good black hand gang.



LCpl Mick Philburn showing the Hon Col around his Radio Relay Det

The final location for the exercise saw the Squadron co-located with a detachment from 40 Sig Regt (V). The joint cookhouse worked well although the language barrier between 'Scouse' and Irish was a slight hindrance. During the Exercise we were visited by our Hon Col, **Col Peter Toyne** who is Vice Chancellor of John Moores University, Liverpool.

EXERCISE NORTHERN WARRIOR

The Second phase of the Annual Camp was training which included trade, military and sports acitivies. The Regimental Cadre Course saw **LCpl Kev Tilley** adjudged best student and **LCpl Jim Goodhall** voted most improved student. Our success in the sports event was limited to the Tug of War, which was to be expected given the weight advantage.

The Squadron did make the final at football, rounders and volley ball but the cricket team need definitely needed more practice.

80 (CHESHIRE YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON

A complex camp with a week of Ex Able Condor, and two weeks of trade and driver training, all put together by TM, **Maj Carl Storey**. Ex Able Condor Week One – **2Lt Lorraine Cox's** first command. A job she did with a great deal of skill and professionalism. Well done Lorraine. Her efforts and those of **Cpl Piper** and **LCpl Dace** were fundamental to her site being chosen for several VIP visits, not least of who was CinC Land. **Lt Chris Hughes**, now Troop Commander for 031, vice **Capt Bill Dixon** (now Sqn 2IC) had a good camp. Most of the rumours, fortunately proved to be unfounded and he did manage to communicate at one point holding the Brigade plan together single handedly. Sounds familiar? **WO2 SSM Bob Taylor** experienced his last camp this year after loyal service, going back to pre-history. I am sure that the six Monarchs he has served are all very grateful for his help. Looking ahead, Squadron members are eagerly anticipating forthcoming events in Belize, Canada, Kenya and FRY.

XXXV

35 (SOUTH MIDLANDS) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

ANNUAL TRAINING

For the second successive year our annual training was to take place in the UK. We had already enjoyed the picturesque, mythological and historical surrounds of Cornwall last year now we turned our attention to God's country and the outstanding natural beauty of North Yorkshire. Although arriving at a rain lashed Wathgill Training Camp after an uneventful journey on a not so bright Saturday 12 June, may have encouraged some other extreme views about the local countryside, including the imminent arrival of the Lampton Worm from across the border! However, as they say you can never get a tan from standing in the English rain and fortunately fair weather moved in from the South during the following day and it stayed that way for the next seven days.



LCpl Michelle Carvell complete with tactical make-up

The first week of camp concentrated on developing and improving military and leadership skills with a few fun elements thrown in such as tactical helicopter flights, off road day and night driving and driving Challenger Tanks over Catterick Training Area to provide a welcome respite and alternative to the arduous training. Not so welcome, however, was the Padre's elevation to the rank of Cannon when he shot out of the Turret of a Challenger followed by the Tank Commander, both of whom suffered some rather nasty blows to their dignity as well as cuts and bruises. The driver, who just happened to be the Training Major, **Maj Tudor Ford,** escaped unscathed except for the continuous ribbing that continued for days after. Meanwhile, following his recovery, the Padre when asked if he wanted to join the Training Major in a Gazelle Helicopter not so gracefully declined! The rest of the week which included tactical river crossings, section attacks during the day and night and a series of exciting and colourful ambushes, despite some near misses remained incident free.

That is until the first TA CFT followed by an assault course competition (which by the way was won by 48 Sqn after an exceptional performance) that was also followed by organised Sports, which I have to report caused a few casualties. Fortunately these were few although our sympathy and support is extended to **Sgt Alan Vowles** who is still nursing a broken tendon following the cricket competition - he survived everything else that was thrown at him but the cricket proved to be the last straw!



In the Bush - patiently awaiting the Section Attack

The final week of camp concentrated on improving our communication skills and started with a Regimental Exercise throughout the Catterick and Richmond area which proved extremely successful in shaking off the cobwebs. This was followed by a full scale Brigade deployment to a concentration area just outside Grantham, where we were joined by our sister Regiments, with the exercise then moving progressively North. This very successful camp concluded with many (bemused & surprised) elements of the Regiment negotiating the Fibua at Gandale Camp in Catterick. Notable visitors during our annual training included the Lord Mayor of Birmingham, The Mayor Of Shrewsbury, ACOS G6 LAND, **Brig James Shaw,** Comd 143 Bde, **Brig John King** Comd 11 Sig Bde and **Brig Jonathan Cook**. As they say every picture tells a story and we make no apology in making these particular regimental notes principally a photographic memory (less the Fibua) of Annual Camp.



A delicate operation that demands total concentration!



Sig Sarah Bell about to ring off - not on duty!!

Continued on page 455

16 AIR ASSAULT BRIGADE



HRH Prince Charles and Brig Wall OBE after the inspection

The arrival of the Royal party

HRH meeting the troops including RSM Hodgson and Sig Porter of the Squadron

The Disbandment of 24 Airmob Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (210)

The Formation of 16 Air Assault Brigade HQ and Sig Sqn (216)

Back to work as an Air Assault Brigade HQ & Signal Squadron (216)







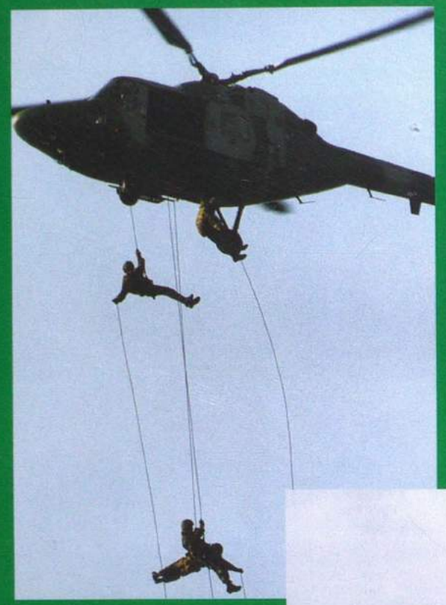






THE LAUNCH OF 16 AIR ASSAULT BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (216) 1 SEPTEMBER 1999

OFFICER COMMANDING - MAJOR I. HOOPER
REGIMENTAL SERGEANT MAJOR - WO1 (RSM) G. HODGSON







COLCHESTER

On 3 September 1999, 16 Air Assault Brigade was officially launched at Wattisham, Suffolk in the presence of **HRH** the **Prince of Wales**. The demonstration included insertion of an all arms grouping by parachute, TALO and support helicopter, just some of the new Brigade's capabilities. 16 Brigade is a unique and revolutionary formation within the Army, with three aviation regiments, three infantry battalions, two of which are parachute trained, and enhanced combat and combat service support. Starting in 2002 the Aviation Regiments will convert to the Apache AH-64D Attack Helicopter providing a powerful striking force for rapid reaction and other operations.

The 3 September also marked the formation of 16 Air Assault Brigade Headquarters and Signal Squadron (216) which will provide command support to the brigade on operations and exercise. The Squadron is formed from 24 Airmobile Brigade Signal Squadron and elements of 5 Airborne Brigade Signal Squadron, 25 members of which moved from Aldershot to Colchester on 1 September. The Squadron retains the ability to field fully airmobile Brigade Main, Step Up and Tac Headquarters with Ptarmigan access, and airmobile rebroadcast and special task detachments. A new Troop, C Troop, forms to provide a focus for the Parachute Tac Headquarters which the Squadron will deploy to support the Airborne Battlegroup. Despite the inevitable and proper focus on future technology, in particular the Attack Helicopter, the Squadron remains acutely aware of its heritage and determined to promote links with its forebearers: airmobile, airborne and aviation. It was therefore entirely appropriate that on the weekend immediately following the Brigade launch the Squadron attended the Royal Signals Old Comrades Association weekend at Caythorpe, in Suffolk. The 'striking eagle' was very much in evidence as responsibility for supporting the OCA weekend passed from Aldershot to Colchester. The event served as a timely reminder that when the 1st Airborne Division was formed in late 1941 it consisted of 1st Parachute Brigade, 1st Airlanding Brigade and glider units; the maroon beret being the head-dress of all ABF including glider and airlanding troops.

All Brigade units wear a new insignia. The 'Gryphons Wings' and 'Pegasus' insignia, both of which were awarded by **Major General** 'Boy' **Browning** have been superseded by the 16 Brigade 'Striking' Eagle. The eagle, already locally christened 'Eddie', is based on a design used by the Special Training Centre in Scotland in 1943-45. The Eagle is mounted on a quartered light blue and maroon shield, the colours representing the key constituents of the new Brigade. The Signal Squadron also wears the maroon beret and Royal Signals LZ flash.

KOSOVO

As the majority of 16 Brigade Signal Squadron watched the Brigade launch at Wattisham, the 37 strong 'K Troop' which deployed to Kosovo in early August prepared for its own celebrations to mark the occasion. The Troop is deployed principally in Pristina with detachments throughout Kosovo, on the Kosovo/Macedonia border, the Macedonia/Greek border and in Thessaloniki in Greece. 'Striking Eagles' and maroon berets were sewn and shaped in secret and over 200 guests invited from 102nd Brigade and Royal Signals units in theatre, including 7th Signal Regiment, 30th Signal Regiment and 19 Mechanised Brigade Headquarters and Signal Squadron (209). Guests, including **Major General Elliot** and **Brigadier Stiern** were issued with a celebratory 'punch' on arrival which was within the letter if not the spirit of 'Two can rule,' and an unlikely but very appropriate combination of The Royal Irish Folkband 'The Wolfhounds' with guest lead guitar and vocalist **Padre** 'Kev the Rev' **Ball** providing entertainment throughout. The metre square eagles staring down from every available high spot left no-one in any doubt as to the reason for the celebrations.

216 Signal Squadron looks forward to its first exercise in the Air Assault role in October. Ex Gryphons Eye will test the Squadron's ability to provide command support to parachute and helicopter delivered forces in a demanding and rigorous scenario. In the forthcoming year 16 Air Assault Brigade HQ & Signal Squadron (216) looks forward to continuing to play a central role in the development of command support to air manoeuvre, with exercises in Canada and Malaysia in the year 2000.









32 (Scottish) Signal Regiment (Volunteers)
Castle Guard – Edinburgh Castle
Front Row (L-R): LCpl McDowall, WO2 (SSM) Kelly, WO1 (RSM) A. B. Hilborn, Sgt Davies, LCpl Convery
Rear Row (L-R): Sigs Sheridan, Leslie, Quail, Boyce, McCartney, Hardie and Henderson, Cpl McGraw, Sigs Robertson and Davanna





The Colonel in Chief with Brigadier Baxter in Kosovo



Cold Comfort at the the river crossing



But a hot ambush with 35 Sig Regt

Continued from page 450



In the land of Nod



The look that says I passed the CFT



Tanks for the memory!

REGIMENTAL ROUND-UP

A detailed round-up of recent events including the successful move of the Regiment to Canley and the Birmingham Discovery Day will appear in the next edition of *The Wire*. Meanwhile many congratulations are extended to **WO2 (FofS) Pete Stowell** on his award of the GOC's Commendation for service in Northern Ireland and the Accumulated Service Medal, to **Capt Mark Whittingham** on his award of the Territorial Decoration and to **Sgt Andy Rodgers** and **Cpl** 'Spot' **Anslow** on their award of the Efficiency Medal TA and finally to **Cpl Carl Rossall** on his award of the Accumulated Service Medal. All awards were presented by Comd 143 Bde on Tuesday 27 July at a special ceremony held at Canley TA Centre.



Food for thought - the catering crew in a rare moment of relaxation

36 (EASTERN) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO **Lt Col J.A . Allan TD**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) R. J. Stanton**

WELCOME

Big welcomes (at long last!) go to **Capt Rod Allen**, PSAO Colchester and **Capt Ernie Feasey**, PSAO Ilford. You're both here now and for a lot longer than the Editor! I hope you enjoy the next 15 years or so with the Regiment. The Regiment and especially the RQMS, **WO2 (RQMS) Tony Gaston**, welcomes **Maj (QM) Phil Daisey** and his wife into the fold all the way from the easy life at 11 Bde HQ. (Note the large hatstand in your office and the RQs leave pass, Sir!) We also say welcome to that famous duo (already), the regular element of the Ops Team, **WO2 (FofS) Phil Holland** and family and **SSgt (YofS) Tony Martin** and family who have both moved up from Blandford. May your sense of humour remain intact and your blood pressure low! We also welcome **Cpl Ballard** to the Regiment and more importantly to the Tech Workshops because **Sgt Kev East** can now be IC workshops with someone to be in charge of! **Sgt Tim Gamble** has now arrived from Blandford and will become PSI HQ Sqn, which releases **SSgt Si Hill** to move upstairs to the Training Office. We also say a big hello to **Mr Mark Little** who joins us as a civilian driver in Ilford, but we also say farewell, temporarily as **Mark** is a Corporal with 4 RGJ(V) and has been called up for six months service in Kosovo!

FAREWELL

We say farewell to **Sgt Aden** 'Bad Back' **Whitty** who is leaving the Army to go to college. Good luck for the future.

REGIMENTAL DRILL COMPETITION

I know, I know, TA and Drill are like Chalk and Cheese, but last year **SSgt Glen Baker** suggested to the RSM, **WO1 Bob Stanton**, that the Regiment needed a good old fashion drill competition. Now the RSM was having none of it, thinking that the Regiment was brilliant at drill, but **Glen** knew better and went down on bended knees and pleaded mercy. The RSM, with a tear in his eye, let **Glen** have his way and went off to the medical centre in search of an FMed 8 for his trusty Troop Staffy. Nine months later we were in Colchester for the competition. **SSgt Anita Smith**, PSI 44 Sig Sqn, had jacked up a horse racing night for the troops' entertainment on the Saturday night, which went down very well, especially as someone had let **SSgt Gaz Sullivan** loose to name the horses! Although, in the last race the horse with the form all evening was bought by the said PSI and **LCpl Mark Mossop** and actually failed to start! OOPS! **SSgt Glen Baker** bought the winner and ended up £40.00 better off. In the winners enclosure he made a comment to the fact that he had trained the horse on Fosters lager! Sunday morning soon arrived and it was down to business on the drill square, which was organised by

WO1 (RSM) 'I've got no money but I'll just keep bidding for a horse anyway' **Stanton**. After a long and arduous morning with the sun beating down, the teams were formed up and given the results by the CO, **Lt Col Jackie Allan TD.** HQ Sqn came a creditable third, considering the lack of experience, 757 from Cambridge came second, led by **Sgt Julie** 'I think I'll just have a lie down during rehearsals' **Cole**, but in first place was 754/756 Troops from Bedford led by **SSgt Sue** 'It's all down to you' **Baker**, who just happens to be married to **SSgt Glen Baker** who suggested the idea in the first place! AND just to make things a little bit spookier, the drill cup was originally presented by **Lt Col Baker WRAC.** Who was it that said 'The writings on the Cup?' Following the Drill Competition, the very next weekend, just happened to be the Freedom of Redbridge Parade. Wasn't that a coincidence! Good thinking Staff. Maybe that's why the Officers were practising sword drill behind that building while the troops were marching.

REGIMENTAL GOLF

You would be correct in thinking that the Adjt, **Capt Scitt Younggsen,** wrote these notes but unfortunately he didn't, which makes**WO1 (RSM) Bob Stanton** still the best golfer in the Regiment! However, last week the Regimental Golf Society did manage to get out and let off steam. Some, like **Sgt Pete Stidwell** did it by losing the odd ball (try facing down the fairway next time!), others like **WO2 Gary Stevens AGC** decided he would combine two sports and went 'fish aiming'. **SSgt Gaz Tuff** didn't bother with a buggy this time, why was that? At the same time, members from the Regiment were playing the semi-finals of the Regimental Knockout Competition. **Capt Rod Allen** was beaten by **SSgt (SQMS) Ray Whall** and **Maj Dave Watson** pipped **Capt Len Carr**. In the Stapleford Competition **Mr Paul Burton** RSA romped home with 41 points, with **SSgt (SQMS) Ray Whall** second in the Group 1 match (u24HCap) and **Maj Dave Watson**, 34 points beat **Sgt Gaz Tuff** into second place with 30 points in the Group 2 match, (24 HCap and over). A good day out which was enjoyed by all with many thanks to **SSgt (SQMS) Ray Whall** for organising the event and to **Paul Burton** and **Brian Carroll** from the East London Branch of the Royal Signals Association for the tickets. Cheers lads.

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj Dave Watson**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Tony Wells**

FREEDOM OF REDBRIDGE PARADE

Preparation began in earnest last January for the Regiment to exercise its right to the Freedom of the Borough of Redbridge, to be held on Saturday 17 July 1999. Various tasks were assigned to the personalities and the Mayor's Officer was consulted, along with the local police. Instructions were then despatched to the outlying Squadrons. The week preceding the parade saw members of HQ Sqn entering the drill competition and coming third place, above 44 and 45 Sig Sqns, which was excellent news. The next day members of the Squadron assembled at Ilford to begin the real work of setting up the TA Centre and especially the field at the rear, where the Regiment would enjoy itself after the parade. **WO2 (RQMS) Tony Gaston** had the loan stores piled high in the garages and all that was required was for us to erect all of the tentage and fill them with 6ft GS tables and benches! The idea was to form a horse-shoe shape of tents for VIPs and Squadrons with the open space for the Band and family fun activities.

The Regimental PSIs were due to arrive and assist but isn't it amazing how many people can get on courses, leave, farewell lunches and even a 7-day 'bad back' chit! However, two stalwarts came to the fore in the shape of **WO2 (RAOWO) Gary Stevens** AGC and **Sgt Pete Stidwell** and I think **Gary** learned the most - it's not that easy stitching four 18 x 24s together, when you've never seen one before, is it? By Thursday evening the place looking thoroughly professional. The grass had been cut by **Caroline**, our resident caretaker, the tents were up and the bar's and barbecues were all in position. This would not have happened without the superb commitment from the following TA personnel **WO1 (SVWO) Mick Grimshaw, Cpl Alan Bell, Sigs** 'George' **Pearce** and 'Dennis' **Owen.** Thank-you very much. By the way **SSgt Gaz Tuff** and **Sgt Ian Chappell** did turn up on Friday, in time to sweep the roads!



Maj Dave Watson leading HQ Sqn through the streets of Ilford
(Photo courtesy of The Ilford Recorder)

Saturday soon arrived and so did the buses from Bedford, Cambridge, Norwich, Colchester, Warley, Grays and Southend. **WO1 (RSM) Bob Stanton** got them all on parade to sort out who was marching (possessed No 2 dress) and those who were to carry security and admin tasks (didn't possess No 2 dress). **WO2 (MTWO) Steve Kentish** was IC Security and **WO1 (SVWO) Mick Grimshaw** drew the short straw and got the admin party. After a few rehearsals, the Regiment were formed up and at 1145hrs **Lt Col Jackie Allan TD** took command of her Regiment, gave a few well chosen words and then ordered her Regiment to March through the streets of the Borough of Redbridge, led by the band of 34 (Northern) Sig Regt (V) by kind permission of **Lt Col David Hargreaves** (an ex-Tp Comd of 36 Sig Regt). Behind the marching troops came **WO2 (RQMS) Eddie Kikas** carrying the Regimental Standard, flanked by standards of three Royal Signals Associations in our area. These were followed up by a vehicle procession (coach and all!) commanded by **Capt Robin Needham REME** and were prepared by **SSgt Tony Dale REME,** PSI LAD.

The Regiment passed the Town Hall and the salute was taken by the Worshipful the Mayor of Redbridge, **Cllr F. K. Maravala** and the GOC London District, **Maj Gen E. J. Webb-Carter OBE**. In the afternoon, the Mayor's party, GOC and ex-COs of the Regiment were invited to a barbecue lunch with the Regiment and their families. It was a really hot day and the PSAOs and SSgt (NRPS) did a splendid job supplying cold refreshments to all, while the chefs under the watchful eye of **Sgt Norma Miller-Knight** produced a super lunch.



Maj Mike White, Mr Mike Gapes MP and Lt Col Jackie Allan TD enjoying the afternoon festivities
(Photo courtesy of The Ilford Recorder)

54 (EA) SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj Mark Smith**
SSM	**WO2 Les Scott**

CHARITY PRESENTATION

Just recently, after all the monies had been collected in from the sponsored 'Lakeland Challenge', **Sgt** (now SSgt) **Gaz Tuff,** PSI Cambridge, arranged for the total money to be equally divided and presented to Children in Need and the NSPCC. Each charity received a cheque for £1035.00.



Lakeland Challenge members present a total of £2070.00 to Children in Need and NSPCC

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please advise the Subscriptions Clerk,
at RHQ, IN WRITING, of any change of address.
This information should not be telephoned.

37 SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO	**Lt Col A. J. Whittle TD**
RSM	**WO1 (RSM) A. Cox**

It is changeover time at the Regiment. **Maj John Duggan** has come across from 53 Sig Sqn to takeover the role of 21C Regt bringing his bottles of red with him. **Maj Stewart McConnell** lost his hair but passed his exams and is off to Blandford for the CISM degree, with **Maj Nik Beecher** stepping in for five months until he goes off to do a degree. **Capt Sara Copley** has now moved on to Corsham with **Capt Lynn Burrell** taking over as Adjt. Big congratulations to the RSM on being selected for a commission. Will he now change his name?!

LANYARD TROPHY MARCH 6 MAY 1999

The arduous competition commenced at 0530 hours on 6 May at the Kent County Showground, near Maidstone. The first obstacle to cross was the very busy A249 and the gates into the show-ground itself. The ten strong team were not put off by this and set off at a cracking pace unaware that **SSgt Graeme Smith** intended this to be the speed of march throughout the 40 miles. The team quickly realised that **SSgt Smith** had told a few white lies and the team was not going to walk at the speed of the slowest member of the team! The team was harangued through each checkpoint with only two minutes to shovel down cold pasta, salt and fruit bars - all very tasty! The admin support of **Cpl (now Sgt) Cindy Meller** and **LCpl Windle** both of 93 Sig Sqn did the team proud and was invaluable in keeping the team going. The limited training that the team was able to undertake due to civilian work commitments paid off and the team was exceptionally strong. After finishing last in the previous year's competition the team finished a credible third in the TA competition and Tenth out of 29 overall. This was a marked improvement and much credit must go to **SSgt Graeme Smith** for training and leading the team. There are, however, no thanks to him for all his abuse throughout the event and his inability to give accurate measurements of how far we still had to march!

EXERCISE MINOAN DRAGON
THE WHITE MOUNTAINS OF WESTERN CRETE

An expedition of 18 led by **Maj Stewart** 'The Mountain Goat' **McConnell** flew out to the White Mountains of Western Crete in April. The expedition followed the escape route of the Allied POW's during the German invasion of Crete in 1941. **LCpl Kev Hall** and **Sig Steve** 'Mother me please' **Edwards** looked like escaped POWs. The first day involved climbing the Soros and Kastro Mountains before descending down the Imbros gorge. Apart from the spectacular sights occasionally witnessed whilst enduring 'P Company' in Crete, a major highlight was watching **SSgt (FofS) Andy Burns** being swooped upon by a Golden Eagle on Soros Mountain. **WO2 (SSM) Joe** 'I've got water and you can't have it' **Krikorian** commented on the eagle's ferocious appetite for vermin! The scaling of the Samaria Gorge provided the group with a big challenge and a chance to tell lots of tall tales after as to how high the water was in the gorge. The 'challenge' even brought on the illness of the Special Forces Greek Officer who had to be rested and then evacuated. The following day the ascent of Melindau Mountain was more like the battle for Tumbledown as everyone clung to the rocks, battered by wind and sleet - in Crete! The theme entertainment nights held each night after the walking proved educational for all with haggis being fed to the locals. The adventures continued as the group returned to UK and the escapades of the red bus began but that is another story.

67 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj R. E. W. Hall**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Walker**

With the demise of Long Marston Camp 67 Sig Sqn have taken over the duty of providing the sword bearer and escort for the Mayor of Stratford Upon Avon. To date the Squadron has performed the duty twice - Shakespeare's Birthday Parade and the Mayor's Civic Sunday.



WO2 (SSM) John Downie – carrying sword,
Cpl Bob Hampson, Cpl Harford

93 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj A. Unwin**

MARCH THROUGH BLACKBURN

July 1, 1916 was the first day of the Battle of the Somme, a battle that would go on until 13 November 1916 and would claim 420,000 British lives. Units from the entire British Army and from all parts of these islands would fight and die there. It was the introduction of the 'Pals' battalions, so called because they were raised from the communities they lived in, for the first time in a major battle. Many of these came from the North of England and so the anniversary of the battle is especially poignant in the mill towns of Lancashire. For the first time in the area, 93 Sig Sqn (V) were invited to take part in a march past, through the town of Blackburn. On 3 July, the nearest day to the anniversary, the Squadron formed up and led by the band of the Lancastrian Brigade and the colours of the Queen's Lancashire Regiment, set off through the town. The Squadron also provided two pike men, **LCpl Tony Windle** and **Sig Stuart Reid** to act as the escort for the VIP dais. Taking the salute were the Mayor of Blackburn, a visiting French Mayor from the area of the battle and the Commanding Officer of the 4th Queens Lancashire Regiment. Although humid, the weather stayed fine and the town's folk, many of whose grandfathers were among the fallen, gave the parade their hearty support.

THIRTY YEARS ON

Following the reforming of the TAVR in 1968, a regional Signal Squadron was formed in June 1969, in the town of Blackburn, as part of 38 Sig Regt (V). Thirty years later, 93 Sig Sqn (V) held an anniversary party to celebrate its continuing success. As many of the 'old hands' that could be contacted were invited and over 120 people attended. The Squadron, now part of 37 Sig Regt (V), still resides in its original barracks in Canterbury Street, which was built for the East Lancashire Militia in 1869. A double anniversary was celebrated, 30 years for the Squadron and 130 for our barracks. The theme of the night was the '60's' and Squadron members excelled themselves by turning up in kaftans, Afro wigs and flower power regalia. **SSgt Pierre Harris** and **SSgt** 'Buzz' **Small** erected some fine backdrops whilst the auntie of **Lt Julie Lodge** prepared a magnificent cake. **SSgt Dan Locker** gave us his Status Quo impression, which always goes down well. A great evening was had by all and now we need an excuse to hold another one.

96 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj R. Bowden**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Campbell**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Taylor**

It was 'Brief Encounters of the Squaddie Kind' as described by members of 96 Sig Sqn ascending Mount Snowdon on Ex Merlin's Mist. Brief being due to the speedy, unplanned and uncoordinated descent made by **LCpl** 'Bowdy Gordy' **Gray** down the slippery slope of shale. Two groups of shameless beer connoisseurs battled against time and flag-proud venture scouts to reach the summit, with the slender stick insect posse plus **Sig** 'Fat-Boy-Now-Slimmer' **Nursall** reaching the summit and pub two hours ahead of schedule. The alternative plan for the descent came into effect when we realised not enough money could be mustered between us to pay for the train! Still we came down a lot quicker than we went up which was just as well as somebody (who shall remain anonymous) had left the minibus lights on. The following day proved just as much fun, although a little more painful as with bumps and bruises one group went riding their penny farthings whilst the other risked life and limb on the rock-face. **Sig** 'Bush on a Bush' managed to be belayed to the top of the face without touching anything he was supposed to be climbing and proved such an inspiration that to save **Sgt Brooke**'s nerves the adventure was cancelled and replaced with the use of an indoor wall. The evening's entertainment proved a revelation, culminating in a scantily clad posse re-enacting the 'charge of the light tackle brigade'. Near death experiences were had by all!



The 'Mountain Goat' team at the top of Mt Snowdon
(shortly before alcohol)

39 (SKINNERS) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS
CO — **Lt Col J. Crackett TD**
RSM — **WO1 (RSM) P. Anderson**

SOinC(A)'s VISIT TO EXERCISE SILVER LYNX

Brig Burton visited the Regiment during Ex Silver Lynx on Saturday 10 July 1999. He received a whistle stop tour by helicopter around all of the Exercise locations including:

a. Longmoor Training Area - Regimental briefing followed by a visit to 57 Squadron.
b. Bramley - 'Bite to eat' with 47 Squadron and the recruits.
c. Camberley Training Area - Visit to 5 Squadron.
d. Return to Longmoor - Visit to HQ Squadron.

The SOinC(A) was party to a number of events during his visit, including a phantom pregnancy as part of the Exercise play!



SOinC(A) mulls over with Sig Wells how big she might have become if really pregnant!



Lt Cornick and LCpl Crown briefing the SOinC(A)

57 (CITY AND COUNTY OF BRISTOL) SQUADRON
Sqn Comd — **Maj Rosemary Tuhey**
SSM — **WO2 P. Packer**

EXERCISE LIVELY LYNX 4-6 JUNE 1999

Well done to 57 Sqn for putting forward two competitive teams for this year's Lively Lynx. **Lt Moseley** led the 57 Alpha Team with a brave but injured **Sgt Zamparelli** to Third place. **Lt Ackroyd** and **Sgt** 'Badger' **Gresswell** led 57 Bravo in a truly 'Bravo two Zero' assault on both the grenade posting and casevac stands. The team missled the DS time and again as they boxed around the objective. **LCpl Dyer** and **LCpl** 'SAS' **Allen** led assault teams and assaulted a concrete OP like no other. Excellent effort was shown by **Sig Baldwin** and **Sig King** - who looked shell shocked on arrival - having both only recently completed recruit weekends 1 to 4. Top marks go to **Sig Hill** for shooting after the march 36/50 and **Lt Ackroyd, Sig Hawkins** and **LCpl Dyer.** Congratulations to **LCpl Estcourt** for swallowing her pride, dented due to the fact she was unable to do her hair for the team photo! A big thanks goes to **Sig** 'Plank' **Normile** after he aided his team by becoming a human bridge in the command task.

5 (QUEEN'S OWN OXFORDSHIRE HUSSARS) SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd — **Maj R. D. Stone**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) R. E. Phillips**

OXFORD TROOP

Following SDR, accommodation has been earmarked for the formation of a detached Signal Troop at Slade Park TAC in Oxford. Early indications suggest this will be a successful venture for the Squadron. We have already welcomed three female members of the RGJ transferring to Royal Signals to serve with the detachment. If you are leaving the Regular Corps and want to continue serving Royal Signals, and moving to the Oxford Area, give us a call - 01295 262178 or call into the Banbury TAC Tuesday Training evening.

WELCOMES AND FAREWELLS

We would like to welcome **Sgt Chris Stuart** (PSI (Tech)) and his family to Banbury. **Capt** 'Chuck' **Robertson** ex-Corps and RAF has taken a commission and the appointment of Second in Command. **OCdt Simon Durtnal** Ex 1 Signal Squadron has passed TCB and is off to RMAS in September 1999. **LCpl Lorraine Hamilton** from the Royal Engineers, **Sigs Lucy Corr, Maxine Sample** and **Sorcha Diskin** from the RGYRRV. Welcome to you all, we hope you enjoy life with the Squadron. **Sgt Robbie Hall** has now had two farewells, which will probably have increased to four, and a welcoming to the TA party, by the time these notes are published. **WO2 (YofS) Debbie Frankham** left the Squadron and the TA in July 1999 after 13 years dedicated service to the Squadron and 39th (Skinners) Sig Regt, Private WRAC to the very first Female WO2 (YofS). **Debbie Frankham** was the senior female member of the Squadron. She was respected by all ranks and provided only the very best support and advice throughout her time. As a Yeoman she served the Squadron and Regiment eminently providing expert advice on all communication and training matters. Sadly the demands of her new found civilian career have had to take priority over service in the Reserve Army.

PROMOTIONS

Well done to **LCpl Sean Buckley** Chef, **Cpl Steve Oliver, Cpl Sharon Scutt** Chef and **WO2 (SSM) Ray** 'Super Chit' **Phillips.** There have been so many promotions this last month we are seriously thinking of forming a campanology group!!

EXERCISE BRAMBLE LYNX 18-20 JUNE 1999
by SSgt 'Scouse' Simcock, PSI (Ops)

Ex Bramble Lynx 99 was the 5(QOOH) Sqn military training Exercise held at Yardley Chase Training Area, over the weekend of 18-20 June 1999. It was designed to practice the Squadron's ability to train up to and including platoon level drills in the field. It was a fully tactical, with arms, squadron military training exercise designed to improve the military skills of all personnel within the Squadron and to prepare them fully for any future Regimental Exercises or deployments! That said let's see what really happened! On a bright sunny June evening they all turned up - it was one of the biggest deployments the squadron was to face all year - with eyes wide open they turned up through the gates of 5(QOOH) TAC. You could hear their minds ticking away with all sorts of questions - were they going to get much sleep this weekend? - was it worth them bringing their quilts with them or do they have to bring sleeping bags? - do we get to roll round in the mud and wear cam cream all weekend? - the questions where all burning in their minds. Eventually under the guidance of the acting platoon OC, **SSgt Judith Phillips** and platoon Sergeant, **Sgt Paul Milner,** the Squadron managed to reach the initial grid at Yardley Chase (Northampton is a nice place to drive around after all!). After camming all vehicles the platoon set off with full kit to their initial harbour area to get some well-deserved sleep of approximately four hours.



Killer Platoon after the ambush drill

Saturday morning was beautiful, not only were the birds up early but so was 5(QOOH) Sqn! Saturday was spent with each individual Section/Platoon being issued their lesson plans and battle exercises by the DS. With enough ammo/pyro to take on a small army, off they went happy in the knowledge that it didn't really matter that much what happened next as long as they got to fire lots and lots of rounds and threw lots of pyro! The new concept to anti-ambush drills - every man/woman for themselves and CHARGES the enemy (or so **LCpl Danny Palmer** thought anyway!) Into Saturday evening and like a child growing up it was time to let the troops loose on the Training Area on their own - a scary thought for all! Orders where given and it was time to see what they had learnt. With moving the platoon twice during the night into different harbour areas, bumping off the platoon harbour area just before first light and each Section putting out patrols all night it was a very busy evening indeed. The Squadron DS was kept down to an absolute minimum - **Cpl Mark Seccull, SSgt** 'Scouse' **Simcock,** PSI Ops**, SSgt Paul** 'Don't give them any sleep' **Johnson** and **WO2 (SSM) George Simpson** all ably led by the quiet yet dashingly forceful **Lt Rupert Cranston.** Into Sunday morning and much thanks must go to 666 Sqn AAC (V) and the use of their Gazelle helicopter and **Capt Nigel Knight.** The Squadron managed a 'Relief in Place' of all soldiers (less DS!) from the TAC Banbury to Yardley Chase Training Area. Whilst the 'Relief in Place' was carried out the rest of the soldiers waiting for the helicopter were put through their paces on 'Sniper Alley'. Sniper Alley is a slightly wet and muddy area designed to practice a soldier in the art of CQBR. It also enhances their ability to work in pairs supporting each other whilst diving through stinking and boggy mud! No matter how old you are it is still the highlight of the day to see how muddy you can become - even **LCpl** 'Swampy' **Palmer** and **LCpl** 'Boggin' **Belcher** wanted to go down a second time in their nice clean uniform! All too soon it was time to say goodbye to Yardley Chase and the end of another weekend -slightly different from the norm but just as much fun.



'Nice smiles ladies.'
Sig Claire Goodwin and Sig Debbie Anderson after finishing 300m crawling, through sweat, mud and obstacles down Sniper Alley

FAREWELL TO MAJOR TONY SHAW

The Training Major made his last visit to the Squadron on Tuesday 20 July 1999. He thanked the Squadron for their support during his tour with the Regiment. We wish him every success with his civilian career and service as a TA Officer. **Maj Shaw** promoted **LCpl Sean Buckley** and appointed **Simon Durtnal** to Officer Cadet. The Squadron welcomes **Maj Jon Fraser.**

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON
Sqn Comd — **Maj R. H. Belbin**
SSM — **WO2 (SSM) L .Carr**

USNG/TA SNCO EXCHANGE PROGRAMME
by WO2 (SSM) Lou Carr

Sgt Nick Marsh (AGC) and I took part in the 1999 Exchange programme between 11 and 26 June, joining Bravo Company of 260th Signal Battalion of the Delaware Army National Guard for their Annual Two Week Training Camp. We flew from Heathrow to Dulles International, Washington with Virgin Air and met up with **Sgt Mandy Jones** and **Sgt Trevor Grant** of 38 Sig Regt who -were also to visit the 260th. We were collected from Dulles by **Sgt Paul Fox** and **Specialist (SPC) Barry Faux** who were to drive us to Newcastle, Delaware, where we were to spend the night before meeting up with Bravo Company in their Armoury (equivalent to a TA Centre). Unfortunately a missed junction on the Interstate put us straight into the heart of Washington, a city unfamiliar to our two American hosts! Being resourceful Seniors the Brit contingent got out our Washington tourist maps (supplied by **Sgt Maj Werley** of the Exchange Programme) and navigated the party through the capital city of the USA (managing to pass most of the sightseeing landmarks on route!).

Saturday morning and we are split up. **Sgt Mandy Jones** went to Bn HQ at Fort Devens Massachusetts and **Sgt Nick Marsh** went to Bethany Beach where the Delaware Guard have a Training School, **Sgt Trevor Grant** and I went with Bravo Company to Fort Dix, New Jersey, 48,000 acres of pine forests and grass land on sand. The task is to set up a tactical secure telephone network in support of 18 Quartermaster Units who are conducting a Waterex/P0Lex in the area and tying in to the Bn network, covering large areas of the North-Eastern States. This was theatre work on a scale rarely seen by TA solders and took four days to fully set up. **Sgt Nick Marsh** rejoined B Coy along with **Sgt Barrington St John** who had come top on his command course at the School.

The unit were also being evaluated, not only on the communications mission, but also on various set piece tasks. The evaluation was conducted internally by **Lt Facciolo** from Bn HQ and externally by **Capt Ellis** of 82 Airborne Div. I was asked to plan and conduct an ambush on a convoy that would be assessed on its reaction. After various recces to find a suitable site, the plan was confirmed, the ambush force (OPFOR) selected, **Sgt** 'I'm dead wary, me' **Grant, Sgt First Class (SFC) Scott** 'Are we having fun yet' **Westbrook** and myself, with an M60 machine gun and three M 1 6A2 Assault rifles, and off we went. Three highly trained soldiers against a convoy of eight vehicles and 16 soldiers. You just knew something was going to go wrong.

At the expected time the convoy appeared and stopped 500 metres short of our road block veh! That was one up to the convoy Commander, **Lt Wickham,** we didn't expect that. **Sgt Grant** on the M60 took out the convoy's recce party, after the unconventional Quick Battle Orders of, 'Do you want to go hunting?' to **Scott,** to which the answer was, 'Hell, Yes!' we stalked up the road side and inflicted severe damage on the convoy (**SFC Westbrook** accounting for at least seven Guardsmen himself) before the Exercise finished.

Interspersed with military activities were 'Cultural' visits to Atlantic City (thanks to **SFC Bob Miller** who showed us how to lose money), New York City (many thanks to New Yorker **Lt Will Cobeo** who showed us round) and Philadelphia (thanks to Cable Dog **Sgt Mandi Perry** and **Jan,** it was wild!) I took a three day road trip with **Sgt Maj Dave Carden,** who proved to be not only an extremely nice guy, but also a very knowledgeable guide to the various Civil sites on our route through New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

Back at Ft Dix and **Sgt Grant** had planned the next Lanes Test (evaluation ex), a night attack on a Comms site, OPFOR for this was twelve strong and included some of the most outstanding characters we met, SPC's **Dave** (9 digits) **Niday, Leland** (Texas) **Hughes, Mike Bounagario, Ptes First Class** (PFC) 'Fighter Pilot' **Guest,** and a late joiner rushing straight from shift in the switch to take part in the fun **Sgt Ruda Harrison** and my old mate **SFC Westbrook.** The site was defended by approximately twenty five National Guardsmen, so we had a stiff task ahead of us. Despite getting split up several times **Sgt Grant** stuck to his plan and in the process ambushed a patrol from the defenders and took prisoner some of the most experienced soldiers guarding the site. All of OPFOR found each other at the FRV (these things exist for a reason!) and put in the attack as planned (except the Hummvee Driver who almost ran me over).

The Exercise was a great success, victory being claimed by both sides! Many lessons were learned, and **Sgt Grant** did an excellent job of commanding the OPFOR. There are too many names to mention everyone who helped to make our stay so memorable, but special thanks must go to **Capt Shabaz** the Coy Comd, **First Sgt Steele, SFC's Bob Miller** and **Scott Westbrook SSG Joe Brady** (for all the food kit), **SPC Mary Caban** (for the shopping advice). And finally **Sgt Gaddy** for his regular greeting to me of 'How you doing Sgt Maj. Want a soda and a burger?' You guys were all great, and I hope to visit you again one day.

71 (YEOMANRY) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO — **Lt Col C. H. Turner**
RSM — **WO1 (RSM) M. Godwin**

REGIMENTAL NEWS
FAREWELL AND GOODBYE

The Regiment says farewell to the Adjutant, **Capt Andrew Mould,** who moves to Upavon to take up a staff appointment at DGD&D. We thank him for his hard work throughout his tour, and wish him and **Jo** the best for the future.

ANNUAL CAMP VISITORS DAY

This year's Annual Camp Visitors Day was held at Warcop Camp, and the Regiment was once again fortunate to be honoured by a large number of distinguished guests. On a drizzly and overcast day, they assembled at Warcop Camp to be briefed on the current state of the Regiment, and plans for the future, before moving up to the edge of the assault course on Warcop Training Area. Once there, the visitors were able to watch the end of the patrol competition and encourage the teams as they raced over the gruelling assault course. Some visitors were so keen that they managed to

complete the majority of the assault course themselves, before the PTI noticed! At the end of the competition, in which the incessant rain did not dampen the spirits of the competitors in any way, the Regiment and visitors formed up for a church parade, followed by the prize giving.

During the parade, the Regiment was addressed by the Brigade Commander, **Brig Hughes**, who congratulated all those present on their tremendous efforts; by **Mr Nicholas Playne**, the Master of the Worshipful Company of Drapers, to whom the Regiment is affiliated; and by **Mr Gerald Garnett**, the Master of the Worshipful Company of Armourers and Braziers, to whom 68 Sig Sqn are affiliated.

After the parade and prize-giving, the Regiment and visitors enjoyed a splendid lunch in the field, after which the visitors departed, and Headquarters got on with the more routing task of taking down the tentage and packing up the camp.



Camp Visitors Day – the Worshipful Company of Drapers (L-R): Hon Col – Vice Adam Dalton; Mr Playne; Lt Col Turner; Mr Lang

70 (EY) SIGNAL SQUADRON - CHELMSFORD AND HARLOW

Sqn Comd	**Maj Simon Palmer TD**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Paul Humphreys**

OPERATION PALATINE

The Squadron wish an enjoyable, safe and interesting tour on Op Palatine to **Sig Natacha Brown**. We look forward to hearing from her during her tour, and hearing the 'war stories' on her return.

CONGRATULATIONS

The Squadron congratulates **SSgt Kirk Humphries** on being awarded the 'Wilkinson Cup' at Annual Camp. The cup is awarded to the SNCO who, in the opinion of the CO, has made the greatest contribution to the Regiment over the previous year. Well done!



An exhausted team from 70 Squadron



Sig Natacha Brown hands over the cheque to residents at Trueloves

TRUELOVES CHARITY PRESENTATION

Members of 881 Sig Tp, based in Chelmsford, visited the Trueloves Home for physically and mentally handicapped young people. The visit ended with the presentation of a cheque for £216 which was presented on behalf of the squadron by **Sig Natacha Brown**, prior to her deployment on Op Palatine.

ANNUAL CAMP 1999

Annual Camp began with a squadron deployment on a Comms Exercise on which military skills were also tested. The second phase of Annual Camp began with a coach trip from Chelmsford to Warcop, arriving at midnight, from where the squadron moved straight onto a military skills competition. After a few hours in bashas, the teams moved around a series of testing stands in an extremely demanding competition organised by the RSM. The event ended with a TACFT and assault course competition, at which our Annual Camp visitors were able to see us being put through our paces.



Sig Gemma Cambron thinks hard for the theory test
Cpl Colin Cavanagh thinks it's easy

The third phase, which was also very popular, was the Adventurous Training Phase, held in the Lake District and based at Halton Camp. The squadron took part in hill walking, canoeing, mountain biking, rock climbing and abseiling. At the start of camp, the CO challenged everybody to 'do something you have never done before'. By the end of camp, almost everybody had achieved this several times over. It was a great way to end camp – we are looking forward to Scotland next year.

265 (KCLY) SIGNAL SQUADRON
BEXLEYHEATH AND BRIGHTON

Sqn Comd	**Maj Hugh Robertson**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Keith Wrate**

ANNUAL CAMP

Well the time had finally come to depart on the last camp of the millennium, so it seemed obvious that it should be attacked in true Sharpshooter fashion, with a ying a yang and a skippidy do. Congratulations went out to the newly promoted **Cpls Paul** 'Yorkie' **York** and **Barry** 'what do you mean I'm late?' **Morse**. So it was off to RAF Hullavington on Saturday 10 July to RV with the Regiment. An uneventful journey for all concerned apart from the REME FRT, sweeping our route for waifs and strays, arriving before the last two packets. Although this allegedly occurred due to an unnamed Squadron OC making an unscheduled stop en route.

EXERCISE WHITE HORSE

The first week was to be spent on a joint exercise with 31 Sig Regt, a first for all concerned. We would be deploying a NMC (Network Management Centre) and three NCRS stations. The three out dets deployed on Saturday evening to join up with 31 Sig Regt at RAF Lineham, with **Lt Penelope** 'feet first' **Bulley** sent along as a liaison officer. Sunday morning saw all troops deploying on Ex White Horse. The NMC travelling to Nesscliff and the out dets to Altcar, Longmoor and Fulbeck. A fairly uneventful trip apart from finding out that 'turn left' on the route card actually meant 'turn right', a small oversight on behalf of **Sgt Mike** 'the tube' **Warrington** (the Squadron's only qualified colonic irrigator).

The NMC convoy arrived at Nesscliff on what seemed to be the hottest day of the millennium, what joy, and only six antennae to erect. It was at this point that everyone's sense of humour would be put to task. Sterling work was done by all concerned, combining moving the vehicles into the site and erecting the antennae. A special mention goes out for **Sgt Mike Warrington** for his skill in manoeuvring the 1624 gene into a ridiculously minute space, only to be told to move it once it was powered up because the exhaust fumes were causing a hazard. Once on site it was time to firm up friendships with our site hosts from 31 Sig Regt. With all the necessary acquaintances made the serious business of comms had to begin. The NMC crew was relatively inexperienced, consisting of a fair number of recent post-SDR transferees. An interesting cross section of ex

RMP, Engineers and Artillery, the majority of whom had already re-badged prior to camp. This proved to be no hindrance in terms of performance, particularly with the assistance of **Sgt Kev** 'I can do that' **Hancock** (late Royal Engineers and Royal Artillery).

The Exercise passed with few incidents, as everyone became au fait with the shift system, including the shower run into Nesscliff Camp, which was a rare treat, especially if you got some hot water as well. Although the OC, **Maj Hugh** 'Omar' **Robertson** did seem to have a penchant for Middle Eastern impressions, much to the amusement of **SSM Keith** 'Snoozy' **Wrate**. There was further embarrassment for the command of 884 Sig Tp, **Capt Penny** 'Auntie' **Wood** and **SSgt Stu** 'short fuse' **McHenery** when they found out that one of their recent transferees, **Cpl Chris** 'Scouse' **Smith**, who had been training with them for a number of months, did in fact not hail from Brighton but from Liverpool. (This seems a little strange as he sounds like Jimmy Corkhill, from Brookside). So a jolly good exercise was had by one and all, and we would be home in time for tea and cakes.

The majority of the squadron had congregated on the last night of the Exercise at Yardley Chase, ready for the big push back to Bexleyheath. The move back was almost uneventful. Everything had been going smoothly until the Sqn 2IC, **Capt Keith** 'Streaky' **Duffy-Penny**, who had gone on the advance party to Bexleyheath received a rather disturbing phone call. The caller was a certain **Sig Simon** 'Service Station' **Regan** calling to inform the 2IC that he was still at Toddington Services and that all green fleet appeared to have left. Mobile phones then came into their own in true Royal Signals style. The 2IC managed to get hold of the offending Detachment Commander, who shall remain nameless, and who by now was an hour's drive away from Toddington, to ask if he had **Sig Regan** in tow. There then followed an embarrassing silence followed by 'Oh F*** !'. The situation was then remedied, by which time the whole Squadron seemed to know what had happened. (proving that rumour control comms were as good as ever). Once back at Bexleyheath it was on with the glamorous task of CES checks for NATO.

REGIMENTAL PATROL COMPETITION

Friday evening eventually saw us depart for Warcop for the long awaited and trained for Patrol Comp. The Team Captains' stress levels were noticeably up on the Richter Scale. They were all hoping that their team would be the one to help the Squadron retain this most coveted trophy. A long coach journey saw us arrive at Warcop at 0300 on Saturday morning, ready for an 0530am start. The troops were dispatched to their basha area for a well-earned kip. The competition commenced at 0730hrs and involved a variety of stands including NBC, First Aid, extracting a casualty under fire, map reading, vehicle recovery, naval general knowledge, AFV recognition, intro to the assault course and an Operation .

Warcop produced its normal local weather system for the day, giving us a taster of sun, wind and rain. All Squadron teams participated with the now infamous high spirits, smiles and general sarcasm. Saturday evening had all teams completing a night navex, with all competitors safety tucked up in bed by 2359. Sunday saw the whole Squadron participate in the all-new singing and dancing TACFT, which everyone successfully completed in the drizzle. The assault course race then followed for all teams.

The Prize giving ceremony followed the Regimental Church Parade. It was an extremely tense moment as the scores were displayed. Out of the ten teams in the competition, the Squadron's four teams were all in the top seven, with 887 Tp first and 884 Tp second overall. A great result for the Squadron and congratulations go out to all competitors with a worthy result for all the pre-competition work done by all teams. The winning team captain, **Lt Penny** 'feet first' **Bulley**, was rendered speechless (a first!!) by the result.



The winning patrol competition team from 887 Tp (L-R): from back - LCpl Keeble, Sgt Pryke, Lt Bulley, Cpl Wilton, LCpl Eyers, LCpl French, Sig Hibberd, Cpl York, LCpl Waldmeyer, LCpl Risley

The Squadron now had to wait patiently for the coaches to take us to Halton Camp. The main party departed leaving eleven lost souls of the Squadron hierarchy at Warcop, as there was not enough room on the coach. The extra two hours at Warcop were killed by playing Frisbee with a plate, where **Cpl Chris** 'Scouse' **Smith** showed off his prowess with his flipping plate routine, an obvious sign of a misspent youth.

BLACKPOOL

The day off was spent on the coast at Blackpool, the least said the better. The Sqn enjoyed many a hostelry along the Golden Mile with some interesting stories coming out, mostly unprintable.

ADVENTURE TRAINING

The second week of camp was to be spent adventure training combining kayaking, mountain biking, rock climbing, abseiling and mountain walking.

Kayaking - The morning got off to a great start when we met our coach driver for the day, the best Freddie Starr look-a-like in the northern hemisphere(apart from Freddie Starr), with a wit to match. The coach journey to Ullswater flew by, mainly due to watching Con Air on video and taking in the coach driver's comments on other road users. On arrival, it was time to don wet suits, which in true military fashion were all either too big or too small, or for the fashion conscious just not the right colour. That done it was time to select a kayak, which was not too tricky as they were all the same size, shape and colour. Unfortunately, **Cpl Pete** 'Haystacks' **Allsop** was unable to find a kayak big enough to fit his frame, so he would have to sit this one out. There was the normal cross section of abilities ranging from **SSM Keith Wrate** in the 'should I really be here category' to a few highly competent kayakers. As expected the day started off at a rather sedate pace and became a mutiny on the high seas by the end of play. Most participants receiving a ducking before



LCpl Kelly Cloughton hitches a lift from SSgt Jim Swain

they had finished. The journey back became interesting when **Sig Liz** 'Essex girl' **Blaber** chose Scream as the video choice for the journey, which rendered hardly an open eye in the house. The remainder of the adventure training activities will be reported on in the next issue.

887 TROOP NOTES

Why is it that you hurl yourself over an assault course, suffer chemical attacks, leopard crawl through streams, and on your last legs, casevac the heaviest man in the Regiment over 300m in a poncho just so that you can put your hands on a piece of silverware? Also why is it that you find it necessary to wear it on you head, fill it with cheap champagne, and run around the parade square shouting, 'We won the cup, we won the cup….' as if it wasn't blatantly obvious in the first place. Well all the answers lie with 887 Tp who set out to win the Regimental patrol competition on Annual Camp. 'It all comes down to team work and a sense of humour,' stated the Paddy with a mission, **Lt Penny Bulley**, who enforced a strict 'laugh in the face of danger' mentality upon the Troop. This was tested to the full by **LCpl Sharon Risley** who failed to see the purpose of crawling through mud and water muttering, 'This is **** ridiculous,' as she pulled herself through the stream. The support came from **Sgt Dave Pryke**, whose catch phrase, 'No bovver,' meant that he was given all the jobs no-one else wanted. The humour came from **Cpl Paul York** who was full of one-liners when the going got tough. Congratulations to **LCpl Graham French** who celebrated his birthday being pushed to the limits of exhaustion and dining out on compo. Then you need someone who knows what they are doing. Enter **Cpl Andy Wilton**, who can reverse a trailer through a forest and out the other side, parking it with an inch to spare on both sides in a sentry box if necessary. Then there was **LCpl Sue Waldmeyer** who had a filing cabinet full of revision notes in her ammo pouch and **Sig Tim Hibberd** who can identify the variant of a BMP by the right hand panel bolt of the foot plate. **LCpl Adrian Keeble** provided the brawn and **LCpl Sean Eyers** – well he was the all-round good egg. All in all the recipe for success. In case anyone was in any doubt; 'We won the cup, we won the cup…..'

NEWS FROM THE SQUADRONS

1 (ROYAL BUCKINGHAMSHIRE YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON (SPECIAL COMMUNICATIONS)

Sqn Comd **Maj David Raleigh**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Dave Scott**

As the last *Wire* Notes were going to press, the TA Centre was awash with people and vehicles deploying on various operational and exercise tasks. Most are back now, for a spot of summer leave, ready for the next round of deployments. The main focus for activity was Ex Global Lynx 1, which saw the SC Course and some TA deploy to Cyprus (see below). Not long after this Exercise was another highly successful TA Bounty weekend, run by **SSgt Poole** at Lydd – not too many members of the Squadron were anxious to try the new TA CFT, but most survived. In between, there has been considerable effort by the Recruiting Team, with displays at various local events. Some of the newer trainees have passed their recruits course, and numbers are creeping upwards towards the 110% target. The Honorary Colonel, **Sir Lawrence Verney**, was dined out in style at Bletchley Park on 17 July, along with **WO2 (FofS) Ian Toft**. **Sir Lawrence** has been a loyal supporter of the Squadron and we wish him all the best. **WO2 (YofS) Paul** 'Ginge' **Willimont** was finally dined out in style on 14 August, along with **Sgt John** 'JD' **Denison** and **Cpl Ian Kennedy**.



WO2 Paul 'Ginge' Willimont, who has retired after 24 years service, much of it as a Special Communicator

The SC Course finished on 9 July, and the four survivors have now been posted in, and two have deployed on SC operations already. A Recruiting Tour for next year will have already started by the time this is published. The current list of locations and dates is as follows:

4 October	Brawdy
7 October	York
22 November	Herford
23 November	Krefeld.

If you are a Tele Op (Tg)/Comms Op RS or Technician, interested in joining the Corps' elite communicators and enjoy a challenge, see your Adjt or phone the Squadron YofS on (9)4240 8516 for details. The following article may give you a flavour of this year's course.

SPECIAL COMMUNICATIONS TRAINING
by LCpl Lee 'Eric' Kemp

It's mid-January and 14 bemused people arrive at Bletchley TA Centre, half of them volunteers and half having been volunteered; all for a course we know very little about. A quick brief sheds no more light, start times, encouragement and little else. Following this is the 28-mile journey to St George's Bks, Bicester, a deserted wasteland in deepest Oxfordshire. Taken twice a day this journey becomes nauseatingly familiar for most of us except for **Cpl Doobs** 'Grandpa Simpson' **Rodgers** who hasn't stayed awake for more than 500 yards yet.

On the Monday morning 14 become 15 as the immortal **Sig Terry Flook** arrives spouting his usual car trouble excuse. As the two weeks progress names and faces become familiar, as do failures in typing, Morse and Murray Code. Extra skills training each evening helps but the high standards still seem a long way off. The weekend presents an initiative exercise. Some do better than others, some of us have to beg for scoff and digs though, but 12 hours walking finally secures accommodation for myself and **Cpl Kev** 'I'm not tight really' **Heaton,** a £200-a-night suite no less, ongoing building work notwithstanding. The final challenge consists of command tasks, mountain bikes, hills, a dunking in the canal, Pythagoras' theorem and very sore bums (from the bikes). After final skills and final drinks, **Terry Flooks** infamous parrot joke will be remembered by Bicester's inhabitants for generations to come. Those selected on the Friday go home jubilant, tempered with disappointment for those deemed unsuitable. After four unexpected weeks back at our units the blessed (or cursed) eight return to Bletchley to start the Special Communications course. Day One, Week One, still no clear picture of what to expect, apart from the ubiquitous skills tests. The course begins with revision of things we already know (apparently) comsec, electrical safety, and batteries to a level we haven't done since training and yet more skills. Slowly we are introduced to some of the equipment and procedures used in special comms. Three weeks into the course the Squadron triples in size as people return from Exercise in Florida, most of them are gone again within a couple of weeks. As ever curiosity spurs you on, but still the skills standards seem incredibly high. Slowly things appear to be coming together. Having Cable and Wireless directly over the road doesn't help when you're having a bad day, but the course daddy **Sgt Jim Coombs** helps knock some sense into you (then takes your dinner money).

We are now at week eleven having just completed the first Exercise. The remaining deployed to either Preston or Thorney Island. The Exercise was indeed difficult but the ability to work independently and unsupervised is a highly prized asset of the Squadron and we were given a great deal of freedom to hang ourselves should we so choose. Putting theory into practice made a great change from nine weeks in the classroom, as was learning that you can put eight antennas on a couple of PU12s. The intervening four weeks before final skill tests disappear very quickly, with five of us left at this point as **Cpl Al Parker** decided to part ways after the Exercise. It was probably for the best as there's only so many times you can sneak lemonade into your drinks before somebody rumbles you. The tests themselves are extremely nerve-wracking with only four of the remaining five passing. The skill standards do appear to be so high as to be almost unachievable but it is in fact quite unusual for anyone to fail because of them. You do get plenty of time during the course to practice so don't be put off applying purely because of the skills. So it's down to four for the final Exercise in Cyprus. The Exercise was difficult and we were put under pressure accordingly. The very last part of the course involved four days R and R, diving, lazing around Waterworld in Aiya Napa, watersports and a football match against 259 Sig Sqn. Everybody played well but we all paled in comparison to **SSgt** 'Deano 'The Cat' **Poole** whose display of goal-keeping amazed all those present and led us all to ask the question - 'Who are you and what have you done with the real Deano?' So six months on and it's all over for the fortunate four. At last the secret's out and it's definitely worth it! Three of us are disappearing over the next few weeks; the fourth is awaiting vetting.

(LCpl Kemp is currently deployed on a Special Communications operation overseas.)

2 (CITY OF DUNDEE) SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

RECRUIT/TRAINING TEAM
OC Trg Team **WO2 Gary Ritchie**
Team SSgt **SSgt Lance T. G.**

There have been a lot of changes taking place within the Squadron recently one being the change of Recruit Tp to the Squadron Training Team. With the changes came the obvious change of personnel, this meant **Sgt Heather Lawrie, Cpl Bob Penman** and **LCpl Nicky Randall** all returned to Comms Tp. The new members to the Team are **SSgt Lance T.G, Sgt** 'Smudge' **Smith** and **Cpl** 'Tosh' **McIntosh**.

The last course the Recruiting team had the pleasure of running started 27-28 March with the Assessment weekend. Ten potential recruits started this weekend but after a selection of physical and mental tests the Squadron were left with eight recruits ready to start their Phase 1 training. The next phases of the Recruit training were two military training weekends and a field-craft weekend. On completion of these weekends the number had been reduced to six recruits. Through a lot of hard work and determination all six passed Phase 1 training and received their cap badges from the Ops Officer, **Capt Bob Davidson** 1 June 1999.

Best recruit for the course went to **Rct Scott Frazer**. Now all six Recruits were ready to attempt Phase 2 training held at the Royal School of Signals. The first three to attempt the course were **Rct Billy Naismith, Rct Scott Frazer** and **Rct Jamies Thompson**. The other three will be attempting the course later on in the year.

The three recruits started their Phase 2 training at Blandford on 5 June. Here the recruits continued with the Military Training previously taught on the Squadron Recruit Training Weekends held in Dundee. All three passed the course with **Sig Scott Fraser** receiving two awards for Best Endeavour and Best in the Field Soldier. On completion of the Two-week course the recruits returned to the Squadron as "Trained Soldiers" and ready to start Squadron Trade Training. Now that the new team has been in place a few weeks they are looking forward to the opportunity to run a Recruit course in October.



(L-R): Sig Billy Naismith, Sig Scott Fraser-Best Endeavour Best Field Soldier, Sig James Thompson

ANNUAL CAMP 1999 20 JUNE-4 JULY
DUNDEE SIGNALLERS HEAD FOR WELSH HILLS

On 20 June, 67 members of the Squadron deployed to Kinmel Park Training Camp Ryhl, North Wales for our two week annual camp.

Week One saw the recently transferred members of 117 (H) Plant Squadron RE undergo an intense week of trade training to retrain them as B3 Tele Op (Radio) and the remainder complete the data module of their Tele Op (TG) training. After six days of death by PowerPoint all students achieved good pass results and eagerly await their first field deployment. Congratulations go to **Cpl Purves** and **LCpl McDonald** on their selection for promotion and to **LCpl McDonald** and **Sig Wright** on winning Top Student awards in their respective trade groups.

Week Two saw the members of the Squadron head for the hills to take part in a variety of arduous training activities ranging through Hill-walking, Mountain Biking, Rock-Climbing to Gorge Walking. Our sympathy goes out to **LCpl Gary McAllister** who had enough of the mountain biking and decided to somersault down the hill dislocating his shoulder in the process much to the amusement of the rest of the group (a 6.2 for technical ability). Judging by the post camp questionnaires a good time was had by all. Long may it continue.



LCpl McDonald receiving his Top Student Award from the OC, Maj E. M. Blyth TD

20 ARMOURED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (200)

Sqn Comd **Maj Iain Standen**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) Terry Crane**

The few months before deployment on Op Palatine have seen some new faces and a few well earned promotions. Welcome to **Maj Iain Standen** who relieves **Capt Nick O'Kelly** of command, not to mention pay of higher rank! Congratulations to **Capt (QM) Mick Bohanon**, WO2 **(RQMS) Chris Drew** and **Sgt**'s **Del Kleppang**, 'Scouse' **Peters** and **Steve Griffiths** on selection for promotion. Celebrations also for **WO1 (RSM) Terry Crane** on his selection for commission. Finally congratulations from all the Squadron to **Sgt Steve Mayle** and his wife **Lucy** on the latest addition to their household, baby **Daniel**.

JOINT SERVICES ALPINE MEET (JSAM) - *by Lt Paul Randell*

JSAM 1999 was held in Lauterbrunnen Switzerland and also provided a valuable training opportunity for both main and junior teams of the Joint Services BSKE 2000 Kangchenjunga Expedition. As a reserve for the junior team whose objective is the 6700m Ramtang peak in eastern Nepal it provided a chance to meet members of both teams, refresh some alpine skills and bag a few peaks. Whilst the rock gods of the main team scaled the north face of the Eiger and other 'trifling' routes in preparation for their attempt at one of the worlds highest mountains we mortals started with simulated crevasse rescues from a treacherous grass bank in the camp site. This over, we heading into the hills for six days of climbing, team bonding and instruction. Due to the range of abilities within the junior team instruction began slowly and the routes chosen relatively simple. Early starts with breakfast at 4am proved enough of a challenge and on reaching a hut, normally in the early afternoon, beds were soon full of snoring climbers. The trip ended with an ascent of the 4273m Finsteraarhorn, the highest peak in the Bernese Oberland. The week proved immensely enjoyable and also served as a tantalizing taster for the actual expedition to Nepal.

EXERCISE MAILED COMRADE 1999

Six o'clock in the morning, Pietermaritzburg South Africa, a cannon shot then 56 miles of gruelling road down the ominously named valley of a thousand hills. Welcome to the Comrades Marathon the largest Ultra Marathon in the world, and somewhere towards the back of the 14,000 starting runners four of 20 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (200)'s finest. A sanity check at this point would surely have failed! So began the end of Ex Mailed Comrade 1999. The Comrades Marathon, first run in 1921 by 34 friends to commemorate their comrades who had fallen in the Great War, is now an annual event attracting the finest ultra runners from around the world. The 56 mile route takes the competitors between Pietermaritzburg and Durban, the direction alternating each year. All entrants must have completed a pre-qualifying marathon in less than 4.5 hours and on race day a cut of time of 11 hours is enforced with sometimes heartbreaking results for exhausted runners.

Preparation - Due to Squadron commitments training time was (as usual!) minimal, however all four members of the team had completed the Lanyard Trophy providing valuable endurance training. **Cpl Dex McFaul** REME had also completed the Comrades previously, providing invaluable information of both South Africa and the race itself. So after completing a weeks maintenance exercise with 12 hour working days, mixed with last minute attempts to scrounge extra funds, deal with passport emergencies and find the squadron running kit it was with great relief that we finally departed for South Africa.

Visits - Johannesburg's bustling airport soon gave way to townships and open veldt stretching on to the horizon. The drive to Durban took us through Pietermaritzburg giving a glimpse of some of the unnervingly hilly terrain we would be running in a scant six days. After a few detours around some of the more interesting and rundown parts of town we emerged unscathed at our hotel and after a quick run headed into town to sample Friday night in Durban. Several beers later it was time for a taxi home and **Sig Stu McDade**'s quote of the trip to a confused taxi driver 'Barker Kasserne bitte!'

Suitably hydrated the team spent the following days mixing acclimatisation runs along the stunning beachfront with visits to various local sights. After touring Durban town centre with its colonial architecture, palm trees and the military museum we headed up country to the Tala game reserve. Sightings of local wildlife were immediate, the game animals were remarkably relaxed and we were able to creep the car to within metres of giraffe, zebra, warthog not to mention a few unidentified species. After a pleasant tea break in the park lodge overlooking the majority of the park we set out to locate the hippo and reclusive white rhino. A tour of the various lakes led to sightings of two families of hippos. Rhinos, however, proved more difficult. Perseverance paid of and the eagle eyes of our REME contingent spotted deep in the bush a very well cammed rhino. After some successful stalking we managed to get within camera shot. Registration in Durban's exhibition centre soon gave us a clearer idea of the scale of the event. Acres of

stands dispensing the latest miracle energy bar or drink stood alongside vendors of just about every kind of running equipment manufacturer. Several hours of wandering paid off in the form of bags of freebies, a free sport watch however eluded us despite numerous attempts at the hourly draw. Buying the bus tickets to the start line brought more bad news, a 3am pickup time for the 6am start. Morale was soon restored by heading to the physiotherapy stand for the consolation prize of a sports massage by two of the hundreds of third year physio students who had been bussed in from around the country.

The Race - Race day came all to soon and following the 2am alarm call and quick breakfast it was across town to the pickup point for the bus ride to Pietermaritzburg. The streets around the start line soon began to fill with runners shivering in the rather fresh morning air. As we made our way to the start, struggling to keep together amid 14,000 runners, a PA system started the entertainment with, predictably, the Chariots of Fire theme. The atmosphere was electric with fellow runners enquiring about where we were from, whether we were enjoying South Africa and wishing us good luck for the next 56 miles. At 6am exactly the start cannon ended all the waiting – this was it! The hours and miles swiftly passed amid the spectacular scenery and conversation with fellow runners. Fluid and food stops were frequent and each sponsored by a different company. The best was undoubtedly that sponsored by Liquorice Allsorts, complete with a Berty Basset dispensing handfuls of sweets, a welcome break from bananas and chocolate. Our initial team plan of finishing together was soon overrun by differing paces and 'pitstop' timings. The initial split of three and one soon became four individuals with **Lt Paul Randell** and **Cpl Dex McFaul** later reunited for the last few hours of the race. A public bank holiday and the incredible popularity of the race meant virtually the entire route was lined with families complete with barbie, deck chairs and beers, all shouting encouragement. The finish when it finally came was as spectacular as the start, winding round a packed Durban City stadium. The leading runners had completed the course in 5hrs 30 mins and were probably long gone but hundreds were still crossing the finish line around the ten to eleven hour mark. Once finished with medal in hand we sat in the international tent supping a well earned beer to watch the horrifying spectacle as exhausted runners pushed themselves to the very limit and often beyond as they try to beat the eleven hour cut off. Soon a procession of stretcher cases snaked passed us and out the stadium. It had been a hell of a day! On exiting the stadium we were greeted by the sight of an empty taxi rank. With our hotel some 2ks distant improvisation was called upon. A polite knock on the window of a spectator driving out the car park gave a ride home for three of our number. The Sandhurst motto of *'Serve to Lead'* wobbled but held and **Lt Paul Randell** started the slow hobble towards the beachfront.

Recovery and Thanks - After a well earned nights sleep our faithful Datsun Taz headed north along some very dubious 'motorway' to Johannesburg, taking in Rorkes Drift on the way. The battle immortalised in the film Zulu was well explained in the small museum, giving life to some of the heroism displayed in the desperate battle. After a hobble round the site of the hospital to loosen stiff legs and a change of rally driver it was back on the road to the airport. The in-flight movie proved a poor second to more sleep disturbed only by screams in the night from **Sig Stu McDade** as his rather tender bare feet received nine stone of stiletto clad stewardess at 2am. Sadly it was no rest for the wicked on our return. No sooner had our feet touched the ground than we were whisked into a lecture hall to start the first day of UNTAT training prior to the Squadron's forthcoming Op Palatine tour. One last surprise was still to come however. **Sig** 'Smudge' **Smith** on marching smartly forward to receive what he thought would be Squadron colours instead come away with his first tape. Congratulation Smudge! The team would like to thank everyone who assisted with advice, funding and administration, but especially the Royal Signals Games Club without whose help we would have missed this opportunity of a lifetime.



Lt Paul Randell and Cpl McFaul (finally) cross the finish line

FINISHING TIMES

Sig Ian Smith	9hrs 44 min
Cpl Dex McFaul	10 hrs 24min
Lt Paul Randell	10 hrs 24min
Sig Stu McDade	10 hrs 44min

ALPHA TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt Rhidian Jones**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt** 'Jack' **Payne**

UNTAT TRAINING - *by Cpl John Reardon*

With the pending deployment to Bosnia the Squadron carried out UNTAT training in Sennelager. The next few days were hectic, parading at 0530hrs to draw weapons then travelling to Sennelarger for the day's activities. For some of the pads it was déjà vu as they had already travelled from Sennelager to parade at the armoury. By the end of the package the Squadron had had an enjoyable time (especially the shadow puppets across from the cookhouse!) and a lot of new and valuable skills had been learnt.

BRAVO TROOP - *by Sig 'Harry' Ramsden*

Tp Comd	**Lt Paul Randell**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Jim Crabb**

Bravo Tp say goodbye to **Cpl** 'Mario' **Plested** and **LCpl** 'Roller Boy' **Lewis**. Welcome to **Cpl Ray Till, Sigs** 'Mrs' **Armour,** 'Lurch' **Lewis** and 'Nathanial' **Fearn**. Welcome back to **Sig** 'Espanol' **Stillie**, congratulations to **Cpl** 'Desperate Dan' **Bailey** on his selection for promotion and also **Sigs** 'Mr and Mrs' **Armour** on their marriage.

THE MOVE

Prior to summer we were tasked with the first phase of moving the squadron from Barker Barracks to Antwerp Barracks Sennelager. The move went smoothly and the aim was achieved with the short time we had to do it. This coincided with the move of vehicles and freight to Emden so we could ship them to Bosnia. This resulted in **LCpl** 'Gath' **Moss** moving the Squadron bar all by himself – well done you! This done the Troop took time out to help Robert Browning School paint their playground ready for the new term. Artistry awards go to **Sig** 'Harry' **Ramsden** for a Humpty Dumpty that will doubtless cause children psychological problems and **Sig Rachel Reeve** for painting herself.



Sig Rachel 'Picasso' Reeve

MAINTENANCE TROOP – *by LCpl Trott*

Tp Comd	**Capt Chris Crowther**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Mark Yates**

Again its been a hectic few months for the Troop. We say goodbye to **LCpl Steve Hall, Cpl** 'Geek' **Peek** and **Sig** 'Billie' **McDade** who all go to seek their fortunes amongst the civvies. Also farewell to **LCpl Daz Orminston** and **Sgt** 'I'll break your computer' **Sanderson**. Hello's to **LCpl Daley**, his wife and their new baby, **Sig** 'PTI' **Phillips** and **Sgt Brown** who arrives from Blandford. Finally a big thank you to **Sig** 'Zombie' **Albiston** for making the summer Troop Party so colourful an event.



4 ARMOURED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (204)

OC	**Maj A. H. Campbell-Black**
RSM	**WO1 (RSM) D. W. Craig**

PAPA TROOP

Tp Comd	**2Lt Dave Hill**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Norm Finnegan**

Well it's been a busy few months in the Balkans. We have finally made it into Kosovo after what seems a lifetime sat on a training area in Macedonia. As with most things the plans were changing right up to the last minute before we left for the border. Papa Tp was to be the 'small' alternate headquarters that would control the move from the border crossing point. As we set off we were a 28 vehicle convoy with 80 pax, small by anyone's reckoning! As with all 'exercises' it rained just to make life that little more comfortable. The guys enjoyed cramming staff officers and all their kit into the back of the panzers and seeing them sleep between the tracks as we had no space for the creature comforts.

We left the border and set off for Pristina, the final destination for the headquarters and the start of a long battle for real-estate with KFOR, guess who won? This left us in the remains of a very battered Serb Army barracks, with no water source and once again a lot of tents. It's drawing to a close now and the guys are all looking forward to the move back to Osnabruck and a well-earned break. We would like to thank all the following augmentees for their hard work and support during their attachment to the troop: **Cpl Ridgers, LCpls Black, Gobie, Tiplady** and **Whitfield** and **Sig Brown** all from 1 Div and **Sigs Burrell** and **Bishnu** from 30 Sig Regt.

As always there has been a steady move of people in and out of the Troop. Firstly we welcome **LCpl Dave Dowson** from 8 Bde, **Sig Grant Mockett** and his family fresh from Blandford and last but by no means least, all the way from Oscar Tp **Cpl Nigel Stiff**, oh and congratulations on the promotion. We also say a fond farewell to **Cpl Steve Heywood** who's off to civvy street, we wish you and the family all the best for the future, **LCpl Lee Slater** off to JCUNI, **LCpl Vinney Walsh** and **Sig Paul Henderson**, both off to 3 Div and also **LCpl** 'Woz' **Wright** and his wife **Denise** who are off to 11 Sig Regt, all the best when the baby arrives. Lastly congratulations to **LCpls Tim Stanton** and **Neil McElhinney** on their recent promotion.

OSCAR TROOP- *by Sigs Brierley, Ashmore and LCpl Mallaburn*

Tp Comd	**2Lt Paul McTurk**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Ollie Oliver**

After four months we were given the orders for the move north into Kosovo and with a clear objective insight it helped in giving us something to concentrate our minds on other than the heat and the food, at least for the duration of the move. Papa Tp moved first, up to the border where the peace talks had been held. On D-Day they took control and with our sixty-eight vehicle convoy we started the 'wacky races' with support from two AH-64 Apache helicopters. The move through the narrow valley into Kosovo that had been secured by the Paras and Ghurkas went very well but soon after this we came head to head with a Serb convoy that was heading the other way. **2Lt Paul McTurk** dismounted from the lead vehicle to try his textbook negotiation skills out for real. He was confronted with angry retreating Serbs waving their weapons in the air insisting that they had priority on this road. The dilemma was that we were not to leave the concrete for fear of landmines. Eventually after much waving of weapons and hand gestures the Serbs gave way and pulled over allowing us to continue. With only one breakdown it was proof that black nasty tape and zip ties can keep even the oldest vehicles running. Our first HQ location had been well recce'd by **Sig Glen** 'Wingnut' **Hislop** and **Capt Sue Barnard**. It was an old paper factory with rotting paper everywhere but it was the only area large enough on hard standing. As we occupied it gunfire came from the neighbouring Serb village and as per SOPs we ignored it and carried on! The rotting paper later proved to be the passports and personal documents of thousands of Albanians kicked out or killed over the last year. Luckily our stay was brief and we moved up to our final location to take over from a very tired Papa Tp who'd been in control for a whole week, poor lambs. Gladly this location was a slight improvement on Macedonia. The good news is that we should finish this tour living in a building since we have taken over the Pristina University Building. Congratulations to **LCpls Lee** 'Rotten Hugs' **Peacock** and **Jane Calderwood** on their promotions. **Sig Shaun** 'Melt-Boy' **Brierley** on the birth of his son **Patrick**. Goodbye to **Sig Gaz** 'Big Issue' **Forrester** to Civ Div, thanks for the beers. Many thanks go to the augmentees that were essential in helping us move successfully. To **Cpl Fowler, Sig Payne, LCpl Lannie, Sig Burrell, Sig Brooks, Cpl Smith** many thanks, we couldn't have done it without you.

OPERATION REASSURANCE - *by 2Lt Paul McTurk*

After four Serbs had been shot dead in the mountains to the East of Pristina the Household Cavalry Regiment (HCR) asked for assistance from other units to provide an added presence on the ground to prevent further incidents. Twelve of us deployed with two ASV436 armoured vehicles into the mountains to be met by a troop of HCR. Until now we had been thoroughly briefed not to leave main roads for fear of landmines but as soon as we approached the area the road turned to dust. I had a trace map of proven routes so this was not a great risk but it was just the start of a culture shock for us.

We occupied a small farmyard as it was getting dark, very quiet area it felt a lot like Wales. Next as I covered the early morning guard an eclectic mix of animals paraded through the yard. Each of them in turn tripping over guy ropes and waking the troops inside. Pigs and dogs fought and cows did.... their stuff all over the place. A little old lady quickly followed them with a big stick shouting in Serbian at the animals. I had thought the village was deserted so the appearance of Grandma was a bit of a surprise. It turned out, through our interpreter **Sgt Smith**, that she had survived the Germans so she wasn't going to let a bunch of KLA scare her away.

Our main role was to patrol the Serb areas of the valley, but since these were almost deserted we progressed on to the Albanian area to the North. Many families met us with dreadful tales of the VJ/MUP Army who had occupied their houses for months while they lived in the woods. They gave us coffee and any food they could spare, refusing to take no for an answer. On one visit to a Serb village where two old men had been recently murdered we found that the houses had been recently looted and the farm animals slaughtered and hung by their necks on the fences. A very large dog that was clearly frightened had us patrolling with our bayonets out at the ready. As we left the village we set up an Instant VCP. The first vehicle we stopped had been slowing down clearly taking an interest in the Serb villages. We had no evidence to suspect they we causing trouble so we released them. The next day the same people in the car had their heads blown off in a booby-trapped Serb house that they were trying to loot. After two weeks the first of many Serb families returned to the village. I had to return to the Brigade HQ early but left **Sgt Hanson** in charge with **Sgt Smith** RAMC as his interpreter. A special mention must go to **LCpl Mark Neillings** who personally proved that a panzer becomes a 16 Tonne roller-skate if you remove both tracks at the same time whilst on the side of a hill. Under the watchful eye of **SSgt** 'Tiffy' **Kimber** and **Sgt Quigley**, the LAD and a section of Canadian pioneers have since built a play park in one of the Albanian villages that we regularly patrol.

SUPPORT TROOP

Tp Comd	**Capt (QM) M. Smith MBE**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt P. A. Buckley**

QUARTERMASTERS DEPARTMENT - *by Cpl Rowles*

Well even the Satellite Communication Specialist (Supply) of the Quartermaster's department of the 'Black Rats' had to take part in the Vanguard relief of the Kosovar people. A special deference must be passed on to Ops who have made this tour so engaging and prosaic with such elucidation in their orders. **RQMS** 'I'm off to Dundee University' **Vince McNaught** and **Sgt** 'I'd shoot all of 'em' **Hughes** duly carried out all Ops' orders with alacrity and outright efficiency. To all other QM departments in the Royal Corps, if you need any help in how to pass an LSI in the middle of an Operation in a war zone do not hesitate to call us. With no outside help for four months the department catered for at one stage nearly 700 people. In the midst of all this the new, **RQMS** 'Doz' **Day** walked straight into the LSI 'Welcome'.

One of the worst moments for **Sgt** 'Spike' **Hughes, LCpl Hawksworth** and **Sig** 'Fi' **Francis** were, thanks to 2 AFA's deviousness, told to move out of location with all their equipment within six hours. Fun was had by all. **Sig** 'Jody' **Walker** has been able to show off her ability to understand and comply with military law in an Operational environment. **Sig** 'Fi' **Francis** has taken her sunbathing duties very seriously and deserves a qualification. **Sig** 'Hacker' **Livsey** has astounded as all with his unique computer knowledge with enough said about the computers all having bugs in them now. **Cpl** 'Can I have two hours off each day to study' **Rowles** arrived in theatre two months after everyone else and immediately moved everything around in the QMs department tent. When out of nowhere the skies opened like no other rain storm on this planet and flooded everyone's tent to the extent that camp beds were actually floating out of them. Everything in the QM department's tent was soaked and **Cpl Rowles** was nowhere to be seen. A special mention must go to **Sig Stella Holyland** for all her help whilst she was attached to us in Kosovo.

MOTOR TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT - *by Cpl Jay Allen*

Since moving into Kosovo and Pristina the MT as a whole has been busy at Bde Main in the University and Echelon at the Bread Factory. **Cpl** 'Ginger Brows' **Sirignano** the spearhead of the generators has had the following personnel working with him, **Sig** 'Marlon' **Brandon, Sig** 'Morgs' **Morgan** and **Sig Toby O'Connor, Sig** 'Angry' **Angus** was left holding the fort for the Lineman when **Cpl Allen** returned to echelon as the details NCO. Life at Echelon has been fairly busy with **LCpl** 'Ginger Whinger' **Callander** ensuring that the Bde Generators were always ready although rumour has it that volleyball took second place from time to time. **LCpl** 'Bish' **Bishop** is asking for a posting to the MT Stores after his adventures fitting a Fuel tank to a 16/24 generator and discovered that you should fit the bottom hose before filling the said tank with fuel..... Vehicle servicing is well under way thanks to **LCpl** 'Chalkey' **White** who as just joined the MT from Ireland.

TECHNICAL MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT
by Cpl Bry Brown

The year started well with January 1 to 3 being days off, since then we have been a little bit busy. The Kosovo crisis unfolding on the television, the Squadron made it's preparation to go in. I believe 204 Signal Sqn is the only Air portable Armoured Brigade Headquarters in the British Army.

We deployed to Macedonia and then on to Kosovo. There have been a few changes to the tech department, it started with **Cpl Paul** 'Ginger' **Bapty** who has left us to become a student in Nottingham.The FofS, **SSgt Phil** 'Ginger Ghost' **Johnson** was the next to leave the sinking ship, **Phil** is off to haunt shady places in Blandford. Thanks for the time that you have given the Tech Department.

New arrivals to the section are **WO2 (FofS) Dean** 'Enormous' **Briers, Sgt Mick** 'M M M Bop' **Hanson, LCpl Brian** 'Caldy Bunt' **Saxton, LCpl Martin** 'Bloody' **Gerald, Sig** 'Fish' **Frank** and **Sig** 'Fish' **Stein.**

Congratulations must go to **Sig**'s **Frank** and **Stein** for enraging the **RSM (WO1 Craig)** despite being three inches long and only goldfish. Still in the department are **SSgt Dave** 'Ran you into the ground' **Patrick, Sgt Dave** 'Silverfish' **Covey, Sgt** 'Titch 'whinge' **McGiffen, Cpl Sean Middleton, Cpl Guy** 'Ugly' **Keyworth, Cpl Bry Brown** and finally **Dan** 'Why am I still a LCpl?' **Taylor**. Congratulations **Dan** on your second tape from all in tech workshops. Finally, on a non-tech note, our heartfelt thanks go out to **SSgt Paul** 'Buckzilla' **Buckley** for keeping an eye on our sideburns and our haircuts, when we were too busy to remember them ourselves. Zilla, we are forever in your debt. NO really, Cheers.

7 ARMOURED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (207)

Sqn Comd **Maj Andy Bristow**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) Colin Milne**

This issue, a series of reports from the Troops' adventure training activities prior to summer block leave. The Squadron now looks forward to Cast, Ulan Eagle and Rhino Charge before a change of emphasis for whatever next year may bring.

THE CORPS REGATTA - *by LCpl 'Biff' Bithell*

On 4 July 1999, a 'specialist' team from the Squadron departed Hohne bound for Kiel. The team consisted of **Maj** 'Eric' **Bristow, Cpl Rob Luke, LCpl** 'Biff' **Bithell** and **Sigs Ben Maton**, 'Magic' **McDermott** and 'Jesse' **Jessop**. On arrival, we started loading the boat with the exception of Jesse who was still in weekend mode and who cracked open a beer instead!

The first week was spent on *Quicksilver* - the Corps' yacht in the Baltic - learning the ropes. By the end of the first week, the skipper, **Maj Bristow** was happy with progress - perhaps due to the fact that we were running out of liquid light refreshments. We were then ready to start racing although we still had to wait for the other teams to arrive and to take over our new boat. As soon as we had, we all dived in to get the best sleeping quarters and transferred all our belongings over from *Quicksilver*.

As the racing began, we put into practice what we had learnt. The weather was perfect and the competition fierce but the Squadron managed to win the first couple of races before a series of shorter round the can races at Horsens. This also provided a good chance for **Sig** 'Jesse' **Jessop** to show off his wine waiting skills. After a couple more wins, including in the long overnight race, thanks in part to **Cpl Rob Luke** who is now the Corps novice skipper, we were delighted to discover we had won the regatta overall and were all presented with trophies. All that remains is a big thank you from the Squadron to the organisers and competition (particularly **Maj John** 'Stealth' **Rowley**). Five converted novices will be back for more next year.

EXERCISE ERIKA DIAMOND - *by OCdt Rob Lawrence*

Our week's climbing course in the Harz mountains started with brilliant sunshine, but much like the Germans in the local area, soon became very unpredictable. On arrival at the campsite, we quickly pitched the famous Army Force Ten tents and started a little fire, which soon managed to turn into a towering inferno, or so **2Lt Andy Hill** thought.



Climbing in the Harz Mountains

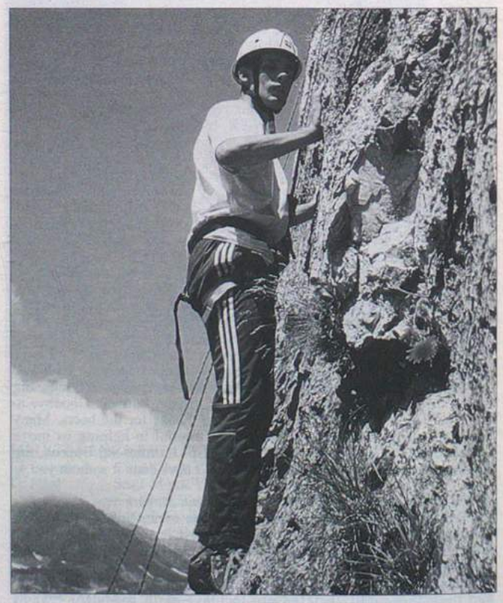
Our first day's training was a great success where everyone learnt the basics of knot tying, even to the point that **Sig Mark Fairley** could tie two figure of eight knots at once - or was he just seeing double? That night whilst relaxing in a commandeered 12x12, we met one of the above mentioned Germans who quickly found himself attached to our two female New Zealand visitors; **2Lt Wendy Wright** and **Cpl Lisa Murray**. However, after he received a cold shoulder we had to resume training in the knowledge that there was no gossip to talk about upon returning to the unit. Various other highlights of the week included **Sig** 'Roy' **Castle**s altitude sickness, **Sig Mark Fairley**'s elegant climbing style, the quickly adopted foetal position and strange Kiwi noises when **Cpl Murray** fell whilst leading and of course **LCpl Si Pereira**'s sense of humour. However, one of the funniest moments was when **Sig Sean Hughes** was told to remove his shorts and go naked whilst having a German sauna. Thanks must go to **Lt Adam Corkery** and **SSgt Dave Sloane** for their instruction and enthusiasm throughout the course which has spurred on an interest in climbing for many of the course participants who are now keen to go on to gain further qualifications.

EXERCISE MARMOTTE DIAMOND
by LCpl 'Pants' Underwood

Join us, the Corkery and Sloane Adventure Training Guides on the adventure of a lifetime. We will take you to Tignes in France in one of our luxury mini-buses including a luxurious overnight stay next to an inspection pit in a Mercedes garage AT NO ADDITIONAL COST and with nature providing a full-on thunderstorm.

Once in Tignes, you'll be driven around and around a few times to get the feel for the place. We offer a number of activities such as rock climbing, where you'll be amazed at your abilities to hold onto a featureless wall, but will no doubt be encouraged by us telling you that there are in-fact 'bombers' and 'jugs' everywhere.

We also have a number of outstanding entertainers such as the two **Steves** who'll have your sides splitting with their witty questions and keen observations. You'll also see the hilarious 'Owl on a rock' impression by **Sig Steve Sharman** and the amazing talent of **Sig** 'Ronnie' **Barker** the snail eater. With great walks, climbing, skiing, weather and company, can you afford to miss out on the adventure of a lifetime?



Climbing in the French Alps

EXERCISE RED JERBOA - *by Sig Chris Nixon*

After months of people dropping out and others wondering whether there were places left, we loaded the minibus and left for Gatwick airport - one that was different in many ways from that of our destination - Sharm El Sheik, Egypt. **2Lt Amy Briggs** and **Sig Phil Green** had to wait to experience the fruits of the Red Sea due to ear trouble and after just a few minutes down, **LCpl Rog** 'I'll have a photo of that' **Mortimer** became the third on the list with a dodgy Lug Hole. The wildlife really was an incredible sight - even just being in the clear, blue water was an eye-opener for those that hadn't dived the seas before. Those that had a fair amount of diving experience included **CSgt Mark Rooke** - our patient instructor, **Capt Jason Gray, Capt Kath Hurley, Capt Kate** 'Only slightly tanned' **Rice, Sgt Rob Allen** - our last minute entrant and **SSgt Steve Roberts** with his pre-historic suitcase. Diving was obviously the main activity on the expedition, however, those that wished an additional activity were not unimpressed with the desert quad biking - amongst others, **LCpl Steve** 'I've got a picture of a turtle' **Livesey, LCpl Ant Oakes** (who incidentally became another victim of the ear infection society) and **Sig Chris** 'I've got my own quad at home, you know!' **Nixon**. The dive sites included Ros Mohamed, Jackson reef, Near Garden and, for the well qualified, the wreck HMS *Thistlegorm* which was a casualty of WW2. The non-*Thistlegorm* divers had a choice of climbing Mount Sinai and seeing the sunrise from the summit or simply indulging in the odd alcoholic beverage or three. I think we all agree that the ten days went too fast and there's already talk of a two week expedition next year.



Diving in the Red Sea

EXERCISE GEEZER DIAMOND - *by SSgt Dave Baddeley*

On 25 June much of Ops/ES Tp went adventure training in Bavaria. On arrival the Troop was split down into three groups with Group 1 really looking forward to the day's walking led by our illustrious leader, **Sgt Jules Thorne**. We parked the bus at the bottom of the Nebelhorn (conveniently some may say) next to the cable car. The shop at the bottom was undoubtedly impressed when six soldiers walked in and decided to kit themselves out in traditional Bavarian hats. This idea was taken one step further when **Sgt Dave** 'I'm considerably richer than thou' **Schofield** bought a walking stick with a bell on it. After a hard day's walking up the Nebelhorn (some 2000m up) we had to retire to the bar for a few of the local Banana Beers. The kayaking was uneventful at first except for the inability of **SSgt Dave Baddeley** to go in a straight line without the addition of a rudder. A special mention ought also to go to **Sig Nikki Thompson** for her impression of the elephant man after an argument with an underwater rock.

Group 3 had more time kayaking due to one of the instructors being sick which meant we were able to gain more experience paddling on rivers (or IN rivers if your name is **Cfn** 'Drillbit' **Cooper**) rather than just practising capsize drills on a lake. All of the extra time spent on the rivers paid off when we were joined by Group 2 (who themselves had an experienced swimmer - **Cpl** 'Yoda' **Holloway**) and went on a 2-day river trip at Garmish with an overnight stay in a log cabin on the American campsite. During the trip we got to paddle on some good technical grade 3 water which enabled us to put into action the skills which we had previously been practising on the calmer water.

Over the week, our instructor, **Lisa** gained herself a little follower who would be by her side whenever possible, charming her with his cheesy one liners and impressing her with his skills! **Cfn** 'Drillbit' **Cooper** even went as far as to capsize every five minutes just to be rescued by the blonde beauty. The week was rounded off with a day of R and R where we all went water skiing. **Cpl** 'Richie' **Brown** proved himself to be a bit of an expert and soon progressed onto the trick-board, amazing us with his leaping starts from the wooden fence at the side of the lake. We were also impressed with **Cpl** 'Yoda' **Holloway**'s uncanny ability to water-ski on his backside! We would like to pass our thanks to **Ray Charlton** and the staff at the Osnabruck lodge for looking after us so well. Top Scoff!



Kayaking in Bavaria

24 AIRMOBILE BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (210)

Sqn Comd **Maj I. Hooper**
RSM **WO2 (RSM) G. Hodgson**

On 16 July, 24 Airmob Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (210) paraded together on the square at Goojerat Barracks for the last time. The backdrop for the OC's address was the vehicles for the Squadron contingent for Op Agricola, bound for Kosovo on 1 August. On 1 September the Brigade re-roles to 16 Air Assault Brigade and with it the Squadron to 16 Air Assault Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (216). The Squadron is already expanding, with a new Troop, C Troop, providing a Parachute Brigade Tac HQ in support of the JRRF Airborne Battlegroup in addition to our existing commitment to support the Lead Aviation Battlegroup. Over the next three months the Squadron faces the twin challenges of preparing for the new Brigade's first exercise, Ex Gryphons Eye, which will see the Squadron parachuting in Brigade Tac and flying in Brigade Main with SH, and committing a Squadron (-) to Kosovo in support of 102 Logistic Brigade. The Airmobile Gryphon's Wings have been laid to rest and replaced with the predatory Eagle. With it will come the best of Airmobile and Airborne worlds to form Air Assault.

EXERCISE LOFOTEN TROLL NORWAY 24 MAY-11 JUNE
by LCpl Scadden

The aim of the expedition was to ascend the highest peak of each of the eight major islands of the Lofoten Islands. These are located some 200 miles within the Arctic Circle, west of Norway. The expedition left Colchester in the early hours of Monday morning on 24 May. We had the privilege of a reliable 16-seat minibus, which broke down en route to Ipswich. However, we finally made our way to Newcastle where we were to take the ferry to Kristiansands in the south of Norway. The night ferry crossing started as we intended to continue. Singing badly, accompanied by **LCpl** 'Ted' **O'Donnell**'s guitar, leering at Scandinavian girls (unless you are one of the statistical 97% we discovered from Glasgow) and the acquisition of a percussion instrument from the cabaret band which was shaped like an orange. There then followed a marathon 27-hour drive through scenic Norway, with various stops, for photos at the point of the Arctic Circle for example, and at every toilet in Norway for **Sig** 'Smudge' **Smith**. No amount of 'diareze' was going to help him. We eventually arrived, by means of another ferry, at Svolvaer; we were now in the Lofoten Islands. Everyone was incredibly excited, especially when we saw the mountains; they looked extremely severe and we realised that this was going to be no easy feat. However, we managed to ascend every peak, with one exception that was in no condition to attempt. The views from the summits were, in the words of **Lt Dan Ashton**, 'gleaming'. The exhilaration and the sense of achievement at the summits were well worth the effort, pain and sweat it took to get there; *'fight through!'* **LCpl O'Donnell** often urged. Morale was always high, usually supplied by our percussion orange. No end of joy was also derived from our staple diet of pasta, smash potato and Tracker cereal bars.

Away from the climbing, entertainment was found at remote pubs, but these were costly as beer was sold for nearly £5 for a half litre. It was very odd to come out of a pub at one in the morning to complete daylight, as the sun was out permanently at this time of year. Accommodation was in our sturdy tents. One of the camping sites was inhabited by dodgy refugees, who looked in better condition than we did. The weather was good considering we were in Norway, but if it ever did rain then little japes such as hiding fish in sleeping bags would definitely liven things up a bit! The expedition was full of high points, which are too numerous to mention here. The climbs gave us views that would be seldom seen by many people and we are unlikely to see anything similar ever again. We timed one climb to be peaked for the midnight sun, no camera could ever give justice to those sights, and it was something we would remember for the rest of our lives.

The expedition could not have succeeded if it were not for the experience of **Lt Ashton** and **WO2 Knight**, the humour from the morale officers **LCpl** 'Ted' **O'Donnell** and **Sig** 'Flash' **Gordon**, and the teamwork and dedication from the rest of the group.

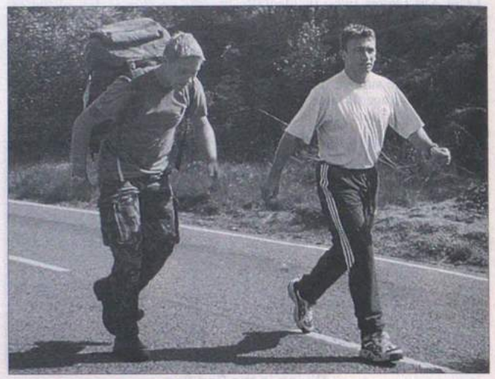
SQUADRON SUMMER CAMP 4-19 JUNE
by Cpl Reed and Sig Jacklin

Following an arduous month in Cyprus on Exercise Lion Sun, the Squadron decided to calm things down for a week by sending us to Frimington, Dartmoor for a spot of adventurous training. Under the watchful gaze of the MTO, **Capt Mark Schofield,** activities included cycling, hill walking, rock climbing and canoeing. The days started bright and early with a spot of PT, which nobody was expecting, but probably should have. The first day consisted of hill walking, which was fun, especially the near to vertical climbs, the baby's heads and the stone circles rumoured to be the petrified remains of ancient witches. **Cpl** 'Marty' **Barringer** was informative throughout – even at times making up stories to keep us interested and **Cpl** 'Taff' **Reed** educated us on local folklore, with regards to burning witches and rumours of the occult. Cycling was the next day's activity, which ranged over a 40km endurance track with **Cpl John Wilson** submitting his entry for next years Tour de France already…not!! Our route took us past the seaside where **Sgt McGuiness** decided to pull in and admire the local wildlife, whereas **Cpl Reed**, **Cpl Wilson** and **Sig Jacklin** decided to re-enact 'Baywatch' on mountain bikes and charge into the sea. A brave attempt was made by all – however, it was cut short by Neptune himself who decreed bikes are not seaworthy vehicles. A mention must be made about **Sig Jase Williams** who through out the journey must have used two telephone batteries talking to his girlfriend. Canoeing was our third day's activity and after managing to stay afloat on a mill pond location, we were promptly relocated by **SSgt** 'Del' **Elesmore** for a spot of canoe surfing in the sea. This proved too much for us (although good fun), and we ended up using our nostrils as brakes in the surf. A special mention must be made to **LCpl** 'Robbo' **Robinson** who won the lifesaving award for saving the majority of us from drowning within the first 10mins of getting on the water. Our final day consisted of rock climbing where **Lt Dan Ashton** decided to throw us over hells teeth themselves. The only fault in his plan was the fact that all of us bar **LCpl Robinson** had a severe problem with heights and large kerbstones – making sure we had at least 27 points of contact at all times! Some were brave enough to venture over the edge, especially **Cpl John Wilson** who was practically ordered over the edge and **Cpl Reed** for having to sit on the edge and belay him.

In conclusion, a good time was had by all on this year's summer camp, it gave everybody a chance to release some steam after a hectic and hard time in Cyprus.

RACE THE SUN 20 MAY - *by 2Lt Knightly Brown*

'Race The Sun' took place in Yorkshire on a gloriously sunny day in May. The elite team from the Squadron and Brigade HQ, drove up to York the night before, ensuring we were in peak condition for the arduous events the next day. **Capt** 'Cheerleader' **Harvey** and myself had the honoured jobs of taxi drivers and providing general moral support. We gained ourselves a respectable fourth position from the start, thanks to **LCpl O'Donnell**, on the 8 mile forced march. This was maintained by the efforts of **SSgt Elesmore**, **LCpl Williams** and others. We kept this lead to the end to finish an impressive fourth out of sixteen, with an excellent save from **Pte Hunter** (AGC) on the final lake swim.



LCpl O'Donnell finishing the 12km forced march on 'Race the Sun'. He is being encouraged in by LCpl Williams



216 PARACHUTE SIGNAL SQUADRON

216 PARACHUTE SIGNAL SQUADRON

What was to have been a relatively smooth period of activity for the Squadron in the build up to the transition to 12 Mech Bde, transpired to be one of the busiest six months in the past couple of years. A short-notice deployment of the vast majority of the unit to Kosovo in support of 5 AB Bde's initial thrust into Kosovo was to undoubtedly be the highlight of the year for the Squadron. It was a memorable way in which to mark the closing stages of 216 Para Sig Sqn in its current role.

The Squadron says hello to the new Admin Officer, **Capt Guy Richards**. Alpha Tp welcomes **SSgt** 'Dicky' **Dyer**, **LCpls** 'Foxy' **Fox**, 'Taff" **Davies** and **Sig** 'Ken' **Dodd**. Bravo Tp introduces **Cpl McMullen** and **LCpl Hunter**. Q Tp greets **Sgt Mark Watts**, **Cpl Brian Sheard**, **Sigs Andy Sergeant** and 'Banana' **Subarna**.

Farewell to **RSM Dave** 'MAD' **Catchpole**, who is off to 264; **WO2 YofS Tony Redman** heads for Sandhurst, and **WO2 RQMS Geordie Marshall** for 35 Sigs where they both take on the role of RSM. 2IC **Capt Stew** 'Crusty' **Gillespie** departs for Sheffield to start as the Adjutant of 38 Sigs. Au revoir to **Capt Steve Morgan**, who is now OC Mil Trg Wng at Blandford. Goodbye to **SSgt Stew Couszins**, **Sgts Ian Conlan** and **Steve Jones**, **Cpl** 'Magoo' **Maguire**, **LCpls** 'Jakey' **Jakeman**, **Mark Wilson**, 'Evo' **Evans**, **Loddy Jones** and to **Sigs Chris Woodall**, 'Flash' **Wilkie** and **Tony Carter**. Heading for 16 Air Assault, the Squadron says farewell to **SSgt Kev** 'Kebabs' **Read**, **Sgts Bruce Thornton** and **Al Coombe**, **Cpls** 'Nosher' **Brown**, 'Knibbsy' **Knibbs**,'Spud' **Fawcett**, **Al Joy**, and **Ted Page**; **LCpls** 'Bob' **Hoskins**, 'Goody' **Good**, 'Digger' **Barnes**, 'Smudge' **Smith**, 'Fish' **Salmon**, **Scott Finn**, **Stu Francis**; **Sigs** 'Air' **Bourne**, 'Blacky' **Blackmore**, 'Richy' **Richardson**, 'Shez' **Sherrington**, 'Fyfey' **Fyfe**, **George Cloney**, **Steve Jones**, **Nick Hillyard** and **Pete Thorpe**.

MORRISON CUP

In keeping with tradition, the morning of the Morrison Cup started promisingly well as the team consisting of **Sgt Coldwell, Cpl Flounders, LCpls Wesson** and **Clancy** and **Sigs Kelly-Rutherford, Lowe, Dine, Richardson, Marshall** set off for the hallowed Blandford meet. Sadly due to operational preparation we were unable to take the support crew of the rest of the Squadron. As we drew closer to the venue the clouds parted and the rain began. Was this an omen? With only three teams competing in the Minor units cup it promised to be a close competition, and the word in the stands was that 24 Bde were fielding a very strong team. Things looked dire as the first race of the day started with **LCpl** 'Springbok' **Wesson** falling very stylishly at the first hurdle in the 400m hurdles, never quite managing to make up the lost ground or disappear into the crowd fast enough after the finish. Our scratch pole vaulter, **Sig Richardson** was given some first rate on the job training by **Sgt** 'Do as I say' **Coldwell**, who finished a promising third in the event. However, sterling performances from **Sgt Coldwell**, **Sigs Kelly-Rutherford**, **Lowe, Marshall, Cpl Flounders** and **LCpl** 'It's me Achilles see' **Clancy**, saw the team edge into the lead. Things were picking up when **Sig Dine** suffered a badly broken arm after falling from a hurdle on the home straight in the 3000m steeplechase as he closed on the leader. As a true hero would, he picked himself up and finished, dislocated wrist flapping and broken bones grinding before zooming off to hospital for an operation. This unfortunate incident meant a slight change to the relay teams, although it did not phase the team, who ran well and won the competition by two points. Congratulations to all who competed, for a job well done.

EXERCISE CORSICAN LANYARD

Destined to be the last 5 Bde Exercise ever, Corsican Lanyard was planned, as the title suggests, to take place in Corsica. Cuts however saw the location change to first French training areas and farmland and then Bonnie Scotland, with its glens and mountains. Glorious indeed. Events in the Balkans added a bit of interest, the exercise scenario took on a rather uncanny likeness to events out there, spooky don't you think? The Ops team, **Capt** 'Crow' **Wilson**, **WO2 FofS** 'Crow too' **Marshall** and **WO2 YofS** 'I'm posted' **Redman** took to implementing the OC Sqns, **Maj** 'What are they doing?' **Workman's** idea, as directed by the staff. Then we deployed in earnest. Bravo Tp were sent to solitary confinement in South Cerney; saw many rehearsals, refresher training and all the officers running all over models the size of two tennis courts (a lot of football was played too). Meanwhile Alpha Tp and the QM's Dept had their wacky races up to West Freugh airfield to set up Excon and kitchens to feed the 5000 respectively. Once the Exercise began in earnest, all the Troops met up together at West Freugh. Elements of Squadron, under the auspicious leadership of **Capt** 'Die hard' **Gillespie**, formed a renegade enemy that took on 1 Para and fought to the last man, as the manpack rebro followed **Cpl** 'Grand old Duke of York' **Page** across a few grid squares of orange contour lines. **LCpl** 'I feel ill' **Shaw** was mightily impressed by the flying skill of the SH crews and was always raring to get on any flights around the areas, especially in the day-glo orange immersion suits – very tactical you see.

The second phase of the Exercise took place back on Salisbury Plain, and saw elements both Fly and Drive back down the country to Keovil airfield. **2Lt** 'Pathfinder' **Day** ably transported the convoy to the correct location, at the correct time, although not quite on the prescribed route.

Capt 'Its better over there' **Wong** then selected a slightly different RV for the Para insert, much to the amusement of the Commander, well it was only a couple of hundred metres more. A manic, non-stop 72hrs followed the Para drop, as the HQ was ambushed, bombed, shelled and chased all over the plain by a remarkably well equipped partisan enemy. They had obviously hired the A Team who had worked wonders transforming their school busses into AFVs and Tanks with wriggly tin , bubble gum and double sided sticky tape. **Sgt** 'Catch us if you can' **James** and **2Lt** 'Come on' **Day** can attest to the cross country speed of a scimitar as it chased them over the plain. All in all it was a very different exercise, but it did prove its training worth as the Squadron was to discover later on.

LANYARD TROPHY

This year's Lanyard Trophy was competed for along a course some 42 miles long, on a course across the South Downs. The day before the competition the teams converged on Napier Barracks to receive their respective briefings and submit their team lists before an early start the following day. The sun had not risen as the teams made their way to the start point at the County show ground, where the tension was tangible. Twenty-eight teams from across the Corps had entered this year, with three women's teams, and five TA teams. With a mass start this year it was easy to see how the teams sorted themselves out into the running order, literally. The first three place were being contested by 216 Sig Sqn, 30 Sig Regt, and 249 Sig Sqn. The lead changed hands several times along the course, each team pushing the other further on (although a special mention goes to the 14 Sig Regt Team who should have turned left, not gone straight on).



216 Para Sig Sqn – 1999 Lanyard Trophy Team

All day the race went on with 30 Sig Regt falling off the pace set by 216 and 249. As the day wore on, the strain of the course began to take its toll as teams started to thin their numbers. But the pace of the lead was relentless and ongoing. 249 just pipped 216 in the finishing stages, and have picked up the trophy for this year. Congratulations to all those who competed and finished, especially to the Squadron Team - **2Lt** 'Doris' **Day**, **SSgt Gaz Greaves**, **Cpls Paddy Howe**, 'Magoo' **Maguire**, 'Goody' **Good**, **Ted Page**, **Si Roughton**, **LCpls** 'Digger' **Barnes**, **Sigs Keith Williams** and 'Air' **Bourne**.

BATTLECAMP

In mid-March, the Squadron deployed to Sennybridge for the annual battle-camp. The first phase of the package began with range work; an APWT, pairs fire and manoeuvre and contact drills enjoying the familiar Irish tones of **Cpl Paddy** 'Chucky from the Rug-Rats' **Briscoe** as he demonstrated his newly acquired RMQ skills. The initial few days of comfort in Sennybridge Camp were soon put aside as the Squadron's two platoons moved into the field and began a skills package with daytime lessons covering a variety of skills including section attacks, HLS marking, ambushes, LAW, and FIBUA in the skills house.



So that's tea, white, two sugars and a plateful of Danish Pastries

After the daytime tuition the platoons would tab to a harbour location, set up defences, receive orders and prepare for the night-time taskings which could be anything from basic patrols, CTRs to a full platoon ambush. The night ambushes were largely successful, and more likely to be remembered for **LCpl Bob Hoskins** falling into a stream, breaking his nose and **Cpl Tim Donoghue** getting geographically embarrassed, sitting in the ERV for thirty minutes in the driving rain.

The FIBUA phase was taught by Squadron's newly qualified instructors, **Cpl's Ted Page** and **Paul Coxon** who covered a whole host of activities including entry and clearance drills, grenades, FIBUA assault course, casevac procedures, defences and an improvised Molotov cocktail range! **Sig** 'Dangerous' **Armstrong** added to the hilarity of high entry drills by pulling out a grenade pin with his teeth and cracking some enamel. The FIBUA phase culminated in a company size attack on the village at dawn in a bid to track down the infamous Gen Cavona, captured on video and camera by the media ops team. With the FIBUA phase complete the Squadron headed back to the ranges for live section and platoon attacks on the final day of the two week package, before heading back to camp for a rapid clean-up and Easter break.

OPERATION AGRICOLA

After being taunted for a number of weeks with the possibility of deploying to Macedonia to prepare to assist in a potential move into Kosovo as part of the KFOR peace-keepers, the Squadron was tasked at short notice to fly complete to FYROM.



Kosovo – 216 liberating Pristina Airport

Within 48hrs of the order to move, almost the entire Squadron flew from RAF Brize Norton arriving in theatre on Sunday 6 June. The Squadron was initially co-located with 4 Bde HQ on the outskirts of Petrovec, some 15km from the capital Skopje; Alpha Tp providing the initial HQ. In a bid to consolidate the Brigade assets the Squadron moved 10km North where over a further 48hrs the planning began to unfold amidst a continuously changing scenario, dictated largely by the fluctuating progress of the talks. Alpha Tp continued to provide the HQ, achieving a back to back move, whilst Bravo Tp continued in their bid to retrieve some temporarily misplaced vehicles from the confusion of the swollen Airhead at Skopje. Amidst the intense planning and in-load of kit and personnel, Q Tp succeeded in keeping their heads as they worked continuously to provide and equip for not only the Squadron and staff but also, the Pathfinders, RMP, PWRR LO's, SHF, dets from 3 Div and 30 Sigs. **QM, Capt George Burrows**, **WO2 RQMS** 'Geordie' **Marshall** and **SQMS Spence Cave** managed to magic everything from the worlds supply of jungle boots, floppy head-dress and ammunition to portable electric fans and NAAFI stores. Bravo Tp, now complete, made the move to Piper Camp, the far side of Skopje, and the staff move quickly followed.



Alpha Troop giving it the Bulldog

Developments in the peace process started to progress at a rapid pace, and Alpha Tp found themselves establishing, amidst intense media attention, below the Europa Cafe, on the main access route leading into Kosovo and just 50 yards from the border. The staff followed suit soon after, along with 4 Bde HQ, and over the next 48hrs, a car park the size of a football pitch was to become the most photographed and hectic piece of military real-estate since the start of the KFOR deployment.

At 4am on Saturday 12 June, 5 AB Bde made its rapid move by air and land up the steep incline of the Kacanick Pass, clearing the route and thus affording access to 4 Bdes move into depth. **Cpls Ted Page** and **John Hilton** arrived with their crews at predesignated spots along the route by Chinook, with their rebro dets under-slung, and set about providing coverage up the entire pass for the Brigades as they moved through.

Bravo Tp as part of the main 5 AB Bde road-move headed up through Kosovo and established HQ in the school at Lipljan, just 15km SW of Pristina; they were to remain in this role for the remainder of the operation. With 5 AB Bde now in situee, Alpha Tp completed its relief in place with US Taskforce Vulcan and drove across into Kosovo on the evening of the 13 June, parking up in the disused bus station at Lipljan.

The Brigade quickly consolidated its AOR with 1PARA policing the streets of Pristina and IRGR based just down the road operating as a QRF for incidents throughout the immediate region. With limited supporting assets, the Squadron continued to provide for a multitude of additional elements and worked tirelessly for the next week establishing a cookhouse at the Coca-Cola factory across the road, clearing and burning rubbish, building defences, providing drivers for endless details and guarding the location. For many of the Squadron, the building of the Sangars will provide mixed emotions for years to come. A combination of blistering heat and lack of materials did not facilitate their speedy construction, however the finished products were undeniably impressive.

Over the following three weeks, the Squadron was involved in a whole host of taskings in addition to the provision of the Brigade HQ. Alpha Troop spent five days guarding the prison on the outskirts of Lipljan, fending off the media, skirmishing with local youths intent on stealing cars and adopting a pack of dogs. **2Lt** 'Doris' **Day** and **LCpl Dave Reids** linguist skills were severely tested as they faced hundreds of returning Kosovar Albanians searching for missing relatives. **Sgt Sid James** headed up the small Alpha Tp element in the infamous APOD option and after days of discussion the Russians finally agreed to allow a small comms set up to establish on the roof of the air terminal at Pristina Airport. **Cpl** 'Dog' **Barker** and **LCpls Dan Pearson** and **Stu Francis** attempted to improve Anglo-Russian relations by ceremoniously flying the Union Jack on a daily basis from the roof of the Terminal. **LCpls Finn, Pearson, Clancy** and **Sig Nick Hillyard** re-enacted their favourite moments from 'Porridge' as they went on to assist in the guarding of a number of war criminals at the Pegasus Prison. **Cpls Ted Page** and **John Hilton** provided a retreat at their rebro site on the Goles Heights, with free brews and sunbathing, and members of both troops received the opportunity to crew the rebros on a three day cycle. A number of the Squadron spent time with 1PARA patrolling the streets of Pristina and **Maj Scott** 'Get Some!' **Workman** and **RSM Dave** 'MAD' **Catchpole** insisted on heading up the QRF on a daily basis when it seemed likely there was going to be some action in down town Lipljan. **Capt** 'Bagpuss' **Wilson** maintained his hold on the golden blanket, sleeping for much of the deployment and **Capt Stew** 'I'm just going on a recce' **Gillespie** was out on the road with **LCpl Jimmy Shaw** running a lucrative business in American camp-cotts.

The tour in Kosovo was a rewarding experience for the Squadron and an excellent way to mark the end of 216 Parachute Signal Squadron in its current form; the high profile nature of the initial insertion into Kosovo finally gave Airborne Signals the opportunity to get amongst it! The Squadron began the exload from theatre back to UK on the 8 July and after a week at work headed off for some well deserved leave.



216 in Kosovo – Comdr 5 AB Bde, Brig A. Freer sat in vehicle!

238 (LONDON) SIGNAL SQUADRON

SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS
Sqn Comd **Maj Steve Hunt**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Ewan Hall**

The Squadron has just completed a very hectic and busy two months where two of the three Troops have been working flat out on the Queen's Birthday Parade, a State Visit and the last Royal Tournament at Earls Court. Despite all the pressures, the Squadron has lived up to its high standards and now enters a period of relative tranquillity before heading off to Penhale, Cornwall in early September for the annual Summer Camp followed closely with a Joint Squadron Battle Camp at St Martins Plain, Kent.

On the 18 June the new Controller Army CIS Group (ACISG), **Lt Col G. J. Cary** paid his initial visit to the Squadron. The aim of the visit was to introduce the Controller to the Squadron and to give him a comprehensive briefing on the role and work carried out by the Squadron. The Controller was met by **WO2 (SSM) Hall** followed by an extended office call with **Maj Steve Hunt**. Nobody was totally convinced that a Harrods shopping trip had been left off the Controller's programme. However, such was the interest shown by the Controller during his visit, that he extended his schedule into a second bottle of wine.

The Worshipful Company of Information Technologists held a sponsored walk in Central London on Sunday 20 July 1999. The Squadron, along with 31 Sig Regt (V) and 71 Sig Regt (V) were tasked to supply logistical support in the shape of tentage, generators and commercial radios for the event. Ideally located, Chelsea Bks acted as the central collection point for what proved to be a very successful and worthwhile day. We look forward to being of assistance next year.

SHQ is still mourning the loss of **LCpl Sophia Morris** (Squadron PTI) to Blandford in early June - PT just won't be the same without her. However, she has been replaced by **LCpl Brian Stewart**, from Radio Tp, who has already made his mark by confirming that Chelsea Bks does have a 1km running route just inside the perimeter fence and that the new ACFT is not a problem! 'When can we start training?' **WO2 (SSM) Ewan Hall**, an ex Spec Op, more used to using complex radio receiving equipment than a transmitter, completed his first Queen's Birthday Parade with the help of **Sgt** 'Leave it to me' **Si Schofield**. The SSM has confirmed that he understands the meaning of 'Silence is Golden' and will always have his mobile phone switched to vibrate when in close proximity to the Royal Family! Rumours are rife, however, that a cardboard cut out will take the place of the SSM in Buckingham Palace next year and that his mobile phone will be diverted to his private residence in Chelsea where we believe the SSM is still looking for his white gloves! (Good try SSM). The Chief Clerk, **Terry Marsh** and the SOG D, **Andy Smith**, supported by **WO2 (YofS) Neil Stewart** have succumbed to the pressures of looking good in up town Chelsea. Laden with guilt, they have both thrown themselves into a fitness regime that caused **LCpl Stewart** (unit PTI) to break into a sweat! Finally, having decided to terminate her service, the Squadron said farewell to **LCpl Carmen Michalska** in July. **LCpl Michalska** returns to her parent unit at 3 Div, Bulford.

RADIO TROOP
Tp Comd **Capt Andy Carroll**
Tp Sgt **Sgt Simon Schofield**

With the silly season now in full swing, weekends off have become a thing of the past for Radio Tp. Everything has to be put on the back burner until things quieten down again in August, when the maximum leave period starts (it seems so far away). Two members of Radio Tp are leaving the throngs of London to better things or maybe worse. Firstly newly promoted **LCpl Jim** 'See ya' **Walton** off to 621 Sqn EOD at sunny Northolt, good luck for the future. Secondly **Sig Baz** 'Oh no not 1 Div' **Maitland** is off to - yes you guessed it..... 1 (UK) Armd Div. Don't forget your underpants **Baz** !!

THE QUEENS BIRTHDAY PARADE

The rehearsals for QBP started in earnest and from late May until the 12 June every weekend was spent preparing for and taking part in, reviews by the Major General, Colonel and finally, Her Royal Highness the Queen, which passed off without incident except **WO2 (SSM)** 'Ewan' **Hall** has been designated Charlie Sierra (Communication Specialist) By Royal Decree, a story which will only be told in the Squadron Bar.

NVQ ACCREDITATION - *by WO2 (YofS) Stewart*

The Squadron, like many other units, has undergone an NVQ Scheme as directed by SOinC (A) PD no 7. The idea of the NVQ scheme came to the Squadron through word of mouth and with the agreement of the **OC Maj Hunt**, the Squadron embarked on it's NVQ Scheme. There was a slight problem in that the Government would only fund those candidates among 16 - 25 years of age. The Squadron wanted to be able to extend the NVQ scheme to those candidates over 25. The Squadron spoke to Underhill Training who are a sub contracted training organisation of Thames Valley TEC with the proposal that for every under 25 year old signed up for an NVQ Underhill would sign up an over 25 year old.

This excellent idea was agreed by Underhill Training. Although the funding was only for the under 25s, both the Squadron and Underhill Training benefited. This new scheme can now give those personnel over 25 an opportunity to gain a nationally recognised certificate. The total amount of NVQs undertaken by the Squadron was 25. The NVQ levels undertaken varied from 2 - 4 in the areas of the Communications PIT2, OTE3 and Management. All the candidates have put in a lot of hard work, primarily in their own time, to achieve the award within the year. The majority of the candidates achieved this within six months which culminated in the award ceremony held in the Squadron Bruno Bar. Our thanks go to Underhill Training for giving the Squadron the opportunity to progress through the NVQ Scheme. Since the award of the NVQs many of the candidates have gone onto higher levels. The Squadron has maintained strong links with Underhill Training and will continue to use their facilities in the future.



NVQ Award Presentations
3rd row (L-R): LCpl Stewart, Sig Kearns, Sig Burgess, Sig McFaul, Sig Daw, Mr Johnson, LCpl Bull, Mr Radwan, Mr Tyrell, Mrs Birks
2nd Row (L-R): Sig Maitland, Sig West Sig Mills, Mrs Carter, Mrs Soriano, Miss Dixon, Mrs Copestake
Front Row (L-R): Miss Wilson, Mrs Leonora Taylor (Underhill Trg), Mrs Lesley Hindmarsh (Underhill Trg), OC Maj Hunt, Mr Peter Richardson (TVSC), SSgt now WO2 (YofS) Stewart



Mr Del Tyrell receiving his award from Peter Richardson (TVSC)

ACHIEVING THE NVQ - *by Sig Gregory Burgess*

I first learnt of the NVQ system by being approached by **SSgt Si Hadley** (Trg Wing) who explained to me that I would be able to achieve a civilian recognised qualification, which I did not have to pay for. This could be achieved by signing up for the NVQ system through Underhill Training. I signed up for the NVQ Level 2 Communications and was then met by **Mr Gorman** who gave me my first assignment. On completion of this first unit, I was given a second unit, which was in the form of a project. I found that a great deal of what I had learnt within the Army was beneficial and I used this knowledge to complete the project and subsequently the course. My main reason for signing up to the course was because it is a civilian recognised qualification and would be a starting point for something to build on. I enjoyed taking part in the Level 2 qualification and I hope to carry on building upon that in the future. At present I am waiting to start my Level 3 qualification. The NVQ itself involved a lot of hard work, especially the project, which included the writing of an administration instruction. I completed all the criteria on the unit successfully. The rest of the units involved information gathering and observation by **Mr Gorman** of the individuals, including myself, carrying out the necessary skills of our trade and therefore fulfilling the criteria of the further units. Once all the criteria were achieved and **Mr Gorman** was happy, we were signed off and the completed folders were sent to Underhill for the Independent Assessors to check and satisfy themselves that we had completed all the criteria and deserved the NVQ Level 2 award.

BEATING THE RETREAT

Involvement this year was minimal only requiring support from **Mr Gary** 'Wot more overtime' **Stevens** and **Cpl Gibbo** 'Still paid the same' **Gibson** helping out 621 EOD with escorting bands wherever they needed to go on the Squadron's 2 Honda ST1100 Pan Europeans. A quick mention for **Cpl Steve** 'Ops Room' **Hook** who controlled movement and generally sat around.

STATE VISIT OF THE PRESIDENT OF HUNGARY

Due to the possible and later non involvement of the Troop in the Royal Wedding, the visit was hastily rehearsed and carried out in a total of four days. Street liners were deployed in new locations under the command of the new Tp OC. All rehearsals went swimmingly well with Kings Tp finally welcoming our Operators **Sgt** 'Schoffs' **Schofield** and **Cpl** 'Bart' **Storey** into their fold by allowing them to remain in position as they gallop onto the firing position instead of having to wait, then march on when it was safe to do so.

STATE OPENING OF THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

For the first time in 300 years, Scotland had a State Opening of The Parliament on 1 July 1999. Over 450 Service personnel took part and Radio Tp were there in support of 242 Sig Sqn. It was a mad rush straight after the State Visit at Windsor. We had a couple of days to turn our kit around then complete a full Tp Deployment to Scotland for the week. Most of the Tp were billeted in a 24 man room all except **Cpl** 'Mini Bar' **Gibson** and **Mr** 'Even more overtime' **Stevens** who were put up in a hotel. Who said love was blind. The Troop acted with it's usual professionalism and more brownie points were gained for the Corps.



Elements of Radio Tp
completing their recovery from the Royal Mile-Edinburgh

DINING OUT OF
CAPT KERRY 'NOW WORKS IN MACDONALDS' LEVINS

The stage was set for a blinding session in the Bruno Bar, we managed to get 95% of the Troop free to attend this function. Incidentally it was a very well organised function by **SSgt Simon** 'Where is my promotion and my BEM?' **Hadley.** The food and wine supplied by the cookhouse was beyond reproach and after a Regimental dinner type of affair we retired to the bar for a few well deserved beers.

ROYAL GARDEN PARTIES

The naphtha club were out in force for several visits to our second home, Buckingham Palace, for the Garden Parties. Dressed up with no where to go we deployed for the three Royal garden Parties to carry out the illustrious Car Calling which involves getting Diplomats into the right car at the right time. The event was hampered by the fact that the PA system at the Entree Entrance failed and a more personal touch of **Sig Jim** 'Och aye' **Walton** to call the diplomats forward. Again **George Robinson**, the Secretary of State for Defence, was glad that we knew who he was otherwise he would disband the Unit.

OSCAR TROOP
Tp Comd **Maj (Tfc) Gilchrist**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Ripley**

A busier few months than the previous reporting period for the Tp. Life in the London Central COMMCEN (LCC) bobs happily along as usual but there was a more sombre mood on 28 July when the Operator Assistance Centre (OAC) Wellington Barracks officially closed. This date marked the end of an era in military telephony within London District. This closure coincided with the switching over to INCA (a commercial consortium who are in the process of taking over responsibility for all fixed telephony services for all armed services within UK) of the major London Primary and Transit exchanges and consequently all operator assisted calls to the INCA-operated OACs located elsewhere in UK. The day commenced with the GOC London District, **Maj Gen Webb-Carter** visiting the OAC and conducting the hand-over to INCA through the medium of a last telephone call made to **Brig Ham CBE,** the Director Networks in the Defence Comms Services Agency. The GOC took the opportunity of thanking all the assembled operators for their valuable and dedicated service which totalled some 171 years between them. The staff then spent the rest of the morning shopping in Knightsbridge, notably Harrods, where they were tempted to spend part of their redundancy payments! The Squadron finally hosted them to a formal lunch back in Chelsea Barracks, in the Bruno Club, where as the saying goes 'a good time was had by all'! Certainly there were many stories swapped and more than the occasional tear, as well as a fair amount of good food and drink imbibed! All is not yet quite over as a more informal social meeting will take place in September when the Troop will take the opportunity to say their sad, though fond, farewells! Whilst on the subject of closures and job losses, the results of the COMMCEN reorganisation programme are out shortly, so there could be more functions and tears shed in the not too distant future. **SSgt Ripley** and **Sgt White** deployed on a recce for the forthcoming Troop Summer Camp 15 - 21 August. A good week should be had by all so watch this space for the thrills and giggles in your favourite publication in the coming months.

The Troop would like to give a warm welcome to **LCpl Sally Patrick** who arrived from 251 Sig Sqn in Aldershot. We hope you have a very enjoyable tour in London. Moving in the opposite direction to be re-united with her husband was **Cpl Sarah Dyer** after one of the shortest stays, ever, in London. Any tips on how you did it, will be greatly appreciated. Seriously, we hope you had a happy stay with us and all the best in the future.

A rather disappointing result in the Inter Troop Challenge Trophy for Golf, but that can be put down to the fact that we poor hardy soul's in O Tp are unable to get out and practice on a Wed afternoon. Unlike the rest of the Squadron we are fully committed around the clock. Anyway, it allows the remainder of you to catch us up and should make the competition a little closer in the coming months.

MIKE TROOP

Tp Comd **Capt Nicol**
Tp SSgt **Sgt Twizell**

The Troop would like to extend a big welcome to **Capt (TOT) Bob Nicol** who has arrived from N. Ireland and farewell to **Capt (TOT) Phil Cooper** - who covered a very busy period. May you enjoy your tour at Blandford as the Falkland Island Desk Officer (FIDO)! The Troop would also like to say a special farewell to **Maj (TOT) Howes** who retired in June after thirty seven years service and two extended postings with the Squadron. He will be sorely missed.

Mike Tp has seen a very busy month with the Royal Tournament at Earl's Court and the State Opening of the Scottish Parliament. **Sgt Cory Pennicott** leads the Royal Tournament Team which includes **Sgt** 'Twiz' **Twizell** and **Sigs** 'All Mouth' **Blevins**, 'Mullers' **McFaul** and 'Loved Up' **McGuire**. The Team were involved with the installation and maintenance of an intercom system covering the whole of the Earls Court Arena including the roof, 180 feet high. The Team also installed a comprehensive telephone network. **Sgt's Pennicott** and **Twizell** also had the role of the Producers Assistant, with the very important task of ensuring the show ran as planned. The Squadron would like to thank **Cpl's Brian** '36 pints' **Jacobs**, **Chris 'Scouse' Stevens**, **LCpl Balaram**, and **Sig Dave** 'Soho' **Mudd** from 2 Sig Regt.

The Radio Techs departed for Edinburgh at the end of June to install and provide a ceremonial net for the State Opening of the Scottish Parliament, without which, Radio Tp would not have been able to operate. The occasion passed off without any trouble and it was an enjoyable and worthwhile experience to work with our sister Squadron (242 Sig Sqn) and to liaise closely with Lothian and Borders Police. Well done to **Sgt Chris** 'Wiggy' **Jacobs** who organised the fun filled 70's/80's Summer Ball. It was an excellent evening with many interesting styles of dress.

The Troop came second in the Inter-Troop Golf Competition. Well done to **Capt (TOT) Phil Cooper** and **Gordy** 'Nelly the Elephant' **Cpls McNeillie** and **Dean** 'Always on holiday' **Spiers** for their efforts. Rumour has it neither player could hit a barn door from five yards with a golf ball. Congratulations are in order for **Cpl Michael Ambler** who completed the first Installation Technician Course at Blandford. Well Done!! Finally, congratulations to **Sgt Cory** 'No Work' **Pennicott** on his marriage to **Charlie**. They are now jetting off to Kenya. Watch out for those lions!

EXERCISE THULO KHOLA COCKNEY: 9 - 26 APRIL 1999

Exercise Thulo Khola Cockney was a Corps / District sponsored Expedition to Nepal. The expedition included qualified team members from RAF Waddington **Flt Lt Simon Moore**, 15 Regt RLC **SSgt Pete Baker**, 144 Para Fd Amb (V) **Cpl Niguta Ithia** without whom the Exercise would have not been possible, so thank you one and all. With the blue touch paper finally lit and burning **Sgt** 'Fergie' **(Fergus)** '*Nepalee Citizen extraordinary font of all knowledge.*' **Anderson** and **Capt Dave Thomas** OIC party seconded from 83 Sig Sqn (V) in Chelsea set too finalising party details and logistics, such things as payments, passports etc. You may well think that was easy, however, the list of those partaking in the Exercise stretched the length of England with **Sgt Heather McNair** form Edinburgh, **LCpl's Eddie Banks** and **Courtney Watts** from Catterick, **Sig Lee Smith** Bulford, **Sgt Cory Pennicott** and **Cpl Paul Bone** both from Chelsea.

Finally on our way, the trip took some 14hrs to Kathmandu. The journey passed reasonably well with **Sgt Fergus Anderson** coming into his own at the under construction Kathmandu Airport. We were not met by our guide and with a few Namaste's, the Napalee greeting, thrown in for good measure he secured transport to the Hotel. The Exercise was a 7-day trek in a remote area of Nepal and not the infamous Annapurna Circuit (Nepals answer to the Southdown's Way) followed by three days White Water Rafting on the ragging River Marsyhandi.

The Trek went very well with a couple of minor sicknesses on route. **Capt Dave Thomas** and **SSgt Pete Baker** spent one night of the trek, due to heat exhaustion, alternating with their heads between their knees making barking noises. The next day, both feeling some what tired, we were faced with longest leg of the trek. That evening, on arrival in the new camp site, **Sgt Fergus Anderson** not wishing to be out done by the other two decided it was his turn to make barking noises as we all sat down to tuck into another well produced meal by the Porters. Bags of sympathy from the remaining members of the Exercise, the air was full of 'Do you want any food Fergie'. Food on the trip was a strange delight. We had been assured by OC 238 Sig Sqn, **Maj Steve Hunt,** that for all meals we would eat only Bhat! We had every thing but chicken, goat and vast quantities of spinach as they had brought a job lot in one of the villages.

On the recreational front our team had a distinct height advantage when invited to play volleyball in some of high mountain villages. Our secret weapon, **LCpl Courtney Watts,** was a towering 6'4'ish! That aside, we diplomatically lost the matches - at least that's the story we are sticking too. The final phase of the trek saw us all marching down the road to Besisahar-har-har! This was to be the final camp site and unknown to us the area for a political rally and the last night with the trekking porters. **Sgt Heather McNair** without the aid of a band entertained as she had done throughout the trek with her rendition of 'I've come 'doone' from the isle of Sky' accompanied by **Amrit Gurung** the head porter wearing a ginger wig and tartan bonnet.

Next came the white knuckle bus ride from Besisahar-har-har to Kundi and the start of the White Water Rafting phase. The bus driver must be congratulated for not going over the cliffs although at times I'm sure he wanted to. All agreed, on arrival, that this was a journey not to be repeated. Hands were blistered from gripping the seat bars, palms were sweaty and the eyes were fixed and glazed. The Stage 4 and 5 rapids we were about to encounter over the next three days would have nothing on the bus ride, or so we thought! White water rafting is not for the faint hearted. It has a tendency to concentrates the mind especially when you are thrown into the water, as most of us were at some point or another. We all had tales of near death experiences, the shear cold of the water from the mountain glazier simply took your breath away. The whole



Farewell to the Porters
(L-R): Flt Lt Simon Moore, BJ, Sgt Heather McNair, Amrit Gurung

experience was like being in washing machine or spin dryer. The trip was a great way to build team spirit particularly when the raft guide gave out heart rendering commands like 'row harder' and 'Oh no not that way'. We, of course, obeyed every command and survived what was ultimately a great experience.



White Water Rafting L - R Flt Lt Simon Moore,
Capt Dave Thomas, Rafting Guide Manu, Rafting Guide,
Cpl Iffy Ithia, LCpl Eddie Bank, LCpl Courtney Watts

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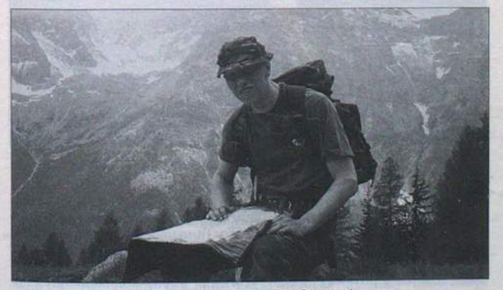
243 SIGNAL SQUADRON

PATROL COMPETITION ITALY - VALMALENCO 1999
by WO2 (SSM) 'Paddy' Morrow

Valmalenco 99 was a Patrol Competition which took place over the period 4 - 6 June 1999 and was held in Valmalenco, Northern Italy, which is a small village normally reserved for the skiing fraternity in winter. The competition was well supported by British teams and other nations. The SSM set about canvassing support for the event and eventually entered two teams but due to other commitments only one team managed to get away. It was envisaged that the competition organised by the Italian reserve forces would be a fast and furious event which we would normally associate with those organised by ourselves this was not the case, as the Italian approach to competitions is slightly more laid back. The instructions issued by our hosts were deliberately vague so very little in the way of preparation could be made. The SSM accompanied by **Cpl Jim Gray** and **LCpl Stu Golightly** set out on a marathon journey to Italy. The first day's activities involved the team participating in a shooting competition using some very interesting weapons. The patrol itself started off at early o'clock on the Saturday morning when the team were met by the doctor who gave us a check up. Unfortunately by Check Point Two we lost **Stu Golightly** who was suffering from a stomach upset. To say the ground was undulating would be a understatement, snow covered peaks would give you an indication of what the ground was like. The tasks which we had to complete were very interesting and unusual and ranged from firing a home made rocket launcher to morse code and semaphore. After about twelve hours a very exhausted team finally finished the event. On the Saturday evening there was a party for the competitors and the locals and surprisingly enough **Stu Golightly** made a miraculous recovery. On the Sunday morning the team attended a church parade which was followed by a parade through the town. The competition culminated in a prize giving presentation suffice to say there was no need to leave much in the way of space in our transport for our trophies.

Valmalenco 99 - The Team
(L-R):Cpl Jim Gray, WO2(SSM) 'Paddy' Morrow and
LCpl Stu Golightly



Valmalenco 99 - The Ground
Cpl Jim Gray plots the route to the next checkpoint - straight up!!!

THREE PEAKS CHALLENGE 18 - 22 JUNE 99
by Cpl 'Gregs' Gregory

The Three Peaks Challenge is to climb consecutively the three highest peaks in Scotland (Ben Nevis 4406ft), England (Scafell 3206ft) and Wales (Snowdon 3560ft). HQ LAND had two teams entered, one led by **SSgt Lou Woolley**, the other led by **Capt Neil Lodwig** and each had it's own Admin team. 77 teams were starting between 5 - 8pm, we started at a steady jog at 7pm, with the other team starting at just after 7pm. By the time we reached the 'zig-zags' it was more of a fast walk but we got to the checkpoint on the summit in 1hr 36mins. We couldn't stop to enjoy the view as the visibility was only a few yards so we started back down at a much faster pace and passed the other team, still on their way up, after a few minutes. We got back to the start with only 2hrs 39mins on the clock. The support team now took over, they had been waiting patiently at the bottom of the mountain, preparing our meals and the vehicles for the journey to Scafell (or had they just been to MacDonald's?). After six hours we reached the next start point. The weather was still very good and it was only 4am, the earliest we were allowed to start. The track up seemed like it would never end but eventually it did and we found that we were the first team to reach the summit. By the time we got back we were beginning to ache but the Admin team had got some food and drinks ready for us and in no time at all we were driving down to Wales for the third mountain. The weather was still very good and the route up Snowdon was relatively easy compared to Scafell and Ben Nevis except for the last mile or so but by this time we knew there wasn't much of the challenge left. We got to the cafe on the summit after about an hour and a quarter's walking to find we were the first team to finish.

Our final position was third in a time of 17hrs 5mins (with 11 hours compulsory driving) and the other HQ LAND team finished in 7th place winning them the prize for the first mixed team. I would like to thank **Capt Neil Lodwig** and **SSgt Lou Woolley** and the fire service for organising the event and the Admin teams for their work before, during and after the event.

EXERCISE STRONG IRON 25 JULY - 6 AUGUST 1999
by WO2 (SSM) 'Paddy' Morrow

Ex Strong Iron was the exercise name given to this year's Squadron Summer Camp, which saw a great number of the Squadron's military element deploying to Wyke Regis Training Camp on the outskirts of Weymouth. The area, which caters for thousands of tourists every year, was a very popular venue.

Not only did it provide some excellent locations in which to carryout the mandatory activities such as canoeing and trekking, it had lots to offer once the training ceased for the day. The SSM decided to keep things simple so the camp took a similar format as last years camp at Brawdy, with the normal level two adventurous training activities taking place Monday through to Thursday leaving Friday morning for the troops to do some fun activities such as Jet Skiing and Go-Karting. Those personnel who deployed on week one of the camp had some excellent weather which many personnel leaving at the end of the week with the makings of some nice tans. Week Two turned out to be a mixed bag regarding the weather with a little sunshine and rain but spirits were not dampened. The training went almost without a hitch the exception being the windsurfing which took place in week one, which on the first two days the wind proved too strong for instruction much to the annoyance of **Cpl Reg Varney** our windsurfing instructor on loan from 3 Div. The only casualty of the two weeks was **LCpl Joyce** who whilst practising his capsize drills managed to damage one of his front teeth, his only concern being for his appearance and his inability to attract any females in the local pubs and clubs so a quick trip to the dental centre brought a smile back to his face, however it did nothing to improve his luck with the local ladies!!



The Canoeists take a break
(L-R): LCpl's Stu Golightly, Joycey Joyce, Fitzy Fitzpatrick,
Cpl Andy Shepherd, Sgt Jim Robertson, Cpl Gregs Gregory and
LCpl Danny Cooper

249 SIGNAL SQUADRON
ACE MOBILE FORCE (LAND)

Sqn Comd **Maj D. J. Foulkes**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) K. Marsh**

This has been yet another busy period for the Squadron during which we have managed to cram in two Adventure Training Exercises, the Kiwi Trophy and rid ourselves of our entire vehicle fleet all while preparing for an imminent deployment to Bosnia.

OPERATION AGRICOLA - 501 COBALT

Since the beginning of the NATO deployment and the increase of tension in the Kosovo region a detachment from the Squadron has been deployed providing Satellite Communications in a variety of roles to different headquarters. Deployed on the detachment has been **Sgt Pete Eden, Cpl Gareth Howell, LCpl Gaz Prydie** and **Sig Russ Taylor.** They have been ably assisted by two personnel from 30 Sig Regt, **LCpl Puslikar** and **Sig Scott Cooper.**

DEPLOYMENT DIARY - *by Sig Russ Taylor*

On initial deployment we were based in Kumanovo, Macedonia. Here we were attached to 7 Sig Regt providing a theatre COMMCEN and a standby Ptarmigan link to the Corsham Hub. Life was very much static and routine as we waited for the decision to be made over possible moves into Kosovo. During these two months we worked hard at honing our pizza eating skills, with **Sgt Pete Eden** emerging as the most superior. Most importantly we managed, against all odds, to win the 30 Sig Regt Five-a-Side football competition. On the day of the competition the bookies had us at 40-1 no hopers but the team consisting of **SSgt Al Ironside, Cpl Gareth Howell, Sig Scott Cooper, LCpl Phil Hughes** and myself managed to overcome all challengers to claim the prize. What tipped the balance was the cheerleading capabilities of **Sgt Phil Eden**, who was forced to sit the competition out after forgetting his trainers (Admin!!). When finally the move into Kosovo came it was quite an event. After closing down all links at 0600hrs on the morning of the move we had to push quite hard in order to be ready for the first packet leaving at 0700hrs. The French vehicles at the front were the first to move and the Wacky Races began. What followed was quite humorous as three lanes of traffic bound for Kosovo and one lane leaving attempted to make headway along a road that could be classed as a country lane. This meant that it took us 11 hrs to reach our final destination, the town of Mitrovica. In that time we had travelled just 139km. Driving through the villages and towns en-route there was nothing but devastation as most areas were completely destroyed with rubble strewn everywhere. The people were out in force lining the streets and singing pro-NATO songs. On reaching Mitrovica it was much the same story. The town was gutted and virtually deserted. We are now firmly entrenched in Mitrovica providing a Ptarmigan Satellite Bridge and eagerly awaiting our end of tour in September. During this time the Squadron has also had soldiers deployed on Op Palatine and in Albania on Op Spooner.

EXERCISE IRON PASS – SWITZERLAND - *by Lt Chris Preston*

Exercise Iron Pass was a Squadron expedition to Switzerland which took place from 11-26 July 1999. The aim was to traverse the width of Switzerland along the Alps from Montreux to Sargans. The Expedition was organised and led by **Lt Chris Preston** and technical assistance was provided by **Capt Andy Marcus** from (AMF(L)) CSS Bn who was the expedition JSMEL(S). The party reached the start point in Montreux by way of Hoverspeed and a 16 hour trek along the E-17. Breakfast on the first day took the form of the squaddie favourite, the egg banjo, this was because it meant less washing-up. On starting the trail we quickly realised the pattern that the trek would follow. Forested lower slopes, extremely steep and very humid, were at the beginning of each trail.



Sigs 'Scouse' Bennett and 'Baldrick' Tierney
Taking time-out at the summit

Even on day one we attempted to make things a little easier but the mountain railway we attempted to catch simply ignored the group of crazy Englishmen that were waving at the driver. The first summit (or col) reached was Rocheuss de Nare standing at 2091m. Here the limiting factor of water became apparent. Despite each carrying sufficient supplies the physical exertion and heat soon meant that each mountain stream was a very welcome sight.

The highest points of the trek lay around the halfway mark, these were the Sefinenfargge Pass at 2612m and the Bluemlisaphutte Pass at 2837m. Both are very steep climbs and command impressive views. Even though, by this stage our legs had grown stronger and feet had hardened we had to reach them on consecutive days. Of the two passes the most remarkable was the latter at the top of which was a mountain lake known as a 'Lager' in which is reflected the peaks of the mountains above. At end of this pass was the Bluemlisap Glacier which pours off the side of the mountain. Climbing around this proved extremely difficult and the last few hundred metres were like the 'step class from hell'. However having reached the summit the view was awesome. You could almost believe you are on the most isolated spot in the world until you turn to notice the Alpine Hut - how did that get there?



Capt Andy 'Crazy Legs' Marcus at the 'Lager'

On completion of these two climbs it was time for midway point day-off. We descended into Griesalp 'just for one' to find a Bierfest in full swing. The Swiss certainly know how to enjoy themselves and we whiled away the hours at Jazz and Blues festival. It is one of the largest in the world and turned the whole place into a massive street party. The enjoyment of this was matched only by **Sig Cooper**'s birthday party in Zurich at the end of the trek. As with all expeditions there is a list of fame/shame. Particular mention must go to **Sig** 'Scouse' **Bennett** and his Italian Job-esque driving ability. Also to **Sig** 'Baldrick' **Tierney** for his reversing skills and to **Capt Andy Marcus** for being a JSMEL, a diplomat and having a seemingly endless sense of humour. Finally, go to Switzerland in the summer, its brilliant.



Sig Ellis showing the strain, going up the Kiwi at the 21km point

THE KIWI TROPHY

The Kiwi Trophy is the Squadron's annual March and Shoot competition which is completed by every fit member of the Squadron. It consists of a 22km march carrying 301bs and rifle followed by a shoot of 10rds at 100metres. It is an individual effort and marks the high point of the Squadron's physical training year. The trophy commemorates the Squadron's association with the Bulford Kiwi, which it maintains and the New Zealand Defence Staff. The Kiwi Trophy itself is presented each year by a representative from the New Zealand High Commission, this year it was the Defence Attache, **Brig R. R. Ottoway MBE**. The competition took place over 22-23 July 1999. Day One saw those involved in the hosting duties for the main day compete. Many of the Squadron 'fitties' ran that day and the OC, **Maj Jim Foulkes,** emerged as the overnight leader. Day Two began at 'Oh my god' o'clock with the first runners setting off at 0630hrs. They were cheered on by the OC, who was anxiously checking out the competition, and the 2IC, **Capt Niall Stokoe**. The hosting for the day began at 0940hrs as the guests, **Brig Ottaway**, accompanied by the New Zealand Defence Staff, and **Brig Shaw**, ACOS G6 CIS LAND, arrived at the Officers Mess. They were met by the OC, 2IC, **WO2 (SSM) Ken Marsh, WO2 (YofS) Kev Kerr** and **WO2 (RQMS) Geordie Harvey**.

Following a short brief on the days events they were whisked off to the finish line to see the first runners come in. Here the New Zealand Defence Staff made the most of the opportunity to use the range and succeeded in gaining some embarrassingly good scores.

The second main event of the day was the Service of Remembrance at the Tidworth Military Cemetery where a lot of New Zealand soldiers are buried. The service was attended by all guests, the OC, SSM and a bugler from the 2nd Bn The Light Infantry, who sounded the Last Post.



Brig R. R. Ottoway MBE
presenting Cpl Mo Pay with the Kiwi Trophy

The culmination of the days events was the presentations and the barbecue. The Kiwi Trophy (Individual Winner) and Innocent Cup (Team Winners) were presented by **Brig Ottaway.** The Kiwi Trophy was won by **Cpl Mo Pay**, the OC came a close second. The Innocent Cup was won by Papa Troop. Finally the Lang Memorial Trophy (most significant contribution to the good of the Squadron) was presented to **LCpl Sammy Samuel** and the Lanyard Trophy Team were presented with their Winners certificates. Both of these were presented by **Brig Shaw** who also took the opportunity to promote **LCpl Rudland** to full Corporal and **Cpl** 'Ninja Chef' **Homer** to Sergeant.

TRAILWALKER UK 1999 - *by Cpl 'Robbo' Robertson*

On 26 June 1999, at a time when most sensible people were still in bed, two teams from the Squadron were deploying to take part in Trailwalker UK. This is 100km, race along the South Downs Way in aid of the Gurkha Welfare Trust. We arrived at the Start Point having been treated to the driving skills of **LCpl Chris** 'definitely a novice' **Noviss** and the delightful background music provided by **LCpl** 'Buzz' **Bury**. The sun was beating down hard and we were definitely up for it. The hard training was about to be tested and we spent the hour before the start attempting to down as many fluids as possible. For **Lt Chris Preston** pre-race preparation meant gelling and styling his hair while **Sig Jim Gallagher** tried to disguise his nerves by grinning at everything everybody said. I, unfortunately, missed the warm-up, a long climb up a big hill, so arrived at the start unprepared. Well not sweating anyway.

Once the start gun had gone we began the race. It quickly became an endless slog of checkpoint after checkpoint and kilometre after kilometre. We suffered our first casualty at the 18 mile point when **LCpl** 'Buzz' **Bury** when down with heat stroke. At this point it is probably worth mentioning that he is one the Squadron PTIs. The finish was reached not before time at 0030hrs. We had been running for over 15hrs and had managed to come a creditable 28/215. **Sig Thompson** from Team B had gone it alone after the rest of his team had dropped out and finished at least one hour ahead of us. We were then presented with our medals and treated to a Gurkha Bhat before proceeding back to Bulford.



Team A (L-R): Sig Kemp, Cpl Robertson, Sgt Lawn and Lt Preston

259 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj N. Griffiths**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) D. Ewing**

Welcome and goodbye to the OC Squadrons, **Maj Neil Griffiths** our new Sqn Comd who has recently arrived from Germany. Having been fully briefed by **Maj Steve Turnbull** during the hand-over and issued with plenty of suntan lotion to boot, he took the chair from **Steve** on the 26 August. **Maj Steve Turnbull** after commanding for 2fi years has moved on with his family to Scotland having been posted to R Sigs MCM Div in Glasgow. All the best for the future and happy sailing for you and your family on Loch Lomond, watch out for the midges! Our visitors for this period of the year were 202 Sig Sqn, 3 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt, who visited the island on Ex Lions Sun 1999. We hope that your sunburn was not too painful and that you enjoyed your visit to the Squadron and of course to Cyprus, happy track bashing in Bulford!

AIRFIELD TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt G. Kemp**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Stenhouse**

Since the Troops last entry there has been two promotions, a few departures and even more arrivals. Firstly promotions, congratulations to the Troop OC, **Lt** 'Gareth' **Kemp**, on his promotion from Second Lieutenant to Lieutenant and **Sig** 'Barney' **Barnett** on his promotion to Lance Corporal. Now the farewells, good luck to **SSgt (FofS) Eric O'Halloran** and wife **Julie** who have gone back to sunny Blandford, (you are sadly missed). Farewell and best wishes to **Cpl** 'Jim' **Wainwright** for your marriage to **Moira**, who is posted to 242 Sig Sqn in Edinburgh and the best of luck to **Marion** our Troop Clerk and husband **Ewan** on their posting to RAF Brize-Norton. Hello and welcome to the Troop, for **SSgt (FofS)** 'Mac' **McGregor** and wife **Lorraine**, also congratulations on the birth of your new son **Fraser**; **Cpl** 'Glen' **Paterson** and wife **Amanda**, **LCpl** 'Danny' **Rudd** and wife **Sue**, **Sig** 'Danny' **(Ex Ships Cat) McGurk, Sig** 'Andy' **(New Ships Cat) Wells** and last but by no means least welcome to **Sharon** our new Troop Clerk, hope that you all enjoy your time in the Troop.

259 SIGNAL SQUADRON SUMMER CAMP - *by Sig 'Gaz' Fuins*

The Troop OC, **Lt** 'Gareth' **Kemp** was recently selected from a cast of thousands (or was that one) to organise and run a two week Squadron Summer Camp from 5 July – 16 July 1999 in and around the Troodos area. On Monday the 5th July 1999, **Lt Kemp,** ably assisted by his band of DS, **Sgt** 'Kev' **Ingley**, **LCpl** 'Barrington' **Barnett**, **Sigs** 'Adi' **Bennett**, 'Danny' **McGurk** and myself, all members of Airfield Tp. We gathered at RAF Troodos along with other members of the Squadron who were taking part in the Camp. It promised to be a fun filled week of adventure training. After all the usual arrival briefs the happy campers were split into groups and for the first two days went mountain biking and orienteering. At the end of which we had broken half of the mountain bikes and proved that map reading was not our forte. Day three, for those who could manage it, was Go-Karting which (sounding my own trumpet) I won. Followed by a visit to the Keo Brewery in Limassol. Here we learnt the techniques of brewing Keo larger and wines, after which we were allowed to put into practice our newly acquired expertise and sample beers and wines of the best. The next day was spent at the Water-Skiing Club RAF Akrotiri for a wet day on banana boats and doughnuts. A fantastic time was had by all except **Sig** 'Windmill Arm' **Green** who unfortunately dislocated his arm and was taken to hospital. The day was completed by a meal in a local Taverna, again with the exception of **Sig Green** who had to survive on hospital food. The Grand Finale of the week was the walk down from Troodos to SHQ in Episkopi, a total of 30km. The day started well with all the teams making the first check point. While **Sgt** 'Fudge' **MacPhee's** team was seen running from checkpoint to checkpoint, **Sig** 'Rimmer' **Eyre's** team had still not been seen at all until two hours after all the other teams had passed checkpoint two. However, no one was concerned, as the teams had been issued with a safety mobile phone for emergencies. Eventually the missing team was located, having lost their mobile phone. The quote of the day was 'Where's your safety phone Mr Eyre?' 'Last seen free-falling down a cliff Sir.'

DHEKELIA TROOP
Tp Comd **Capt N. Morris**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Whitty**

Like the rest of the Squadron, Dhekelia Tp has also undergone a major transformation on the posting front. So with out further ado welcome to **Sgt Avery** and family, **Cpl Mercer** and impending family and **Cpl Torrington** and family all from Northern Ireland. Welcome also to **Sigs Stuart** and **Fell** from trade training and finally welcome back to **LCpl Lloyd** on return form FI. The Troop bids farewell to **Sgt Jones** and family to 39 Bde and **Cpl Little** and family to RSS Blanford on his T1. **Cpl D'Or** leaves us for JCUNI and **LCpl Fazackerly** and family move on promotion to 3(UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt. **Cpl Cavanagh**, **Sig Bates** and **Hicklin** have gone to war in Kosovo to assist 21Sig Regt. Good luck lads and a safe return. The Troop has remained busy here in sunny Cyprus, particularly socially.

We deployed to the Dhekelia Watersports Club for a day's activities. The Bitsa Bar Banana boat Display team proved their worth and only narrowly missed drowning themselves. A barbecue and Karaoke session followed the day, where the boss showed his nerve with a fantastic rendition of Lucky Man.



The Bitsa Bar Banana Boat Display Team from L to R Sig Stewart, Sig Ling, Sig Bate, Sig Winter and Cpl Kirby

EPISKOPI TROOP
Tp Comd **2Lt S. Covey-Crump**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Duncan**

Episkopi Tp has been in a period of change, with the loss of SSgt '2fi years in Cyprus, still no tan' **Tierney**, **Sgt** 'Wallis and Gromit' **Wilson** and **Cpl** 'Lance' **Swarbrick.** The five newcomers arriving in the heat of Summer are, **2Lt Sarah Covey-Crump**, **SSgt Duncan**, **Foreman** 'Peri' **Winckle**, **Cpl** 'Patchwork' **Quilter** from and **Sig** 'Ship Cat' **Lecras**. Finally congratulations to **Sig Bennett** on her pregnancy, she will be leaving the Troop at the end of October, to go on maternity leave. So far in the Hodgson Shield, a *friendly* Inter troop sporting competition, taken very seriously, Epi Troop has won the softball, cricket and the swimming. Training and tactics for the next competitions are already in motion. Well done to **LCpl John Quinn**, Team Captain for Softball, **LCpl Bob Cope** and **Sig Robbie Williams** in the swimming. The Troop has also been on top form socially with a very successful summer function to the Lebilia Apartments and swimming pool in down town Limassol.

202 SIGNAL SQUADRON GAMES NIGHT

On Monday 2 August 1999, the Episkopi and Akrotiri based Troops had the pleasure of challenging 202 Sig Sqn to a Games Night. The evening commenced with a hockey match in Happy Valley. 202 Sig Sqn eventually won this match 3-1 after many midfield battles between **Sgt Chris Cheeseman (202)** and **LCpl Owen Trimble (259)**. Refreshments were required by this stage so both teams and all supporters retired to the Jimmy Club where a Games Night was organised. With all the hard Exercises over 202 Sig Sqn were ready to replace all lost fluids. The games cunningly chosen by 259 Sig Sqn were to be undertaken with great enthusiasm by both teams. The outcome was inevitable with 259 Sig Sqn becoming the overall champions of the evening, thanks to their superb chess and pool players. The evening was rounded off with a presentation of Sqn plaques from **SSgt Kev Tierney** (259) to **Lt Kelvin Grice** (202) and **Maj Richard Quinlan** (OC 202) to **Capt Katy Caie** (2IC 259).

280 (UNITED KINGDOM) SIGNAL SQUADRON (LANDCENT)

Sqn Comd **Maj S. G. Hutchinson**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) McKenna**

SQUADRON DEPLOYS ON OPERATION JOINT GUARDIAN

The Squadron is presently in the process of experiencing 'déjà vu'. In late 1996 we deployed to Bosnia in support of HQ LANDCENT as they took over from HQ ARRC in command of the IFOR/SFOR mission. (The Squadron ended its formal commitment to Bosnia in November 1998 although we still have a detachment with MND(SW) in Banja Luka and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future). Almost three years later it is a case of history repeating as we once again deploy in support of HQ LANDCENT who are again relieving HQ ARRC in their command of the KFOR mission. The Squadron Kosovo mission is almost identical to the Bosnia mission. We will be overseeing the commercialisation of the strategic and operational communications infrastructure whilst being deployed into nine different locations within the region. Locations are as diverse as Pristina, Pec, Mitrovica, Urosevac and Prizren in Kosovo, Skopje in Macedonia, Tirana and Durres in Albania and finally Thessaloniki in Greece. The Squadron has undergone a busy summer in preparation for the deployment with the inevitable UNTAT briefings as part of our 'national' training. On the trade and NATO side a lucky few have deployed on courses to the NATO CIS School in Latina (near Rome) to undergo specialist training on the various COTS equipment and systems that will be used in theatre. The Squadron will deploy for six months and we expect the tour to end in April 2000.

280 (UK) SIGNAL SQUADRON SAVES AND WINS THE DAY! THE SQUADRON ROMPS TO VICTORY IN THE MORRISON CUP - *by Sgt 'Vinny' Vincent*

The last Morrison Cup of the century took place at the Grenzland Stadium Mönchengladbach on Thursday 3 June 1999. With the current situation in Macedonia there was a real fear that this prestigious event was in danger of being cancelled. With the sun shining brightly over the track and the spectators, the day's events got underway with an emphatic victory for **Sgt Trev McSween** in the 110m Hurdles. The hosting team followed this up with several impressive victories, including **Sgt Wayne Dunbar** in the Discus, **Sgt Vincent** in the Long Jump and **LCpl Haustead** in the 400 metres Hurdles. Halfway through the well organised competition there was a lull in the battle for lunch, with the SNCO's and Officers retiring to the Mess tent to prepare themselves mentally for the afternoon's activities. At this stage of the competition it was announced that 280 (UK) Sig Sqn had an impressive 17 points lead. The afternoon's events recommenced with the womens' competition by an excellent performance in the 100 metres by **LCpl Applegarth** of 16 Sig Regt, followed by a comfortable victory in the 3000 metres by **LCpl McGregor** of 200 Sig Sqn. Throughout the afternoon not everything went 280's way, with two outstanding performances from **SSgt Jed Kean** of 7 Sig Regt in the 3000 metres and 5000 metres. 16 Sig Regt also tasted victory with a close win in the Triple Jump. The day drew to a close with rapturous applause at the presentation of the Morrison Cup by **Col Innocent** to the 280 Team Captain, **Sgt** 'Vinny' **Vincent**. All in all the day had been a tremendous success due to the participation of all the athletes and the support from the crowd.



Sgt Vinnie Vincent receives the Winners Trophy at the 1999 Morrison Cup from Col Innocent

ALPHA TROOP - *by Cpl Wells*
Tp Comd **2Lt Higgs**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Roberts**

Congratulations to **Sig Edwards** on her forthcoming promotion to Lance Corporal. Well done to **Sig Lloyd** on passing his Leadership Course in Blandford (with a little help from his old Tp OC!) Good luck to **Sig Custy** on his posting to 4 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn, we hope everything goes well for you. Farewell also to **Sgt Stebbing** on his posting to 251 Sig Sqn Aldershot, where hopefully he won't have to write as many 252's. **LCpl Gladish** has also moved on to bigger things, by being posted to 264 Sig Sqn after being with us for only five months.

A busy month has seen the Troop complete most of their ITD's on a camp designed to sharpen our talents during which **Sgt** 'Pathfinder' **Porter** and **Cpl** 'I'm not lost ....MUCH' **Menzies** decided that the 1hr 3km course with 5 checkpoints wasn't challenging enough and disappeared off for 2.5 hrs covering around 10km and two checkpoints, needless to say there wasn't much grief heading in their direction. During the range phase **Sig Ryall** and **Sig Thompson** managed to achieve marksman scores, and now proudly wear X-rifles on their dressing gowns, a fashion started by **Cpl** 'No Course Too Hard' **Icke.**

On returning to camp, TUV was at the top of the list and due to the hard work of the Troop the vehicles passed with flying colours. **Sig Edwards** later decided that one of the DAFs was too big to park in the garages and took it upon herself, under the guidance of **Sig** 'Why Didn't You Use Your Mirrors' **Machin**, to widen the doorway with the use of the side bins on the DAF! Well done to the Troop athletics heroes for an excellent all-round season. The Troop is starting to disperse, ready for its' future tour to Kosovo, happy Millenium troops!

BRAVO TROOP

The Troop would like to start by saying farewell to **Sig** 'Dangerous Dave' **Machin** who has left us to return to the MT. He made a crashing impression within the Troop with his likeable Yorkshire banter and will be sorely missed. Also we have another farewell for **LCpl** 'Wannabe Queen' **Andy King**, who is leaving us for civilian street. His career is yet to be decided but whatever **Mr King's** choice, we wish him all the best in his future employment. Apart from the departures the two dets in Bosnia – Mostar; **Sgt** 'Hatch' **Hatcher**, **Cpl** 'Ronnie' **Radford**, **LCpl** 'Jacko' **Jackson**, **LCpl Andy Truswell** and **Sig Emma Watts** and Banja Luka; **Sgt Tom Atkinson**, **Cpl Bri Hillson**, **LCpl Craig Harrison, Sig Jannette Lloyd** are running smoothly, keeping the standard high, which is expected from 280 (UK) Sig Sqn. **Sgt Chris Read**, who is currently deployed to Greece and is in the same situation with everything well in hand. Also this month **SSgt Graham Weavers, Cpl Stewart Wilkinson, LCpl Matt Grant** and **Sig Glenn** 'Paddler' **James** attended Adventure Training at Engloff in Bavaria for four days. Trekking along with rock climbing and canoeing were the activities which we took part in. Everyone fully enjoyed the four days down there and the activities in which they participated in. Adventure Training was a definite success. With the current commitment in Bosnia and the pending one for Kosovo the Troop is at a quiet time of the year.

CHARLIE TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt Emma Rae**

On the movement side of life we are sorry to be losing: **Cpl Richie** 'I'm the MT Rep' **Birch** and his wife **Karen**, they are headed to 3 Inf Bde Northern Ireland, and **Sig Tracy** 'Treacle' **Holland** who is off to 24 Airmob Bde, back in good ol' Blighty. We have also lost **Cpl Matt Rigby** who has left for Civvy Strasse – your collections of videographic matter is sadly missed in the block! We are, however, pleased to welcome **2Lt** 'Woollyhat' **Caulderhead** into the family that is Charlie Tp!



The Salty Sea Dogs
Pte Blacklock, LCpl Simmonds, Sig Lowe and LCpl Cook

Just as the Troop finished its mission in Bosnia and post-leave complete, the Squadron has been warned off for sunny Kosovo! Morale was at an all time high when it was announced that the Cadre Course and Freedom Parade HAD to be cancelled in preparation for the deployment! Manning in the Troop is at a minimum as National ITD Training, Trade Training, beloved Rear Details, Adventurous Training and some Summer Leave all take their toll. Still, the personnel of the Troop take it all in their stride, with less complaints than Victor Meldrew, especially when some Trade Training can ONLY be completed in Latina (that is, in Southern Italy for all you geographic buffs!)

EXERCISE QUICKSILVER BACKSTOP

(This story has been adapted from the official diary kept by **Sig Lowe** and **Sig Clarke**). *Quicksilver* the Royal Signals yacht, the pride of the Corps' – well, that was how it was described to nine novice sailors in Charlie Tp. The adventurous members of the Troop divided themselves into two groups and were allocated five days sailing in the Baltic Sea. Group 1 consisted of **Lt Emma** 'The Boss' **Rae**, **LCpl** 'Cookie & Eatie' **Cook**, **LCpl Simmo** 'Neanderthal' **Simmonds**, **Sig Terrence** 'Tarquin' **Lowe** and **Pte Lois** 'Clerk' **Blacklock**. Group 2 were **Sgt Chris** 'The Tan Man' **Porter**, **LCpl Cookie** 'Now Promoted to First Mate' **Cook, LCpl Daz** 'Public Display' **Rickard**, **Sig Nobby** 'West Indian' **Styles** and **Sig Phil** 'Writer' **Clarke**. The first group arrived in Kiel to meet the yacht and Skipper. **LCpl Del** 'Belly Laughs' **Whyman** one Tuesday morning, after being up all night on the Ranges! Their first challenge was to buy three days worth of supplies, a task almost impossible of a group of singlies! The afternoon was spent settling into the luxury liner, safety briefs and practicing our nautical skills on a 4ft motorised boat before setting sail early the next morning. Group 1 set sail on a glorious day. After an hour of sun, light winds and good morale the wind picked up, the seas roughened and suddenly the seasickness hit. We bounced around the Baltic Sea for a further nine hours, at times it seemed the boat would tip as it reached gravity-defying angles. Luckily the Corp's yacht is made of sturdier stuff than the crew. The 'parking' of the yacht was another adventure; after dropping a rope into the water, wrapping it around the prop and going diving to untangle it (thanks Del!), we played yacht pinball and increased Anglo-German/Danish relations! The next day was an extreme disappointment, the weather had become worse and we were storm-bound. The crew, always ready to adapt and overcome, went for a cultural trip around Sonderburg. Day 4 was a perfect day to set sail for Damp. The Skipper soon handed the control over to the crew and by the end of the day everyone was helming, jibing as if we were all weathered Salty Sea Dogs, in addition **Sig** 'Sunny' **Lowe** was 'Tikiti Booing'. The final day was glorious and, finally, our interpretation of sailing was fulfilled and we wasted no time in getting the sun lotion out. It was during this fine weather that we handed over to Group 2, along with the Skipper and a few necessary supplies. After hearing the perilous journey of Group 1 we set sail a little apprehensively at a breath taking 2 knots and headed for Marstel. To everyone's disappointment, the next day was awful... for sailing and we headed for Sonderberg on full throttle. We all took our turns to navigate, steer on the correct bearing and boost the tans. Again the next day, to the utter disgust of the less-disciplined Sun-worshipers, the weather was in the 30s. **Sgt Chris Porter** and **Sig** 'Nobby' **Styles** adopted the position of ship covers and missed out on the detour past the nudist beach (although this did save confusion on whose turn it was on the Binos!) On arrival back at Kiel we had to clean the boat from top to bottom, pulpit to cockpit, in what can only be described as 'the worst march out of an Army Quarter EVER!!'

In summary both groups thoroughly enjoyed themselves; Group 1 experiencing the whole spectrum of weathers and Group 2 experiencing.... Sunbathing! So thank you *Quicksilver*!!

MOTOR TRANSPORT TROOP
MTO **Capt Kev Jones**

With TUV over it has been a relatively quiet time for the Troop, allowing ample time to get in that much needed training. This included Driver Training Light with **Cpl Betts** in a fleet of Landrover TDIs and Mercedes Benz Galanders, which went very well until **LCpl** 'Recker' **McDougall** managed to lose control on a difficult ascent and make **Cpl Betts'** day. **Sig Osborne** of MT Troop has recently represented the Squadron in the Minor Units' Athletic Championship, Germany, which put him in good stead for a Fourth place in the 5000 metres in the Minor Units' Championship, UK. As most of you know, these days a tour or two is not that uncommon and this is certainly the case for the Troop, with its' ongoing commitments in Bosnia. The MT is now preparing for a late September deployment to Kosovo with Out-Dets located in Greece, Albania and Macedonia. We are looking forward to putting into practice the training we have done over the past few months. Good luck and farewell to **Sig Ross Phillips**, who is posted to 20 Armd Bde, and **Sig Charlie Lister**, who has departed for Northern Ireland.

ADVENTURE TRAINING, BAVARIA 24 – 29 JULY 1999

After finding out that the whole Squadron is to deploy to Kosovo and a highly intensive ITD week, it came as a great relief for the Squadron to carry out Adventure Training in Bavaria. Headed by **2Lt** 'All the Gear...' **Higgs**, several members of the Squadron set off to Weitnau, Bavaria for four days of activities, including kayaking, rock climbing and hill walking. The week's activities were blessed by glorious sunshine and the blossoming love of **Sig** 'Sleepy Head' **Crothers** and **Sig** 'Daddy' **Foulkes**. **Pte** 'Dr Doolittle' **Lane** managed to find something 'small and fluffy' to keep the guys happy – a local farmer was breeding deer. The kayakers, consisting of **SSgt Weavers**, **LCpl Grant**, **Sig James** and **Sig Wildridge** kept themselves busy on the water, with the latter three gaining their Level 1 proficiency. The walking took place in Sonthofen, around the Nebelhorn, where **Sig** 'Too Slow, I'm Bored' **Ryall**, took to the pace as if it was the Lanyard Trophy, whilst all other participants preferred to admire the view and bimble along taking in the fresh air. The evenings were spent relaxing in the lodge with a few party tricks from the likes of **Cpl** 'Dreamboy' **Icke** and **Cpl** 'Wannabe' **Teasdale**, who entertained with a dance routine adapted from 'The Full Monty'. The week was a great success until the drive home, when **Sig Ryall** and **Sig Wildridge** relaxed a bit too much and decided a demolition derby was more fun in mini buses than in go-karts.

COMMUNICATION SUPPORT SECTION
Tp Comd **Capt Dave Stewart**

FAREWELLS, ARRIVALS & THANK YOU

First of all we have some goodbyes, in order of departure: **Sig Omar Sherriff**, who is probably putting another shrimp on the barbi half way around the world, (G'DAY MATE). **LCpl Si** 'Ewok' **Harris,** off to sunny Paderborn, and even sunnier Banja Luka after his Leadership course. **Cpl Tony Caban** who has left to take up a civilian ADP job in The Hague. Now is the time to buy shares in Dutch breweries. Finally **LCpl** 'Mac' **McGlinchey** and his wife **Raffaela**; best of luck in his new career here in Germany. Keep an eye out for him at Dusseldorf Airport. Just one this time: welcome to **Cpl** 'F-H' **Featherstonehaugh** and family who join us

from C Tp after another tour of Bosnia. His main task at present is trying to get the better of NT4 and give the Squadron a reliable internet connection. A Thank you goes to **SSgt (FofS)** 'Lumberjack' **Griffiths** for a fun day out at his new house, pulling out trees. The barbecue was good as well.

EXERCISE COMBINED ENDEAVOUR

The beginning of June saw the end of another NATO exercise. 32 nations assembled in Baumholde, close to Luxembourg, to carry out interfacing trials. Comms Support Section was out in force supplying what was probably the last deployment of the RMA trunk system. The Exercise lasted for three weeks, with a great deal of technical and social interfacing carried out. The Section OC, **Capt Dave Stewart**, found out during the final evening that Rumanian plum brandy is pretty strong stuff! The prize of highest national flag went to this Squadron who attached a Union Jack to a kite and positioned it above the 30 metre French Airforce Mast.

FURTHER SQUADRON ATHLETICS SUCCESS AT THE BA(G) & ARMY CHAMPIONSHIPS

With the Morrison Cup victory still freshly embedded within the athletes' minds, the team travelled up to Sennelager to compete in the British Forces (Germany) Athletics Championship on 26 June 1999. Due to the amount of teams entered for this championship, both the Major and Minor Units were informed that the winning teams would be selected to represent BF (G) in the army team finals. The scoring of the championships proved to be a problem due to the lack of teams entered, as no matter how much better an athlete was than his opponent, the opposition always came second! It became apparent quite quickly that 3 Fd Amb RAMC were not here just to make up the numbers. Throughout the morning the local unit won every event, leaving 280 with all the work to do. It was during the break that the younger athletes within the team realised it's not such a good idea to drink alcohol the night before an athletics championship! After a serious tactical team talk, the competition recommenced with **Sig Les Ryall** running a great race to win the 800 metres. The winning trend stayed with 280 with superb athletic feats by **Sgt's Trev McSween** and **Ned Kelly**. With only the 400 x 400 metres relay to run, 3 Armd Fd Amb realised that the visiting unit was to be going home with the silverware.

THE GRAND FINALE!!
ARMY INTER UNIT TEAM ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIP 1999

The 21 July 1999 saw the team enter into the final battle of the gladiators. This would be the ultimate victory, and of course complete the treble. The players of Manchester United received £500,000 each bonus for completing such a great achievement. What would it bring us?! It was a fine summer's day, the Stadium had recently received a major face lift and was looking more spectacular than ever. With eight major units entered the stage had been set for a magnificent competition. The team was quietly confident after a couple of weeks intense altitude training in the UK. The event kicked off with a tremendous win in the Hammer for **Cpl Barny Barnett**, unfortunately this was followed by some unforeseen shock defeats on the track (mention no names, **Sgt McSween**)! The teams hopes of winning were kept alive with **Sgt** 'Vinny' **Vincent** winning all his events, and another fine performance which saw **Sig Les Ryall** battle his way into a well deserved Third in the 800 metres. Throughout the day the Minor Units competition was a very closely fought battle between HQ 4 Div, AFC Harrogate and 280 (UK) Sig Sqn. Brave displays by **Sig** 'Ossy' **Osborne** and **Mat Baber** were to no avail, as HQ 4 Div over powered us by a very influential one point to gain victory. Overall this has been a admirable team performance and it is a great honour to be part of the Squadron's most successful athletics team to date.



The all Conquering Athletics Team

DEFENCE ELECTRONIC WARFARE CENTRE (ARMY ELEMENT) RAF WADDINGTON

Snr Army Offr **Maj (Tfc (R)) D. P. Dolling MBE**
Warrant Officer **WO1 (Supvr R) W. Corner**

A fairly busy period on the operational support side of life has not stopped the Army continuing to make their presence felt around the station, despite our small numbers. **Sgt Bridget Jukes** organised a highly successful 12 hour sponsored step, which was well supported not only by ourselves, but the rest of the DEWC and RAF Waddington station. BBC Radio Lincolnshire gave air coverage to the event and Lincoln City Football Club also sent two players along to be put through their paces, although both declined claiming their insurance was invalid. They could possibly have been put off after witnessing the 'beasting' **Sgt Jukes** was administering to the 'volunteers'! A sum in the region of 2000 pounds was raised for local charities. Meanwhile, **Sgt Danny O'Neill** and **Cpl Andy Bush** are set to take part in the Lyke Wake Walk charity challenge between the DEWC and RAF Leuchers. The walk covers 42 miles across the North Yorkshire Moors from Osmotherly to Robin Hoods Bay. It must be completed in 24 hours, but the challenge is for the fastest time possible.

CONGRATULATIONS, WELCOMES & FAREWELLS

Congratulations go out to **Maj Dolling** on his 'promotion' to substantive Major and also to **Cpl Lee** 'the Gut' **Ghaut** on selection for promotion to Sergeant. The promotion drinks have already gone down in legend despite most that were present being unable to remember the night itself! **Lee** now leaves us to take up a post as a trade training instructor at DSSS Chicksands. Welcome to **Cpl** (Sgt to be) **Tel** 'Crossword King' **Gardiner** and his wife **Gail**. Welcome back that is as he has only been gone 18 months! Rumour has it that he couldn't hack it in the real world! Congratulations on your promotion **Tel** and good to see Blackburn Rovers back were they belong as well! Soon to leave us is **Sgt Danny O'Neill,** who has managed to get himself posted to NATO MEWSG (LAND DET) and has the prospect of two years in Italy to look forward to!

AN/APR-39AM 4 RAF WADDINGTON 12-16 JULY 1999

The AN/APR 39A (V) 4 Radar Warning Receiver Course took place at the Defence Electronic Warfare Centre RAF Waddington in July. The course was sponsored by GKN Westland and run on their behalf by SRI International under the direction of the American Electronic Warfare Centre (AEWC) based at Elgin Air Force Base Florida. The AN/APR 39A (V) 4 will be fitted to the first 9 WAH-64 (Apache) helicopters. A total of eight Army personnel took part which included five members of the Royal Signals (Tele Op (Spec)) and three from the Army Air Corps, all based at the DEWC. Royal Signals personnel presently support the Army Air Corps and Royal Navy Radar Warning Receivers and will make a major contribution towards supporting the Helicopter Integrated Defensive Aid Suite (HIDAS) which will eventually be fitted to the Army Air Corps fleet of WAH64.



Rear row (L-R): Sgt O'Neill, Cpl Shepherd, Sgt Gill, Cpl Bush, Cpl Ghaut; Sgt McKean
Front row (L-R): WO2 Wiltshire, Pete McGrew (AEWC), Cy Pambeuna (AEWC), Brian Todoroff (AEWC), WO2 Coleman

EXERCISE CLIFFHANGER

Ex Cliffhanger was an Adventurous Training week undertaken by members of the Army Element from the DEWC in the Cairngorms. The aim of the week was to give personnel the opportunity to conduct various outdoor activities. It was also an all too rare chance for us to get together and get away from 'the building' for a week. Nine members of the unit plus two RAF Expedition Leaders set off from Lincoln on Monday 26 April. After an 8-hour haul up to Kingussie, we eventually made it in one piece, despite the efforts of **Sgt Martin** 'Michael Schumacher' **Gill** to frighten the life out of the passengers in his mini-bus. As is customary on these occasions, one or two individuals felt it was time to 'reece' the local refreshment joints. Our RAF counterparts, however, had other plans. When they informed us that we would be going for an evening walk around one of the lochs in order to 'shake off the legs', there were various responses. **Sgt Andy** 'Its just a scratch' **Barber** suggested everyone should search the floor for the plot they seemed to have lost! He later vented his anger by crashing the mini bus as we approached the start point of the walk! After a quick 'speed-tab' around the loch, we swapped drivers for someone who could drive and made it back in time to taste the local brew! Tuesday was down to business. Everyone was given the opportunity to have a go at abseiling and various climbs that were set up, some harder than others. **Sgt Martin Gill** defied his age and his figure and flew up the rocks like Spiderman, whilst others were not so keen. **Sgt Danny** 'I love nature' **O'Neill** fooled no one, by claiming there was nothing to it. This was after he had his hands surgically removed from the supporting tree in order to begin his abseil! That evening we went out once again to one of the many lochs, this time to practice or in some cases, learn open canoeing techniques. Once everyone had mastered the skills it turned into a free-for-all attempt to 'attack' each other and tip the occupants into the freezing loch. Top marks went to **Sgt's O'Neill** and **Barber** for the sporting way in which they flung themselves in after seemingly escaping the hunting pack! Wednesday saw our merry band split into two groups. Some went up into the Caimgorms to 'play in the snow' as the instructors put it. The rest departed with **Maj Dave** 'Dangerous' **Dolling** for Ben Nevis. **Sgt Danny O'Neill** had convinced both himself and one or two other individuals in the pub the previous night that this was surely the easy option as there were no real mountains in Britain, only big hills! It would be a stroll he proclaimed! All this from someone who had never seen Ben Nevis! **Maj Dolling** assured the instructors and convinced (or is that fooled?) the group that he would take us up the tourist route, as the group contained mainly beginners. We were 'corrected' as we stood at the foot of the 'mountain' and informed we would try a more challenging route. 'Up that hill, over that ridge, little bit of a climb; right, follow me men!' Everyone felt a sense of achievement at the top. There were many memorable moments, in particular **Sgt O'Neill** once again displaying his love of all things natural by clinging to rocks for dear life every time the group stopped to rest! **Sgt Martin** 'No sense, no fear' **Gill** managed to make everyone else nervous by hopping from rock to rock as though he were playing hopscotch whilst crossing 'the ridge'.

On Thursday, the group was reunited for a day's mountain biking. The two expedition leaders had drawn up a route for us to negotiate. All 45km



of it! **Sgt Martin Gill** quickly displayed his level of biking expertise by demanding a vehicle fitted with stabilisers! The route turned out to be both demanding but enjoyable, with everyone managing to complete it. As is inevitable, challenges were thrown down, and it turned into a bit of a race between certain members. **Sgt Danny** 'Competitive Dad' **O'Neill** took this to heart and pushed himself to his physical limits in an attempt to stay ahead of whom he thought was a chasing pack of **Maj Dave Dolling** and **Cpl Lee** 'Dinger' **Ghaut** on the last leg. If only he had looked behind, he would have realised he was well clear of the rest of the group, his bet was safe and he was in fact being pushed along by **Flt Lt Clifford** who happened to be an experienced and very good mountain biker! Friday saw the final day of activities and we headed to a start point on the River Spey to begin a 6-mile course down river. Tuesday night's practice had been useful and our merry band of canoeing experts set off. Some found the course easier than others, with **Sgt Martin Gill** in particular having to work extremely hard. With shouts of 'More power **Martin,**' coming from his fellow crewman, **Maj Dolling,** he paddled with all his worth, not being one to disobey orders. Rumour has it that the Major proceeded to lie back. crack open a bottle of vintage champagne and munch on grapes whilst admiring the surrounding countryside, but this remains unfounded! Once again. **Sgts O'Neill** and **Barber** decided it was far too easy doing the course in the canoe and proceeded to tip themselves into the river at every possible opportunity. After cleaning up the hostel and packing on Saturday, a final night out was had in nearby Aviemore. I am sure everyone will extend thanks to the two RAF expedition leaders, who ensured we had a full week of first class activities to keep us busy. Finally, we mustn't forget **Cpl Lee** 'Gut' **Ghaut** who spent months of stress, phone calls, panic and more phone calls, arranging and co-ordinating the exercise on behalf of **Maj Dolling**.

THE ROYAL SIGNALS ASSOCIATION IS NOW ON THE INTERNET
www.royalsignals.army.org.uk/museum/

NEWS FROM THE TROOPS

600 SIGNAL TROOP

EXERCISE RAW IRON

Ex Raw Iron was a 600 Sig Tp Adventure Training Exercise which took place in the Lake District between the period 4-9 July 1999. Eight of the ten participants were from the Troop with the remaining two being selected from RSIT and the Corsham Hub. The party was accommodated at Denton House in Keswick, which has recently changed hands and is now owned by the Adventure Company. The week's activities included Hill walking, canoeing, mountain biking and rock climbing/abseiling, all of which were conducted around the Keswick area.



The party pictured at Glenridding, the start of their fell walk
(L-R): Sgt Dave Doody, SSgt Kev Wosika, Cpl Tara Dancey,
WO2 (FofS) Mick Campbell, LCpl Sharon Blythe,
SSgt Chris Gouldson, SSgt (FofS) Dave Petty,
Sgt Paul Hughes, SSgt (Yofs) Nige Richards,
OC 600 Sig Tp Maj Alan Eames

MONDAY 5 JULY - HILL WALKING - *by SSgt (YofS) Richards*

The Hill Walking took place on Monday 5 July 1999, with **WO2 (FofS) Mick Campbell** the UEL taking charge during his last working week in the Army. The aim was to climb Helvellyn (950m) and some of its lesser brethren. Although the route taken was only 15km in length, the steep gradients and track conditions made it seem much longer. Added to this the day was bright and sunny with temperatures in the mid twenties Celsius, which made the pace slow but steady. The OC was soon to discover that hours spent on a step machine had not paid off.

The ascent provided a challenge to all personnel, whether it was the climb, the conditions underfoot or the concentration necessary to traverse Striding Edge with a hundred metre drop either side. A lunch break was taken at the summit, during which **SSgt (FofS) Dave Petty** took the opportunity to use his mobile and inform his wife that he was in the precise location where marriage had been proposed some six years earlier. However, to 'phone' her in front of an audience was probably less than wise. The route back was longer but thankfully easier, with some stunning views and beautiful weather, we descended with the agility of mountain goats. The day ended with the party being dragged forcibly into a pub by some Australian cousins. It was a good day to be serving Queen and Country.



The Team pictured at the summit of Helvellyn with two cheerful tourists who wished to remain anonymous, as they weren't meant to be there

TUESDAY 6 JULY - MOUNTAIN BIKING - *by Sgt Hughes*

The Mountain Bike route consisted of a 22 mile circuit starting and ending at Denton House. The outset began with a gradual climb before following contours, which finally had us descending back into Keswick. On paper, the trail appeared to be 'kids stuff'. However the outward climb soon left the smooth tarmac roads and paths, becoming a rocky arduous trek occasionally forcing the keen bikers to revert to the use of their feet. The route passed a stone circle just outside Keswick, continued through the village of Threkeld, up a mountainous climb, passing the Blencartha Centre. This is where the route became arduous, following an old mining track along the hillside of Blease Fell, with a fine view to the left overlooking Glenderaterra Beck and Lonscale Fell. The track then wound its way up and along until Skiddaw House could be seen in the distance.

Having stopped for lunch at Skiddaw House and socialised with the local sheep the journey began to reap the benefits of such hard work earlier on. Whatever goes up must come down, and down the daredevil bikers did, flying through the rock and debris tracks leading through Dead Crags and Little Calva. With adrenaline flowing the now hardened bikers took to the easygoing tarmac roads and cruised on to meet the A591. From hereon the descent into Keswick disappeared effortlessly into the sunny Cumbrian afternoon, with the World land speed record safely intact. On reaching Keswick a leisurely cycle through the town centre admiring the local views and allowing afternoon shoppers to feast their eyes on some of UK's finest mountain bikers, ended back at Denton House amidst conversations about saddle sores.

WEDNESDAY 7 JULY - CANOEING - *by SSgt Gouldson.*

Having completed the initial safety training prior to the adventure training we could proceed with **Cpl Tara Dancey** (RAF) onto the more interesting aspects of canoeing. For once we didn't have the usual let's get you wet to demonstrate what fun it is, thank God. We started the day by practising a few recovery strokes. They were soon needed as I had a canoe with a left-hand bias, it may have been my paddling but I'm convinced it was the boat. Both blue canoes had this problem, just as you built up a head of steam you would suddenly without reason veer off to the left.

We then went out onto Derwent Water and canoed around a couple of islands, landing on one to claim it for Queen and country, oh and had a coffee for good measure. Having satisfied our imperial aspirations and bodily needs we went back to base camp for lunch. For the afternoon's expedition we canoed across the lake and up the River Derwent, at this stage we practised for the circus, standing up and paddling or like myself falling in as soon as I stood up. The thought was enough to make me roll over. **Cpl Tara Dancey** then demonstrated the Eskimo roll with the help of **Sgt Dave Doody**, who enjoyed it so much he kept on going. He would come out of one roll and immediately proceed straight into another, this completing an excellent day's activity.



The newly acclaimed Royal Signals Red Helmet Display Team demonstrating their skills,
so what if the canoes were touching the bottom of the lake
(L-R): Maj Alan Eames, SSgt (YofS) Nige Richards,
SSgt (FofS) Dave Petty, SSgt Kev Wosika, Cpl Tara Dancey

THURSDAY 8 JULY - CLIMBING/ABSEILING

by SSgt (FofS) Petty

Cpl Tara Dancey and a couple of all too willing volunteers deployed early to Shepherds Crag in order to claim a stake on what has become a very popular and busy rock-climbing location. Aided by a 'Climbing in Borrowdale' book purchased locally and many years of experience **Cpl Dancey** soon erected two single pitched climbs. Although single pitch, the climbs soon had me wishing I'd visited the toilet earlier. During the day **SSgt (Yofs) Richards** and myself came to the conclusion that we were slowly being eaten alive by tiny Lakeland midges. We later retreated to Keswick and purchased the worlds strongest insect repellent, returning smiling, we dared the midges to bite us now.

On our return **Maj Eames** impressed us with his climbing ability, proving that he could still teach the younger members of the group a thing or two. **SSgt (YofS) Richards,** however, proved to be the climbing star and was later nicknamed spider, although not having eight legs he did claim a third, which left the remainder of us somewhat bemused. All members of the party successfully attempted both climbs at least once. However, it was soon apparent that civilian climbers were encroaching from all angles. For one final adrenaline rush **Cpl Dancey** erected an abseil which each member of the party descended with varying degrees of prowess. With the equipment packed, the group sadly departed the location of the week's final activity.



Sgt Dave Doody wishing he'd visited the toilet earlier at Shepherds Crag in Borrowdale Valley

NEWS FROM THE CADETS

ROYAL SIGNALS SUPPORT CADET FORCE SIGNALLING

Many will be aware that the Royal Signals support Cadet Force signalling through being advisors to some 277 Cadet Signal Platoons throughout the British Isles. What may not be so well known is that during the Easter and Summer school holidays a number of Cadet courses are included in the established programme of the Royal School of Signals. The aim of these courses is to upgrade Cadets and Cadet Instructors. On a three year cycle Cadet Instructors, of all ranks, meet in a Symposium to discuss their problems, exchange solutions and to generally inform and update. The next Symposium being 19-21 November 1999. The Cadet Instructors courses this year have covered Basic Signalling, both line and Radio, as well as separate courses for those responsible for Commanding a Cadet Signal platoon.



Cadet Force Instructors learn the ropes

MERSEYSIDE ARMY CADETS
RETURN FROM ONE OF THEIR LARGEST CAMPS FOR MANY YEARS

In the depths of the beautiful Northumberland National Park, during the warmest weather of the year so far, 500 Army Cadets from Merseyside have just enjoyed a thrilling, action packed 12 days at their Annual Camp. Together with 150 of their Adult Instructors and Officers and supported by some 50 other adult staff, the boys and girls have taken part in Cadet military training on the Otterburn Army Training Area, expeditions, and adventure training activities at the Scout Association centre at Kellder Water. Their Commandant, **Col Amlot** said, 'The Cadets have loved it. It has been a great challenge to get it set up and run for so many but every one of the 12 days have been rewarding. I am grateful to all my staff who have done a splendid job. I am also very grateful for the level of support that our friends in Merseyside and in Northumberland have given to us. However, most of all I take my hat off to the marvellous young men and women of Merseyside, our cadets who have risen to every challenge that we have put in front of them and overcome them in style. They are a credit to their families and to Merseyside.'

At the farewell parade on 10 August, after five years service as Commandant, **Col Amlot** handed over to his successor, **Col Ian Thomson**. **Col Thomson** lives in Formby and is a Principal Inspector with the Offshore Safety Division of the Health and Safety Executive. He has served with the Territorial Army for the last 32 years and the Army Cadet Force for the last three.



Cpl Attea Houghton (16) delighted at passing a parachute course proudly shows off her parachute badge

SUSSEX ARMY CADET FORCE
ANNUAL CAMP (1999) ST. MARTIN'S PLAIN

By Lt Col R. D. Newton MBE FISM AMIPR

Sussex Army Cadet Force's highlight of the training year and main event had arrived, we were off to Annual Camp! 255 Cadets, male and female, plus 34 Officers and 50SNCOs arrived at Camp, having travelled by coach, from all parts of Sussex. This was to be the first Annual Camp for many Cadets. Our last visit to St Martin's Plain Camp was five years ago. As usual our busy training wing, led by **Maj David Rusbridger**, had arranged a wide variety of training, using to the full the many benefits of first class military and adventurous training facilities offered by Annual Camp. The training package included mountain bikes, assault courses, 22 shooting, air rifle shooting, canoeing, watermanship, climbing, first-aid training, abseiling, military skills, progress in the Army Proficiency Certificate (APC), lots of sport and of course, I must not forget to mention, the very tasty 'happy bags' haversack rations. The food proved to be of a high standard with the cadets having a large number of choices for each meal. Also the NAAFI was a big hit with the Cadets, having a very large screen video and TV to show films, on their few nights off. O n e

of the many highlights of Camp was the two-day Exercises using the large training areas at Folkstone. The cadets had great fun putting into practice the skills learnt during the rest of the year. It was for many their first taste of living under the stars. The training programme designed to bring out newly acquired skills resulted in many Cadets returning from Camp sporting new star badges and promotions on their brazzards.

Our Camp notes would not be complete without expressing our thanks for the tremendous efforts made on our behalf by **2Lt Don Sweeney** from the 1st Battalion Princess of Wales Royal Regiment and his Platoon Staff, whose contribution made the Camp so enjoyable and such fun, we are all very grateful to them. A number of distinguished visitors attended camp and saw many of the different activities taking place. See TAVR **Brig John Holman CBE DL**, our Honorary Colonel **Sir Brian Bartalott BL OBE DL**, **Brig T. J. Minter OBE** Commander 2 South East Brigade, **Col P. C. Cook** Commandant Frimley Park Training Centre, **Maj Ian Jones** 2 Brigade, **Maj G. Bartlett** SE ACF Regional Press and Public Relations Advisor. They all left our Camp delighted to see so many Cadets enjoying themselves and were very impressed by the enthusiasm and courtesy in the manner in which they responded to questions asked. At the end of Camp we enjoyed our usual penultimate day's Presentation Parade, again a sizeable array of silverware and prizes was presented by our Commandant, **Col Chris Blessington JP**. This Camp was the last Annual Camp for **Col Chris** as he is retiring at the end of the year, after five years as Commandant with Sussex ACF. Without doubt our Cadets returned to Sussex all the better for good training, good sport, good fun and good fellowship and are ready to crack on with their local training with even greater enthusiasm.

ROLL ON CAMP 2000!

THE SOUTH WEST LONDON ARMY CADET FORCE

South West London Army Cadet Force has long had associations with the Royal Signals through 31 Signal Regiment, both in Earlsfield and Coulsdon, with the first Detachments affiliated in the early 1960's. Over 30 years later **Cdt Cpl Elliott Walker** of 153 Detachment in Sutton earned the distinction of passing out of the top Four Star Cadet's Course at Napier Barracks, Shorncliffe, during Summer Camp, and is here seen being inspected by the Cadet Commandant, **Col David Leech**. **Elliott** comes from nearby Hackbridge, once the home of a Squadron of 31 Signal Regiment until the cuts in the late 1960's.

For over three years he has travelled two nights a week, over five miles to the best Cadet Detachment around, as he puts it, ignoring a more local Cadet Detachment that is not badged Royal Signals!! — Many will know that the Cadet Forces provide some 25% of the Army recruit intake each year, staffed as they are by volunteers from all walks of life. Ex soldiers are, of course, most welcome, and their expertise in both signalling matters and general infantry work are a valuable resource.



SPORT

SNOWBOARDING

ARMY SNOWBOARDING CHAMPIONSHIPS 22-25 MAY 1999

by Sgt Dom Graham

The first Army Snowboard championships took place between 22-25 May 1999 at the all year resort of Stubai, Austria. The competition started with a large number of competitors having problems getting into Austria due to the fact the region was having the worst floods for 20 years. This delay meant most of the competitors had to miss the first day's training. The first morning of the competition was allocated to training as many of the participants had never been on a slalom course, let alone racing on one. The afternoon saw all competitors competing in a race-off, to gain their seeding positions for the main competition. The standard for the competition was between expert and novice with most riders having snowboarded before. This made for excellent racing and after the first run, only a few seconds separated the top 15 places.



Army Competitors at the start of the Slalom Race course

The second run saw a different course and individuals going in the reverse order depending on their first run times. After the second run all competitors had both times added together to give an overall time. This then reflected an average position. Like the first run, the top 15 were again close with a small mistake being the difference between several places. The top places came from individuals from AA College Arborfield and Engineer units stationed in Germany, with the only Royal Signals entrant, **Sgt** 'Dom' **Graham,** in 11th place.

The Boarder X was the last race, this involved participants racing head to head with three other riders for a knock out style competition. Racing was quick and fun with jumps, turns and the odd table top for individuals to negotiate before a sprint to the line. 35 Engineer Regiment followed by AA college Arborfield won the team events. This year saw no Royal Signals' teams compete. All participants enjoyed competing for the first time, with most looking forward to next year's events.

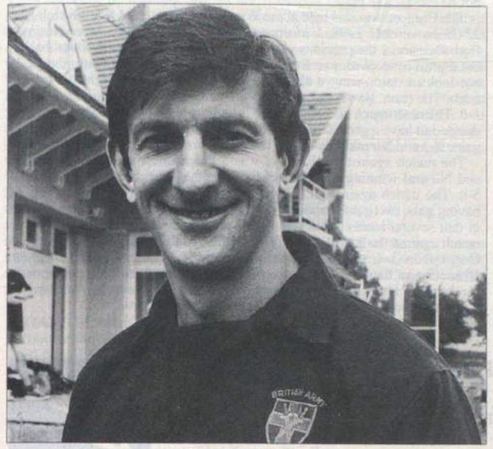
As snowboarding is a popular sport it is expected next year's competition will have even more competitors and teams enter, thus making racing even more competitive. As the Corps does not have a snowboard team to compete next year, it is intended to hold a training camp later in the year for individuals who are interested in snowboarding. Anyone who is interested in competing at next year's Army championships should contact **Sgt** 'Dom' **Graham** for further details. All levels of ability are welcome. The contact number is Blandford mil 2585 or you could write to him direct at FCS Troop, Area systems Group, Blandford Camp, DORSET DT11 8RH.



RUGBY

WIDNES SOLDIER IN BUDAPEST 'SEVENS'

SSgt Bob Vowles, from Widnes, has just returned to his unit in Germany after playing in a Rugby 'Sevens' competition in Budapest, Hungary. **Bob** (32) is a member of the British Army (Germany) team which, having been invited by the Hungarian Rugby Union, went on to win the two-day competition, beating Moldovia by 28 points to 4 in the final. **Bob**, whose parents **Frank** and **Norah** still live in Widnes, joined the Royal Corps of Signals in 1983 and has seen service in Namibia, USA, France, the Bahamas, Cyprus, Bosnia, Australia, Spain and Canada. He is currently serving with 16 Sig Regt at their base near Monchengladbach in northern Germany, where he and his wife **Jenny** live with their children **Mathew** and **Isobel**. In addition to being a top-class rugby player he is a keen athlete, yet he has also managed to find time to complete a BSc degree in Engineering! The British Army (G) rugby team is now taking a short break before training for the next season begins. **Bob**, and the other members of the squad, is looking forward to playing in the Munich 'Beer Festival Sevens' and the Singapore International Sevens in November.



SSgt Bob Vowles

ROYAL SIGNALS SPRINT AND MARATHON CANOEING 1999

How better to celebrate Princess Royal Day than in glorious sunshine on the River Wye in Monmouth? That is exactly how 30 officers and soldiers of the Royal Corps earned their pay over the period 28 June-4 July 1999! Of course this was not simply a holiday, but a Corps Canoe training camp preparing our soldiers for the Army Championships. Expectations were running high, with 1(UK) Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt hoping to retain the Senior Marathon Novice Trophy and a strong team from the Royal Military College of Science aiming to gain much invaluable advice from the training camp. All competitors live under canvas on the ideal Vauxhall training camp in Monmouth. Being within five minutes walk of both the River Wye and the beautiful town centre the Camp is perfectly located for a successful and enjoyable week. Throughout the week racing advice was given (almost free of charge) by **Capt David Drinkall** (HQ 2(NC) Sig Bde) and **LCpls** 'Rich' **Astridge** (30 Sig Regt) and 'Digger' **Blake** (33 EOD). The training was based upon racing kayaks and much encouragement was given to the 1 Div crowd to convert from general-purpose kayaks into racing boats. On the Saturday the Army Sprint Championships took place over distances of 500 and 1000m. Results worthy of particular note were those of **LCpl** 'Rich' **Astridge** who won a gold medal in all his races, both single and double! Rich therefore is promoted to Div A. **SSgt Chris Lloyd** (3(UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt) won a silver medal in both his events and **Maj Mark Edwards** (PJHQ) won a silver and bronze in the doubles events. Also successful were **Cpl Dave Thomas** (264(SAS) Sig Sqn) and **Sig Neale Climpson** (30 Sig Regt). **Dave** won a gold medal in the 500 K1 Div C race and combined with **Neale** to gain gold in the K2 500m race and a silver in the 1000m race. **Capt John Collyer** not only led the RMCS team to a decisive victory but also managed to gain two bronze medals in the K2 events. **Sigs Craddock** and **Moore** (1 Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt) also earn a mention as they gained gold medals in both the Ladies 500m K2 race and Class 4 event.

AT Carlyon (AAC Arborfield) displayed excellent potential gaining a silver medal in the Junior Class 5 event, watch this space! In the team competition 1 Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt gained Third place in the Senior Novice Trophy. After a night of 'carbohydrate loading' the R SIGNALS personnel were well prepared for an excellent marathon race. Depending on Div, the marathon event is over a course of between 8 and 12 miles, which includes half up-stream, not to mention the swans! **Astridge** and **Edwards** took silver and bronze medals in the Div B K2 events, with **Thomas/Climpson** taking a silver in the Div C event. **Lloyd** stormed to take gold in the Div B K1 race with the excellent style expected of a veteran! The RMCS team convincingly won the Senior Marathon Cup. In the novice classes, **2Lt Stuart Gunson** took the gold medal in the Class 5 race and led his team to an outstanding victory, thus achieving his aim! Well done 1 Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt. Overall, the training camp was an outstanding success with the following personnel being selected for the Army Squad:

Maj Mark Edwards	PJHQ
Capt John Collyer	RMCS
SSgt Chris Lloyd	3(UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt
Cpl Dave Thomas	264 (SAS) Sig Sqn
LCpl Rich Astridge	30 Sig Regt
Sig Neale Climpson	30 Sig Regt
Sig Kizzy Craddock	1 Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt
Sig Alison Moore	1 Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt

In addition, **Capt David Drinkall** (2 (NC) Sig Bde), **Lt Annabel Taylor** (7 Sig Regt) and **Sig Nicola Burnip** (1 Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt) retain their positions within the Squad. R SIGNALS now have the strongest contingent within the Army Squad. The Squad members will now all be invited to the Army Training Camp where selection takes place to decide the Army Team that will compete at the Inter-Services Sprint and Marathon Canoe Championships. The Championships will take place over the period 3 – 5 September 1999 at The International Water Sports Centre, Holme Pierre Pont, Nottingham when the Army Team hope to retain both the Sprint and Marathon trophies! Good luck goes to the team and in particular those members of R Signals competing for the Army, but remember Canoeing in the Army does not simply involve competitions but also includes recreation, instruction and expeditions! For further information on Canoeing contact **Capt David Drinkall** at HQ 2 (NC) Sig Bde on Corsham Mil 4213.



R Signals personnel selected for Army Canoe Squad 1999 (L-R): Capt David Drinkall, Sig Neale Climpson, SSgt Chris Lloyd, LCpl Rich Astridge, Cpl Dave Thomas and Maj Mark Edwards (not pictured is Capt John Collyer)



Swimming lessons with a Canoe Instructor with an Army Youth Team at Conniston



LCpl Alf Redshaw demonstrates canoeing at Matlock

SQUASH

ROYAL SIGNALS SQUASH CHAMPIONSHIPS 1998

Last year's Royal Signals Squash Championships were again held at Blandford Camp 17 to 20 November 1998. It was very well supported with a final total of 38 players including two females and six teams. The overall standard of squash was higher than previous years despite the loss of some regular Corps players with a few new players making their presence felt notably **2Lt Bates** and **2Lt Gardener**. The open competition proved to be very competitive and went according to the seedings up until the semi-finals. **Sgt Dave Gallagher** had a relatively easy route to his place in the final beating **SSgt Dick** in the quarter final 9-5 9-0 9-1 and **SSgt Nirmal** in the semi-final 10-8 9-7 9-0. His opponent was to be **2Lt Olly Gardener** who overcame **Sgt Ian Piers** in the quarter final 9-3 9-7 9-5 and **WO2 FofS Steve Bason** in the semi final 9-3 9-4 9-5. The final was won in straight games 10-8 9-6 9-6, with **Sgt Dave Gallagher** being pushed every step of the way. His reign as the Corps Number One may soon be over.

The Plate competition consisted of all those players losing in Rounds One and Two and proved to be more exciting than the open competition.

The standard of player was more evenly matched which led to many matches being decided in the fifth game and in some cases the final point. **WO2 Stan Stanford** was one of the main culprits and decided on winning most of all his matches on his way to the final 3-2. The other finalist **SSgt FofS Mick Swift** was no different. The final was again won in straight games by **Mick Swift** 9-2 9-1 9-0 but then he is 15 years younger than **Stan** who was just to tired to make any impression.

The Over 35 competition was a straight forward win for **WO2 FofS Yam** beating **WO2 FofS Adrian Woodley** 9-3 9-5 9-5. In the team competition two units stood out amongst the rest, 21 Signal Regiment and the Royal School of Signals both putting in very strong teams. The winners were to be the Royal School of Signals consisting of **2Lt Olly Gardener, SSgt Nirmal** and **Capt Blair Mitchell** winning two matches to one.

The four days of Squash at Blandford were excellent and congratulations goes to all those who reached the finals and who turned up to play in the competition.

INTER CORPS SQUASH

The players selected to represent the Corps in the Inter Corps championships were:

No1 **Sgt Gallagher**
No2 **WO2 FofS Bason**
No3 **SSgt Nirmal**
No4 **WO2 FofS Yam**
No5 **Sgt Piers**

The other players selected were **2Lt Gardener** and **2Lt Bates** but could not be released to play.

The Competition was held at the Winchester Tennis and Squash club from 23-25 November 1998. Unfortunately the Royal Signals were relegated from Division 1 the previous year so the aim was to gain promotion back to the top division. With just five players to play, in a 5-man team, things did not look too promising with other teams fielding up to eight players per team. The team, however, started well beating the Royal Artillery 'A' team 5-0. The next match was against the Infantry 'A' team and **Dave Gallagher** decided to have a groin strain and lost his match 3-0. With **Yam** winning his game 3-2 and **Nirmal** winning 3-1, the team eventually won the match 4-1.

The match against the RLC W was a tough one with **Dave Gallagher** and **Nirmal** winning their games 3-2 and the team beating the RLC 'B' 5-0. The match against REME 'B' was won 4-1 with **Nirmal** losing 3-2 having gone two games up. The final day threw up all sorts of permutations in that several teams could win the division and gain promotion. The first match against the Royal Artillery W team was to be our hardest which the Corps won 3-2, and a 5-0 victory over the Int Corps gave the team promotion to division 1. The team are congratulated on there performance for winning Division 2 giving next year's team a chance to win the Inter Corps title, something Royal Signals have never achieved.

THE ROYAL SIGNALS YACHT CLUB

Admiral	**Brig C. J. Burton OBE**
Commodore	**Col D. J. Lowe**
Vice Commodore	**Maj D. C. A. Ellis**
Rear Commodores:	
Offshore	**Lt Col R. J. Good**
Dinghy & Dayboats	**Maj J. F. Calvert** (York Mil 2204)
Windsurfing (UK)	**Maj D. Gilchrist**
(Germany)	**Lt Col E. Flint**
Yachtmaster (UK)	**Maj J. S. Stuart** (Blandford Mil 2166)
Yachtmaster (Germany)	**Capt I. Gray** (Blandford Mil 2261)
Yacht Manager (Quicksilver)	**Capt R. W. Badger** (Herford Mil 3285)
Secretaries:	
General	**Maj K. Whitehead** (Warminster Mil 2531)
Dinghy & Dayboats	**Sgt C. Cowell** (Blandford Mil 2225)
Windsurfing (UK)	**Capt F. Hargreaves** (Blandford Mil 5372)
(Germany)	**SSgt N. Finnegan** (Osnabruck Mill 2225)
Soldier Members:	
Offshore	**Cpl D. Sangster**
Dinghies & Dayboats	**Cpl S. Southern**
Windsurfing	**Sgt A. Varney**
Retired Member	**Lt Col (Retd) M. J. Collins**

The Royal Signals Yacht Club communicates with its members through the medium of The Wire, *which regularly prints a forecast of events, accounts of activities and contains details for club officials.*

Any member of the Corps who subscribes to the Corps funds is automatically a member of the Yacht Club. If you are an active sailor or interested in becoming an active sailor then register now with your unit Sailing Officer or alternatively with one of the Club Secretaries.

LCPL SOUTHAN AND THE RS400

In April last year I purchased a RS400 from the ASA. At first I found the RS400 a very different boat to sail. Adding to the problem was the finding of a crew, with the experience I needed, to succeed in forth coming events.

My first event was the RS400 Inter Services at Portland in April 1998. Everybody was in a similar position to myself, with regard to experience in the boat, and every gybe I put in caused me to take a quick swim. Eventually **Graham Forshaw** got in the boat and showed me the ropes. I was now able to stay dry, until the wind picked up! The boat is designed to sail in strong winds and my adrenalin was certainly pumping when on a plane down-wind with very limited control. I did not produce a very good result at Portland. After this experience I spent a lot of time in the boat just learning how to sail it and stay dry.

The next event was at Weymouth. There was lots of wind, up to Force 6. The first day was called off due to too much wind but racing took place on the Sunday. I was 32 out of 45.

The Inlands Nationals at Draycote was next. Similar to Weymouth but windier. Many Masts were broken. On the second day the wind was friendlier but resulted in boring racing, I came 22 out of 38.

I embarked on serious training at Stokes Bay Sailing Club during the winter and was lucky to find a young lady to crew with me, who had real experience.

This year's racing was to take me up the learning curve. The first event was at Queen Mary's reservoir with more than 300 hundred boats of all types sailing. The tactics were to try and sail for clean air. At the end of the day we were the sixth RS400 out of 16. The Oxford Water Championships followed with many of the top sailors competing and we managed to come 19th out of 40. Next at Queen Mary's I managed 16th out of 36. On return to Draycote, I had an uphill struggle because I didn't have a lot of weight to keep the boat flat. This decided me to switch to an RS200 which is a lot easier to sail with my weight in the boat. Just recently I picked up a new RS200 to sail under the Combined Services flag for the rest of the year. Since then we have had much improved results with our first win. In June at Swansea we once again had a successful weekend, finishing 11th out of 59, against some top competition. At the moment I am sitting in approximately 16th position in the RS200 fleet in Britain and 20th in the RS400 and I am going for the Top Ten in the Nationals this year.



RSYC DINGHY & DAY BOATS

ROYAL SIGNALS KEELBOAT REGATTA SEA VIEW IOW

After a lot of phoning around we managed to get ten entries to the Championships from units all over the UK (including two Brigadiers). The competition from Second to Nineth place was very keenly contested (**Maj David Ellis** is still invincible in these boats and came first by a country mile) **Maj George Odling** after the first race-sail to Portsmouth started to show his true potential and started to string some consistent results together as did **Sgt Chas Cowell** and **Sgt Craig Avey-Hebditch** so at the end of the first day it was **Ellis, Cowell, Avey-Hebditch** and **Odling**. Day Two started again with **Ellis** in his winning ways but chased by **Odling Cowell** and **Avey-Hebditch**. After two days and eight races the position were as follows:

1st **Maj Ellis, Maj Wadey, Cpl Reeves**
2nd **Maj Wig, Maj Rowley, Sgt Taylor**
3rd **Sgt Avey-Hebditch, Sgt Calder, LCpl Rayden**
4th **Sgt Cowell, Capt Westeman, Cpl Heath.**

Note: **Sgt Avey-Hebditch** paid **Sgt Cowell** back in the last race for an incident that happened in 1986 in which **Sgt Cowell** capsized **Sgt A-H**. This, after many years, was **Maj George Odling** and **Sgt Chas Cowell's** last regatta as serving members.

TRIANGULAR KEEL BOAT REGATTA SEA VIEW IOW
4-Boat team racing against Royal Engineers Yacht Club and Royal Artillery Yacht Club

The Signals sailed very well with some excellent team racing skills being shown. The Corps team won all their matches with the RAYC conceding the last race in the club house so the Corps YC retain the Glover Cup. The Victorious team was:

Boat 1 **Maj David Ellis, Maj Tim Wadey, LCpl Pete Rayden**
Boat 2 **Maj George Odling, Maj Trevor Bradley, Maj John Rowley**
Boat 3 **Sgt Avey-Hebditch, Cpl Greg Miller, Sig Nick Scullion**
Boat 4 **Sgt Chas Cowell, Maj Tim Pender Johns, Cpl Ted Heath.**

ARMY INDIVIDUAL KEELBOAT CHAMPIONSHIPS SEA VIEW IOW

Maj David Ellis crewed by **Maj Tim Wadey** and **Sgt Chas Cowell** along with **Maj George Odling** crewed by **Maj Fred Calvert** and **Maj John Rowley** were the Corps' only entries into this year's individual championships. With consistent sailing, our boats came First and Second with **Maj David Ellis** retaining the trophy with six First places, a Second, a Third and Retired. Both our boats were selected to represent the Army in the Gold & Cunningham Cup (Inter Service Individual & Team Keelboat Championships). However, due to previous commitments only **Maj Ellis** and his crew could attend. In the Individual Championships they came through the knockout round in Third place, (by the skin of their teeth) giving them the last place in the final for their heat. The final (1 Race) started well and just went down hill ending with a 3ft tear in the spinnaker, time for an early tea and doughnuts in the club house. The Inter-Service Team Competition was a very tightly fought contest with the Army beating the RN who were the reigning champions. This was done with some outstanding tactical team racing by the 4-Boat team. The Army then went out and convincingly beat the RAF First, Second, Third, Fifth giving the Army a resounding win of the competition. Congratulations to **Maj Ellis, Maj Wadey, Sgt Cowell**.

INTER CORPS DINGHY LEAGUE 1999

We have two matches left and as yet we have not lost a match, the standard of competition of all teams is high this year. However, it is getting increasingly difficult to muster a CORPS TEAM due to Corps commitments but hopefully we can retain our League victory of 1998 and not have to concede our remaining matches due to no team.

ARMY INTER UNIT CHAMPIONSHIPS

Congratulations must go to 14th Signal Regiment who came Second in the Inter Units at Netley Southampton on 30 June 1999.



LCpl Stu Southan, 3 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt – 202 Sqn
Racing the RS400 in the Inland Championships this year

Do you want to help the Corps to recruit more soldiers?

SATISFIED SOLDIER SCHEME

✷ Are you a satisfied soldier?
✷ Would you like to be attached to your home town AFCO/ACIO for 5-10 days?
✷ Would you like to visit your old school or ACF and tell them about Royal Signals?

YES?

THEN CONTACT YOUR SQUADRON OFFICE FOR DETAILS

THE ROYAL SIGNALS ASSOCIATION

Patron: HRH The Princess Royal

President: The Master of Signals

Chairman: Major General A. Yeoman CB

Vice Chairmen: Brig C. T. Garton Area 1; Brig W. H. Backhouse Area 2; Brig S. G. M. Gordon Area 3; Brig K. H. Olds Area 4; Brig P. J. Evans CBE Area 5; Lt Col J. G. Billingham Wales; Maj R. Sampson CBE Scotland

General Secretary and Treasurer: Col A. R. Carter MBE — **Assistant General Secretary: Lt Col I. J. Hamilton**
Welfare Secretary: Mrs J. Cornick — **Administrative Officer: Mr. P. J. Cuckow (Membership & Records)**

Association Office, RHQ Royal Signals, Blandford Camp, Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 8RH. Telephone: Military System 737 2090 or 01258 48 2090. Welfare Secretary Telephone: Military System 737 2089 or 01258 48 2089.

All contributions for *The Wire* should be addressed to the Editor and any queries referred to him on extensions 2079 or 2085. Internet: www.royalsignals.army.org.uk/museum/rsa.htm

The Association communicates with its branches and individual members through the pages of The Wire, *which contains accounts of Branch affairs as well as a forecast of Association events.*

Branch Secretaries are asked to check that their Branch members receive sufficient copies of The Wire. *Association HQ can arrange for copies to be delivered in bulk to Branch Secretaries for further distribution if this is convenient: it helps us save on postage.*

Dates of Branch events can always be published in The Wire *and should be submitted to the Editor. We also welcome letters, requests to contact old comrades and announcements of births, marriages and deaths. We hope that each Branch will contribute a short account of its activities, preferably with photographs, at least once a year.*

NEWS FROM THE AO'S DESK



The photograph shows the Master of Signals presenting Maj (Retd) Ray Vasper with his RSA 50 Year Badge and certificate at this year's QM's Dinner at Blandford.

KOREA & NEW ZEALAND - REVISITED

When I was a very young soldier serving with the Corps in Tripoli the Troop was asked by **Capt Smith** if any one would like to volunteer to go to Korea. This would be early in 1951, time does strange things to the memory but I think the entire Troop volunteered. We then went to Benghazi and joined 28th Field Regiment Royal Engineers. After training we sailed to Korea from Tobruk, Cyrenaica, in the *Empire Orwell*. Spending almost two years in Korea and at times being the radio operator for the CO Royal Engineers, (**Lt Col P. N. M. Moor**, later Brig), he would visit most units including the Australian Diggers and the New Zealand Kiwi's.

(One night forward of the British lines the sappers were putting in a new minefield, the CO said, 'Wait there Corporal, this was on a tape marking the pattern for the mine field. It must have been two hours later when he finally returned. I saw the dark silhouetted figure in the reflected light and thought shall I shoot it! Good job I didn't for the next words were, 'Are you there Corporal?')

Can any ex-veterans, who served in Korea, remember getting their first food parcels? I can and it came not from England but from Australia. I have always remembered this so it was with great pleasure on a recent visit to Australia and New Zealand I took out a BKVA (British Korean Veterans Association) plaque, also a Royal Signals Plaque. This was at the request of the North Lincolnshire Branch BKVA of which I am a member also the Branch is twinned with 3rd Battalion Royal Australia Regiment (Old Faithful).

On the morning of Sunday 7 March I attended a ceremony at the Gympie Memorial (Queensland) Normanby Hill, Remembrance Park and was seated with the officials at the presentation of a certificate to **Brig (Retd)** 'Paddy' **K. P. Outridge,** president of the Gympie RSL (Returned Servicemens League) club. This certificate marked the 75th year of the founding of the club.



At the Memorial
Reg Briggs, Brig 'Paddy' K. P. Outridge, Margaret Briggs

In the photograph taken at the memorial you can see to the right and to the rear Members of the 5th Light Horse Regt Gympie Troop, with rifles slung besides their saddles.

The presentation of the BKVA plaque and the Royal Signals plaque was to take place in the RSL club after the ceremony and after their AGM.



Reg Briggs, Brig 'Paddy' K. P. Outridge
(Photo: Courtesy of Crossley Studios, Gympie)

I met with many members who served in 'K' Force, my wife **Margaret** was taken with other members wives for a tour around Gympie including the gold mine. Their driver was **Greg** a most helpful man and who had served with the 5th Light Horse Regt **Greg** would collect and return us to our hotel at no charge. We also visited RSL clubs in Sydney and Hervey Bay. These clubs are excellent for meals and drinks and you are made very welcome.

Before leaving on the trip I phoned up **Ron Larby** who served with 28th Bde Signals as a radio operator and is the author of 'Armour to the Right Signals to the Left' and asked if there was anyone he would like me to meet. He suggested meeting **Ron Cashman MM**, (Awarded for action in Korea). This we did, **Rod** and his wife **Bett** lived out at Homebush near to where the Sydney 2000 Olympics will be held, so he gave us a conducted tour of the site. Also we went into the Olympic swimming pool. (**Ron** will be in England for the July Reunion and march past in London.)

In New Zealand we again met members who had served in 'K' Force in Korea and visited their RSA (Returned Servicemens Clubs). Again given a warm welcome, we stopped at Picton South Island with **Doug Bushby** for a few days **Doug** served with Royal New Zealand Signals. He is a regular visitor to Britain stopping in Manchester where he is very well known to members of the Manchester Branch of the BKVA.

Returning to Australia from NZ we visited Ayres rock where my wife had a nasty fall and had to be treated by the Royal Flying Doctor, this pleased her so made up for the accident. A wonderful trip and a promise kept by me to my wife, after leaving the Corps I worked in New Guinea and Australia as a seismic operator and promised her I would take her there one day. It's nice to know that the training received as a boy soldier at Harrogate and the training later in Catterick would many years later enable me to take what still is a great adventure a second trip down under.

A STEP INTO THE PAST

After more than a year of trying to contact the remainder of 18 Troop of No 1 Independant Selection Signal Squadron who commenced basic training under a certain **Cpl Orgill** on 8 February 1950 at Gallowgate Camp in Richmond, it was decided that as time waits for no man, those who were in contact, and were able to, would revisit the area and seek out those who we knew were in need of cheering up.

Midnight on Wednesday 21 April, my wife bade me farewell (thinking I was absolutely crazy) as I drove away from South Wales on my way to Boroughbridge where I was to base myself with **Ken Pumell** for the duration of my stay up North. Arriving at dawn and sounding reveille in harmony with the local birds (feathered variety) the **Purnells** welcomed me with typical Gallowgate humour.

The journey North I had undertaken many times before, but I could not help feeling that as this was a special trip and its intended purpose, the memories of the first time, in February 1950 began to cast doubts and trepidation in my mind. Should we go back into the past and what our expectations were, did we expect others to have lived the same sort of life as ourselves and how had they reacted to the ever changing problems of living as we had. By the time I drove up to the **Purnell**'s I did have serious doubts, but once **Ken Purnell** started laughing, all worries disappeared.

After breakfast we drove up to Lynemouth in Northumberland to see **Billy Leach**, we had not met since April 1950, forty nine years had passed since he looked after my welfare and kept me out of trouble, for like most of my age, I thought I knew it all and as he was much older than I, (he was twenty to my seventeen) took it upon himself to keep this young Welshman under control, no easy task in those days. We arrived at **Bill's** flat and the smile upon his face when greeting us said it all, no words can describe the feeling of nostalgia and despite the fact that like many of his age, **Billy** had suffered a number of minor strokes and had experienced loss of memory, it soon became apparent that our visit was a tonic. **Billy Leach** is partially paralysed, has difficulty in making himself understood and is subject to collapsing without any warning. It was heartbreaking to see the physical state he was in, a man who was extremely strong, who

had returned to the mines after his Army service and now reduced to living in such circumstances I found hard to understand. Our caring and benevolent society surely must be questioned, I have arranged for a case worker from SSAFFA to visit together with someone from the British Legion, so hopefully things will improve for him in the future. When we finally came to depart, both **Ken Purnell** and I were lost for words and sadness was the overriding feeling.

We next visited with the widow of **Norman Wearmouth**. He had left the Army after only a little more that a year's service to look after his eight siblings upon the death of his father. An interesting piece of paperwork, now in my possession to pass on to the Museum, is his undertaking to return to the coal mines and work underground on the understanding that should he fail to live up to this obligation, it would necessitate a return to the colours for the remainder of his service. **Norman** served in 7 Armoured Brigade in Luneburg until he left the Army to return to the mines.



Together for the first time since April 1950 – 49 years!!
(L-R): Ken Bunston, Billy Leach, Ken Purnell

Our next visit was to the widow of **Arthur** 'Tich' **Bates** who had sadly died in only January of this year. We were made so welcome despite the circumstances and spent a few pleasant hours talking about him. From the time I recontacted 'Tich' in October last year, we had spent many happy hours on the phone, he was a character and had a wonderful memory of all that had happened all those years ago. He achieved the near impossible in that he joined man service at the age of only sixteen in the days when medical officers were on peace work in their efforts to get chaps into the services.

Our main task for the next visit was of course to Gallowgate Camp itself, that wonderful Poulson project where the bricks were laid on their ends thus achieving an extra 3/4 of an inch in height for every row laid but depriving the occupants of the necessary insulation against the Yorkshire winds that I swear blew through the walls. The camp itself is now a badly run industrial estate, soon I believe to be twinned with the most battered village in Kosovo. Many of the original buildings are still there. Despite its current state we still found the Orderly Room, MI Room, Stores, Cookhouse the different messes and a building that was enough to gladden the heart of anyone who ever served there, yes the NAAFI canteen, and even more importantly, the NAAFI girl's accommodation, for some reason nicknamed Colditz by the re-enlistments who had other purposes in mind beside a cup of tea for one old penny. We walked all around the old place and could distinguish many of the terror ridden aspects of our life in Gallowgate, truly an amazing experience. Our drive around the old Green Howards Barracks, now an upmarket housing development, will no doubt bring back other memories of some of the ex-boys who upon completion of their boy service ended up in Gallowgate to finish their basic training with us.

I have a number of people who I am in contact with who have answered my adverts in many diverse publications as well as from *The Wire*, and have retained all their letters. The one over riding thing that comes from it all is the horrors they recall of life in that place, the list is endless, but makes hilarious reading. Although I have only found eight of the original 18 Troop, I have seven from 17 Troop, one from 19 Troop and two of the permanent staff from the particular period. In addition I have spoken to a number of the Officers who served there at the time, including one particular ex 2Lt who was caught breaking out of camp on a Friday evening with two members of his Troop. Who said things were bad!!

I have enjoyed the search for my old friends from those far off days, and intend to continue the search. The one regret which surely we all have is that we allow our friendships to wane, being intent on our own careers and lives we become insular to the very thing that kept us together, comradeship. We must not allow it to happen and I urge everyone reading this to pause and ask themselves, is there any friend who could do with a call or is there an old friend who needs cheering up. Ask yourself if you were in trouble, who could you turn to ?

Our Corps is about communicating, but sadly we lack the commitment to keep in touch with our old comrades. We are all guilty in various degrees so do something about it before it is too late.

Ken Bunston
31 St Davids Road
Miskin
Pontyclun
Mid Glam CF72 8PW
Tel: 01443 224036

HAPPY NEW MILLENNIUM

by Keith Hind

A few days ago an advert in a local newspaper caught my eye - 'New Year's Celebration Party - only £90 per person. I also read recently that the foolish rich of London, were prepared to pay their nannies thousands of pounds, with a new BMW thrown in, to take care of their off-spring so that they could party the night away. Also, rumour has it, there is a pub in Chester-le-Street that has organised a savings plan where you can pay so much a week so that by December, customers will have saved the required £100 to allow them entrance on New Year's Eve. What on earth are they paying all this money to celebrate? Certainly not the New Millennium - that doesn't begin until **next** year!

Let me explain. when a cricketer scores a hundred runs he has completed his century. The next run - his 101st, is the first run of his second century. Also if you ever managed to find such a thing as the old penny slot machine, and you fed one hundred pennies in without winning, you would have spent one pound. The next penny?The 101st penny? It would be the first penny of your second pound. IS IT BECOMING CLEAR YET? It is the same with years. The last day of the year one BC gave way to the first day of year one AD - not the year ZERO as some people seem to think. Are they trying to say that after six months, of the first year after year one BC, that we were half way through Year Zero? I must admit, I am a teeny bit curious as to how you can have a half of nothing. A hundred years isn't complete until the last day of the year One Hundred. The next day, the first day of year 101, is the start of the new century. It then follows that the current millennium is not complete until the last day of the 2000th year, ie: 31 December 2000, the next day, 1 January 2001, being the first day of the New Millenium. If you were fortunate enough to have a few thousand pounds in the bank and wanted to withdraw a couple of thousand, would you be happy if the cashier counted out £999 and said that that was £1000 and that the next one was the first one of the next thousand? Of course yopu wouldn't.

Several countries across Europe think we have gone barmy, celebrating the New Millennium a year early, so do I. In fact, as midnight approaches on New Year's Eve **NEXT YEAR,** I will have my eye on the clock and as the sound of the twelfth chime fades away I will welcome the new day - 1 January 2001 - along with millions of our European neighbours, and will raise my glass and say,

'HAPPY NEW MILLENNIUM!'

NOTES FROM THE AO's DESK

Branch affairs - It was with great sadness that we learned of the sudden passing of **Frank Mitchell**, Hon Secretary of the Langeleben Reunion Club. **Frank** had put so much into starting the Club and he will be missed by all his friends in the Reunion Club, the Huddersfield Branch and us here at Associationn HQ. **Frank**'s successor is **Ernie Callaghan,** 12 Carisbrooke Avenue, Bexley, Kent DA5 3HS. Tel: 0181 300 7577.

Reunion 2000 - A long way off, I know, but next year's Reunion at Blandford will be held over the weekend 24/25 June. Please let Association HQ know if you would like your name to go on the mailing list for details, when they are issued, hopefully in March. Don't forget that Association HQ has a list of local accommodation.

The Royal Hospital, Chelsea - A warm welcome is extended to **Leonard Whiteman** on his admission as an In-Pensioner to the Royal Hospital, Chelsea. We hope his stay there is long and happy.

The Corps' Carol Service - This years service will be held on Thursday 16 December. It will be held in St Stephens with St John, Rochester Row, Westminster starting at 1800hrs and ending around 1900hrs, when we retire to the Church Hall for sherry and hot mince pies. All serving and retired members of the Corps, plus their families, are welcome to attend this popular event. Come along and meet new friends and old.

Freedom of Richmond Parade - The Freedom of Richmond Parade will take place at 1930hrs on Saturday 16 September 2000. (Not 9 September as published in the RSA Newsletter). It will be followed on the Sunday by a Memorial Service, to which all Association members are invited.

New Life Members - The following Life Members have been enrolled since the last edition of *The Wire*:-

Rank	*Name*	*Branch*	*Service*
WPte	Betty Jezzard (Moss)	RHQ	1949-52
Sig	Jason Twist	RHQ	1991-96
Sig	Craig Myers	RHQ	1989-98
Cpl	Tony Annall	RHQ	1976-94
Sgt	Richard Simpson	Leeds	1966-89
Sig	Arthur Wistow	Derby	1958-60
Cpl	Harry Kennard	Newcastle	1955-64
LCpl	John Harvey	RHQ	1965-71
Sgt	Lawton Davies	RHQ	1983-99
Cpl	Walter Anderson	RHQ	1986-99
Cpl	Kevin Tyrrell	RHQ	1986-98
WO1	Sam McElreavey	RHQ	1975-99
Sig	G. A. H. Green	West London	1943-51
Cpl	Colin Sharman	Bristol	1959-67
Cpl	Alan Bell	RHQ	1984-99
WO2	Terry Oakes	RHQ	1975-99
Cpl	Matt Lennie	RHQ	1994-99
Sig	Eric Dowse	Middx Yeomanry	1939-46
Cpl	Ron Morse	RHQ	1945-48
Brig	John Griffin	RHQ	1966-99
Lt Col	Malcolm Sinton	RHQ	1969-99
Capt	Ian Ellis	RHQ	1989-99
Capt	Paul Richardson	RHQ	1975-99
Lt Col	Steve Coltman	RHQ	1965-99
Sig	Les Simmons	Bournemouth	1958-60
WO2	Andrew Turner	RHQ	1975-99
Lt	Kenneth Taylor	Reading	1946-49
WO2	Robin Scott	Reading	1977-date
Sgt	Lynne Camm	Reading	1991-date
LCpl	Dave Dorking	RHQ	1985-99
Sig	Mark Matthews	RHQ	1988-99
Cpl	Gerald Adams	RHQ	1945-52
Cpl	Victor Baker-Holmes	South London	1951-53
Sig	Sarah Hall	East London	1997-date
Sig	Stephen Parsons	RHQ	1992-99
WO1	Tony Mullen	RHQ	1976-99
Cpl	John White	RHQ	1984-98
SSgt	Brian Armstrong	RHQ	1975-99
Cpl	Dave Whitehead	RHQ	1990-99
Sgt	John MacNamara	RHQ	1984-99
Sgt	Richard Siddans	RHQ	1984-99
LCpl	Wayne Lynk	RHQ	1991-99
Cpl	Louis Haig	RHQ	1955-57 & 63-72
Cpl	Nick Kerslake	RHQ	1989-99
Sig	Jim Whitecross	Cornwall	1945-48
WO1	Dave Clark	RHQ	1976-99
WO2	Leonard Hilton	RHQ	1975-99
SSgt	Mark Hogan	RHQ	1984-99
Sgt	Bob Lond	RHQ	1975-99
Sig	Lionel Hill	RHQ	1946-48

BRIGHTON BRANCH

Well what about Blandford '99? Was it mediocre? Good? Brilliant? It was just brilliant!! In particular 'Pegasus Bridge' was an outstanding contribution. Congratulations to all concerned. Let us hope that we have more innovations next year.

As you will remember, after the talk we had by **Brig Colin Brown,** we had requests for 884 Troop to display its' wares. They responded nobly. **Maj John Barber** (TOT) took a major part and comments as follows:



Major (TOT) John Barber

'For the general interest of members, an evening showing two very different types of radio kit was laid on. Both systems were relevant to many members past experiences. Firstly, SSgt Stu McHenery, of 884 Tp, gave a general system description and 'horse-box' hardware tour for a typical NCRS Station. Members with HF signalling interests were drawn to the user friendly radio controls but were less sure about the cabin's interior lack of space!

This was followed by a brief explanation of the ever increasing importance of good ground-air-ground comms in current operations. Especially for the ex-Air Support Signals personnel, an example of the new Tactical Ground Air Comms System was brought and commented on by Maj (TOT) John Barber. Members with memories of the BE201 set (and even further back!) were impressed with its capability but like all good soldiers, less happy about the weight of the man-pack station.

The two contrasting roles and equipment were well chosen as examples of the widely differing roles of the Corps. Members appreciated the opportunity of seeing the kit and learning a little more and then they retreated to the bar for sausage, beans and mash which was washed down with a pint. A good evening was had by all and thanks to 71 (Y) Sig Regt (V), Hunting Engineering Ltd and the Branch Committee for co-ordinating the comms and the cooking.



(L-R): Gordon Holloway, Dee Barber, Joy Lovelock

Talking about 'mash' who broke the masher? Was it **Gordon Holloway, Dee Barber** or **Joy Lovelock??** Well just look at the photo. Who is not looking at the camera?

Finally we congratulate **Derek Swann** who is now eighty years old. **Derek** was part of the ill-fated 51 (Highland Division). Together with several thousand others he was captured at St Valery en Caux and spent five years in a German POW Camp.



Derek Swann

If you're visiting Bournemouth or Poole,
why not combine it with a visit to
The Royal Signals Museum, Blandford Camp
01258 482248 for opening times

DORSET BRANCH

I missed the deadline for the last publication but at least I shall get these notes in before the next deadline. However, it's still 1999 and our Branch goes from strength to strength. In April this year we had our Annual Dinner at the Crown Hotel in Blandford. 103 members and guests attended and a good evening was enjoyed by all. The principal guests were the Commander of the Royal School of Signals, **Col K. Hadfield** and **Mrs Hadfield**. The Colonel gave a very interesting and amusing speech, as the photograph shows.



The Commander speaks
David Whitehead saw the joke, Mrs Yeoman didn't and Mrs Wheawell cried, but Pat Lafferty seems to be thinking – .....What?

Our monthly meetings continue to be held in the Sergeant's Mess and are well attended. In June, at the Annual Reunion, our Chairman, **Maj Pat Lafferty**, presented a set of bagpipes to the Corps' Pipes and Drums, on behalf of our Branch.



Maj Pat Lafferty presents the Bagpipes
(Don't worry it's dead!)

The general opinion of our members is that the Reunion was considered to be a great success, the best yet in Blandford. Thanks to the efforts put in by **Peter Cuckow** , the organiser. In August we held a barbecue which was enjoyed by all. There was, of course, the inevitable raffle but we need to keep **Dick Houghton** our Treasurer happy. We already have our AGM on the horizon, the years go too fast. Just in case you don't hear from me again this year, I wish you a happy Christmas.

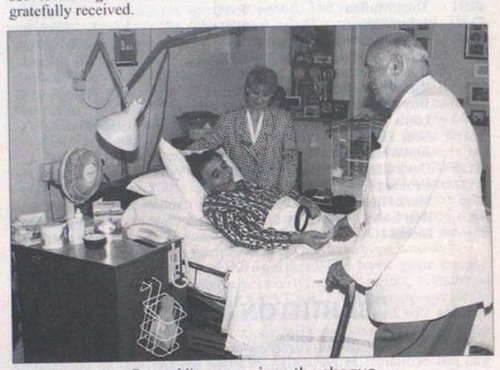
EASTBOURNE BRANCH

This is the first article for *The Wire* from sunny Eastbourne for some years. We will try to improve on this record in the future! The Branch continues to prosper and has moved location of Meetings to the Royal Engineers Club in Latimer Road, Eastbourne where we are looked after very well indeed. Meeting nights continue to be the second Thursday of the month, so if any member or ex member of the Corps happen to be holidaying in the area and would like to look in, they would be very welcome. We recently welcomed a new Branch President, **Brig Frank Clarkson**, who has taken over from **Col Alan Dexter** who has now become a Vice President. **Alan** has been a sterling worker for the Branch and has done much to ensure its survival, he stands down due to pressure of other commitments but continues as a loyal member of the Branch..

The Annual Dinner was held last October it was a special occasion as it was the 20th Anniversary of the founding of the Branch. The guest speaker was **Brig Keith Olds**. The 21st Annual Dinner is to be held in the Royal Engineers Club on 23 October this year.

In July, members of the Brighton Branch joined us for a social evening (and winning their fair share of raffle prizes). This was in return for the visit we made to Dyke Road last November. Both evenings were very pleasant gatherings.

In June, a group of Branch members consisting of **Brig Frank Clarkson, Chris Deadman** (Chairman), **Lt Col Ron Brodie** (Secretary) and **Tony Lewis** (Committee and voluntary helper at Chaseley) visited Chaseley, Eastbourne, a home for disabled servicemen and women. Currently the home is undergoing substantial rebuilding and refurbishment and had launched an appeal for funds. The Association when appraised of the situation by **Col Alan Dexter** made a special grant of £250 to allow the two ex members of the Corps resident in Chaseley to improve their own rooms. The two residents in question are **Vic Green** and **Dave Allen**, both former LCpls who were paralysed during their service. **Brig Frank Clarkson** presented the cheques which were gratefully received.



Dave Allen examines the cheque
presented by Brig Frank Clarkson. Matron Sue Wyatt looks on



Presentation to Vic Green
(L-R): Chris Deadman, Tony Lewis, Sue Wyatt (Matron), Ron Brodle, Brig Frank Clarkson, Vic Green is in front

EAST KENT BRANCH

Other Branches from Area 4 who did not take up the challenge missed a perfectly lovely day at the Duke of Yorks Military School, Dover on Sunday 11 July. East Kent Branch rallied round as usual and managed to get two teams together for a Cricket match. The two teams, made up of members, their wives, sons and grandsons, gathered outside the Pavilion . The 'A' Team was captained by our Chairman, **Donald Crisp**. We had three Umpires, **Doug Dickeson** and **John Badcock** before lunch and **Bill Lovatt** and **John Badcock** after lunch. The timing was perfect, lunch was taken between 1300-1400hrs. The result was 'B' Team 132 for 11 and the 'A' Team 82 for 13 wickets.

As can be imagined there was some hilarious play but the Branch contains some dark horses in the Batting and Fielding roles, not to mention the stylish Keepers. Who would have thought that we could muster two full sides to play such entertaining cricket for the fifty or so supporters, who could not even be enticed to play Bat & Trap or Boules, so absorbed were they on the cricket and the delightful setting that the Duke of Yorks Military School had so kindly provided for us. Our thanks to 'Housemaster', **Mr Alexander,** an annual event where we think we now feel confident enough to take on any other Branch in the Royal Signals Association.



A Team



B Team
The 'B' Team was captained by our Vice Chairman, John Ballantyne

NEW MEMBER

We are delighted to welcome **Lt Col Peter** and **Friedy Devanney** of Folkestone. We are sure he will be known to many as he served from 1951 until retirement in 1989 having started at Harrogate in 1948, then 11 AF Regt, BAOR, 1TR Catterick, Bulford SWS Tp, 24 Bde Sig Sqn in Kenya & Bahrein, Gan Island, 206 Sig.Sqn BAOR 24 Sig Regt Catterick, 17Ghurka Sig Regt, PEPS London, HQ 4 Sig Gp BAOR, 38 Sigs in the MOD 8 Sig Regt and finally at SHAPE, with that record you must have met somewhere!

VALE

It is with regret that we have to announce the death of **Maj Tommy Thomas** on 23 June. He was buried on 5 July in his Parish Church at Swalecliffe. An obituary is to appear in *The Wire*. As a founder member of the Branch there were many of his friends who came to support **Eadie** at the funeral which coincided with a horrendous thunderstorm, it was thought that failing the attendance of the RHA Saluting Battery, it was the best 21 gun-salute that the congregation had heard. The Hon Sec gave an address and most of the congregation went back to **Eadie**'s house to chat with her and her family. The next day **Eadie** entered the Brompton Hospital for a further heart operation but returned home to build up her strength for the operation. Our sympathy and best wishes go to her and her family.

FOOTNOTE

Upon receipt of the information that RHQ Royal Signals at Blandford could be reached by Email, it so happened that the Branch Committee were meeting that evening. The Hon Sec took a digital photograph and sent it that night; the following exchange of signals took place:

For: **Col A. F. Carter MBE**
Lt Col I. Hamilton
Mr P. Cuckow

Dear All

By way of congratulating you upon joining this Branch on the www the Committee at it's meeting this evening instructed me to send you our best wishes and so that you may be able to recognise us all when we next meet, here we are in session an hour or so ago.

Reply:
From Regt Sec to all members EKB Committee.

Unfortunately we had momentarily popped out of the office when your Email arrived at 22.53hrs last night. **Lt Col Ian Hamilton** was having an early night. He picked it up at 0600hrs this morning. As yet we are unable to match your instantaneous colour portraits of RHQ Staff hard at work but we thank you for your greetings and best wishes.

(Editor: It should be noted though RHQ is accessible by Email 'THE WIRE' is not).

GLASGOW BRANCH

Ten members joined the annual reunion at Blandford arriving late on the Friday evening with a diversion due to the rail disaster, and a train in front of ours running out of fuel. They borrowed our train's engine to push it into a siding, adding an additional hour and a half further to our delay. The weather could have been kinder but again it was an enjoyable week-end. Our Standard Bearer, **Bill MacNamara**, was in the last six finalists of the Standard Bearers contest but unfortunately did not manage to retain the cup. There is always next year's contest.

The Branch members who have enjoyed the hospitality at these re-unions, wished to show their appreciation of the efforts of **Peter Cuckow**, in organising arrangements for their stay over the years, by gifting him a bottle of whisky with a special printed label with his name on it. A gift of a Glasgow Branch tie was made to **Lt Col I. J. Hamilton**, both were presented to the recipients by the Glasgow Branch Chairman, **Bill Taylor**. Again our thanks to the staff and members of both messes for their consideration and help in 'Making our Journey Necessary.' We also were able to make purchases at the museum, especially those of us with a shopping list for the members unable to attend. Saving on postage? Not mean but canny! How about a discount on prices for the RSA members on that week-end, most of us being pensioners?



Bill Taylor making the presentation to Peter Cuckow

Twenty-nine members and friends took a coach trip to Inverness on 10 July arranged by **Jim McMillan** our social convenor. Unfortunately although the weather was sunny all day in Glasgow, it was wet all day in Inverness. So between ducking in and out of shops, cafés and pubs, getting wet inside and out, it was great when the time came to go to the Royal British Legion Scotland club in Inverness for an excellent high tea, with time to relax in their several bars before catching the coach for Glasgow. The members wish to record their thanks to the RBLS Inverness for their hospitality, they have magnificent premises. **Jim** was disappointed that more members did not fill the 46-seater coach after all his efforts to get the best possible deal for the trip. A raffle was held on the return journey for a bottle of whisky and a bottle of sherry to help offset the cost of the coach.

A coach trip is planned for Sunday the 15 August to Edinburgh Castle Esplanade, as the Tattoo is not on that day, to see the Central Band, and the combined drum and pipe bands of the RBLS from all over Scotland, perform Beating Retreat. It is hoped as many members, family and friends will support this venture, to fill the 50-seater coach. A meal beforehand with a great choice of menu, will be available at the Royal British Hotel, Prince's Street, Edinburgh. A raffle will also be held on the coach, to offset the cost of the hire. Future dates include a 40's night, Christmas Draw, and the St. Andrew's Dinner Dance in November 1999, with a Burns Supper in the year 2000.

NORTHERN IRELAND BRANCH

The Branch had no meeting in either June or July due to Annual Camp and the stand down of 40 (U) Sig Regt (V) which leaves me a little bit short of material for this issue.

The Blandford Reunion is over once again and, although not there myself, I believe it was very successful. A lot of credit for this must go to **Peter Cuckow** to whom our Blandford Organiser, **Edgar McCall**, also wishes to convey his thanks for all the assistance given to him by **Peter**. A total of twelve Branch members attended the reunion led by Branch Chairman, **John Loveday**. As 40 (U) Sig Regt (V) was completing Annual Camp, six of our serving members travelled direct from camp to Blandford, five members travelled by the over-night ferry to Liverpool and they were then joined by **Bill Ogden** at Blandford. The Branch

members took part in the Church Service and the March Past. **Jim Reilly** kept the Branch to the fore by acting as Standard Bearer. The thanks of the Branch goes to 40 (U) Sig Regt (V), in particular **George Cooke**, foe assisting with the travel arrangements. Thanks also go to **Mark Barrass** and **Eddie Hedley** for their driving skills and of course to **Edgar McCall** for doing a good job as Blandford Organiser under difficult circumstances and taking the load off our ever busy Hon Sec, **Ian Wolfe**. On a sad note, the late **Tommy Maguire** was very much missed at Blandford.

Branch Member, **SSgt Mark Barrass** has now been posted to Blandford. We wish him well in his new environment. I understand that he intends to remain a Branch Member and keep in touch. I'm sure that our Branch President, **Maj (Retd) Bill Douglas,** will not mind if we offer our congratulations for the celebration of his 80th birthday. We wish him belated birthday greetings and a hope that he will celebrate many more. As usual a warm welcome awaits any serving or ex-Signallers, Regulars or TAVR at our Branch meetings any third Wednesday in Clonaver TAVR Centre, Belfast.

PETERBOROUGH BRANCH

On 1 August one of the supermarkets in Wisbech organised its annual fund-raising Fun Day in aid of local charities. This event has been run very successfully in previous years and is a very popular event for the people of Wisbech and the surrounding area. The Branch was invited to have a Stall and for some months we have been preparing a 'For Sale' section, a 'Tombola Table' and a Grand Raffle'. A small group of members, the 'Stall Gang', have worked hard to scrounge items to make up our three sections. Branch Members have been donated items in cash or kind. Early on the morning of the first of August five loaded cars left Peterborough for Wisbech Park, fifteen miles away. It was a very hot day with the temperature in the eighties, but thankfully an awning provided by **Brian Overland** gave us shade some of the time. A long and tiring day ended at about 4 o'clock with a thunderstorm and torrential rain but the following day we banked more than three hundred pounds and we hope to be able to make a donation to Corps Welfare Fund and to subsidise in a small way a special end of millennium and Christmas function planned for December.



The 'Stall Gang' wait for their first customers
(L-R): Brian Overland, Dorcie Rowland, Brian Smith,
Barry Archer, George Hopkinson, Margaret Archer,
Wynne Hopkinson

56 DIV (SIGNALS) BRANCH

The Branch held its AGM on 14 March and their annual Ladies Night on 27 March. This year our Guest of Honour was **Sam Elliott**, in recognition of the support he has given, and continues to give, to the Branch, not least of which when he was Secretary up to a couple of years ago. As usual the dinner and convivial atmosphere was enjoyed by everyone and the Eastbourne weather helped to clear heads the next day.



Chairman, John Robson, presents a bouquet to Pam Elliott
whilst Sam prepares his speech and
President Roy Hughes tells him how long to make it!

REUNIONS
3 DIVISIONAL SIGNALS REUNION CLUB

In spite of operational requirements in Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo and various other stations East, West, North or South, the powers that be in 3rd (UK) Div HQ and Signal Regiment were determined that the Reunion Club should be invited to take part in the Regimental Weekend and Fete to be held at Bulford. Needless to say Club members were glad to accept the kind invitation of **Lt Col Neil Couch**, the CO, and 41 of them duly arrived at Bulford on Friday 18 June ready to enjoy the hospitality of the Regiment. After the usual efficient processing at reception, coffee and sandwiches and chatting to **Capt Dave Stachini**, the Liaison Officer, and our official hosts, a group of charming young officers, we were officially welcomed by **Maj Adam Ewell**, the 2IC, standing in for the CO who was somewhere in the Balkans. **RSM Gary Stoker** then finished off the welcome by inviting us all to have a drink.

We were missing some of our regular supporters at this weekend. Our chairman, **Maj Derek Roberts**, and his wife **Pam** have both had health problems recently but I am pleased to be able to tell you that they are both well on the way to complete health as is **Ethel**, wife of **Les Wright**. Another couple we missed were **Doug** and **Sylvia Kay**. **Sylvia** is awaiting a hip replacement. To compensate for the absentees we had some first timers at Bulford, **Norman Hands** with his wife, **Margaret** and **Elgan** and **Linda Davies**. **Elgan** is at present working hard to establish a Branch of the RSA in South Wales so any ex-Corps Taffies who are not members of the Association get in touch with **Elgan**.

It was a great weekend, the Fete was good the briefings were interesting but for me the highlight was when, on the Friday night, three young lady Mess members took the company by the scruff of it's neck and dragged some of our more staid members on to the dance floor and made them dance. It will be a long time before I forget **Tom Dean, Fred Timms, Colin Hall, Vince Martin, Gwynn Edwards, Trader Horn** and a few others being made to strut their stuff. Girl power in action. Once again the Club must thank the Regiment for making us so welcome.

Z Troop
1 Squadron
9th Signal Regiment (Radio)

Would all existing members and associated personnel (CO/RSM/SSM etc) of the 'infamous' Z Troop (April - Nov 1984) please contact the following for a possible reunion:

Tom Hamilton
2 Walton Cottages
Westgate
Sleaford
Lincs-NG34 7QX
Tel: 01529 307061

A REUNION TO REMEMBER

On 13 July 1949, some 300 Officer Cadets – members of Intake 3 – were commissioned at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and on 12 July 1999, 172 of those former cadets met once again at Sandhurst to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of their commissioning parade. They had invited their Inspecting Officer as their guest and **Her Majesty the Queen**, who was then the **Princess Elizabeth**, graciously accepted.



The photograph shows the five Royal Signals Officers who attended the Reunion – out of an original eleven who were commissioned into the Corps that July, (L-R): **Michael Watts, Paul Durrant, John Garratt, Kevin Kirkby** and **Roy Thomas.**

As we gathered on a warm sunny morning, the years seemed to slip away. For the most part, recognition of faces was quite easy, even those not seen for fifty years, but putting a name to a face sometimes required a glance at a name tag. The day started with a Service of Thanksgiving in the Academy Chapel when we remembered 68 of our members who have

died. As a mark of our appreciation, we presented a silver communion ewer to the chapel.

The reception was held in the splendid Indian Army Room of the Old College and shortly after midday, a fanfare announced the arrival of Her **Majesty the Queen**. Accompanied by our 'head boy' **General Sir James Glover, Her Majesty** made a tour of the assembled members, meeting and talking to as many as possible. On being told that one of our absent members could not attend because his home is now in Queensland, **Her Majesty** remarked, 'Well it is rather a long way to come for lunch.'

After the reception it was time for a photograph on the College steps. The Academy RSM – buttons and Sam Browne gleaming like glass – had the task of getting us formed up correctly and obviously decided that the best way to achieve this was to treat us like Cadets. His polite requests to, 'Fill your right, Sir,' were unmistakable as orders and we did as we were told, albeit with some asides that Cadets might not have ventured to utter.

Lunch in the Old College Dining Hall was a splendid affair, enhanced by music from an orchestra culled from the Band of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. Wine and conversation flowed throughout the lunch. **Her Majesty** looked happy and relaxed. None of us could remember the food being as good in our day! We have all drunk the Loyal Toast many times but it was a privilege to be able to toast '**The Queen**' in person. The orchestra played a selection of popular tunes from the late forties followed by excerpts from the slow and quick marches from the parade in July 1949. All too soon it was time for **Her Majesty** to leave. The orchestra struck up 'Auld Lang Syne' and 172 voices joined in. The singing gave way to prolonged applause and as **Her Majesty** departed, the hall echoed with, 'Three cheers for **Her Majesty the Queen**!'

The day was not yet quite over. We made our way down to the lake for tea, more music and, of course, more trips down memory lane with former comrades in arms, before finally setting off for home to relive, this time with our families the events of

'A Reunion to Remember.'

LOST COMMS

Mr F. G. Coles is trying to contact anyone who served in Korea at the FMA compound in Seoul between 1952 and 1954. He was in the REME attached to 'Z' Sig Sqn as a Vehicle Mechanic. **Mr Coles'** address is:- 13 Kerries Walk, Parklands Mobile Homes, Scunthorpe, North Lincs DN17 1SQ.

From: **Bill Coyne**
2 Malsters Court
George Street
Newark
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
NG24 1LU

Dear Sir,

I am hoping that someone can help me with an address. I was in the Royal Signals and stationed at 1 Wireless, Munster, Germany, in 1950-1952. I have been visiting my daughter, who lives in Southern Germany and would love to visit the old camp in Munster. I have been going to Germany for 25 years and not managed it yet, as I cannot remember where the camp was.

The only things that I can recall is that it was near an open-air swimming pool, a brewery and that nearby a railway line went across the road. Also I was in a tented camp for some months near Helmstett. I think that the nearest place was called Koiningslutter. I believe there may be an association for those who have served at this camp?

Yours Sincerely……

Ron Smith would like to contact anyone from AAC Harrogate, Bradley Sqn, Intake 70C, or 3 Sqn 30 Sig Regt 1972-75, or from 8 Field Force HQ & Sig Sqn Tidworth which then moved to Aldershot in 1981 to become 5 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn. I would especially like to contact **WO1 (RSM) Hunt**, or **Capt Helm**, Sqn 2IC, from the latter, who served with me on Op Corporate. Phone him on 0161 684 7479 or email him on:
ronald@alansmith26.freeserve.co.uk

An inhabitant of a town in Northern France has asked the British Consulate General in Lille to trace a soldier of the Corps who was billeted in Roubaix in 1945. His name was Leslie Fry of Paddington, London. Anyone who can help is asked to contact the consulate at 11 Square Dutilleul, 59800 Lille, France.

TED REDFERN would like to get in contact with any of his old friends who served with him in the 104 Beach Signals, Combined Ops. Their sleeve badge was a Red Anchor on a Blue background , with a Red Circle border. They were involved with the D-Day Landings and went through to Belgium, Holland, Germany and eventually to Denmark. If there are any of you left he would love to hear from you please contact him at: 1 Treven Noweth, Landsdowne Park, Wheal Rose, Nr Scorrier, Redruth, CORNWALL TR16 5DB.

From: **Reg Briggs**
157 Chaucer Road
Peterborough
PE1 3LS
Tel: 01733 701963

Dear Sir,

Reading the April issue of the British Korean Veterans Magazine 'The Morning Calm', I was interested to read the following from **George E. Eyon.**

From **George E. Eyon,** 11 Rhind Street, Bodmin, Cornwall, PL31 2EL. Telephone 01208 75019.

The enclosed photographs (*Editor: we added two more.*)show members of the Royal Signals that I served with at 28 Brigade HQ. My memory has dimmed with the passing years and I would be grateful if anybody can recognise these soldiers.



Me rear left, Jack Taylor - Middle Rear,
Front kneeling my Cypher Operator - Cpl Patrick Lohan



Patrick Lohan



Jack Taylor

Jess Mullins would like to trace anyone who knew her father, **Bob Mullins** (2322449) who was in the Royal Signals from 02/01/33-24/04/46, and was in Hong Kong before the war, El Alamein and Italy during the war. Please email her or write to **Mrs J. Mullins**, 16 Rushdale Avenue, Sheffield, S8 9QF.

From: **Barry Hickling** (Sig-Scene)
7 Park Drive
Sandiacre
NOTTINGHAM NG10 5NB
Tel: 0115 972 1045

If the following photograph, taken on Luneburg Heath, jogs anybody's memory please contact **Barry Hickling.**

(This was two thirds of 71 W/T, 2nd Army Signals, BAOR, 1945/46 the other third was on shift).



Back Row (L-R): Berry, ?, Deveny, Robinson, ?, Ball, Coles, Rush, Hunt, Wood, Holmes, Me!, Walker
Middle Row (L-R): Higgs, ?, Chapman, Moses, Stait
Front Row (L-R): King, Rose, Sgt Beckwith, Capt Ryan, Sgt Wall, 'Hay' Franklin, ?, 'Burge'

Barbara Mallar, on behalf of her aunt, is trying to locate a family member who served with 4 Division Signals in Egypt. Unfortunately the data she has is sketchy, and the dates of his service are not known. His name is **Douglas Bourne**, and his army number was 2326560. Did you know **Douglas**, or is your own army number about the same?Any information at all will be welcome, e-mail me **Ron Smith** on ronald@alansmith26.freeserve.co.uk I will forward any information to **Barbara.**

Mrs Nancy Jeffery would like to hear from anyone who served with her late husband, **Sig Thomas A. Jeffery** in India, Burma and Singapore during WW2. **Thomas** served in 69th Tech Maintenance Section, mostly with Z L of C Regt, Indian Div. Names **Mrs Jeffery** recalls are; **Jimmy Millan, Ron Sheldon, Ernie Broadbent, Bob Golley, Capt E. Barrett,** 874 **Sig D. Baker,** 629 **Sig A. Goodman** and 440 **Sig A. Keill.**

Mr G. Morrison
NATO (Sgt) Balado Bridge
Kinross
PERTHSHIRE
KY13 ONH
Tel: 01577 862456

I am trying to get in contact with an old colleague of mine, from our days at 8 Sig Regt in Catterick. His name is **Les Bostock**, last known posting was ATR Bassingbourn. I was with the Display Team (Quicksilver) that was from 1980-1982 and called **Angus.** I have lost the last telephone number that I had, for him. Anyone knowing the whereabouts of **Les** can contact me at above address or telephone number.

Andy Miller is trying to get in touch with **Justin** 'Tiny' **Tindale** who joined the Royal Signals approximately 1986/87. Last time **Andy** saw him was about 1993, he was married to **Helen,** had two kids and had just returned from service in the Gulf War. If you have any details please email him at: Andywindymiller@lineone.net
Or snail mail: 118 Randolph Road
DERBY
DE23 8TG
Tel: 01332 737903

CORRESPONDENCE

From: **Ernest E. Gathercole**
17 Chiltern Crescent
Hunstanton
NORFOLK PE36 5IB
Tel: 01485 533943

Dear Sir,

As the only member of the Berlin Signals Squadron (during the Berlin Airlift), who is also a member of the British Berlin Airlift Association, I had the honour and privilege of being invited to attend the 50th Anniversary Celebrations of the ending of the Airlift in Berlin. The all-expenses trip (9th - 13th May 1999) was paid for by the Berlin Airlift Gratitude Foundation and the city of Berlin.

Besides the 325 members of the British Berlin Airlift Association from the United Kingdom there were representatives from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada, Prance and America, making a total of about 1000 veterans. We were overwhelmed by the welcome, hospitality and generosity (including many gifts and souvenirs) we received from the German Government, city officials and even the ordinary men and women in Berlin. Our days were totally taken up with tours of Berlin and the surrounding areas, including Potsdam, a three hour lunch cruise on the Havel, the Allied Airlift Museum and an evening concert by the Berlin Chamber Orchestra. In addition there were Official ceremonies such as the Service of Remembrance at the Memorial stone at Gatow.

On Wednesday 12 May at the 50th Anniversary of the lifting of the Berlin Blockade there was a Service and Wreath laying ceremony at the impressive Airlift Memorial at Tempelhof. On parade were military bands from Britain (the Band of the Royal Air Force), United States, France and Germany. In attendance were the Governing Mayor of Berlin, German City Governors and the Ambassadors of Britain, United States, Canada, South Africa and France. Amongst those who paid tribute to those who had lost their lives during the Airlift and all who had taken part in the Airlift, was our Minister of State for Defence, **George Robertson.**

One of the most abiding, and emotional, memories of the visit occurred on the final night, when we attended an evening concert/military tattoo at the Olympic Stadium. It began with the Airlift veterans marching into the Stadium, led by the band of the Royal Airforce, The British Berlin Airlift Association Standard Bearers and members of the Association. We had obviously been chosen to lead the parade because we were the only contingent who were uniformly dressed, in our blazers (bearing the Association badge), white shirts (with Association tie) and grey slacks. As one Yank remarked 'Gee, you guys are the top drawer compared to us Yanks in our T-shirts and jeans!') As we marched into the Stadium, the crowd of 30,000 Berliners rose and gave us a standing ovation. Even as we climbed up to our seats in the arena they were clapping, patting us on the back and shaking our hands. The events which followed lasted almost four hours and ended with a spectacular fireworks display.

On our return to this country it was very disappointing to learn that the 50th Anniversary had been almost totally ignored by the media. In fact articles which I had sent to two Norfolk local newspapers were never printed This dismal state of affairs was echoed by other Airlift veterans (with whom I keep contact) in Glasgow, Aberdeen, Sheffield and Wrexham. As an ex-National Serviceman (1947-49, I am proud that I was able to put my Royal Signals training (OKW) to good use during the Airlift. If there are any Signallers who knew me during my stay in Berlin, or prior to that in Hamburg (GHQ 2nd Echelon - Signals Troop) I shall be happy to hear from them.
Yours sincerely.....

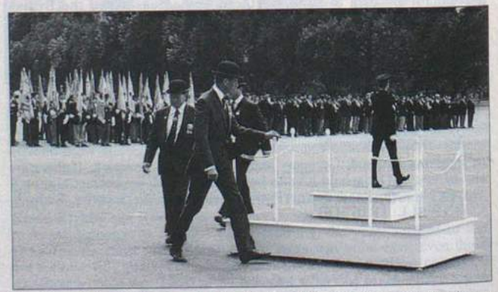
From: **Ron Larby**
178 Braemar Avenue
NEASDEN
NW10 0DS

Dear Sir,

Thank you for including my letter re **Brian Close** in the August edition of *The Wire*. I received a number of replies to my query from various RSA members, who recall the MCC tour furore. Perhaps the following may be of interest, particularly to members who served in the Korean War.

International Korean War Veterans Reunion

The British Korean War Veterans Association hosted an International Korean War Veterans Reunion in London during the week of 19-23 July 1999. The programme included a Memorial Service at St Paul's Cathedral, a luncheon reception at the Guildhall, A Garden Party at Chelsea Hospital, a parade and inspection by the **Duke of Kent** at Horse Guards and a gala dinner at the Paragon Hotel, Fulham. A separate reception and buffet was also held for British Veterans aboard HMS *Belfast*, whilst our overseas colleagues attended receptions at their respective Embassies. All the United Nations countries that sent troops to Korea were represented at the Reunion, large parties coming from the USA, South Korea, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Also well represented were many former members of the Corps who served in Korea. They were prominent at the event as described, including the former Master of Signals, **Maj Gen Birtwistle** who is the current President of the British Korean Veterans Association.



Maj Gen Birtwistle escorts the Duke of Kent to the saluting base

The highlight was undoubtedly the Parade which formed up in Wellington Barracks, being marshalled by some magnificent NCOs from the Welsh Guards, 'In sixes PLEASE gentlemen!' We then marched off to Horse Guards, headed by the flags of the nations followed by a group of BKVA Branch Standards, two columns of British Veterans and then the remainder of the nations in alphabetical order. The Parade was accompanied by the band of the Welsh Guards.

The Duke of Kent, accompanied by **Maj Gen Birtwistle**, inspected the Parade, speaking to many of the veterans before taking the salute during the March Past. It was interesting to note that at least six of the BKVA standards were carried by ex-Royal Signals, which represented a goodly proportion of those standards on parade.

A wonderful week to remember in particular in respect of being able to meet fellow veterans from the other United Nations contingents. Should any member of the RSA who is a veteran of the Korean War and is not a member of the BKVA, but is interested in joining, contact me at the above address and I will endeavour to help them.
Regards.....

From: **D. R. Stanforth**
93 Sefton Street
Southport
MERSEYSIDE PR8 5DD

Dear Sir,

In the past I have read in your Letters Column experiences of RSA members assisting schools by giving talks regarding the 1939-45 World War.

I have been involved with such an event this past April. I would imagine the procedure as usual was similar to mine, that of a telephone call. This I received from Stanley High School in Southport asking if their information was correct - 'Was I something to do with the army and could I help them?' It appears that WWII is now part of the curriculum. Such is our age now, that we are deemed 'history', and could I provide ex-service and home-front personnel to give their experiences and recollections of those years, to help the students.



Ex Radio Mechanic, Roger Stabforth, instructing Headteacher, M. Danvers, in the art of tuning the HRO



NVA members and pupils pose by the 1944 Standard Utility outside Stanley High School. Roger Stanforth, Branch Secretary, to the fore in the usual nonchalant manner. At the back, on the left, can be seen Chairman - C. Bennett ex-RM Commando with Chairman W. Whalley ex-Royal Signals on the right

The students would be grouped into fours; with two asking questions on what they understood to have happened and with two asking on matters they did not comprehend. Also, would we be able to supply any relics or souvenirs from the period. I think the head of history was taken by surprise when I offered vehicles, signalling equipment, weapons and other impedimenta of service life of the time.

Thus, the Southport & District Branch of the Normandy Veterans Association mustered a dozen volunteers. Amongst the personnel agreeing to attend were ex-Signalmen **Bill Parker, Bill Whalley** and myself. The day went extremely well with considerable interest from both the students and the ex-servicemen and women.

The study groups were wide ranging and the classes viewed and handled the equipment on display in turn which proved to be a great success. The display being so popular was opened up to all the classes in the school. As an extra benefit two local papers arrived and took photographs following up with articles. Likewise, our own PR Officer, **Maj R. Bevan MBE** came to record the event.

During the day the students supplied us with a non stop 'NAAFI' which was most appreciated. Needless to say we were all thanked for our efforts, so much so that we have been invited again for next year's course. Such events are very rewarding and it is a eye opener for the young to understand experiences and conditions during those momentous years. Should such requests be made for a organised day such as that by Stanley High School, I would certainly recommend them to RSA members and as it is said 'all publicity is good publicity as long as they spell your name correctly'.
Yours sincerely and kindest regards.....

From: **K.Bunston**
31 St Davids Road
Miskin
Pontyclun
Mid Glam CF72 8PW
Tel: 01443 224036

Dear Sir,

The recent RSA weekend, as all are aware, was the last of this century. The numbers of the old and bold are diminishing and I personally have a feeling of regret that their stories and versions of events are no longer to be heard around the evening's entertainment centred on the well worn bars of Blandford Camp. This is the central focus of our reunions and with this in mind a number of us who are now in their late sixties are getting together to ensure that the tales that enthralled us are not lost to future generations of the Corps.

Send me your story, no matter what the subject about an episode of your Army service, whether you were regular or National Service, events of basic training, your impressions of 38 pattern webbing, anklets web, boots ammunition, anything that can strike a chord of merriment or nostalgia into the memories of an ex-serviceman. Any tale that would be of interest will be considered and naturally the names of those not wishing to have their names published as the authors will be respected.

All profits generated will go toward the Corps Funds. I feel sure that this will be a success and look forward to hearing from you.
Yours sincerely.....
(Ed to George W. Cooke, Sonoma, California – Your anecdotes have been forwarded for consideration and will be featured as fillers in future WIRES – many thanks! PV.)

DON'T BE DISAPPOINTED

COPY MUST BE RECEIVED SIX WEEKS BEFORE THE PUBLICATION DATE

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Mr G. W. Cook ... ...$ 50.00
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Brig F. L. Clarkson in memory of Lt Col W. Gaskell ... ...£ 20.00

LAST POST

Adlam - LCpl R. T. Adlam	Served 1939/46	Died 08/04/99
Andrews - Cpl W. Andrews	Served 1940/46	Died 01/08/99
Atkinson - Brig A. L. Atkinson OBE	Served 1932/64	Died 16/08/99
Atkinson - Sig G. E. Atkinson	Served 1946/48	Died 19/07/99
Baker - Sig H. Baker	Served 1939/46	Died 28/03/99
Blaker - Brig E. C. R. Blaker OBE	Served 1932/66	Died 30/07/99
Benjamin - Sig N. Benjamin	Served 1935/??	Died Sep '98
Bishop - Capt J. L. BishopMID, MBE	Served	Died 16/07/99
Brick - Sig M. S. Brick	Served 1962/71	Died 04/06/99
Burt - Sgt B. A. C. Burt	Served 1945/71	Died 29/08/99
Caplan - Capt M. J. Caplan	Served 1944/71	Died
Cockram - WO1 R. G. Cockram	Served 1926/45	Died
Cullen - Mr W. B. Cullen	Served 1928/32	Died 30/05/99
Ellerker - LCpl T. A. Ellerker	Served 1942/46	Died 12/06/99
Emery - Capt G. J. Emery	Served	Died 15/07/99
Faircloth - WO1 W. G. Faircloth	Served 1929/56	Died June '99
Freeman - Capt T. Freeman	served 1941/46	Died 21/08/99
Green - Capt B. G. Green	Served	Died 24/06/99
Guest - LCpl R. Guest	Served 1957/61	Died 15/07/99
Hall - WO2 D. J. Hall MBE	Served 1942/72	Died 13/06/99
Hall - Maj J. R. Hall ERD	Served 1939/69	Died 03/07/99
Howell - Cpl R. A. Howell	Served 1942/46	Died 20/07/99
Jepson - WO2 J. W. Jepson	Served 1942/71	Died 15/08/99
McCarthy - Lt P. McCarthy	Served 1940/46	Died 03/07/99
Maguire - Cpl T. A. Maguire	Served 1963/??	Died 16/05/99
McCarthy - Lt P. P. K. McCarthy	Served 1940/46	Died 03/07/99
McElvogue - WO1 J. J. McElvogue	Served 1951/77	Died 26/06/99
Mercer - WO1 (RSM) G. W. Mercer	Served 1947/72	Died 07/05/99
Missett - Sig J. J. Missett	Served 1936/45	Died 29/04/99
Mitchell - Sig F. Mitchell	Served 1959/61	Died 06/07/99
Mitchiner - Capt G. M. Mitchiner	Served WWII	Died Aug '99
Purcell - Sig J. F. Purcell	Served 1942/46	Died
Raiders - WPte J. M. Raiders	Served 1942/46	Died 15/03/99
Seale - Capt T. Seale	Served	Died June '99
Sellers - Sig K. Sellers	Served 1943/47	Died 24/07/99
Smith - WO2 G. Smith	Served 19??/69	Died 198?
Smith - Sgt R. M. Smith	Served 1967/89	Died 21/06/99
Somerville - Sig R. R. Somerville	Served 1945/48	Died 19/06/99
Taylor - SSgt J. W. Taylor	Served 1944/68	Died 25/06/99
Thomas - Maj W. J. Thomas	Served 1932/65	Died 23/06/99
Tindle - Sgt J. E. Tindle	Served 1949/60	Died
Watts - Sgt P. H. J. Watts	Served 1950/72	Died 26/06/99
Watson - Sig E. Watson	Served 1950/52	Died
White - Mr C. A. White	Served 1935/43	Died 25/07/99
White - Sig H. K. White	Served 1942/46	Died 02/06/99
Williams - Maj F. Williams	Served 1951/82	Died 03/07/99
Willis - Capt A. G. Willis	Served 1939/48	Died 22/10/98

Thomas – Maj W. J. Thomas, 'Tommy', was born in 1912 and whilst he shone at school, he left early to take an apprenticeship as an electrical engineer. In 1932 he joined the Corps at Catterick as an Electrician Fitter. On passing out he was posted to Meerut in India and the NW Frontier where he operated a mobile wireless station from a 30cwt truck. In those days promotion was hopelessly slow and it was not until 1937 that he was promoted Unpaid Lance Corporal, but was made substantive a year later. He returned to UK in 1939 and became the MT Sergeant in 1 Armd Div Signals in the BEF and withdrew with his MT Section back to UK via Brest.

He remained with the reformed 1 Armd Div Sigs. He married **Eadie** in 1942 and was not to see her again until 1945. With the Regiment he went to Egypt and took part in the advance to Cyrenaica and the retreat to Alamein. He then went to 9th Army Sigs in the Lebanon as a WO2 , then to the Cheshire Yeomanry which was converting from a cavalry regiment to R Signals in Palestine. Later as a WO1 RSM he served with 5 Air Formation Signals in Italy. returning to UK in 1945. Reverting to WO2 he served in the War Office Signal Regiment.

He felt that he was not being sufficiently taxed and so applied to go overseas again and in 1948 he was on his way to East Africa Command Signals in Nairobi where he served for two years until 1950 and was granted an extension to 1952, being promoted to WO1 a few days before returning to the UK. The Kenya Police tried to recruit him in the rank of Superintendent, to run their transport, but his loyalty to and love of the Army prevailed. He was selected for a commission as a Cypher Officer. In preparation for this, his CO asked him how he wished to be known as an officer. Hitherto he had been called 'Willy' which he disliked and to be called John Thomas was even worse and so he opted for 'Tommy' by which most people know him today, He was posted to Hanover District Signals until 1954 when he was posted to Singapore in the Comcan Signal Centre. In 1956 it was back to BAOR and to 7 Sig Regt. His final overseas tour was to Cyprus at Dhekelia in 1961 and finally home to 10 Signals Regiment for retirement in 1965.

However, he gained a RO3 post in BAOR, first with an Electronic Warfare Squadron and subsequently with Hannover Works Services Group' and in 1970 after 39 years of service to the Crown, 30 of them serving overseas and one year on troopships, he made his second retirement. Throughout his service and particularly when a senior NCO, he realised the value of a tight knit WO & Sgts Mess in every unit in which he served and always worked hard to ensure that his was the best. As a result he had a host of old friends, and acquaintances throughout the Corps. He came to live in Kent and he and his wife **Eadie** travelled widely. His parents had insisted that as a child he was widely read and he furthered his education throughout his service. In consequence he embarked upon writing his autobiography. ('Signal Success' published by The Book Guild, Lewes, Sussex). He also became the founder member and Hon Treasurer of the East Kent Branch of the RSA being awarded the well deserved RSA 50 Year Badge for service to the Corps. He is survived by his wife **Eadie**, together for 58 years and his children, **Pet, Linda** and **Bryan**.

Benjamin - Sig Nathan 'Nat' **Benjamin** died in September 1998 at the age of 87. In 1935 **Nat** joined the City of London Signals (Volunteers) and qualified as a dispatch rider. Nat was a prominent member of the Regiment's thriving motorcycle display team. In 1937 the Regiment was accorded the honour of providing the first TA motorcycle display team to perform at the Royal Tournament and Nat played an active part in the display. At the outbreak of war and mobilisation in 1939 a medical downgrade precluded Nat from staying with 56 Div Signal Regiment and he transferred to London District Signals. He later served with the Jewish Signal Brigade in Italy and, after another transfer, finished his wartime service in Rome. After demob Nat continued his active membership of the 56 Div Signals Regiment RSA and was subsequently awarded the 50 Years Service badge. He continued his membership up to his death. Nat will be sorely missed by his family and friends including his comrades from the 1937 Display Team who have maintained close contact with each other up to the present day. Nat leaves a widow, **Doris**, daughter, **Pat**, and two grand-daughters.

McElvogue – RSM James McElvogue, it is with great regret that the Beverley Ex-Boys Association announce the death of **22537320 RSM Jim McElvogue**, who passed away on Saturday 26 June 1999 after suffering from multiple sclerosis and other ailments for some years. **Jim** commenced his service with the 6 (Boys) Training Regiment at Beverley in January 1951 where he spent two years. In 1953 he went to 6 Armoured Division for two years and then spent the next ten years with various Regiments until being sent to Borneo for a year in 1965. On his return he was posted to 11 Signal Regiment in Germany returning to Harrogate in 1967. In later life, despite being in a wheelchair, **Jim** served as a case worker for SSAFA. We were represented at the funeral, at St Austell's Church, Southshields, by **Mick Teague** and a Royal Signals Association Member and life-long friend, **Ken Bunston**, also attended. We offer our sincere condolences to his wife, **Maureen**, and family.

Mitchell - Sig Frank 'Mitch' **Mitchell.** Mitch died suddenly on 6 July 1999. He was the much respected and loved Secretary of the Langeleben Reunion Branch. that owes it's very existence to his tenacity and hard work. His funeral took place in Elland, Yorkshire, on 15 July and was attended by a great number of 'Langy' members, including our President, **Maj Gen Peter Baldwin**, along with members of the Huddersfield Branch who carried their Standard. The chapel was bursting at the seams due to the large number of 'Corps' friends and the many local organisations 'Mitch' was connected with.

'Mitch' served as a Spec Op, following training at 10 WTS/224 Squadron. He was posted to 1 Squadron, 13 Signal Regiment early in 1960. Before long he volunteered for 2 Squadron at Langeleben which was situated close to the old East/West Germany Border near Helmstedt, and stayed there until de-mob in 1961!

In June 1992 'Langy' closed down. 'Mitch' along with many others attended the closing ceremonies. This sparked the idea of forming a Reunion Branch. It was to be open to all, however they were badged. Due to his efforts membership now exceeds 300. A Reunion has taken place each year since 1994. They have alternated between Germany and the UK. The last of these took place in May, just six weeks before 'Mitch' died.

McCarthy - Lt Patrick McCarthy died following a heart attack on the 3rd July 1999 in Dalemain House Rest Home, Southport; he would have been 83 on 14 July. **Pat** served in the Corps from 1940-1946 in both Europe and the Far East. During the German retreat from Paris **Pat** and a fellow officer drove into Paris some 36 hours ahead of the Allied Liberators. After the War he returned to Education and was Headmaster of a large school in Richmond on Thames until his retirement and ultimate return to his North West origins. Due to failing health he entered Dalemain Rest Home in May 1997 and was virtually blind in his latter days. His funeral was on Thursday 15th July in Richmond where he was buried with his wife **Margaret**, who died on 1 May 1993 and his son **Aidan**. **Pat** was a popular member of the Southport Branch of the RSA. He was a cheerful man with a mischievous sense of humour, modest and forthright, a generous man, an optimist with unbounded enthusiasm, a good companion who will be sadly missed. The Branch Chairman, **Bruce Gillingham**, and members offer their condolences to **Pat**'s sons **Terence** and **Liam** and to all the family.

Caplan – Capt M. J. Caplan. Many in the Corps will be saddened to learn of the death, after a long illness, of **Maurice Caplan** who served from 1944 to 1971. **Maurice** was a polymath who counted ukulele playing and a keen interest in amateur radio (mostly on the key) amongst his many and varied accomplishments. He was affectionately known by all ranks in the Corps as the absent minded professor. His George Formby impressions were always appreciated. He was an excellent Yeoman of Signals and was commissioned in 1968 as a Traffic Officer. After retiring, he served in the Diplomatic Wireless Service for a short time before joining the Royal Brunei Malay Regiment as a contract officer where he was highly regarded by Malays and British alike.

Andrews - Cpl William Andrews. It is with deep regret that the Cotswolds Branch has to report the death of **Bill Andrews** who passed away on 1 August 1999 at the age of 85. **Bill** was called up for service during World War II and after training as a Dispatch Rider with the then newly formed 8 Corps Signals, at Bakewell Derbyshire, he embarked with his unit on the troopship *Otranto* for service in the Middle East where he remained throughout the war. Following his return to civilian life after the war **Bill** became an active member of the Royal British Legion and he played a large part in establishing a branch of the Legion in his home village of Bibury. He was their Standard Bearer for some twenty years. A member of,' the Cotswolds Branch, of the RSA, **Bill**, together with his wife **Marjorie**, regularly attended Branch meetings and social gatherings. He will be remembered with affection by all who knew him. We offer our sincere condolences to **Mrs Andrews** in her sad loss.

Currie - Maj A. D. H. Currie TD M.Inst M. It is with much regret that we must advise of the recent death of **Alec Currie** after an illness. **Alec** joined the TA in 1939 and served throughout the war in the Royal Artillery, being demobilised in 1946. In 1950 he was recalled for Z Reserve Training and rejoined the Royal Artillery TA. In the 1958 reorganisation, as a Captain, he transferred into 42 Signal Regiment becoming a Major in 1960 commanding 2 Squadron. From 1966 to retiring in 1968 he commanded a Troop in category 111 being over the age for the TA. He was a founder member of the 42 Signal Regiment Officers Club being Chairman for a time and only recently made life president. He was also a member of the Manchester Branch of the RSA. Before retiring from his business career he was an Advertising Director of a publishing company. He will be sadly missed by his many friends; We extend our deepest sympathy to his family.

Faircloth – WO1 W. G. Faircloth. The passing of **WO1 William George Faircloth**, 'Fairy' to those that know, occurred on Monday 28 June 1999, aged 88years. He is survived by **Ada,** his wife, and their two sons, **David** and **Christopher**. The Service was held at the Holy Trinity Church, Blacon, where he had served as a Church Warden for twelve years, and Church Treasurer for seventeen. **Canon P. L. Williams** conducted a sensitive and stimulating service assisted by **Canon K. V. Povey**, giving the personal account of a friend and comrade to a packed congregation of fellow Royal Corps of Signals people, (of which 'Fairy' was a Life Member), colleagues from the Civil Service with whom he had served, and a host of friends of the Church and neighbours who came to give their last respects. Born in Colchester in January 1911 he left school at the age of fourteen to join F. W. Brackett & Co., Engineers as an apprentice draughtsman, but the firm shortly closed. Due to the General Strike, employment was uncertain, luckily he found a vacancy with H. J. Willett, Motor Body Builders in the office, but the indoor work affected his health, and he had to leave. He filled his time at a farm cum riding school, very happy to put in his 70 hours a week for full board plus ten shillings. 'Fairy', even as a boy, was inclined to things electrical. Wireless was the thing of the day. In fact his passion for the crystal set that he had made, and his ability to ride a horse, clinched his application to enlist with the Royal Corps of Signals in August 1929. After completing his training at Catterick Camp, he was posted to 5 Division Scarborough for Technical Training. Then Overseas to the 1st Indian Signals in Rawalpindi for six years returning to 3 Divisional Signals at Bulford. At the outbreak of War he became part of the British Expeditionary Force in France. It was there that he suffered a personal tragedy that was to cause him to lose the use of his left eye. While working on a broken down lorry with a hammer, a splinter of steel became embedded in his eye. Even after several operations in France the splinter remained fixed. He was sent back to England, where a lady surgeon at Moorfields Hospital was successful, but the eye was too damaged to be useful. From then on 'Fairy' concentrated on his teaching abilities with the 3rd Operator's Training Battalion, temporarily on loan to Manchester University as a Lecturer, then as a Warrant Officer, to handle all prospective candidates, as a preliminary to the War Office Commissioning Board, which he found to be a very interesting job indeed. Later he was appointed by the Foreign Office to work with the administration of the African Territories of Asmara, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somaliland to prepare the 'Five Power Commission' to decide their future and running the Accounts Division of Posts & Telegraphs. For services to the Corps he was awarded The Meritorious Service Medal. Due to the eye injury, a Commission was not possible, although temporary ones were offered. His final posting, in 1954, was to Headquarters Army Emergency Reserve, that had been recently formed at Blacon Camp Chester. He was the Senior RSM carrying the Sword of Honour at the Coronation Procession, and was discharged from distinguished service in January1956.



Green - Capt Bryan George Green BEM I knew **Bryan** for over 45 years. I first met him when he joined us in 16th Independent Parachute Signal Squadron in the Suez Canal zone, straight from basic and trade training at Beverley and initial parachute training at Aldershot. He was a keen young soldier and a very good telegraph operator. He quickly qualified himself for promotion and was soon appointed to be a Lance Corporal and became an excellent radio detachment commander and in due course was promoted to Corporal. When we returned to England he was promoted to Sergeant just before his 21st Birthday, and proved to be a very good Troop Sergeant. After some years he was posted to 602 Special Communications Troop where he was awarded the BEM and served with them in Kenya. He rejoined the Parachute Signal Squadron as SSM and after a tour as RQMS he was promoted to RSM and posted to the Guards Brigade HQ and Signal Squadron. He was commissioned and became a very competent officer.

He retired from the Army as a Captain and went into industry as a works manager but soon branched out on his own to set up his own company, Laser Scientific Services, providing precision engineered parts to among others the aircraft and armaments companies and supplying computer controlled laser equipment to industry in the UK, the Continent and the Far East. In 1992 he expanded his company to become Precision Beam Technology and had a new factory built at Peterborough which was to have been opened by the then Prime Minister, **John Major**, unfortunately Black Wednesday intervened and the factory was opened by **Norma Major** and **Lady Blatch**, the Minister for Education. **Bryan** always worked hard and excelled at all that he did, whether at work or at sport, where he was an outstanding soccer player, and later managed a number of unit soccer teams, culminating in taking 28th Signal Regiment team to the Army Cup Final, unfortunately losing by a single goal in the closing minutes.

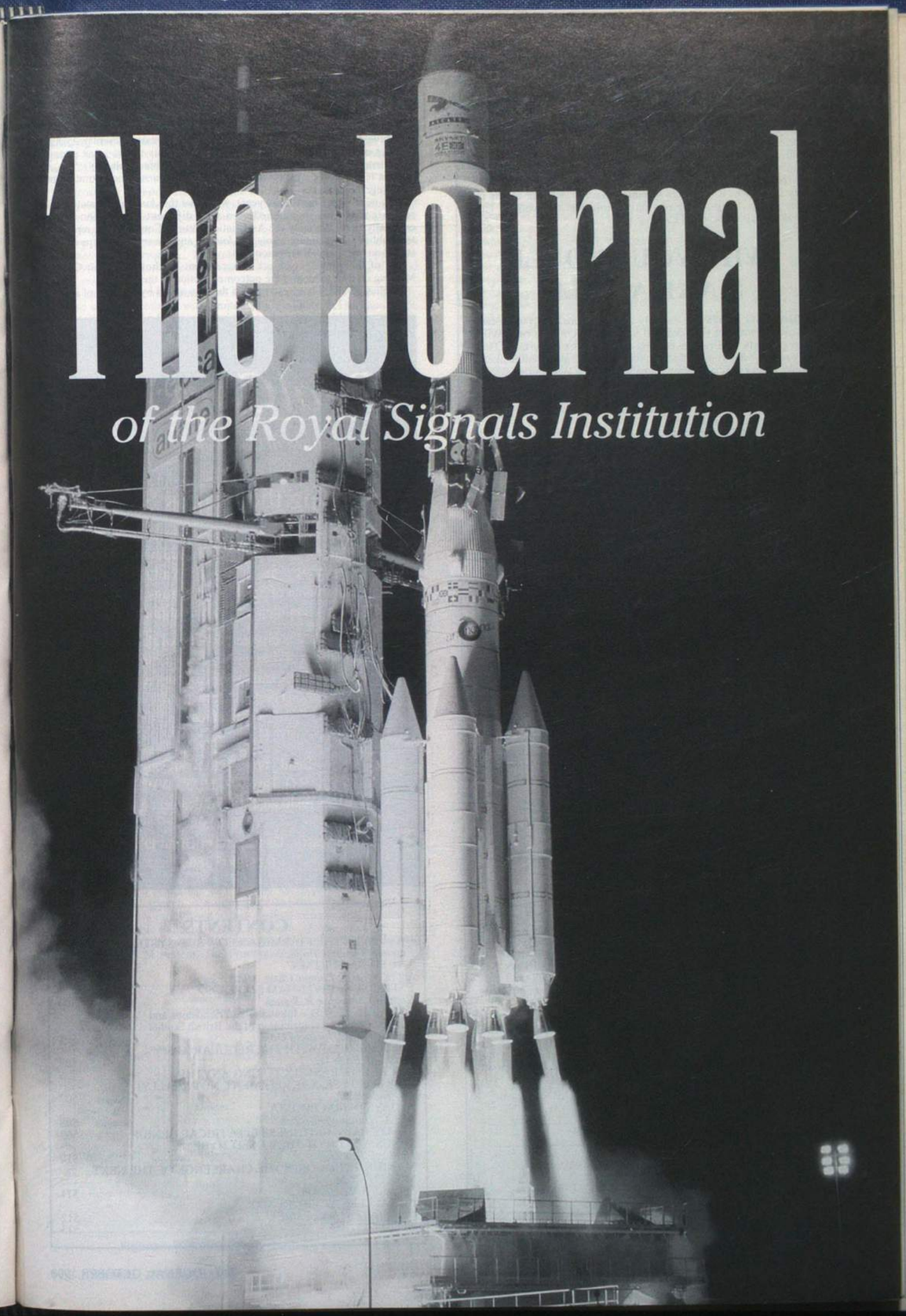
He died unexpectedly on 24th June 1999 at the age of 65 and leaves a widow, **Nantiya** and children **Patiya** and **Justin**, and **Elaine** and **David** by a previous marriage, to whom we extend our sincere condolences. He was a good friend and will be sadly missed by all who knew him. He was cremated at Peterborough Crematorium and his ashes will be interred at Aldershot Military Cemetery.



Robinson – John Robinson soldier and teacher, born 5 May, 1923, died 24 June, 1999. One of Scotland's last survivors of the Battle of Imphal has died in Edinburgh. **John Robinson**'s career saw him endure the ferocious experience of combat against the Japanese in WWII after which he became a dedicated school teacher. Like many of his generation, the war interrupted but was not allowed to dominate the rest of his life. Few would have suspected that this kindly, lively man had witnessed mankind at its worst. As a Signaller his was the last jeep to arrive at Imphal – 'The Japs must have been watching.' He joked – before the 86-day siege. 'The first 80 days were the worst, then I got malaria. Food was dropped in, we were on one third rations, one-third of bugger all.' **Robinson** lived in a hole for nearly ten weeks, as Radio Operator for Divisional HQ, 5th Indian Division. Imphal lay 60 miles inside India and was the door to Japanese victory: both sides had to win and the isolated plain saw some of the most desperate fighting of the war, in which bodies lay so deep the men wore nose-plugs. There were 13000 Allied casualties evacuated – one of them was **John Robinson.** Having recovered, he rejoined his unit and fought his way to the outskirts of Rangoon until, thanks to **Gen Bill Slim** (knighted on the field of Imphal), '....the Japanese were torn apart.' Not all of them. Shortly before VJ Day, **Robinson** was charged by a sword-wielding officer. **Robinson** calmly shot him dead at close quarters. **Robinson** was then sent to Java to mop up the Japanese and liberate the POWs in a now forgotten campaign in which 255 British and 955 Indian troops died. Two Japanese Battalions came under British command in the attempt to quell the Javanese who saw the Allies as attempting to reintroduce Dutch rule. After five months of street fighting, 'Not officially fighting anyone,' **Robinson** said, he was given a medical discharge , suffering from malaria and anaemia – along with a Corporal's helpful explanation, 'Your haemoglobin is down to 60%, whatever that means.' He graduated from Downing College, Cambridge, in History, and Lincoln College, Oxford, in Anthropology to become a lecturer at Chatham Naval Dockyard and then Rosyth. His love of education also saw him teach for 13 years at Dunfermline's Woodmill High School. In 1982 he was awarded a BA in Geology from the Open University. When health returned he joined the Inns of Court Regiment, Signal Squadron, TA London Division, before transferring to 21 Special Air Service. He was commissioned into the Royal Army Education Corps in 1957.

Sellers- Sig K. Sellers. It is with regret that the Hull Branch of the Association report the death of **Kenneth Sellers** on Saturday 24 July 1999. **Ken** served in the Corps from 1943 to 1947 during which time he served in the Italian Campaign. He was a staunch member of the Hull Branch of the RSA and will be missed by his friends. We extend sincere condolences to his family and friends.

White - Cecil 'Chalky' **White** 1917-1999. **Cecil Anthony White** better known during his days with the Corps as 'Chalky', died in Nottingham City Hospital on 25 July 1999, following a short illness. 'Chalky' joined the Corps on 3 January 1935 at Catterick. After training as an Operator Signals he was posted to serve with the Indian Signals on the North West Frontier. He was next transferred to North Africa, soon after the outbreak of hostilities, and served as an Operator in the desert campaigns until wounded and taken prisoner by the Germans but fortunately held in an Italian POW Camp until the Italian surrender. Repatriated to England in 1943 he was medically discharged due to the effects of his wounds. After leaving the Corps, **Cecil**, usually called **Tony**, became a successful businessman with several ventures throughout England. He eventually retired from his Estate Agency business in Margate and settled in Skegness. **Tony** leaves a wife, **Hazel**, three children, six grand children and one great grandchild. His son **Robert** also served in the Corps from 1963 to 1988.



In this Issue we launch a partnership with **Just Wills plc**, the largest independent Will writing company in the United Kingdom. The work done by **The Royal Signals Benevolent Fund** is helped enormously by the generosity of individual legacies left to the Fund. The arrangement with Just Wills allows members and ex-members of the Corps to benefit from a discount for using the service and at the same time the Fund also benefits by donations from Just Wills. It is always sensible advice to put your affairs in order and in doing so we ask you to remember the work of The Royal Signals Benevolent Fund.

WHY YOU SHOULD MAKE A WILL

MAKING A WILL is the only way to ensure that your wishes are carried out after your death. If you have not made a valid Will, your property will pass according to the laws of intestacy. This may not be what you would have wished and in any event is likely to take longer to finalise than if you had made a Will, during which time your beneficiaries may not be able to draw any money from your estate. It can mean arguments and distress for relatives. Making a Will lets your loved ones know that you cared enough to 'sort things out' in advance.

IF YOU ARE SINGLE you will want your estate divided among friends, relatives and charities of your choosing and in the proportions you want.

IF YOU ARE MARRIED do not assume 'my other half will get everything'. Children, siblings or parents may have a claim. If you are living as a couple but not legally married, you will be treated as a single person and a surviving partner may get nothing at all. One thing you can be certain of – there will be argument and dispute at a time when the family have to cope with the loss of a loved one.

IF YOU ARE A PARENT you should consider who will look after your children in the event of your death. This is particularly important in the case of 'one-parent' families or unmarried parents living together and a valid Will nominating Guardians is imperative – if no one knows what you would have wanted, the Court will decide on the future of your children and it may not be what you would have wished.

IF YOU ARE RETIRED maybe you made a Will a long time ago. It probably needs updating to include additional grandchildren or even deletion of persons to whom you no longer wish to leave anything to.

By deciding to write your Will through **Just Wills plc** you will save **£5.88** per Will (special discount) and you will also be benefiting this worthwhile charity as **Just Wills plc** have agreed to donate **£5.00** to the charity 'The Royal Signals Benevolent Fund'. (Reg. No: 284923)

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Please Mark Box [X]

☐ Please send me the Wills by Post pack to enable me to draft my Will. I understand that once I have read the booklet and completed the instructions I then forward the form to **Just Wills plc** who will draw up my legally valid Will and return it to me. I enclose my cheque made payable to **Just Wills plc** for **£10.00** deposit for each Will. I understand that I will send the balance of **£31.13** inc. VAT per Will with the completed instruction sheet.

I further understand that if I am not satisfied, I can return the pack within seven days and receive a full refund.

☐ Please let **The Royal Signals Benevolent Fund** know that I intend to include them in my Will.

Name _____

Address _____

_____

_____

Postcode _____ Telephone _____

Editor's Note:

THE WIRE/JOURNAL FUTURE

After the 'flyer' asking for your views on *The Wire/Journal* future, (for which we thank you for the excellent response), we are currently trying a number of combinations which reflect your various views, in an attempt to achieve the best and most economically acceptable result.

This issue shows a maximum *Wire* with the *Journal* incorporated, but not integrated, into it.

The next step, (April next year), will have the *Journal* reinstated as a separate magazine, but issued on a very different distribution to that originally used. Probably the Association/Retired Corps will be circulated to establish who actually wants the *Journal* and the serving Corps may be issued on an agreed distribution.

All of the above is subject to agreement by the Institution Council Meeting on 5 October and the outcome/reaction to the trials.

I believe we will have established the way ahead by the start of 2000!

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DATA OVER THE PTARMIGAN EOW SUB-SYSTEM

Utilising the Engineering Order Wire facility in the Ptarmigan System to pass signal engineering data communications between the Node Command Installation and the Radio Relay Detachments.

This article is reproduced from the executive summary of a project report produced by the authors – Sgt's Leyland, Peters and Robinson of Number 68 Foreman of Signals Course. The authors were set the subject of the project and conducted four weeks of research in their own time with two days of course programme time in which to carry out any confirmatory work required. The authors completed their FofS course in April 1999 and are now serving at 35 Sig Regt (V), 600 Sig Tp and RSSST, respectively.

The engineering management of the Ptarmigan System relies heavily on voice communications, with limited data available in OSC and Node Command (NC) vehicles using the SMT and remote FAME access. Link Information Data (LID) has to be passed verbally from OSC to NC to SW & FC to Radio Relay (RR) installations, which is both time consuming and prone to errors. As well as engineering traffic, tactical updates and briefings need to be passed to all personnel, including remote RR detachments. These problems could be addressed by the availability of a data system for network managers which utilised the EOW sub-system as a bearer and was capable of automatic routing and repeating. Therefore, the aim of this short project was to explore a system that would allow data communications over EOW between NCs and their deployed RR, and up to OSC command.

The effectiveness of Ptarmigan as a communications system will be dependent on the effectiveness of its management systems. In order to carry out such comprehensive management, of what is in effect a large communications system, the system managers are provided with their own installations and equipment. Future plans, intentions and information up dates are passed up and down the chain of command using various management facilities, two such devices being the System Management Terminal (SMT) and the COSSOR Teleprinter. A problem arises when the information to be passed is intended for non-command vehicles. Such detachments are not equipped with these management tools and as a result the system relies heavily upon voice communications. Most people having played Chinese whispers realise how easy it is to lose important information due to human error and interpolation, even within a very small circle of players! As the Radio Relay Installation plays such a key role within the network, it is essential that the system managers are able to pass accurate information without the risk of an intermediary person relaying a vital message incorrectly.

This paper addresses this problem by utilising a secure, tactical, hand-held Data Entry Device (DED) that can transmit and receive audio data signals directly to and from the already existing Engineering Order Wire (EOW). EOW speech signals are encoded using delta modulation where speech is passed throughout the subsystem as a 16 kbit/s stream, encoding and decoding functions are performed at subscribers equipment's and interface units. To provide three separate EOW circuits over the supergroup transmission link, two EOW links are combined into the housekeeping group and one EOW link is carried along with the supergroup. This third EOW circuit may be extracted and used by remotely deployed SHF radio.

'The EOW speech from the DEOW handset is initially routed to an amplifier circuit before being fed to a Codec Encoder. The internally generated 16kHz clock signal is used to convert the analogue speech signal into 16kbit/s NRZ form using Continuously Variable Slope Delta Modulation (CVSDM) which is then routed to an Interface Module'[1]

The reason for quoting this particular paragraph is because it flags up a key issue, which is the use of CVSDM. CVSDM allows reasonable quality of digital speech at a quarter of the bandwidth required for standard PCM. It is rarely used within civilian systems as the quality is below the acceptable standard. It does, however, offer an advantage in the fact there is no requirement for an analogue to digital converter as there would be in a PCM system. The Ptarmigan speech encoding circuit is shown in Figure 1.

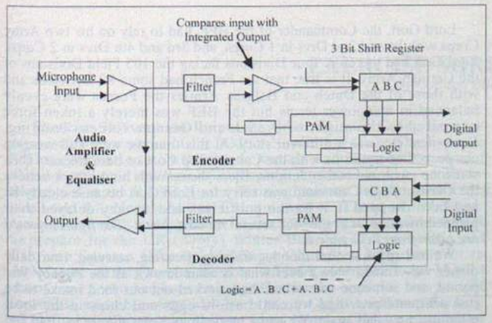


Figure 1. PTARMIGAN Speech Encoding[2]

CVSDM has two main drawbacks, the first occurs when the input changes so quickly that the stepped waveform is unable to track it and is termed slope overload. This problem is more apparent in simple Delta Modulation as CVSDM uses different step sizes in an attempt to reduce this risk. With normal speech this is not really a problem as the human brain interpolates the missing information, data however could prove a different matter. It was therefore decided that providing the bit rate was kept to a reasonably low speed slope overload would not become an issue when the time arrived to pass data over an EOW circuit.

The second drawback of CVSDM is due to the finite step size causing quantisation error. Making the step sizes smaller reduces this but increases the risk of slope overload. The DED selected for the job was the Kipling as it was readily available, compact enough to fit in the smallest of hiding places and relatively user friendly. In addition, the Kipling DED can output digital data to an associated printer allowing hard copies and records to be easily maintained. It is also able to transmit and receive audio data signals directly to and from a radio. Operator interface with the Kipling DED is via the keyboard and a display screen, this allows the operator to configure the system, prepare and transmit messages, action received messages and initiate the built in tests, using a series of displayed menus. System information is displayed on a screen. Typically, the screen display is sub-divided into three main areas, a status line, the main display area and a prompt line. A typical display is shown in Figure 2.

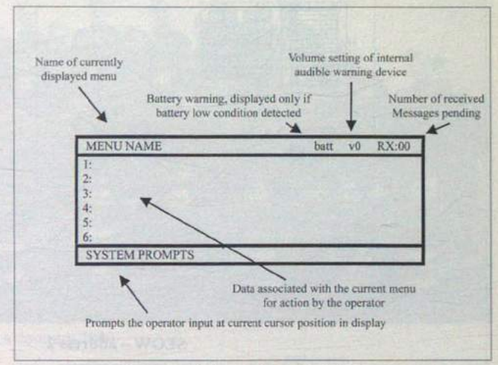


Figure 2. Kipling DED typical display

When configuring the DED's parameters there are several settings that one should be aware of. The first point to note is that the PTARMIGAN EOW circuit has an in built delay of one second, once the pressel is depressed, in order for synchronisation with the distant end equipment's to take place[3]. Fortunately the Kipling DED allows the operator to set a parameter called the Keytime Delay[4]. This is a time period at the beginning of each transmission during which Kipling does not send any useful information in order to allow the transmitter a chance to key up to full power and the receivers AGC to settle down when used in conjunction with radios. This period can be set in the range 0 to 31, where each unit represents 0.1 seconds (i.e. a range of 0 to 3.1 seconds). The parameter settings used in the trials are shown in Table 1.

Serial	Parameter	Setting
(a)	(b)	(c)
1	Net Name	Test
2	Radio 1 C'sign	1:0 2:3 3:9
3	TX Mode	Manual
4	Baud Rate	300
5	Nx (Packet Size)	15
6	Clock	DTG
7	Key Delay	20

Table 1. Parameter Settings for Kipling DED

The first test conducted was to pass a simple message from the DEOW within the Switch and FC to the SCRA Central Installation. This was achieved by selecting the correct channel on the DEOW, speaking to the distant end to ensure that their device was switched on and ready to receive and then transmitting the message.

Once the message is transmitted audible FSK tones are heard in the ear-piece and a 'Q' (showing a Queued message) is displayed in the top right hand corner of the DEDs display. On the receiving side the yellow busy light on the SEOW lights and an 'R' (informing the user that a message is being received) appears in the top right hand corner of the display screen. Once the transmission has finished the yellow light extinguishes on the SEOW while the transmitting device replaces the 'Q' indication for an 'A' in order to acknowledge a successful transmission.

The second test conducted, involved a message being transmitted from the SCRA Central to the Switch and FC installation. Here the same operating procedure was adopted as before, with voice communications being established prior to transmitting the data message. Again the same confirmatory indications were observed. The first two tests carried out confirmed that data could be transmitted over the EOW circuit. The syndicate was then keen to discover whether multiple calls could be made both on a single circuit and two different EOW circuits, enabling more than one installation to receive the same message after a single transmission. Theory suggested it was possible and within minutes it was confirmed. By selecting two EOW circuits on the DEOW within the Switch and FC, and transmitting a single message to both the SCC and SCRA Central installations one message could be transmitted down two separate EOW circuits in a single action.

Multiple address calls on a single EOW circuit were also made and as with the previous trials conducted, voice communications were established first to ensure that the terminals we wished to receive the messages were on line. A message was then transmitted where upon all stations consequently received the transmitted message successfully. The equipment configuration is shown in Figure 3.

The authors wish to thank Area Systems Group at the Royal School of Signals for the facilities and assistance provided in carrying out this project. The full report of this project is available through **WO1 (FofS) Cutforth** MBE at Area Systems Group.

Bibliography:

1 AESP 5805-S-405-302.
2 Engineering Order Wire, AESP 5805-S-405-302, Chapter 2.
3 Ptarmigan System Overview, AESP 5895-B-510-301, Chapter 8.
4 Kipling System Operator Handbook, AESP 5810-C-211.

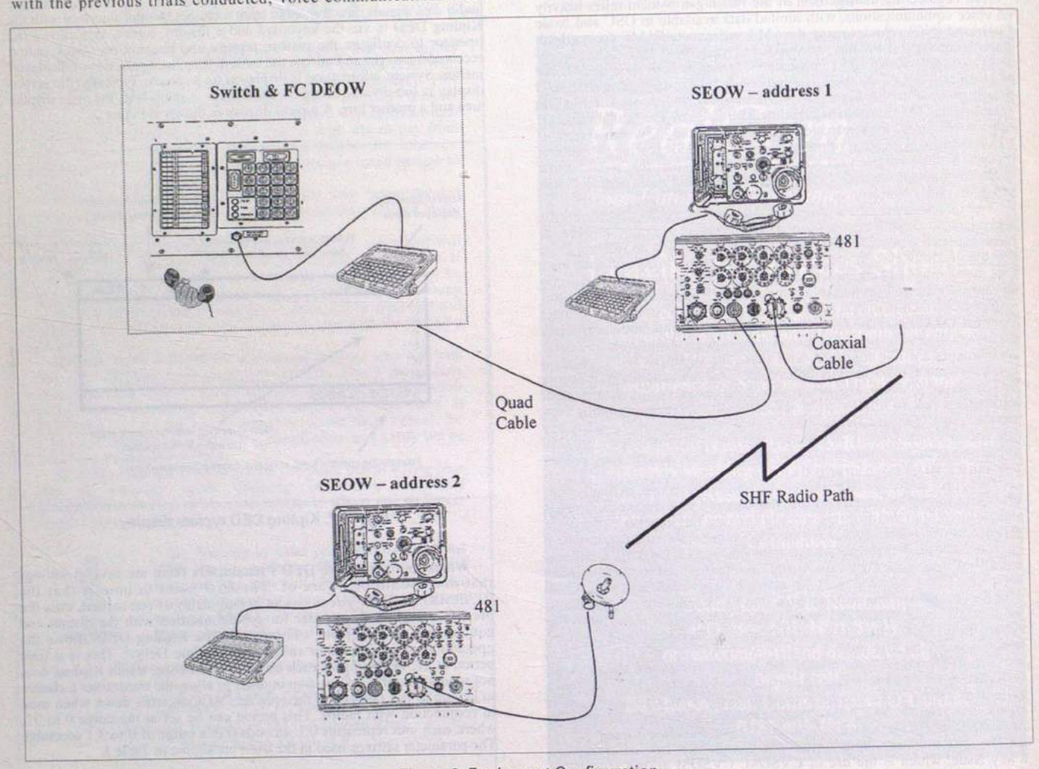


Figure 3. Equipment Configuration

THE FINAL CURTAIN

Sig (Rtd) L. S. Palmer C Eng, MIEE

The dramatic title of this story arises because the year 2000 sees the closing down of all Branches of the Dunkirk Veterans Association. So ends an era in which the British Army got a kick in the rear but paid back the culprit with considerable interest. As a Dunkirk Veteran I have been proud to stand and honour those who didn't make it home after the battle for France in 1940, but there has always been some who considered that the withdrawal by the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) was a shameful act for an army, but these people are always those who have never faced a Tiger Tank with the 0.55 inch Boys anti-tank rifle which happened to be the only anti-tank weapon 3 Line had. Our Lee Enfields weren't much good against their tanks.

3 Line Section had sailed from Southampton to Cherbourg on 18 September 1939, being one of three Line Sections, (the others were 1 & 2) which formed No 1 Company 'A' Corps Signals, Nos 2 & 3 Companies were operators and Admin, if I remember correctly. Later the 'A' was changed to lst Corps and comprised the lst and 2nd. Divisions. So, at the end of September 1939, the BEF consisted of all of 160,000 men, 25,000 vehicles, 140,000 tons of stores and a front line of 25 miles, part of the Maginot line. It was assumed that the war would be fought as in WW1.

Lord Gort, the Commander of the BEF, had to rely on his two Army Corps with lst and 2nd Divs in 1 Corps, and 3rd and 4th Divs in 2 Corps. Lord Gort had therefore four Divisions facing the 105 Field Divisions of the German Army. It is true that the French had some 80 Divisions and with those of the Dutch and Belgian Armies the Forces were evenly balanced in manpower terms but the BEF was merely a token force compared to the might of French and German forces. Training, Equipment etc, was a different story. At this time we were still wearing our peacetime uniforms with the Cavalry Top Coat or bum freezer. Then someone gave us Leather Jerkins, Bless them. With hindsight, I believe the German High Command was sorry for Lord Gort because clearly he had been dropped in it by the politicians and so they delayed their planned invasion of France for several months. *Note:- The figures quoted are taken from Reference 1.*

We had spent several months, training, freezing, starving, (our daily dinner was Tinned Stew,) over what became known as the Phoney War period, and someone somewhere had worked out our food intake to be just adequate provided we could afford eggs and chips in the local estaminet now and again. We had a marvellous Xmas dinner in 1940 and the original menu was given by me to the museum. By early 1940 lst Corps had another Division, 48th, 2nd Corps had 5th and 50th and another Corps, 3rd arrived in April. 51st Highland Div had been attached to the French Army. On 10 May 1940 the Battle began. When you examine the figures you find that the BEF gave a good account of themselves leading to praise from at least one involved German General, and our Commander, Lord Gort, who had the courage to save the BEF by his retreat and reform orders in spite of the fact that the French seemed to forget all about the BEF and left him to get on with it. When the left flank of 1 Corps became vulnerable due to the capitulation of first the Dutch then the Belgians he had little choice. As far as I remember his saving of so many at Dunkirk and the southern evacuation ports didn't seem to be recognised by the politicians. For those of us who survived we cannot thank him enough. In war time soldiers obey orders and retreat if ordered to do so, under threat of Court Martial but some still have a go and remnants of the Dutch, Belgian, and French Forces helped the evacuation to succeed with many coming over to England.

The Signals were the communications experts but one well remembered failure was the fact that none of us seemed to know what was happening. On 10 May we moved into Belgium and on our arrival in Brussels we had a hectic time laying D8 left, right and centre: I was a lineman in 3 Line Section, lst Corps Signals, *see Photograph taken early 1940.*



3 Line Section circa January 1940

The Officer was Lt Jacobs. To his right was SSM 'Snowey' Weedon (Who terrorised recruits in the late thirties in the Depot), to Snowey's right was Sgt 'Taffy' Wilding, to the left of Lt Jacobs is Sgt 'Taffy' Edwards and next to him Cpl 'Tich' Harrison, the third of a well known Aldershot Trio. The writer is fourth from the right in the rear rank. Cpl Halliday mentioned in the text is marked. The photograph included all transfers from 11 Line Section to 3 Line Section and vice versa.

We often came under small arms fire when out line laying and on occasion we fired back but to this day I have no idea who was shooting at us. This led to an amusing episode involving our Section Fitter (motor) Cpl 'Busty' Halliday, a reservist, who got very annoyed over bullet holes in his 30cwt Morris vehicles and a damaged cable-layer MK2. It was alleged he went around to Corps Headquarters, was granted an interview with Lt Gen Barker, Corps Commander, whereupon within 48hrs our vehicles were fitted with Heath Robinson twin gun (Lewis) mountings which gave us the chance to hit back, which we did, when they didn't jam. I think 'Busty' was on the carpet for not involving our Section officer but he was a fine officer (photo) and probably saw the funny side of the event. Without doubt the guns made whoever was shooting at us think again. Our Section Sergeant in Aldershot had told us that the Signals were classed as non combatants, rather like Medics, and it was good for him that he wasn't with us, having escaped on leave just prior to the push into Belgium.

For those new boys out there, the cable-layer mentioned was our latest piece of equipment and comprised a two stroke engine driving two rubber rollers through which the twin D8 was passed from a free running drum attached to the machine through a belt drive. The rollers spewed the cable out a good 30ft, guided by an NCO with a crook stick and as long as you didn't mind using one mile of twisted cable to cover 300yds all was well. I am disappointed that we do not have one in the museum or does someone know something I don't. To be fair, when the layer was used with single D8 cable followed by another layer producing a pair, they worked perfectly and someone somewhere decided that two bobbins (cotton reels) spaced 9ins apart produced a near perfect communication channel with a characteristic impedance of 600ohms, just right for the carrier terminals available at the time. Great pride was taken by the lineman to ensure that the 'clove hitch' used on the bobbin was tight enough to ensure a constant 9in gap throughout the bay length for both cables on the French Telephone poles. (I bet some are still there). The cotton reels were collected throughout the country by the lovely ladies of the WS, who probably wondered if we were throwing them at the Germans but now you know the truth Ladies.

So, on 10 May, we drove into Belgium. Corps Headquarters was in a large Country House and we were kept quite busy Line laying and/or installing switchboards. F&F of course. After a few days we began the retreat to the coast but until I picked up a leaflet dropped by a German aircraft I didn't know what was happening and as far as I am aware, neither did anyone else. The leaflet explained we were surrounded and invited us to lay down our arms. We didn't. I became cut off from my Line Section and reached Dunkirk on the morning of 3 June.

Dunkirk was the end for the original BEF but some of the lads continued to fight on in the Calais area and a counter attack was launched in the Arras area. I think someone who was there should tell that one. We all did our best, and some were awarded the highest honour possible, The VC. His Majesty awarded seven, yes seven, Victoria Crosses to Members of the BEF for outstanding bravery during the battle for France but there were many acts which went unrecognised. We say we will remember them but we never seem to these days. Is it because we think that bravery in defeat is different from bravery in victory? Here they are:

8 June 1940	Flying Officer D. E. Garland Pilot
	Sergeant T. Gray Observer
26 July 1940	LCpl H. Nicholls Grenadier Guards
	Lt H. M. Ervine-Andrews East Lancs Regt
20 August 1940	2Lt R. W. Annand Durham Light Infantry
	CSM G. Gristock. Royal Norfolk Regt
5 February 1946	Lt The Hon C. Furness Welsh Guards

(The names are from the London Gazette on the dates mentioned.)

Ref No l: AGAINST ALL ODDS - The British Army of 1939-40.
A National Army Museum Publication.

EXERCISE SHRIVENHAM LOIPE 99

by Captain Bill Anderson R Signals

Exercise Shrivenham Loipe is a Cross Country Skiing Exercise organised by members of the RMCS Nordic Ski Club. The Exercise deploys annually to Switzerland, Austria and France. The aim of Shrivenham Loipe is to develop novice and intermediate skiers' skills, by taking part in the RAAC Nordic Training Scheme and the joint RAC, AAC and RA Nordic Skiing Championships. These two elements combine to form a training camp for the budding Bialliletes from RMCS to prepare for the UK (Army) Winter Biathlon Championship and Exercise Spartan Hike held in Serre Chevalier, France. Prior to deployment on the Exercise the potential team of ten had to be whittled out of the 15 who had been training. This for the most part was straight forward as a number of the well paid Officer Cadets could not afford the £350 for the five weeks skiing. In addition to this, a number of individuals were not willing to leave their families for the five weeks over Christmas and New Year. Training started in October 1998 and consisted of two runs, two sessions of circuits and two range practices per week. This was of course in addition to individual training. In addition to this training, in the last few weeks, one session of in-line roller blading was introduced. This was to introduce novices to the skills common between skating on skis and skating on roller blades. Unfortunately the only venue for this was in the Student Patch area and we are all glad that the entertainment value for spectators was exceptionally high!!

On 4 December the intrepid ten departed from Shrivenham for the drive to St Moritz, Switzerland. The ten included, from the Corps, Capt Bill Anderson and Lts Andy Parfitt and Colin 'I'll be a Captain in two weeks' Kell. Amongst the remaining seven were OCdts Mat 'Sick Note' O'Hare and Rob 'Kimo' Addison who are at present sponsored by the Corps but, have still to attend RMA Sandhurst. 24 hours after leaving

Shrivenharn we arrived in the Engadin Valley, Switzerland, to be confronted by so much snow that we couldn't see it! There had been no snow since October, skiing was going to be limited to say the least.

The team, accommodated in two apartments in the neighbouring villages of Celerina and Samedan, quickly settled into a limited training schedule which included gym work, skiing (both Classic and Freestyle) and the highly critical range time. For the first week the team was split into two sections: the intermediates were attached to various groups within the Royal Artillery Alpine Club Training Scheme whilst the beginners, with the politically correct title of Novices, were taken by Maj Paul Belcourt RA, who had the uphill (no pun intended) task of converting the Novices into race-ready skiers. No pressure at all, considering the first two races were at the end of that first week! In no time at all the Novices were skiing up and down hills where other novices feared to tread and the intermediate skiers found the revision of basic skills a welcome refresher. Due to the lack of snow in Pontresina there was a heavily restricted skiing programme available, thus a daily exodus to Davos was required. This involved a 1.5 hour trip over the Fluelapass that was to become an all too familiar sight over the coming weeks. The first two races went better than expected, with the whole team performing well against an opposition with a two week head start of training on us. No prizes won but, morale was high and the potential for some good results in later races in the exercise was obvious.

With the RAAC scheme behind us it was up to the old sweats of the team to show the young guns a trick or two! For the two weeks prior to Christmas, Colin Kell, in his third season with the team, and Andy Parfitt, in his second season with the team and with the onerous task of Captaining the team, along with two other third season veterans, Lt Chris Brogan and Capt Mac McGill. both Royal Engineers', set about improving their own techniques whilst dragging the youngsters of the team and the team granddad, Capt Bill Anderson, around the slopes of Davos and Pontresina. By now some techniques were beginning to show, particularly by OCdt 'Kimo' Addison and Capt 'Old Git,' Anderson with a stunning display of ski ballet or was it break dancing on skis'?

Christmas Day and Boxing Day were spent relaxing on the downhill slopes of the Davos/Kloisters Ski Resort which made for a very enjoyable couple of days but defeated the purpose slightly. The days were meant as rest days but the ski-ing undertaken ensured that the team were all slightly more 'fatigued' than planned. Following the next few days training the team relocated to Livigno in Italy. Not as one would expect was any skiing undertaken but, normal Hogmanay activities were indulged in until well, it was early!!!!

New Years Day was then spent recovering, packing the vehicles and generally preparing for the Team's move to Austria, and the forthcoming RAC/RA/AAC Championships in Hochfilzen. The Team moved to Austria on 2 January 1999 and quickly settled into their accommodation in St Ulrich, approx 20km from Kitzbuel. Unlike Switzerland there was an abundance of snow here, which enabled us to ski from our accommodation to the competition ranges, approximately 10km away in the village of Hochfilzen.

The first day of the Championships was a practice day, with the course for the following day's classic race open for inspection and the ranges open for training. The Team took the opportunity to practice range drills and shooting technique, with individuals skiing sections of the course between each shoot in order to practice shooting with a heightened pulse rate. The snow was in very good condition and the Team was confident of good results in the week's races.



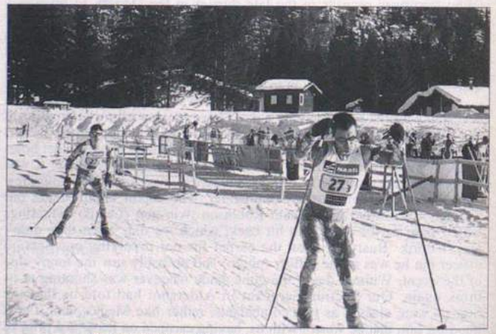
Lt Andy Parfitt trying to look cool, calm and collected on the range in Hochfilzen

Overnight fresh snow fell and conditions looked good early in the morning. The team deployed early to the race start area in order to test the ski waxes. However, after testing tub waxes with limited success, the temperature increased to above freezing and it then began to rain. To add to the team's difficulties, OCdt Gareth Walker in a display of how not to control a minibus in icy conditions. managed to collide with the RAF's very own White Arrows (Landrover equivalent of the Red Arrows). Two of the RMCS A team went off to arrange repair and recovery of the team's minibus while the remaining team members battled on trying to find that elusive combination of wax and snow. The race proved to be a test of brute strength in the double poling department, and the practice gained in Switzerland proved invaluable as the Team achieved a very respectable 11th out of a field of 32 teams.



Lt Andy Parfitt easing up the hills in the 10km individual biathlon

The next race was the 4 x 7.5km biathlon relay. The loipes had frozen overnight making them quite icy, and fog on the range made accurate shooting extremely difficult. As always, shooting accuracy proved invaluable with Capt Colin Kell showing the field why he is within the Bisley 100. Lt Andy Parfitt also has to be commended upon his Flipper impersonations and being the only individual on the course to collide with the only one-armed man lying in the middle of the race loipe. Well done Andy, that took real skill!!!!!



Capt Bill Anderson and OCdt John Wilson
See, they can stand up long enough for a photo to be taken

The final race was the 10km individual biathlon, held on the Thursday morning. Only one 4-man team was entered, as it was impossible to share the five biathlon rifles between two teams. Sadly, the excellent shooting from the previous day was not repeated. and the Team had to ski hard to achieve 11th place. The remainder of the day was spent in preparation for the journey back to Shrivenham that was planned for the next day. Thursday evening was the final prize-giving, held in the Kulture Hall in Hochfilzen. It was here that Capt Colin Kell was honoured with the coveted prize for the 'Best Bottom in Lycra', and his prize, well that was a particularly fine pair of underpants. Unfortunately the decision was made that due to the damage to the minibus, and it's need to return to UK for repair, that the team would not go on to compete in Exercise Spartan Hike. The whole team therefore returned to the UK, arriving back in Shrivenham in the early hours of Saturday 9 January.

Lt Andy Partitt has now handed over the reins as team Captain to Capt Bill Anderson who is now planning Exercise Shrivenham Loipe 2000. The format for the expedition is still unknown as yet, due to the dates for the various elements having not been confirmed due to the Millennium.

INDIA REVISITED – INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIPS AND REFLECTIONS ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE BRITISH SOLDIER

By Maj Gen D. R. Horsfield OBE

I am one of the few remaining officers of the Corps who had close experience of 'old style' foreign service, having spent ten years long ago in Egypt, India and later on, Malaya. The Indian part included time in Burma as well as service in what is now Pakistan. I was launched from the UK on this interesting foreign travel in 1939 in the month that war had been declared, bound for 'The Tropics' with a minimal one full day's embarkation leave at home. I returned eight years later.

My first appointment on Indian soil was the command of the Officer Cadet Wing at the Signal Training Centre in Mhow in the summer of 1942 and it was here, some months later that I met my first Indian Signals Officer, Brij Bhagat, a Regular of my own vintage. He was a great all rounder in every way and we became firm friends. He was one of the distinguished band of Indian officers commissioned from the Indian Military Academy (IMA) in the 1930s, where he had won the Sword of Honour of his term. His younger brother, a Bombay Sapper and Miner won the Victoria Cross in one of the Desert battles.

Small numbers of Indian officers had been commissioned from Sandhurst from around 1920. The IMA had not been founded until 10 years later and in its early years none of its output came to Signals. Perhaps one reason for this was that there was no Signals equivalent to the Indian Sappers and Miners or Indian Artillery, so what commission could they be given? When this problem was solved and one Signals commission a term allowed, the vacancy became a top prize to compete for. The IMA term after Brij Bhagat produced a very great man in the history of the Indian Corps, Raj Batra by name. His prizes included both the Sword of Honour for being the outstanding Cadet and the Gold Medal for being first in the order of merit. By the time I left India I had met the majority of this small but talented group of officers commissioned from the IMA in the 1930s.

A tale about Raj Batra illustrates both the confidence and the sense of humour of this great man. As one of the youngest subalterns at Jabalpur Signal Training Centre he dined at a British Infantry Guest Night where he was called upon to deliver his party piece which turned out to be Ronald Frankau's recitation 'I'm Proud to be British' which was received from this young Indian with delighted applause. However his Royal Signals seniors were much in doubt as to whether this was acceptable behaviour. 'Taking the Mickey' was frowned upon. However, I am glad to say that he was not suppressed. Not surprisingly the same recitation was hilariously received at a Ladies Guest Night given by 2 Signal Brigade for the Indian Generals during our Corps celebrations in 1995. Raj and others like him formed immediate bonds of friendship with their British contemporaries from their earliest meetings. The valuable thing from my point of view was that I was meeting these fellow young officers, all of us in our early twenties, without any preconceived ideas about our standing one with another. Reactions were the same as with any British of our own kind. It would be presumptuous of me to claim equality with my new friends but I was not too far behind. At this point I would like to give credit to Maj Gen Ralph Vyvyan, SOinC India. I detected a careful hand guiding the careers of the young Indian officers of their Corps. He had been a friend of my Father's in the Worcestershire Regiment and came to Royal Signals via the Signals Service of the 1914-18 war.

Sixty years from my early experiences I have recently returned from three weeks in India for a reunion with Indian friends and their families ranging from my contemporaries to young serving soldiers in remote stations. My wife Sheelah and daughter Claudia accompanied me. Sheelah's father had served Indian Railways for 25 years and Claudia had visited there herself as well as knowing our own Indian guests on various visits to the UK, so all looked forward to a great experience.



Mrs Horsfield, Priyo Batra and the author

The tour was an outstanding success. Examining our programme on arrival we were much impressed to see that the Signal Officer in Chief, Lt Gen Gokarn had included a Ladies Guest Night to honour us and make clear that linkages with Royal Signals were of great importance to him and his serving Corps as well as those at the Veteran level. Wherever we went, the message had gone before and we were treated as the closest and most welcome of friends. Sadly Raj Batra died not long after visiting Britain for our 1995 anniversary but the Batra family played a great part in everything that we did. On the evening of our arrival we were entertained at the Batra's house by Priyo, his widow, where we met their son, two daughters and grandchildren. Moving on to the house of one of Raj's brothers we met other relations whom we knew - more drinks then on again to one of Priyo's sisters where conviviality continued, to be rounded off by supper. Stamina and survivability were to be well tested on the trip.

There were so many good friends in Delhi who were keen to entertain us that at one stage I suggested that an auction might be needed to sort things out, particularly in view of the fact that part of our time would be taken up with a tour which had been arranged to the State of Sikkim far to the east in an area where India, Nepal, Bhutan, China, Bangladesh, Assam and Burma are not far separated even though the highest of mountains and the greatest of rivers provide separation.

This tour owes its creation to a conversation I had with Lt Gen Balaram during our Corps 75th Anniversary activities in 1995. I learned that he had been a Corps Commander in Sikkim during the Chinese offensive of 1962. I mentioned that I had been due some leave when 23rd Indian Division was withdrawn from the Imphal Plain in late 1944 after pushing the Japanese off the Shenam Heights down towards the Chindwin River. I was planning a visit to Sikkim when I received a signal ordering me to report immediately to Quetta Staff College to join the Directing Staff so no trip took place. Bala as we call him set about rectifying the missing Sikkim part of my education. Burma veterans will be pleased to know that we stayed on our trip with 33 Corps and 17 Division, both important formations in our battles with the Japanese. Mrs Priyo Batra, much loved by us all, was to accompany us and her wide knowledge of the cultures and history of her country and much else, quite apart from her company, added enormously to our enjoyment.

Sikkim is approached from West Bengal at the far north extremity of India. It is only some 40 miles wide and 70 north to south but in other ways it goes in for extremes. Gangtok, the capital, was our first port of call. In this town and others like it, spread over slopes and ridges, the altitude ranges from 4,000 to 6,000 feet or more, making shopping good exercise. In the great range of mountains in north Sikkim lies Kanchenjunga, at over 28,000 feet the third highest mountain in the world. The country, once ruled by a Buddhist dynasty, has also become a centre for those who have fled from the Chinese out of Tibet. The Himalayas in Sikkim, as elsewhere, are relatively recent in geological terms so that landslides and other disturbances are common. Travel takes time. We drove west from Gangtok to a town some 30 air miles distant. With never a straight stretch of road, constant climbing and descending and a few landslide problems the journey took five hours and the speedometer registered the 65 miles we had covered. Much was beautiful forest country intersected by fast flowing rivers. Some areas were cleared and terracing for rice had been carried out step by step up steep slopes. Arriving in Kalimpong, also draped over several ridges, 17 Division Signal Regiment took us in hand and the Divisional Commander, Major General Brar and his family were very hospitable. We were looking forward to seeing the great snow clad range of mountains to our north, but the weather in the whole of this mountainous area can vary by the hour and one learns to be patient, to adapt to circumstance and welcome the brighter kind when it comes. Our busy programme went ahead most enjoyably. People are not daunted by slopes. A fine garden centre we visited stretched way down a 30° incline but flourished all the same.

Darjeeling was our final call in the same territory though, like Kalimpong, just across the frontier into India and with much less forest. It will be known to many of our Corps with Gurkha service. On arrival I was invited to lay a wreath at the fine Gurkha memorial to soldiers of the area who had fallen in operations since 1947. We were in a popular tourist area, but the throngs of Indians were so great that tourists do not stand out. At last fine views of the great mountains to the north were visible every morning and for those with hosts as good as ours there was plenty to see. A tea estate in lovely country was very worthwhile and the Tibetan Refugee Training Centre impressed us all. Facilities are well provided for at minimal cost. Their material products are of the highest quality and education of the young leads the clever to professional level employment from which they in turn help fund future education. At the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute we were well instructed and I noted that Smith Windham and Thompson, 2 Signals subalterns who supported the 1936 Eric Shipton Everest expedition were mentioned as, of course, was Lord Hunt, with whom I had worked in the founding days of the British Ski Federation. Gombu, a diminuitive and cheerful Sherpa who accompanied us round the Museum had scaled Everest on two occasions. Signals Major Saksen was our expert guide.

Our final four days in Delhi were busy and illustrated above all how much talent is always available waiting for the hand of opportunity to release it. We met old friends who had met the challenges open to them after 1947. Amongst the Generals, Brahm Kapur had headed Defence Procurement with direct access to Nehru and Chiefs of Defence Staff in

America and the UK. He and his wife Kamla have also played a part particularly in improving education in Indian villages. Vijay Khanna, a one time Cadet of mine, became SOinC and with his wife Uma has built up the contacts with our Corps. Bala Balaram, who attended a Catterick Long Tels course, became a Vice Chief of the Indian Army. We look upon him and his wife Hima as the leading intellectuals of their Corps. It was 'RP' Singh and his wife Kamla who took the lead when he was SOinC in entertaining the large British contingent to the 1986 Indian Corps celebrations. The personal tragedy of failed operations leaving him with a locked knee joint have in no way diminished the sparkle which illuminates their lives and the contribution which the two of them and their daughter have made to health problems of others in the medical sphere through Homeopathy and Reike.

On a less serious note we were happy to meet another ex-SOinC, Mooke as we called him, who attended a Long Tels course in Catterick when I was Chief Instructor at the School. Mrs Mookerji, Aroti by name, went off to the RAMC hospital soon after their arrival where their daughter was born. Mooke always declares that Sheelah taught him to cook, gathered the wives of Whinny Hill to spring clean the house for Aroti's return and collected a suitable layette from her helpers. Aroti tells us that Claudia, then aged four, taught her the skills of the Hula-Hoop!

All in all the whole visit was an exceptionally moving and enjoyable experience. We parted with bear hugs all round. The experience deserves a generous report both for our Corps and theirs. At the end of our visit, still moved by their heart warming attentions, I spoke of the one time image of the heroic Britisher 'remote, unemotional and stiff upper lipped' and thanked our hosts for showing me how to be rather more Indian in their very important way that does not dismiss emotion as a weakness.

Over the past dozen years many of our senior officers, together with parties of our veterans, all led by our Masters of Signals, have met their Indian counterparts and been delighted by the experience. Full credit must be given to the dynamic Lieutenant General 'RP' Singh for setting in motion the various steps which revealed and regenerated the bonds, individual and collective, between our two Corps and its individuals. The approach had to come from India. Our recent visit showed the great flowering of good will which has come from his initiative. We are pressed to ensure our attendance on 15 February 2001 at their 90th Anniversary celebrations. If we remain fit we shall be there and look for strong support from the top level of the serving Corps as well as from the diminishing number of Veterans available and fit to travel.

There must be reasons in history which had formed the grounding of the wonderful spirit which bound the soldiers of our two Nations together. I decided to look back on our shared history to search for these foundations of mutual respect, admiration and friendship built up over the centuries by the soldiers of our two Nations. It is of note that our soldiers of all ranks have a good reputation in many countries in which they have served, or are serving, earning credit built on friendliness, good humour, helpfulness and respect for local inhabitants and their way of life. Such behaviour is as much the role of our soldiers today as it ever was. Much of modern history appears to be written applying the morality of today and providing character assassination of great people of earlier ages. Too little regard is given to the problems faced and the options open for completing the task of the moment. In regard to Britain and India I propose to take a more robust soldiers line.

India is a country bounded by sea for much of its borders and by the highest of mountain ranges elsewhere. Borders are important and India is lucky to have such sound ones. It is part of Asia but with the barrier of the Himalayas to the north, it is in many ways much like a continent in its own right. In Europe, invasions, attempted or successful, have been taking place throughout history. They have been part of the activities of mankind which have spread knowledge, skills and, perhaps oddly, civilisation around the world. This may be a process which will die out, but it has served a useful purpose. At a distance of 2000 years we in Britain have no difficulty in accepting that many valuable ideas were left us by Roman intervention. India too has had many invasions, including the Aryans in 1500 BC through others to the important one leading to the Moghul Empire in 1520. However, the arrival of Europeans in India was no typical invasion. The influence of Trade on opening up relations between Nations is not sufficiently recognised. The difficulties of some early traders were well illustrated when we were taken to the Natu La Pass from Gangtok in Sikkim. This is the pass between Sikkim and the part of China which was formerly Tibet and the height is over 14,000 feet high in disorderly mountain country. Even so routes had been found for yak or camel convoys through these mountains in earlier centuries with journey times calculated in weeks rather than days. At the western end of the ranges in what is now Pakistan, the Karakoram Highway passes through Gilgit to the Khunjerab Pass with its own ancient caravan tracks at a greater height than the Natu La.

Discovery and exploration was already an active pursuit a thousand years and more ago. Intellectual curiosity and the spread of new ideas, particularly concerning religions, increased the drive. In the Ming Dynasty in the late 14th century, China had fine fleets which explored as far as East Africa, but there was little chance of trading opportunity as their own culture was so far ahead of other races. The skills of European sailors were increasing greatly from the 15th century. There were many advantages to exploration by sea which Europeans were to pursue. Travel by sea was quicker than by land. Organised and self supporting groups could move together and the freedom of the open seas allowed them choice of route and destination. Though the pace of development was slower, the developments in sea transport brought changes as dramatic as those in air transport in the last 60 years. Their effect on world trade and travel was to produce unforeseeable results. Although the Egyptians had worked out the dimensions of the world centuries before, European explorers of the oceans who knew of China from overland travellers from early times had assumed a world smaller than reality, in which China could be reached perhaps more easily by going west than by going east. It was a surprise to find the Americas in the way. The West Indies were found on the way and so named on the assumption that proceeding west from them would soon take one to the Eastern variety. It soon became apparent that sailing from the Atlantic to other oceans involved passing turbulent waters either round the Cape of Good Hope or Cape Horn. In the first instance it was the Portuguese, to the east and the Spanish to the west who turned successes into commerce or victory. For Portugal Vasco da Gama reached the port of Calicut on the west coast of India around 1499 and called there again in 1502 in what is described as a voyage of plunder and destruction rather than of exploration. Meanwhile Christopher Columbus, in the pay of Spain, located South America. Spain and Portugal protected their interest east and west with formidable fleets. In 1567 Francis Drake took an alternative commercial opportunity on a pirate voyage to the new Spanish territories. He sailed round the world in 1580. Between 1500, when Cabot sailed from Bristol to Nova Scotia, and 1600 both England and Holland expended energy in trying to discover practicable passages to the Pacific east-about to the north of Russia or west-about north of Canada. They failed and it was not until the naval superiority of Spain and Portugal started to wane that others were able to build up their trade with the East Indies.

By the year 1600 Dutch Merchants had obtained a near monopoly of trade to the East Indies and were demanding outrageous prices for pepper and other spices. In the years to come, eight European countries formed their own incorporated Companies for exploiting the trade with all countries lying beyond the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Magellan. There was not yet a collective name for what is now India so it and the islands were covered by the name 'East Indies'. It was Queen Elizabeth I who applied to Akbar the outstanding Moghul Emperor for 'liberties for an English Trading Company'. In 1609 Captain William Hawkins visited the Emperor Jehangir in Agra and was well received, a permit being granted for a factory in Surat north of Bombay and in 1615 Sir Thomas Roe became the first Ambassador to the Moghul Court. Disputes with the Dutch continued, ending in tacit agreement that the English Company should restrict operations to India and surrounding countries. Dockyards in Deptford for two centuries produced 'East Indiamen', ships which were pre-eminent for two centuries amongst the merchant vessels of the world. A major change in the charter of the Company was made late in the 17th century under King Charles II. Rights were given to the Company 'To acquire territory, coin money, command fortresses and troops, to form alliances, make war and peace and exercise both civil and military jurisdiction.' Such terms seem strange but the need arose because Southern India had become practically independent of Delhi early in the century and no authoritative government existed. Trading companies were too much at the mercy of the whims of local princes. The French were the first to take on native Indians to guard their factories and carry out military duties. The English followed suit, both having found that the loss of life of Europeans from disease was excessive. Thus the seeds of an Indian Army were sown. The 1688-1815 France/England conflict in Europe led to similar strife in India. The developments of the next 50 years are less important than the outcome which brought English supremacy and well developed Indian units.

It was around this point in my research that I started to re-read a treasured book on the history of the Indian Army. I was soon to recognise that a book read to answer a particular question brings into strong focus particular parts of the story to replace the broad blur of a general reader. It is very rewarding. I will give some key points of the story which provide stepping stones to the creation of the strong bonds of friendship experienced today.

It is recorded that in February 1759 a French officer, Lally de Tollendal wrote 'You would be surprised at the difference between the black troops of the English and ours ..... Theirs will even venture to attack white troops, while ours will not even look at their black ones.' A number of reasons are put forward for this difference. First of all, the earlier advice of the Duke of Marlborough about the treatment of his soldiers was respected. 'Take care to feed him well, to pay him regularly, work him hard and keep him under the strictest discipline. Cherish a genial feeling for the men and obey strict injunctions to watch over their comfort. Acts of personal kindness kindly bestowed bring their reward.' It is then suggested that, compared with the French, the English social system produced a higher proportion of officers at Company and Battalion level - men with a strong sense of devotion to their men who combined personal initiative with disciplined obedience to a commander. Many seemed to be Huguenots. (My Huguenot Grandmother would have been proud to know this!) Finally it was important to have the greater continuity of policy. The English Company was in a much stronger position than the French. English attention to Indian affairs was continuous, while a French Government's could only be intermittent. Some feeling of permanence, some consistency between past and future is essential to a soldier's needs; he must feel that what he dies for will not end with his death.

There is much in this story which carries a permanent message:

· Government must demand and support the search for and encourage the practice of ever improving methods.

· Foresight, imagination and experiment must be a continuous process in the Forces. This requires thought on how to win battles as well as technical advances.

· Training must be up to date and demanding in teaching new as well as relevant old techniques. We failed in this in the UK before 1939.

· At all levels fair treatment and well considered inter-relationships play an important part. Confidence between all ranks and within all ranks is the aim.

· Friendship is a strength multiplier. It produces Old Comrades!

THE RESERVIST WITH THE REGULAR ARMY

by Maj E.M. Blyth TD

The experiences that can be gained through service with the Territorial Army and the Regular Army are varied, exciting, numerous and rewarding. This is one of the fundamental reasons for personnel enlisting with the armed forces. However, occasionally it is worth reflecting on the cross-over between part-time and regular service and the rewards and challenges that result from this.

Certain issues which are highlighted as a young officer, both personally and as a young commander, require attention. The allocation of postings for both TA and Reservists when serving with the Regular Army can be at best a lottery and at worst an almost deliberate misuse of trade skills on a wide scale. This is best seen in the use of soldiers in the Bosnian theatre of operations. The trawl for Royal Signals operators of all trades from the TA was well answered for soldiers to serve on Op Lodestar. Significantly, many operators were employed out of role. This is not what they had volunteered to do. Many soldiers freely admitted that they would not have volunteered had they been aware of what they were to be doing. This allocation of employment appeared to be endemic throughout many cap-badges with only a minimal regard for either utilising or improving the trade skills of personnel. The overwhelming majority of volunteers do so because they wish to improve both their trade skills and promotion prospects. This situation may have changed and it is understandable as to why it happened. The simple ploy of telling soldiers they will be employed in trade prior to deployment and then placing them elsewhere appears to have been used on an indiscriminate basis. Being commissioned it is perhaps easier to argue one's way to a more exciting posting but for many junior soldiers under command this is not the case. This can leave a bitter taste over service with the Regular Army. A simple case of 'them' and 'us'. That TA soldiers may take time to reach the level of their Regular counterparts is not in question but that their experience can be given little credence is unacceptable and, although not policy, is fact.

A secondary problem that faces soldiers serving with the Regular Army is that of pay. Not with regard to scales but as to whether, or not, they actually receive it. I believe it is worthy of note that many TA and Reservists were not paid for several months and this resulted with families having financial difficulties back in the UK. If this was to be the case for several isolated soldiers then it is understandable that several could slip through the net. This has also been compounded by flaws with pay upon return to service with the TA. Soldiers expect to be paid when they have worked and this is a just entitlement. When the system lets them down for five months because they are still on the books as regular soldiers this surely amounts to a serious oversight.

The vast majority of TA soldiers who do serve with the Regular Army have an immensely rewarding experience and take back new skills and increased confidence in their trades. The currently trumpeted crossover method between the Regular and part-time soldiers is Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS). The theory being that TA soldiers volunteer to fill a post that is not currently held by a Regular counterpart. This is sound in theory but again, perhaps like trawls for Bosnia, the reality can be somewhat different but for more mundane reasons. Many TA soldiers who apply are failing simple dental checks and thus being declined for service. Many of those who apply for FTRS are unemployed or underachieving financially in the civilian world. Therefore the expense of visiting a dentist to have a check-up or have treatment carried out that is required and not available on the NHS is an extreme financial burden. This simple technicality can, and has, precluded soldiers from furthering their military ambitions at a stroke. When the new mobilisation centre at Chilwell becomes operational all TA and Reservist personnel will pass through on a two week mobilisation prior to deployment to the field army. A medical examination will be carried out and this will include a dental inspection. With dentists *in situ* surely a greater use of their talents would be to allow them the opportunity to repair any dental damage of volunteers. For the DDA to operate a simple pass/fail system is understandable but potentially churlish as many good soldiers with straightforward problems could be treated there.

The time delay between application for and acknowledgement is considerable, four weeks for many. This closely followed, or not dependent on perspective, by a delay of a further eight weeks before any contact is unacceptable in the civilian workplace. In the civilian environment one expects to hear on applying for employment whether, or not, you have the job within four weeks. This allows people to make whatever arrangements are necessary with regard to current employers, family and any financial settlements that need to be made. The seeming lack of concrete decisions and excruciating time-scale deters many potential volunteers from signing up for FTRS. Although once the wheels are in motion the system moves along relatively smoothly.

The introduction of the Reserve Forces Act, 1996 (RFA 96) has given the government of the day a simpler method of calling out the Territorial Army in times of crisis. The apparent reluctance of the government to take decisive action and put the system into operation can be seen as an unshakeable belief that even post SDR the Regular Army does not suffer from over-stretch. This is blatantly not the case. What is the current time between unaccompanied operational tours for soldiers in the Royal Signals? Is this sufficient time to allow soldiers and their families to enjoy a semblance of normal family life? The overwhelming majority of TA personnel are willing to volunteer and do their operational tours but if there is to be a bureaucratic quagmire to wade through this pool of personnel is going to decrease and the reasoning is clear. If TA personnel do volunteer for active service the simple knowledge that when they apply for a posting they are informed within a reasonable timeframe of the result of their application must be a prime consideration. When they deploy to the field army they must know that they are being paid and that when they leave they are not going to have to hound their clerks for back-pay. These two simple tasks carried out correctly would ensure a continuing stream of volunteers. A secondary outcome is that TA personnel who have enjoyed their experiences will relate them to their colleagues and encourage them to join the armed forces either part-time or regular. This, surely, is what everyone seeks to achieve from a cross-over between the part-time and full-time soldier and the benefits that it can and does bring.

THE STRATEGIC DEFENCE REVIEW (SDR) AND TA RESTRUCTURING ANYTHING NEW FOR 35 SIGNAL REGIMENT (V)? NOT REALLY!

by Maj Tudor Hill (Training Major 35 Signal Regiment (V)

INTRODUCTION

When the Defence Secretary, George Robertson, announced the results of the Strategic Defence Review the Regular Army were happier with this paper than its immediate budget-driven predecessors. Its attempt to develop the Armed Forces in line with Foreign and Defence Policy was applauded in military circles who felt that, this time, it is change for the better. But what of the TA? The frenetic lobbying against the swingeing cuts in TA manpower suggests otherwise. The TA may even be forgiven for maintaining that governments and the Regular Army are no closer to really understanding this sibling institution.

Even so, George Robertson announced the 'One Army Concept'; a more deployable, better trained and better equipped TA ready to support a Regular Army which simply cannot meet its manpower commitments. On the face of it, the TA would be entering a totally new ball game. However, having had time to draw breath and look at some of the implications for 35 Signal Regiment (V) I see little that the TA has not had to deal with before and remain to be convinced of the relevance of the 'One Army Concept'. To add substance to that last assertion I will look at the major effects on this Unit as a result of SDR/TA Restructuring: the move of RHQ and HQ Sqn to Coventry, the loss of permanent staff and finally, the alterations to the way the TA trains which were designed to make the join between Territorial and Regular Armies seamless i.e: the Reserve Forces Act 1996, TRIT and the new Individual Training Directives (Army) (ITD(A)).

THE MOVE TO COVENTRY

Canley Road TA Centre was the home of the BHQ and HQ Company of 5 RRF (V) who - under TA Restructuring - were reduced to company strength to form part of the new West Midlands Regiment. It was announced that 35 Signal Regiment (V) would become resident there despite some compelling arguments: unbalanced command distances between RHQ and its field squadrons, insufficient real estate for the HQ Squadron of a Ptarmigan equipped Signals Regiment, diluting the strong links with the City of Birmingham and having to share the same recruiting pool as 37 Signal Regiment (V). However, Canley Road TA Centre is a new build and probably more cost effective in the medium to

long term and therefore, it is not difficult to see that the Regiment's case was lost. Indeed, the fact that the Regiment survived a similar move from Stoney Lane, Birmingham to its current location in Sutton Coldfield in 1983 probably sealed its fate. So, nothing new there.

LOSS OF PERMANENT STAFF

When the new TA establishments were finally announced at the end of April this year, this Regiment had to come to terms with the loss of roughly 40% of its regular soldiers and 20% of its civilian staff. The deliberations about the civilian staff are ongoing, however, there was a major question mark about achieving a balance between training the TA and maintaining the Regiment's Ptarmigan fleet. Now while these lower levels of Permanent Staff manning are nothing new for the TA, it is accepted that the previous higher levels were there to keep the Ptarmigan equipment on the road; contrary to rumour, the TA soldier is not driven by long hours of maintenance and the TA pay budget does not provide for equipment maintenance! Therefore, this change is new and presents a challenge which the Regiment takes very seriously. To meet this challenge, the Regiment has rationalised what it can maintain for training purposes, sought to place the remainder into light care and preservation at CVD Ashchurch and restructured the Regiment in terms of its permanent staff and equipment accordingly.

INDIVIDUAL TRAINING AND SUPPORT TO OPERATIONS

The final area of change to be considered is that of the various studies and acts that have been introduced around SDR/TA Restructuring, but which all support the 'One Army Concept'. They being: RSTRIT, ITD(A)s and RFA 96.

RSTRIT - RSTRIT was commissioned to restructure the Corps to meet the challenges of 'Digitisation' and winning the 'Information Battle' for a commander. It takes the realities of TA life into account i.e. there is not the time to train to the same breadth and depth as for regular signallers. Therefore, TA Royal Signals trades will diverge in that the narrower scope of the trade will be recognised in the title e.g: *Area SysOp (RR/Trunk)*. This emphasises the differences between TA and their Regular Royal Signals counterparts.

ITD(A)s - In this area the regular chain of command has good intentions. ITD(A)s, and in particular the TA CFT and annual weapon training requirements, do take into account the ever increasing demands on training time. The TA CFT is now only four miles in an hour with no scheduled pre-event preparation for the trained TA soldier. Additionally, TA Royal Signals need only achieve Grouping and Zeroing for Bounty and Fitness For Role (FFR) purposes. However, ITD(A) 2 (Fitness Training) and TA Regulations still differ as to the standards to be achieved i.e. ITDs say a pass is required whereas TA Regulations stipulate an 'attempt' only for TA CFT. Furthermore, the G2 (Sy) world insist that if soldiers are to act as gate guards, and they are required to do so, they must pass an APWT annually!

Reserve Forces Act 1996 (RFA 96) - RFA 96 was designed to make the TA more deployable and, for the first time, mentioned call out for operations in support of humanitarian disasters. It is difficult to gauge the effect - if any - this new Act has on the deployability of the TA as it is uncertain how private sector businesses would respond to their TA employees being called out for anything short of a National emergency. Certainly, filling Regular Army gaps is nothing new; you only have to go back to the Gulf War to see that infantry and medical reservists were used extensively without the need for call out of the TA. In that respect, this Unit is no different. In recent times, the Regiment has supported operations in Cyprus, the Falkland Islands, Bosnia and Macedonia.

SUMMARY

The current changes to the TA are unsettling and in some areas deeply distressing. That said, as far as 35 Signal Regiment (V) is concerned, with the exception of the additional maintenance burden due to the loss of manpower (and this affects the permanent staff primarily), they are nothing new. The RHQ and HQ Squadron have been moved around before, TA soldiers have filled the gaps in support of operations and the chain of command has always had to contend with the conflicting messages from TA Regulations. So what of the 'One Army Concept'? The real acid test - the use of compulsory call out for the TA via RFA 96 - has yet to be attempted and I suggest it would be a brave government that would be prepared to take that option even for a 'humanitarian disaster' such as that taking place in Kosovo. It appears that while Royal Signals is gearing itself up for meeting the technical challenges of the future through greater levels of training for its soldiers, the TA can only meet this change through modified trade names and clearer channels of communication with its regular counterparts. These assertions should not be taken to be in any way disparaging about TA Royal Signals ability to promote the 'One Army Concept'. It is simply a case of the TA soldier having a finite amount of time for training. I am a firm believer in the principles of the TA and am in no doubt that it will continue to flourish in spite of the well-meaning SDR.

90 DAYS IN MACEDONIA

by Maj A. H. Campbell-Black

INTRODUCTION

On warning for deployment to Kosovo there was the obvious requirement for passing secure data between our Headquarters in Osnabrück and HQ ARRC, PJHQ and HQ Land. It was not until Land CSS was installed in the Headquarters that this link was stable enough to cope with the requisite passage of information. Although Brent lines had been installed in some of the barracks of Units on the JRRF there were other Units warned which did not have a secure link other than through signal message. In addition, the lack of reliability in passing secret material between CASH and Land CSS exacerbated the situation. The only way of passing data was through the COMCEN. Had it not been for the Ptarminet life could have been extremely awkward.

SKOPJE DAYS

On deploying to Macedonia it was clear that the Reconnaissance Group would not deploy with any armour at all but would need to be able to take the elements under command at some time in the future. It therefore comprised 13 Landrovers, of which nine were fitted for radio, one was a GS and three were rebroadcast stations.

The Reconnaissance Group needed to liaise closely with the organisations that were in theatre and, therefore, all but three of the FFR Landrovers were used as 'runarounds'. The operators established communications in the Hotel Panorama in Skopje and had to work long hours to cope with the transport details and the communications requirements. The situation was eased slightly as all the Brigade nets were not initially established and the staff cells were provided with communications using a daisy chain of RCUs on just three nets. This helped to reduce the manpower bill for monitoring nets and gave enough flexibility to cope with the driving, but only just. Local PTT lines were important to liaise with both the NSE and the other organisations in theatre such as the KVM and the OSCE. Early on it was recognised that there was a requirement to have an insecure VET guard net because so many Units were dispersed across SKOPJE. Burma Company of the Kings Own Royal Border Regiment on Operation Upminster had already established a net and initially this was hijacked as a Force Guard net. In addition, the Brigade net was opened and an HF Guard net. The VHF net and the I-IF net were then used as the primary insecure voice for MEDEVAC. Once the King's Royal Hussars arrived in Krivolak, the communications were extended down the country by the use of a chain of radio rebroadcast stations: a mixture of the four additional rebroadcast stations provided by 3rd Division Headquarters and Signal Regiment and the three in the Squadron. The soldiers were accommodated in three different sites in Skopje and accommodation management was a top priority.

Initial communications with the OSCE in Kumanovo were on local PTT lines and 30th Signal Regiment lent us three Motorola STU IIB for secure communications on PTT lines. The mobile phones that were procured in country provided a back up insecure means. Gateways into all systems such as IVSN, Patron, Euromux and ATN were an essential way of navigating around systems that were less than robust and this appeared to add a degree of redundancy. STU IIB on PTT fines gave us secure communications with USOTF, the Extraction Force HQ and PJHQ. Ptarmigan was available and even the dialek-like Brahms was used to ensure a secure line with the KRH Advance Group in another hotel in SKOPJE. Internally the use of registered laptops offered the primary means for data manipulation and an ATacCS LAN (five terminals) was used to pass data between the staff cells. All the equipment for the build of the Headquarters in the Hotel Panorama in SKOPJE was brought in by pallet and then transported to the Hotel in a 4 tonne. HQ NSE was allocated real estate in the room next to us in the Hotel and thus the facilities offered by the 501 detachment (two Patron fines, a Ptarmigan satellite bridge, Land CSS, ASMA, CUTG and point-to-point fax) were shared between the two HQ. Although on the communications side this limited each HQ to eight Ptarmigan fines and presented only one Patron line to each, the close co-ordination of the two staffs more than compensated for this shortfall. The circuits being anchored by the 501 detachment were not quickly established and it took considerable time to engineer both the Land CSS and the Point to Point fax. This was partly due to equipment failures, partly to the time taken to configure the tails with the various agencies in the UK and partly to engineer the power balancing on the satellite as some ten SATCOM detachments were trying to configure at the same time.

The shortfall of vehicles that had been highlighted during Ex Ulan Eagle the previous October helped us to put the DOAST and FET together relatively quickly. The augmented vehicles, however, did not materialise until some 12 hours prior to the last ship sailing and then some were provided in such a poor state of repair that they had to be towed to the port. Not all had had a thorough out-inspection and in most cases they came without drivers. To put two of these vehicles back on the road took major work from the LAD and was an unwelcome additional workload but still better than having no vehicles at all.

We had stripped out the vehicles for the Alternate Headquarters and had taken the precaution of loading a container with 24 palettes of communications equipment to build a HQ in a static location. It was originally envisaged that this would be in Pristina although the lift of the equipment forward would still have been an issue. After two weeks in Skopje the remaining staff began to arrive and it became clear that the site was becoming too crowded. The HQ moved south and the 24 palettes of equipment were used to establish a static HQ next to the main supply route in the Hotel Makedonija.

VELES DAYS

As we settled into the Hotel Makedonija the rest of the Brigade staff joined us and the Headquarters blossomed. Additional staff cells included a large Media Ops cell, CIMIC, Legal and POLAD, an STA team from 12 AD Regt and our own intelligence section. HQ KFOR gave us a divisional slice of their WAN, that is, a hub, server and five staff user terminals. These were laid out in the HQ giving terminals to G3 Ops, Media, the ARRC LO, G2 and keeping one as a common user terminal. A LAN was put in place to provide the staff with the ability to transfer data internally and this was expanded to cope with the demand from the additional users to a network of some 14 users. It was also pushed down to Battlegroups to allow them to transfer data using a dial-up facility. Early on it was decided that the LAN would not be connected to the ARRC WAN to avoid the transfer of viruses. This was just as well as Melissa appeared on the WAN in the second month of the tour. As it was there were over 550 viruses that had to be destroyed once the latest version of Sophos had been installed. The authority for connection to the NATO Cronos system was slow as a multi-cultural mandarin in Brussels was concerned that all NATO's secrets were about to be hoovered up by the UK. Authority was eventually forthcoming and the RSST team provided expert advice on the connectivity until our augmentees from 3rd United Kingdom Division Headquarters and Signal Regiment arrived.

PETROVAC DAYS

After two weeks and a 48 hour Exercise on Krivolak Training Area to practise the move North into Pristina, the air campaign kicked off and the Headquarters moved up onto a training area to the East of Petrovac airfield a green-field site. Initially there were no strategic communications. The SATCOM detachment that was located in VELES remained to provide the links for HQ NSE. SATCOM Detachment LINE came up from HQ KFOR at the Shoe Factory in Skopje to join us. It took some time to engineer the circuits again because LINE was the last detachment to leave Bramcote and subsequently did not have all the terminal equipment. The Ptarmigan fines also took time to come in and the initial sites were unworkable. The trunk network was working as a chain rather than an area network and during this phase whenever a link was broken the community would be fragmented. This caused a deal of frustration for the staff but the situation could not be improved until additional manpower and equipment arrived to bolster 1st Signal Brigade's minimal numbers in-country - This was a direct result of NATO manpower capping pending an ACTORD.

The Headquarters continued to grow and after a few weeks under the stars and cam nets it became clear that the Penthouse option was too tight and the large planning tent was erected. Spring brought the rains and after a couple of downpours of rain and swilling around in the mud it was obvious that the situation had to be improved. Another move was the solution. The cookhouse was moved onto hard standing and hardcore was put down around the site. The Headquarters was moved 25 metres to the next area of hard-standing. The Pioneers helped erect wire and the Sappers provided engineer support to enhance the site. As more and more cells appeared in the Headquarters the demands for tables, chairs, tents and cam nets swelled to well over double our normal peacetime holdings. The Headquarters resembled a Divisional MAIN HQ. Additional assets continued to arrive and included 226 Signal Squadron Group (EW) and MI Detachment, a Strategic Intelligence cell, an EOD Troop, TACISYS and TACIPRINT, a Force HUMINT Team, 15 UK Information Support Group and a SAXON to provide ADCIS. Slots were also held open for representatives from 'D' Squadron HCR and 'A' Squadron of Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadian), a Canadian Reconnaissance Squadron. To furnish all these cells with Ptarmigan both SAS(MC) were required. One was set up as the normal MAIN HQ community and the second one provided the subsets and fines for the additional cells.

Planning continued unabated and CONPLANs for different situations were worked up as the corresponding CONPLAN from HQ KFOR was received in the Headquarters. Our period of grace from visitors appeared to be over and a stream almost developed into a torrent until caveats were placed on our erstwhile colleagues from UK and Germany. Once the Headquarters settled down in the location on the Petrovac Training Area(PTA) the communications attention switched to establishing PTT fines to the other green-field sites in Macedonia, connecting to the internet, gaining access to LOCE and the development of a valuable training programme.

Technically the greatest problems were keeping the less robust strategic suite of communications on the road and trying to acquire enough frequencies in Macedonia. The ageing 430 series fleet had also kept the Squadron busy and had guaranteed that the LAD had not been bored. Clansman had also shown its age with an average of 10% of the equipment being out of use at any time. The AtacCS repair chain had been tortuously slow and the number of available terminals had reduced more quickly than the sets could be sent back to UK for repair and then returned.

At the time of writing the Signal Squadron was coping with the influx of 5 AB Bde and elements of the UK SHF, as well as keeping a watchful eye on the arrival of an Advance Party from Headquarters 3rd United Kingdom Division. The Military Technical Agreement to enter Kosovo seemed to be a few days away and both the Brigade Commander and CONIKFOR were in close discussions with the Yugoslav Army in no-man's land between Kosovo and FYROM. There was a mood of optimism that a deal would be struck in a few days time.

SANDY BAIN
CAITHNESS ELECTRICAL GENIUS

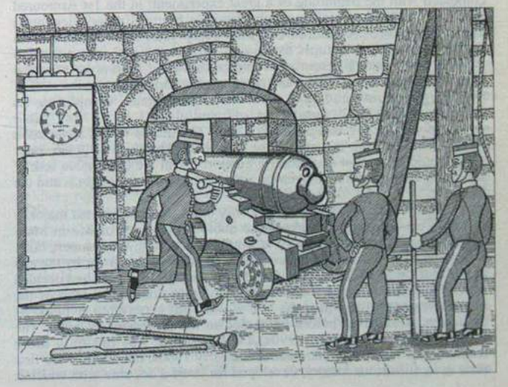
When Sandy Bain returned to Scotland from the USA in the late 1860's, the Caithness clockmaker found that the capital now had an electric time gun which fired automatically at one o'clock.

Sandy had been born in Watten in 1810. After leaving school he had been taken on as an apprentice watchmaker by John Sellar who's premises were at Stafford Place in Wick. After attending a lecture on electricity at Thurso, the young clockmaker became so fascinated by the subject that he began carrying out his own experiments. In 1837 Sandy decided to leave Caithness and look for a job in London. Earning his living during the day as a journeyman clockmaker, he spent his spare time constructing an electric clock and a telegraph receiver which would print out incoming messages.

Within a year Sandy had produced working models of the clock and the receiver. Needing money to perfect his inventions , he showed his models to the editor of the 'Mechanics Magazine'. Mr Baddeley introduced Sandy to Professor Wheatstone, one of the many scientists who were carrying out experiments to improve the electric telegraph. Realising the importance of Sandy's inventions, the professor commissioned him to build two models of the telegraphic printer. Promising to pay the watchmaker £150 for the models, the professor also guaranteed to compensate Sandy for his time and to pay for the materials. The scientist advised Sandy to suspend his electrical experiments and keep the results to himself. Suspicious of his motives, the clockmaker ignored the professor's advice. Sandy's instincts proved to be correct as he received just five pounds for the work he had carried out. In November 1840 Professor Wheatstone exhibited an electric clock which he claimed he had invented at the Royal Society of London. To establish the fact that the clock was his invention, Sandy sent details of it's construction to the editor of the 'John o' Groat Journal'. He also exhibited his clock at the Polytechnic Institution in March 1841 and laid claim to his invention with the Inventor's Advocate.

Deciding to move to Edinburgh, the thirty four year old inventor opened a shop specialsing in electric-clocks at 11 Hanover Street, just off Princes Street. Seeing that there would come a time when public clocks in towns and cities would receive Greenwich mean time by electric telegraph, Sandy continued with his experiments. Edinburgh clockmaker Frederick James Ritchie had the same idea, and like Sandy was experimenting with the transmission of time by electricity.

In 1846 banker John Hewat suggested to the city authorities that the capital should have a time signal so that captains of ships lying in the Firth of Forth could set their chronometers accurately. That same year Sandy decided to leave Scotland and try his luck in the United States. Six years later, due to John Hewat's efforts, a time-ball was erected on the top of Nelson's Monument which stood on the capital's Calton Hill. The



time-ball's mechanism was connected to the Calton Hill Observatory's electric clock which had been designed on the experiments carried out by Sandy Bain and Frederick James Ritchie. The time-ball was designed to drop at one o'clock when it's mechanism was triggered by a signal sent along underground wires running from the observatory's clock. The time service proved to be a winner and the city authorities decided that the ball should be backed up by an audible signal.

In 1861 the Army supplied the city with a gun. A clock was placed next to the time gun on the Castle's Half Moon Battery and connected by the Royal Engineers to the observatory via the Monument by a 4,000 foot electric wire which hung over the city. Except on public holidays and Sundays the time-gun was fired daily by two Royal Artillery gunners. At 12.55 a.m. one of the blue uniformed artillerymen supervised by the Castle's Master Gunner loaded the gun. The gunner then attached a chain which was hooked to the gun's fuse and to a weight inside the clock.

On the stroke of one, the time was sent across the wire from the observatory to the gun's clock. The weight dropped pulling the chain. The pin was jerked from the fuse which ignited and set off the charge. Although the present District Gunner, SSgt Tom McKay MBE no longer depends on the observatory's clock for the exact time, the 'One o'clock Gun' still fires daily. As you watch 'Tom the Gun' firing his howitzer on television to signal the arrival of the year 2000, take the time to raise your glass to Sandy Bain the inventor of the electric clock.

'FINGS AIN'T WOT THEY USED TO BE.....'

by Maj C. J. Thackray

In March 1984, fresh from my CQ Course (the last ever, incidentally), I reported for duty at 22 Signal Regiment. I was 20 years old. Pausing merely to complete 'The Lippstadt Marches' which seemed to involve walking a kilometre, drinking a keg of beer, and then repeating the same process ten times, I was driven out to join the Regiment on Exercise. The Exercise was known as Wintex, and, though I didn't know it, was the first in an annual series of Corps-level CPX, which would work up, through Ex Summer Sales and beyond, the skills of the 1 (BR) Corps staffs, their communicators and their flanking and subordinate HQs. A programme of FTX was simultaneously underway, which would, since 1984 was a special year, culminate in Ex Lionheart, an Exercise so gigantically enormous as to be unrepeatable until Sadaam Hussein insisted otherwise in 1991. I spent most of that summer on Exercise: never too far away from Churchill Barracks that I couldn't nip back for a shower every now and then, admittedly, and always the same thing: Cpl Strefford's team would be setting up, whilst, 20kms or so away, Cpl Wilson's team would be tearing down. I had a whole troop of Linemen, and grandly emblazoned the front of my Land Rover 'Commander, Rear Corps Line'.

Now and again, when I was allowed to pick up a telephone (and on the rare occasions when the BRUIN circuits were working) I would speak to my compatriots posted to the sharp end: night-manning the CPs at divisional COMMCENs, or even - wow! - Brigade HQs. If anything, their lives were even more exacting and exciting than my own: it turned out that each Brigade COS would insist on Exercising his staff before going out with the Brigadier, and when the Brigades had reached the required standard, the divisional staffs would be put through their paces. Finally, the GOCs of each division would hold their own enormous bean-feasts, and, ultimately, they would Exercise alongside us. I would occasionally try and speak to friends posted to units in the Rear Combat Zone, or even the Communications Zone, but their communications depended, if memory serves, on something called the troposphere, and were even less reliable than ours. Anyway, they apparently all worked for a General called Bagnall, who had a HQ of some sort in Rheindahlen. My head began to spin as they tried to explain the command relationships which existed at these rarefied levels, and I would hang up and wander back to the line wagon, where I would find my soldiers engaged in a card game which I now know as 'Chase the Lady', but which they called something else entirely. Each night I would tuck myself into bed, happy in the knowledge that I had spent another day keeping Western Europe safe from Communism. I knew that I was doing exactly what my predecessors had done some ten years before, just as theirs had before them, and thought that's just as it should be when you were part of the best army in NATO and therefore the universe.

In December 1995, fatter, balder, with a heavily-pregnant wife, two dogs, a cat and (amazing but true) less disposable income than I had enjoyed eleven years earlier, I reported for duty at Hohne, to take up my appointment as DCOS 7th Armoured Brigade. I had not served in Germany since leaving Lippstadt. My arrival with the Desert Rats coincided with the beginning of a great experiment: in the 1st Armoured Division, instead of training opportunities being divided piecemeal amongst the three Armoured Brigades every year, each Brigade (ours first) would take it in turns to enjoy a 'Training Year', when the full panoply of Divisional resources would be thrown at it, in order to turn it into the fiercest, finest, fittest and most capable formation that the staff of the charging rhino had ever seen. Another Brigade, completing its 'Operational Year', would go off and do all those itsy-bitsy not-quite-warfighting things which LAND Command would insist upon (IFOR was then the flavour of the moment). The third Brigade, poor sods, would be known as 'Training Support', with the unenviable task of following us around Sennelager for a year emptying our portaloos and the like.

I couldn't wait to get started: not only had I - unlike the vast majority of my peers - managed to avoid the dubious pleasures of life in Main Building and very occasionally at home in Kingston-on-Thames, but I was about to be trained as I'd never been trained before. Truly, by the end of my tour - which, due to entirely unrelated events, the gods had decided would be some two years and eight months in duration instead of the normal twenty-four months - I would have reached a peak of battle-readiness never before witnessed in the profession of arms. The British Army of the late 1990s, I'd been told, was not only more technologically capable than that of the early 1980s, but had, for the first time in its illustrious history, developed for itself a doctrine with which it felt at ease. In addition, it had so reorganised the way it funded its activities as to ensure that resources need only be thought about before they were delivered, steaming, on a silver platter.

I enjoyed an extraordinary, amazing and truly satisfying thirty-two months with 7 Armoured Brigade. Looking back on it now, almost a year since leaving, I worked with and for some of the most capable people I'm ever likely to meet, in this career or any other, and the places we went! Christmas 1995 over, and firstborn son safely delivered, I packed my Staff Officers' Handbook and headed for Hannover Airport. By the time Christmas 1996 came along, HQ 7 Armoured Brigade had set out its stall in Poland, Atlanta, BATUS, Ladysmith, Kuwait, BATUS again, Grafenwhor, Sennelager (far too often), and finally - in the first armoured formation-level FTX conducted by the British Army since 1990 - Poland again. As we celebrated the New Year, I looked back with fondness on the six months I'd spent away from home. I then kissed my wife (pregnant again) and noisy toddler goodbye, and set off for Banja Luka. Another year went by. This time, I managed to spend only four months of it at home. By the time the team of lowly paid vandals from Whittle's Movers arrived at Hoppenstedter Strasse, and as I loaded wife (thankfully not pregnant), two sons, one dog and no cat into the people-mover, I reflected on a tour during which I'd spent fully 50% of the time available either on operations or training. Best job I've ever done, I thought (until I started this one, of course).

So, was I trained? Had the formulaic, GDP-orientated, reactive, befehlstactic world of 1 (BR) Corps been replaced, revamped and improved by the capability-driven, doctrinally sound post-Options Army?

You're all professionals, reading this. You know the answer, don't you? Of course we're no better than we were. If anything I would consider myself (having, don't forget, been the beneficiary of arguably the most complete and progressive collective training package the British Army of the late 1990s had to offer) less proficient in the planning and execution of war-fighting tactics and techniques than my predecessors of the 1980s. Not just me: I would apply the same criteria to my fellow staff officers, our clerks, and particularly our long-suffering Signallers. Hugely capable people, all of them, but lacking proficiency in their most demanding role. Why?

Consider this, I've already described the unparalleled training opportunities offered to me whilst I was with 7th Armoured Brigade. Despite these opportunities, during the period December 1995 to August 1998, I deployed in the vehicles which would take me to war, and reported to my parent formation, over the radios I would use in such a war, once only. I deployed in these same vehicles, with these same signallers, but without my parent formation, on two other occasions - in almost three years. When practising one's primary role so infrequently, certain things become inevitable:

1. When more than 50% of personnel in any organisation turn over between training opportunities, it is impossible to develop and improve procedures. There is simply not enough experience remaining in order to pass on lessons learnt. Instead, therefore, the same lessons are re-learnt every time. PXR after PXR point out the same things, but by the time the next similar set of circumstances come round, they've long been consigned to File 13.
2. Low-level skills - the kind that our predecessors considered to be so basic as to be hardly worth listing under 'Exercise Aims and Objectives' - are now beyond us, or considered so difficult that we congratulate ourselves if we manage to display them to any degree before ENDEX. Administration in the field, light discipline and vehicle camouflage and concealment, to select just three examples, are woeful when compared to the standards set ten or fifteen years before.
3. Core functions are performed more deliberately and less effectively. Change of control, for example, would take place every twelve hours or so (at most) between Brigade Main and Step-Up/Alternate HQs in the bad old days. By the end of our Polish FTX, we could just about hit a move every 24 hours or so (we could have moved more frequently, but would have virtually sacrificed all planning capability to do so). By the time we next had the opportunity to practice this, *some nineteen months later*, the expertise had vanished to the four winds, and it was all we could manage to change control every thirty-six hours and still call ourselves effective. Had we been any better, and wished to move more frequently, it would have made little difference: the locations to move into didn't exist, or were occupied by someone else. Some 70% or so of these locations were peacetime barracks locations, by the way, which don't really do that much for the recce/siting skills of signal squadron 21Cs, or the navigation skills of anyone else. I firmly believe that we were slicker in COMMHEAD NOVEMBER when we moved - and that towed a 200-strong Officers' Mess behind it.
4. Bad habits become unavoidable. We preach mission command, and attempt to convince ourselves that we allow subordinates freedom of action, but if you're the Brigade Commander (or COS), and you're only allowed to play with your entire train set once a year, then it's difficult to avoid the temptation to over control. This, of course, manifests itself in a Brigade Command Net which is rarely - if ever - silent once EMCON measures have been lifted. The large electronic arrow hovering above formation HQs and pointing downward would have been immediately obvious to EW assets in the 1980s. Unfortunately, our EW experts can usually, these days, plead a more pressing engagement down the road.

Some readers might opine that their experiences are far different, and that in their view standards are as high or higher now than ever in the past. I hope so: I consider myself a professional soldier, and it brings me no satisfaction to come to the conclusion that we are not as professional as once we were. There might be those turning puce and spitting out the word 'leadership!' To them, I would merely point out that the Army tends not to send its idiots to its only Armoured Division. I have never met more inspiring leaders, more effective staff officers, and more capable signallers than I did when serving with the Desert Rats, but there's a limit to what can be achieved when the opportunities to improve aren't provided. There'll also be some who'll agree with what I've said but murmur 'under-manning', and look with hope towards the horizon, when (by 2007, we're told), AG's HR Strategy will see us fully manned, and over-stretch will be merely an unpleasant memory. It won't make a blind bit of difference. All the difficulties I list above wouldn't have changed one jot if we'd had full manning (as a matter of fact, we were virtually fully manned anyway, thanks to massive sacrifices made at the Divisional Signal Regiment in order to keep Brigade Signal Squadrons effective). We're the wrong shape and size to play this game anymore - and one extra deployable Brigade - courtesy of SDR -won't change things enough.

A bigger Army's the answer - obviously (well, either that or the recognition that this high-intensity business will shortly be beyond us once we get above battle-group level). This bigger Army needs to be manned, and the only way these two things will happen is by forking out more money. If the cash is found from within the defence budget, something else has to suffer. If we cut equipment programmes, we push ourselves out of the high-intensity game anyway. Impasse. The only thing that's going to alter this situation is a big change of heart on defence expenditure by the Government of the day. And how does that happen? Same way it always has - we need to lose a war (or at least get a severe mauling before snatching victory from the jaws of defeat). A bit depressing, this conclusion, when I put two and two together and realise that I'll be the one doing the losing or getting the mauling. That's the trouble with Peace Dividends: they assume peace, and there isn't any.

There's a bright side. If there wasn't, I suppose I'd have to consider leaving and imagine what sort of state the Corps would find itself in if a large number of majors and lieutenant colonels decided to seek employment elsewhere? It doesn't bear thinking about. OK, first off, as an Army, we don't have to be as good as we once were - we only need to be better than anybody else right now. Patriotism being the last refuge of a scoundrel, I must consign myself to that fate. We're still better than anybody else. There are armies whose regression rate leaves ours standing - both within and without NATO. I know this is the philosophy of the kitchen sink, but I've done a lot of washing up over the past couple of years. Second, it doesn't seem likely we'll have to fight a war of national survival anytime soon (unless we're forced to square up to the jocks - in which case, I'm on their side, particularly if it's a Saturday night). Thirdly, although I didn't think my little bit of the Army was as good as it used to be, I saw plenty of evidence that other little bits of it were far better. I don't just mean the technology (though you should see what Challenger 2 can do: it actually makes the cavalry look earnestly professional; an epithet they despise). A battle-group, having undergone low level field firing on Bergen-Hohne ranges, followed by simulation training at Grafenwhor, manoeuvre training in Hohenfels, a pre-BATUS work-up in Poland, BATUS itself (which includes a superb TES phase) and, finally, manoeuvre training with at least two other units on the brigade Poland FTX, is trained like you wouldn't believe. It's scarily good. I firmly believe that our low-level capabilities - whether collective or individual - are outstanding.

Finally, of course, I'm the proud possessor of the most rose-tinted spectacles you can imagine. It is part of the function of the curmudgeonly old to decry the efforts of shallow youth. It is just possible, I suppose, that sitting for six weeks on Hill 309, or on the Ripon Barracks parade square, keeping the Herforder brewery in profit every night and sleeping by day, did not turn me into Guderian. Perhaps we weren't that good then, either. Perhaps we're getting better whilst we're getting worse (It does happen - look at television). If we are getting worse - even in part - then we should try and do something about it. Despite my strident claims above that only money can solve the big problems, I think some things can be done down at the coal face. I think we should concentrate less on esoteric concepts such as the nature of information management and its ownership, and the pure definition of G6 as a function, and more on doing well what should be done well. I think - heresy - that we should focus less on our technology, not more. (We were never more effective in 7th Armoured Brigade Main HQ than when the photocopier was broken. It forced us to be concise, and to get the message across quickly. QP24 and GP3 are bigger and better photocopiers, that's all. Decision cycles will become longer, not shorter. Also, because they're photocopiers, they'll break down all the time). Concentrating less on our technology will allow us to concentrate more on our people, and this is good. I think we are defined by who we are, not what we are. Whilst we struggle as a Corps to design for ourselves the perfect mission statement, to develop command support doctrine' and dispute ownership of this and that process, system or bit of kit with the rest of the Army, we run the risk of being derided as a bunch of techno-anoraks. Let's instead try and be respected for being good at what we've always been good at.

End of diatribe. This article was prepared in response to a directive from the Chairman of the Royal Signals Institution that units should provide articles for the Journal 'to make people sit up and take notice.' Readers will note that I am a devout believer in the dictum that shrill opinion is always more interesting than passionless logic: I look forward to reading responses in the same vein.

'Incidentally, to my knowledge, no-one has yet come up with a procedure entitled 'Communications Preparation of the Battlefield (CPB)'. Being both catchy and useless, it would exactly meet our current requirements. If I am the first to think of this then I hereby claim IPR. If someone else has already put out a paper on it, then shame on you.

MANNING THE CORPS
THE CHALLENGE OF THE NEXT MILLENNIUM

by Lt Col J. A. Terrington

Recent operational commitments have highlighted the requirement for robust CIS and bring into sharp focus the challenges, which Royal Signals face with the advent of Digitisation. In the near term we must retain and restructure in order to capitalise on the advantages which new equipment, such as TWACN and BOWMAN, will bring. Yet this must be done against a backdrop of extremely high levels of operational deployment and overall R Signals under-manning of some 13%. Furthermore this head line figure masks significant shortfalls in key Ptarmigan trades and deficiencies as high as 40% at certain ranks. What can be done to retain our manpower?

As ever the Corps manpower is in high demand and spread all too thinly across a diverse range of tasks. Almost all units are undermanned and ultimately this has driven a piecemeal approach to back-filling Units for operations. Such a policy, undoubtedly driven by necessity, generates its own problems further downstream as Units already culled for individual reinforcements are then themselves stood to for operations. The simple reality is that the Corps has too many commitments, which we need to publicise in a manner which the General Staff fully understand. Perhaps we should consider manning fewer units to Peacetime or Unit Establishment (UE), thus removing (temporarily) a number of units from the Corps ORBAT. No matter how unpalatable, such a move might have the desired effect.

The high use of Regular Individual Reserves (IRs), driven by under-manning and taut establishments, generates it's own difficulties as soldiers are removed from their parent chain of command and placed in other units, frequently creating a feeling of isolation. We need to identify the lowest level of formed contribution from one unit to another. The troop level of command seems logical for this. We need a more fundamental review of Corps structures, however, as it is clear that we do not have the correct equipment task organisation to tackle Peace Support operations effectively, let alone full war fighting.

Our system of 'trickle postings' is also contributing to wastage as soldiers return from one operational tour and are posted, only to find themselves deployed again from their new Unit. In some cases, tour intervals are now measured in weeks. MCM Div Desk Officers in Glasgow cannot be expected to have full oversight of operational commitments and this is best done at Unit level. We need time to take stock, however, until the current high level of operational commitments stabilises. The majority of our soldiers are now gaining valuable operational experience from the earliest days of their service, so perhaps the time has come to move towards a model of posting by exception, in order to create some short term stability.

Whilst the subject of financial retention incentives for key trades is well understood, the current allowance package for those deployed on

operations remains an emotive and divisive issue. Soldiers with under three years service are not entitled to LSSA and the welfare telephone system is of little use for many deployed on isolated hill top sites. If long term Peace Support operations are to be the norm, then soldiers will reasonably expect improved living and working conditions both in and out of barracks. In reality, the investment and will required to deliver this is unlikely to materialise, consequently we might have to look elsewhere for solutions. We could learn something from how our Allies tackle these issues. In this respect, the American system of no tax charges for those deployed on operations might be a useful starting point which could provide a meaningful reward for frequent deployments; and long service. Ultimately, if we do not get the G1 package right, we face an uphill struggle in keeping our valuable manpower.

I hope this article stimulates some much needed discussion on potential ways forward in the retention battle. Unless we take action now, the combined effects of shortening tour intervals and worsening under-manning at Unit level, is likely to further reduce our operational capability to a critical level.

INSTALLERS AT THE READY

Capt (TOT) N. Baugh MBE

No one near a RAF base in Germany could miss the roar of Harriers and Tornado's taking off and landing. However, few people might realise that a unique Squadron of the Royal Signals is helping keep the jets in the air. Based at RAF Laarbruch and Bruggen - as well as at JHQ Rheindahlen - 220 Signal Squadron, part of Colerne - based 21 Signal Regiment, is the only Royal Signals Squadron formation completely dedicated to RAF support in its primary role. The task and job of keeping all ground communications up and running at RAF's Main Operating Bases in Germany. This vital role dates back to the 1960s when the 'RISTACOMW' or 'Responsibilities for Inter Service Tactical Communications' Agreement, was drawn up.

'With a unique planning and deployment capability, we are very much in demand,' says Squadron Commander, **Capt** 'Noddy' **Baugh MBE**.

'We provide a service wherever needed in the world. Aside from our permanent role in Germany, recent detachments have included the former Yugoslavia, the Falkland Islands, Ascension Island, Greece, Macedonia, as well as Exercises throughout the world.'

Handling these many challenges are just 98 Squadron personnel, as well as ten civilian staff including a full time draughtswoman, at Laarbruch, Bruggen and JHQ Rheindahlen. Squadron members, many of them young Signallers fresh from trade training at the Royal School of Signals are responsible for the entire cable infrastructure, more than 1000 miles of it at each airfield.

Cable maintenance involves monitoring a complex system of telephone and computer cable, spreading out from the telephone exchange through Main and Intermediate Distribution Frames and then underground right across the airfields. Some 5500 circuits are linked via Test Pits and Cable Huts to every building that needs communications. At the sharp end of this work are the Squadron's 70 'Tele Mechs'. Flexibility is the name of the game for these highly skilled technicians, of which the Royal Signals now boasts some 270. Equally at home with all kinds of cable and wiring, especially fibre optics, their vast experience reflects a 'multi-skilling' approach, covering a wide variety of communications functions from initial survey of the task, right through to implementation. Royal Signals cabling strategy now embraces Category 5 UTP cabling. Ideal in a military environment where taskings come up at short notice, the built in flexibility and redundancy of Cat 5 will allow signallers to 'flood wire' a building to meet a whole variety of operational requirements. A recent task to undertake the planning, procurement specification and implementation of a Headquarters build to commercial civilian standards in Petrovac, Macedonia has certainly highlighted the abilities of the Squadrons tradesman to all within the Ministry of Defence.

CIVILIAN TRAINING

Army Signallers have already received civilian Cat 5 training and the systems is being used, for example, permanently at RAF Bruggen on a Local Data Communications Network. This is the RAF main IT communications backbone on all stations, supported in the United Kingdom by civilian companies and at overseas bases where Royal Signals tradesman are based, by the 'Tele Mech'. Working closely with the RAF's Communications Information System Engineering Flight, and with the Deutsche Telekom, peacetime maintenance sees the Squadron dealing with cabling throughout the airfields, much of it fibre optic blown cable. When faults come to light they must be put right immediately, if necessary calling out a repair crew, day or night. Now in standard Royal Signals use is the U7 10 modular connection system.

Maintenance of operational cabling, in support of the 'Airfield Survival Measure' is another challenging Squadron task. Designed to withstand airfield attacks, and very heavy-duty, two 'ring cables' – 150kms in all - travel the entire perimeter of the airfields, linking up the various buildings, with each one's communications traffic routed in opposite directions. If one were disabled, all communications would be switched to the other, pending repairs. Bomb and blast proof Cable Huts allow the signallers to work in comparative safety, and the operational system is completely separate from that used in peacetime: none of the key operational staff can afford to be out of contact, whether it's the pilots, the flight engineers or air traffic control.

Away from Germany, typical detachments include Banja Luka and Split in the Former Yugoslavia, the Falkland Islands, Ascension Island and more recently is support of the NATO Troop deployments to Macedonia and Greece.

One fine example is a project at RAF Ascension in the Atlantic where a team from 220 Squadron, with support from our Regiment's TA 'Tele Mech' Sqn, 81 Sqn (V) are currently upgrading cable installations, both fibre and copper. Some 40kms of cable is being replaced and enhanced to provide the RAF with a backbone that will support the military communications well into the next century. At the same time, with colleagues from the Royal Signals Communications Projects Division, two new GPT Realitis exchanges are being installed and commissioned, and a new Operations centre is being established. The Squadron Ascension Island Planner, **SSgt Adrian Jones** has been planning this work for months, working closely with all the Services and Cable and Wireless to define the requirement and ensure full completion, with no loss of service to any customer.

The main task of Phase One was to establish a system of telegraph poles around the Travellers Hill accommodation areas. The buildings were then linked through an Aerial Network with a distribution feed in Phase Two. Through this system each of the buildings were connected with an upgraded telephone system. Phase Three required a poled aerial route with enough distribution points to connect the remaining accommodation sites and to assure communication with all buildings on Travellers Hill. The installation of a ducted wiring connection of modern Copper and Fibre Optic cables from Airhead exchange to Travellers Hill completed Phase Four. This phase also proved to be the most challenging task to the teams, who had to cross eight miles of volcanic rock between the two exchanges. This step boosted the former eight telephone trunks between the two exchanges to thirty channels, which can now be used simultaneously. Phase Five has recently been completed when the joint team connected the new GPT Realitis Exchange switches, which replaced the out-dated Monarch exchange switches. The last phase, which will officially start on 12 July and end 28 July, will finally connect Airhead Exchange and Travellers Hill with Georgetown. The Team will be working with the civilian Georgetown-based Cable and Wireless, which has supported the Tele Mechs in the past, and will complete what had begun under Phase Five. Modern Copper and Fibre Optic cables will provide the necessary capacity for future communications and will take the three exchanges' capabilities into the next millennium. By 28 July the 220 Sig Sqn and 81 (V) Sig Sqn will have renewed the forty kilometres of communication lines with 38 personnel. The personnel from Rheindahlen and Colerne were on two week rotations to assure a good turnover for both Squadrons. After the project is completed the system will be maintained by two resident Tele Mechs from 220 Sig Sqn, who are on a six-month rotation.

Even further afield, and rather cooler, a team is permanently attached to the Joint Communications Unit Falkland Islands. Here the manpower is primarily tasked with the support to the RAF Mount Pleasant Airfield and Headquarters. The Squadron also provides constant support to the various British deployments to the former Yugoslavia at Split, Gorni Vakuf Banja Luka and Sipovo. Many new projects are being considered to enhance present installations, which may be achieved later this year as manpower is released from other tasks. These have recently included setting up a communications infrastructure for the ACE Rapid Reaction Corps (the 'ARRW) REAR HQ in Skopje, and the ARRC Rear Support Command (RSC) HQ in Greece. Additional new and demanding tasks are expected and awaited as any peace dividend is developed within Kosovo. A Squadron Group under **SSgt Les Chapman** is permanently focused on this area of operations and commitment.

THE FUTURE

With the announcements at ministerial level of the Strategic Defence Review (SDR) and the impending closure of RAF Laarbruch, the Royal Signals have taken a positive step in the overall restructuring of 'Tele Mech' support world-wide. In addition, the Corps is undertaking a major trade restructuring programme, thus ensuring all tradesman are well prepared for the challenges that lie ahead.

This means that 220 Sig Sqn will close in Germany before the end of the year but will reform with its parent Regiment in Colerne, in a new role supporting the Joint Helicopter Command (JHC). The 'Tele Mech' manpower is being relocated within 16 Sig Regt in Germany and 30 Sig Regt in UK. This manpower will provide continual support to the RAF Airbases at Bruggen and Ascension and provide structured deployable sections, maintained at a high state of readiness, to deploy world-wide in support of any MOD task. Communications Planning staff based at JHQ Rheindahlen provide the planning focus to any task now and will remain so, for the foreseeable future.

The trade restructuring having focused on the present excellent skill set of the 'Tele Mech' has enhanced it further, so the tradesman can undertake harness and installation repair on the many Army vehicular communications installations. From a present trade group of some 215 posts, this new trade group, the 'installation Technician' - Inst. Tech, is likely to need some 400 + individuals in the future. It remains an excellent trade group at 'Installation Technician', for any young individual wishing to join the Armed Forces. Whatever the task, wherever it is in the world, the Army and RAF can rely on the 220 Signal Squadron 'Mechs' to see the job through, living up to the unofficial Corps motto of - 'First in, last out'.



Taking a break
Members of 220 Sig Sqn and 81 (V) Sig Sqn
posing for the photographer while enjoying the fabulous weather

APPRECIATION



Major General L de M Thuillier CB CVO OBE

Major General L de M (Pete) Thuiller has died aged 93. He was Director of Telecommunications at the War Office in the mid 1950s and Leader of the British Government Mission which went to America in 1960 to discuss civil and military satellite communications systems. For the nine months before his retirement and for nearly nine years after it, he was Assistant Secretary in the Cabinet Office organising the co-ordination of communications electronic policy. He was also concerned with the establishment of various international communications systems, including that used for the Queen's overseas tours. Leslie de Malapert Thuillier, always known as 'Pete' was born in India on September 26 1905. His father Lt Col L. C. Thuillier, was a descendent of a family of French clock makers who, at the French Revolution moved to Switzerland, and later to England. He was educated at Berkhamsted and Woolwich, before being commissioned into the Royal Corps of Signals in 1926. In 1930 he was posted to 3 Indian Divisional Signals at Meerut, India, but returned to the Staff College, Camberley in 1939. In the early months of the war, he was posted to the War Office where he was instrumental in establishing the Y Service. In 1941 he was posted to 10th Corps Signals in Syria soon to be transferred to North Africa, where he saw action in various battles including El Alamein. He was then in Italy from the landings at Salerno until the crossing of the Garigliano, after which he was posted to General Alexander's HQ, where he remained until the end of the War. Subsequently he was Chief of Staff N. Ireland District, GSO 1 at the War Office and CSO Air Formation Signals BAOR. From 1951 to 53 he was CSO in Egypt. In 1954 he returned to the War Office before becoming CSO Northern Command and subsequently Director of Telecommunications. He was a first class athlete. He rode in the International Horse Show and in the Royal Tournament; he played rugby for the Harlequins, Hampshire and Yorkshire and was well above average at squash, tennis and hockey. He married Barbara Rawlins in 1935 and they had a son and two daughters.



Brigadier W. M. Ponsonby OBE

Brig Wilfred Ponsonby, who has died aged 93 escaped from German POW camps three times; he was also an outstanding horseman, a first class motorcyclist, champion boxer and a brilliant conjuror and member of the Magic Circle. After the outbreak of war he was posted to 1 Armoured Division Signals, which was sent to France in May 1940.The Division was eventually surrounded at St Valery-en-Caux, and Ponsonby was taken prisoner. He made his first attempt to escape on the march back to Germany, but was recaptured by chance. After making two further temporary escapes he was put on the list for repatriation (when Germans were exchanged for ill British prisoners) as his captors thought he looked so unwell that he must have tuberculosis. In fact he looked no worse than he had done all his life. Ponsonby was later awarded the OBE for his work in helping other POW's in the camps. After the war he went on to have a distinguished career in NATO. Wilfred Ponsonby was born on 10 July 1905 in Nova Scotia, where his father, an officer in the Sappers was serving. The family had a five generation military tradition. He went to Shrewsbury and Woolwich before being commissioned in Royal Signals in 1926. In 1930 he boxed for the Royal Signals team that won the Army Championships. The same year he took the Army equitation course and became a riding instructor at Catterick. He himself won many races and rode four times at Sandown, twice in the Grand Military Gold Cup which he won in 1935 on Kicking Time. He was closely involved in the Royal Tournament, Olympia and the International Horse Show. On arrival back in England from POW Camp in 1943 he had time out to learn about the new, to him, equipment before being posted to the War Office as GSO 1. At the end of the War, he was posted as CSO Sudan and Eritrea and returned to Britain to command 11 Signal Regiment. Later that year he became UK Representative of the Western Union Defence Organisation, which became part of NATO the following year. He was closely concerned with re-establishing the communications system in Europe and became Chairman of the European Military Communications Co-ordination Committee. In 1952 he moved on to Scottish Command and three years later was posted to SHAPE. In 1957 he retired from the Army and worked for the Ministry of Supply. In full retirement he became a steward at Catterick Racecourse, and was heavily involved in acting and producing at the Leyburn Amateur Dramatics Society.

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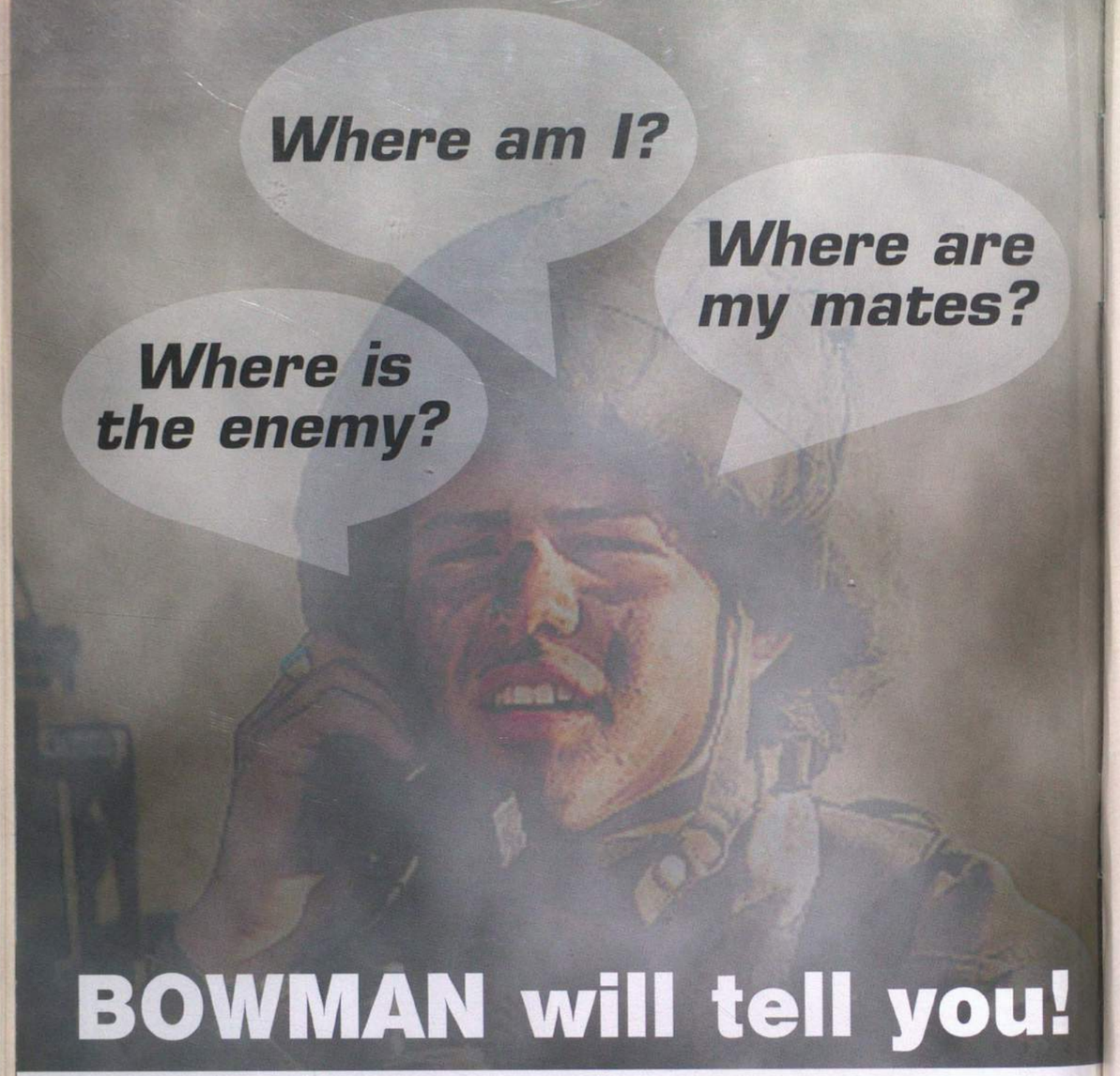
December 1999



The Royal Corps of Signals



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Finding a way through the fog of war

The Royal Signals Magazine

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FRONT COVER
Her Majesty The Queen presents the Braemar Relay Shield to **Sig Mike Lake** - 11 Signal Regiment Relay Team

BACK COVER
A dusk (Snow) Clearance Patrol, a reminder that the Corps remains committed throughout the festive season

RSA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The next Annual General Meeting of the Royal Signals Association will be held in the Corporals' Club, Chelsea Barracks, Chelsea Bridge Road, LONDON, SW1 8RF, on Saturday 8 April 2000. The meeting will start at 1030hrs. All Life Members of the RSA are cordially invited to attend. To assist administration, those who intend attending are asked to give their name and vehicle details (if applicable) to Association HQ. A call to 01258 482090 will suffice. Any points for the Agenda must reach Association HQ by 1 March 2000.

MILLENNIUM CORPS CAROL SERVICE

Thursday 16 December 1999, 1800hrs

Church of St Stephen with St John
Rochester Row, Westminster
Afterwards at the Napier Hall for sherry and mince pies
EVERYONE IS WELCOME

Authors alone are responsible for the content of their articles. The opinions expressed in the articles of this publication are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy and views, official or otherwise, of the Royal Signals or the Ministry of Defence. This publication should be treated with discretion by the recipient.

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Seasons Greetings



CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE SOinC(A)

At this time of year we are reminded of the message, 'Peace and goodwill to all men.' This is particularly poignant as we reflect, not only on the close of the most vicious century in the history of mankind, but also on a year which has seen yet another major deployment to defend the lives and liberties of ordinary people in the tragic Balkans theatre.

'The price of peace is eternal vigilance.' Whilst it may be that national governments have not always been as vigilant as some with hindsight might wish, the soldiers, sailors and airmen of our armed forces have always been ready to play their part in maintaining the security of this nation and the defence of a just cause. Vigilance depends upon information, and information has always been the business of Royal Signals. Since its formation, the Corps has always been at the heart of our Defence capability. Whether in support of the national intelligence effort or the tactical commander on the ground, the men and women of the Royal Signals have played a vital part in world wars, withdrawal from Empire, regional conflicts and peace support operations.

This year has seen proportionally the largest deployment of the Corps on operations since 1945. In Macedonia and Kosovo our soldiers performed magnificently, not only technically and militarily, but also on initiatives designed to help the people of the province, activities vital to stability and the cause of peace. At the same time, our people sustained other operations world-wide and maintained our commitment to Northern Ireland where, despite the peace process, there has been little respite in the demand for robust operational communications. The Regular Corps alone could not have sustained this level of activity. Significant numbers of volunteers continue to come forward from the TA to serve both in the United Kingdom and abroad, and they bring with them a range of complementary skills and expertise which greatly enriches the units and headquarters with which they serve.

Our families too continue to make sacrifices and are perhaps too often forgotten in the 'lessons learnt' process, which follows recovery from operations. The wider Corps family, including the Association and the Institution each plays its part in sustaining the Corps and spreading the message of the competence of our people and the central role they play in Defence as well as providing us in the serving Corps with examples and role models.

But what of the future? We are at the beginning of the information age. In Defence, perhaps as never before, the efficient delivery of information services is central to the utility of the United Kingdom's armed forces in pursuit of security and international policy goals. We in the Corps have an immense opportunity, but with that comes increased responsibility to demonstrate that we have the necessary skills and profound understanding of the information business. There is much to do to prepare ourselves but I believe we should enter the new Millennium with confidence, certain that we will continue to play a central role contributing to the vigilance, which maintains the peace.

Laurette and I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a successful New Year

THE MASTER'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Rightly, the Signal Officer in Chief reminds us all of the Christmas message and the heroic contribution being made all round the world by the serving Corps towards the wider 'peace'. In my travels I have marvelled at the work of our young men and women in the field, and been lifted by their spirit and enthusiasm. Their professionalism and responsiveness is now a byword amongst allied forces and our own high command alike. The Corps has risen magnificently to the challenge of 'expeditionary warfare'. Never has the Corps' operational value been more recognised, or held in higher regard.

At the same time, I have watched in admiration as our leadership has moved to address the demands of the 'information revolution' and the future of the Corps whose time has surely come. But the serving Corps is not alone in this vital purpose. Out there is a vibrant, supportive Association, an Institution bristling with ideas and experience now directly engaged in shaping the future, and industry and commerce with a mountain of goodwill and commitment to help.

So my message, on this very special Millennial Christmas, is to the wider family of the Corps. To the 'old comrade' and the new; to the officer and the soldier; to the regular and the territorial; and to the families on whose backing we all depend. It is that these are times of exceptional challenge and unimagined opportunity; we need not just to be together, but to work together to build a great future.

Next year we have planned a range of special Corps celebrations to mark the start of the new Millennium. I do hope that you will take every opportunity to get involved.

Annie and I wish you all a very Merry Christmas



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London Marathon 2000

If you've got the get-up-and-go to run a Marathon, why not join the **Whizz-Kidz** London Marathon Team next year? As one of the official charities at this year's Marathon, **Whizz-Kidz** enjoyed a great deal of support and a large number of cheers as their 750 runners crossed the finishing line. Next year, **Whizz-Kidz** hopes to see 800 runners complete the Marathon for them.

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If you want to benefit from an experience of a lifetime and get non-mobile children mobile, please call the Hotline: **0800 600 9933**.

If you would like to interview **Christopher Craven, Charlie Waggett** and **Jules Walster** from HM Forces, who together raised £5938, when they ran the Marathon this year, please call **Katie Crichton-Miller** at **Whizz-Kidz** Press Office: 0171 233 6600.

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WANTED – BONE MARROW DONORS

Members of the Corps will be saddened to hear that one of our former Warrant Officers, **WO2 Paul** 'PC' **Collins** is currently fighting Leukaemia. Many serving and former members of Royal Signals will remember **Paul** as not only an extremely skilled Rugby Player but also as one of life's genuine 'nice guys.' At the time of writing 'PC' is in Frimley Hospital where he has just completed his fourth bout of Chemotherapy. You will not be surprised that 'PC' is fighting his illness and both he and his wife **Tina** are displaying tremendous courage and resilience. It is hoped that as a result of this particular course of Chemotherapy 'PC' will go into remission, thus enabling the next part of his treatment, a Bone Marrow Transplant, to take place. Potentially the most significant challenge for 'PC' is that to date it has proved impossible to find a Bone Marrow match to enable a successful transplant. Currently, The Anthony Nolan Bone Marrow Trust (a charity that exists purely by fundraising) holds the world's largest database of Bone Marrow Donors. Unfortunately, only 30% of registered donors are male and the Trust is desperate to increase its numbers of males aged between 18-40 (males can provide greater volumes of marrow and are much less likely to suffer from anaemia - a condition which would prohibit a volunteer from being able to donate). In order to identify a donor's tissue type a small sample of blood is required which is then processed to identify the bone marrow type. If, in the fullness of time, a compatible donor is identified the bone marrow will be extracted from the pelvic bones under general anaesthetic. The short-term effects may include some discomfort in the lower back but full recovery is within 10-14 days. The purpose in writing this article is to encourage members of the Royal Signals to register as potential Bone Marrow Donors; not only to hopefully produce a match for 'PC', but also to assist The Anthony Nolan Bone Marrow Trust in its overall battle against Leukaemia. The address for potential donors is:

Donor Recruitment Office
The Anthony Nolan Bone Marrow Trust
PO Box 1767
Royal Free Hospital
LONDON
NW3 4YR

Additionally, **Maj Graham Complin** (Salisbury Mil 3212) is happy to pass on messages etc: to 'PC' and **Tina** and provide their contact details on request.
Many thanks .....



THE GAP YEAR COMMISSION (GYC)

Introduction by Lt Col I. C. Shuker
Main article by Miss Caroline Orlebar

Some school or college students, who intend to go on to university, take a year out after their A-levels (or equivalent studies) before entering university. This 'gap year' normally involves foreign travel, adventurous and challenging activities and, perhaps, the opportunity to earn some money. The Royal Signals, amongst several other Regiments and Corps, offers selected students the opportunity to fulfil all of these ambitions as an officer on a 'Gap Year Commission' (GYC) and without any further commitment.

Students aged between 18 and 19 before commissioning, with a confirmed place at a UK university or college to read for a recognised first degree, are eligible for a GYC. Having been interviewed by the school Army Careers Adviser, and provisionally accepted by a Regiment or Corps following assessment at a 'familiarisation visit', candidates will be assessed by the Regular Commissions Board (RCB) at Westbury in Wiltshire. The 3-day assessment tests the candidates' leadership skills, intelligence, knowledge of world affairs, and essay writing and communications skills. A good school or college report and head-teacher's recommendation is also required.

GYC candidates attend the RCB alongside officer candidates seeking career commissions but will be assessed for their extraordinary potential to be entrusted with the leadership of soldiers given only three weeks GYC training at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, compared to the eleven months training provided on the common commissioning course. Having been assessed as suitable for a GYC by the RCB, students will attend three weeks intensive training as officer cadets at Sandhurst in the October of their gap year. Sandhurst training involves leadership, battle-craft, skill at arms, signals skills, map reading and drill. On successful completion of training, the officer cadet passes out as a Second Lieutenant. A Royal Signals GYC Second Lieutenant, now on a salary worth more than £1,000 a month, will attend a one week Troop Commanders' course at the Royal School of Signals before joining his or her Regiment. There, the Commanding Officer will decide how and where to employ the young officer. Although the GYC officer is not qualified for operational duty, the CO will always seek to provide opportunities for as much challenge and responsibility as the officer is capable of accepting.

The Royal Signals offers a maximum of five GYC commissions each year. Some of these GYC officers may subsequently decide to apply for a career commission after university, and a full eleven months commissioning course at Sandhurst. Others may decide to pursue a career elsewhere but, we hope, will act as ambassadors for the Army and the Royal Signals. At the end of their commission, Royal Signals GYC officers are asked to provide a résumé of their year. The remainder of this article is the résumé of Miss Caroline Orlebar, who was a GYC officer with 16 Signal Regiment in Germany before going to Somerville College, Oxford in 1998 to read chemistry.

The Gap Year Commission (GYC) is a scheme run by the Army that gives the opportunity for young people taking a year out between school and university to sample and enjoy Army life and be paid. Recently I came to the end of such a year. It was an incredible experience. One in which I was challenged and rewarded with greater magnitude than I have previously experienced and am unlikely to again. I took part in numerous challenging pursuits, often only acquired in a lifetime of serving in the British Army. I had fantastic fun and have minimal regrets.

In July 1997 I left Roedean School, Brighton with a place at Sandhurst and a deferred place at University. I had four months to recover from the strain of A levels and to get fit. On 31 October, much to everybody's amazement I joined the Army. No one had underestimated the physical and mental stamina that was required throughout a month long Officer Training at Sandhurst. Such intensity made normal life highly pleasurable. Zero previous military knowledge and experience only added to the challenge. I learnt infantry tactics, how to shoot and clean firearms, how to be meticulous and punctual, how to survive with minimal sleep and how to run long distances with excessive weight. It was a challenging course. I left having learnt much more than they thought I had.



Passing out from RMA Sandhurst

By the end of November, rather alarmingly, I was a commissioned officer. Being sponsored by the Royal Signals, I was then off to Blandford for a week long 'Troopies' course. Here the network of comradeship the Army thrives upon became established. I met newly commissioned 'proper' Officers, some of whom I would meet up with later and would be of unconditional support. I was introduced to the signalling side of the Army and to Mess life. It was great fun. I was extremely lucky to be subsequently posted to 16 Signal Regiment at JHQ, Germany. With their unstinting patience and generosity I continued my Army experience. I acted the officer role as any might without the long formal training. It was a challenge to be on the commanding side of the fence having been at school for so long. We would go on 4-mile fun runs, fancy dress runs and have numerous parties. Still constantly mildly challenging, Christmas came as a welcome break.



Cycling to work at 16 Signal Regiment

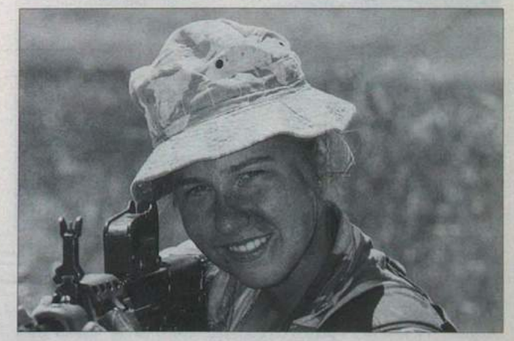
In January the signal side came into action. I acted as OC MAN Troop and to the best of my ability waded through first sight files in order to put my input into the system. The Ptarmigan Network - the one 16 Signal Regiment operates, was - but for an hour at Blandford - totally unfamiliar. I acquired a shady overall knowledge as I was informed at length about how each vehicle fitted in to the larger communication network.

'Get away as much as possible,' a fellow Second Lieutenant told me on my arrival. Nobody could have anticipated to what extent I would follow this advice.

February saw me in Igls, Austria participating in the unusual sport of Skeleton Bob-sleighing. I have written a piece on the specific sensations of Bob-sleighing which was published in *The Wire* (June 1998). They had my sights on the Winter 2002 Olympics. An exciting dream, but I was off to University the following October and the training would have coincided. This sport is to be recommended to those who can cope with a fast, white, frosty and potentially dangerous ice slide and can give a decent sprint start.

March was punctuated with Basic Winter Training in Bavaria. I learnt lessons in skiing, winter and social survival. I had some spectacular falls and witnessed blissful views. It was a snowy wonderland in southern Germany.

April in its entirety was spent on infantry exercise in Cyprus. Everything I learnt at Sandhurst was reinforced to my great satisfaction. I particularly enjoyed the use of a variety of firearms, live and blank, and the parading along the sandy paths in Cyprus. The people, weather, scenery and exercise made this month highly memorable. I was also able to visit Egypt, on R and R, during my stay.



Training in Cyprus

May and I was floating. First came a fortnight of jumping out of an aeroplane at Lippspringe in Germany. This was followed by a further fortnight of paragliding - walking off a mountain. The former was an exhilarating experience, the latter, a relatively peaceful glide down to earth.



Parachuting in Lippspringe, Germany

End June-early July, I was improving my limited skill at kayaking in the South of France. I spent a stunning three weeks of camping. The weather was unbelievable and the cool, glacial waters were crystal clear. I capsized frequently which was terrifying.



Kayaking in the South of France

On returning from that trip, I thought it was about time to further my sporting prowess at tennis. I entered the Army Championships at Aldershot from where I was picked to play for the Army at Wimbledon in August. The first day I played on clay, the second on the famous grass courts. It was a great thrill.



With the Army Tennis Team at Wimbledon

I had only one more thing to achieve and that was to organise my own expedition. Scuba diving was an adventure training activity I had not yet attempted, so I chose to take a group of 12 diving off Gibraltar at the end of August. After sporadic weekly training in the Blue Pool at JHQ, Germany, I had acquired BSAC novice level. Gibraltar was an ideal location; superb for diving, steeped in military history and using the pound sterling as currency. We lived aboard a boat and dived at numerous sites and wrecks. All the party came back having achieved at least BSAC Sport. There is also an account of this in *The Wire*.



Scuba diving in Gibraltar

By mid September, I had two weeks to go before starting at University. After watching the film 'Saving Private Ryan', the Officers and SNCOs of 16 Signal Regiment departed for an educational trip to Normandy to study the 1944 Landings. It was too good an opportunity to miss, so blow the pre-university reading, I was off again. This proved to be an excellent 4-day send off. I learnt loads of very interesting history and it was a highly worthwhile 'resettlement' course back into academic and civilian life.

I am now working very hard studying Chemistry at Somerville College, Oxford and often think back to the fun I had in the Army. I recommend the Gap Year Commission to any fit, enthusiastic person and challenge them to better my experiences. I am grateful to the Army for giving me such a splendid opportunity.

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THE MAN FROM MANNING AND RECORDS

by Maj S. J. Turnbull

(with apologies to all my hard working comrades in the R Signals and Int Corps MCM Div)

Some time has passed since I last composed a column for this august publication, and those of you with long memories will remember my 'Man from the Ministry' notes compiled while I worked in the world of pay and allowances. Things change and after a 'holiday' in Cyprus for a couple of years, it is back to work for me. I now find myself sitting at one quarter of a desk in Kentigern House, Glasgow as a member of the staff of the R SIGNALS & INT Corps Manning and Career Management Division.

Now many of us, at one time or another, will come across the MCM Div, one way or another. Whether it is waiting with baited breath, or trepidation, for the results of a promotion board, or haggling to get that posting that is just right for the wife/husband/sun tan/dog/ or to 'hack off' Fred whose been posted to Benbecula or whatever. Sometimes we get what we want, other times the news is less good and I suppose that the way we feel about the MCM Div, reflects the success or otherwise of our last request.

So what is the MCM Div like? Well I was surprised. I had been able to visit on a number of previous occasions and on the face of it everything 'hummed like a well oiled machine', paper flowing steadily from one tray to another, with lots of happy soldiers being generated at the end of the day – Right? Well, partly right! Like all parts of the MOD, the MCM Div is a shadow of our former well-staffed MRO. First impressions (after all I've only been here two weeks!) are that we have some great people, mostly local, from the Glasgow area, most with a minimum of exposure to the Army at large, let alone the Royal Signals. Many of them are really well motivated and trying to do their best for the soldiers in the Corps. Yes! - Stop laughing - I mean it.

What is the MCM Div trying to achieve? Most of you will have been exposed to Mission Statements, some perhaps to management plans (no cringing in SHQ 259 Sig Sqn!) Well, here is the mission statement for the Royal Signals and INT Corps MCM Div: The R SIGNALS and INT Corps MCM Div Mission is 'to manage the R SIGNALS and INT Corps manpower assets to match liabilities in accordance with the Army's manning priorities and manage officer and soldier careers in a manner that ensures the total confidence of the Corps.'

We all know that we are working in an environment of under-manning, on 1 October 1999 the Corps was 928 soldiers short of it's full establishment. Many of the Corps are committed to operations and the restrictions that this creates serves to further complicate the manning and career management process. We all know the problems. So what can we do to make things better? One simple act would be to ensure that YOU, yes, YOU have lodged through your Squadron a current posting preference form with the MCM Div. You won't believe this, but less than 50% of all our soldiers have expressed a preference for their next posting. Next time your mate starts moaning when he gets posted, just ask him if he bothered to tell anyone what he wanted to do. If you don't ask, how can anyone know what you would like to do! Obviously, we can't promise that everyone of you will get his first choice for a next posting, but you do have a much better chance if you told us what you would like to do.

Enough of the sales pitch. Here are some highlights from the MCM world:

Retention incentives agreed for Royal Signals Technicians completing Class 1 qualification and/or passing for a Foreman of Signals.

The first new F board, which replaced unit G boards, will sit in Glasgow over the period 8 to 12 November to select Signallers for promotion to Lance Corporal.

Opportunities for extended service and LSL are very good and more soldiers than ever are serving beyond the 22 year point. In fact the Royal Signals have recently been given clearance to create a special technical LSL List. So if you are interested watch out for more information.

Revised Unit establishments have included over 200 Information Systems Operator and Supervisor posts and soldiers will soon start being selected for these posts from amongst the 151 that volunteered under SoinC's PD 31. If you are interested DO IT NOW.

That's all for now. Looking forward to future copies of *The Wire*, I hope to be able to explain the promotion board process in detail, publish results from the most recent boards and provide some hints and tips for getting the most out of your MCM Div. I also hope to feature a Promotion Wing of the month, throwing the spotlight on the parts and personalities of the Division. Look out for this column in future editions of *The Wire*.

(Welcome back Maj Turnbull - we look forward to receiving your on going copy, which is an important and 'up front' contribution that we are very pleased to publish. - The Editor.)



The White Helmets

OC RSMDT **Lt Col Jack Amberton**
Team Capt **Capt Gordon Newell**
Team Sgt **Sgt Don Brebner**

TEAM UPDATE - *by LCpl D. Hankin*

The team has finally reached the end of a very successful season. As always that's not quite the end, with the team busily preparing itself for the annual selection course held in mid November. New team riders for the next few seasons are then selected to replace those soldiers like me, who will be posted back to the Corps. With the selection course completed and new recruits chosen, the team then looks forward to a well earned break with Christmas and New Year leave, only to return and start the whole process over again. Good luck for next season, I wish you all the best!

THE 1999 SHOW SEASON - *by Sig 'Marcus' Fiddes*

The season properly started after five months of continuous training at Blandford, Bovington, and Chester. In this time all riders in the team have to learn and perfect any new tricks and rides that they are given to perform. With many of the tricks it's a case of trial and error. Team Sgt, **Sgt Don Brebner** has the task of finding the right people for the right trick. A great deal of the time is spent on this. Two or three people would try to crack one trick with the best being picked. With a few bumps and bruises, the worst being **Cpl Bob** 'funky monk' **Sizeland** having stitches to his knee due to an over extreme fire jump, the season began.

The SOinC's Opening show here at Blandford Camp was the first performance of the newly formed 1999 Royal Signals White Helmets, with the first public show taking place in Leeds at the Yorkshire Water Fun Day. The Leeds show wasn't the most spectacular of shows, but the team would go on to perform at better show grounds later that season. The Rheindahlen show was two weeks away and this was a show the team had been looking forward to for some time. It could have something to do with the cheap beer or was it the sunshine? (I don't think so!!). The first performance for the team was Saturday 15 May. The show ground was perfect and the crowds turned out in their thousands. The show was a definite high along with the after show party, things were going well. The party saw the Team **Capt Gordon** 'Judge' **Newell** kick out some pumping tunes from his decks and **LCpl Gypo Hooper** cooking the burgers. What more could a man want than a wheelie bin full of beer, cheers!



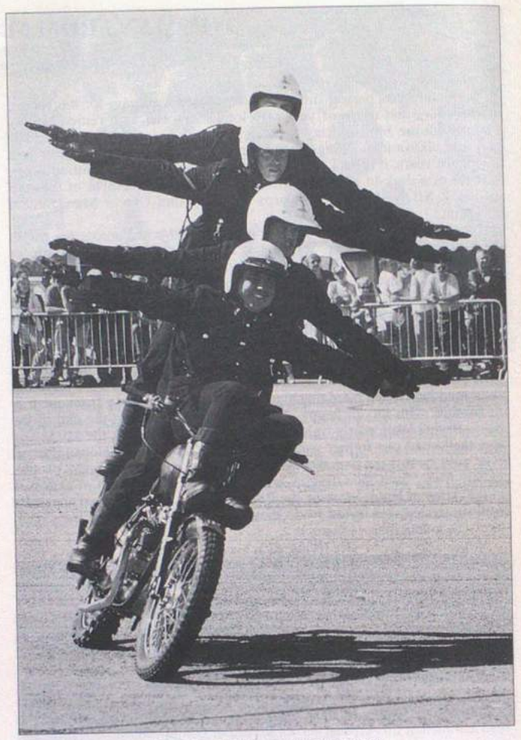
The Parallel Bar
LCpl 'V,mal' Mildreth hanging around and taking it easy

Admittedly your first year in the team is a hard one. The first year riders have the task of loading bikes and props. To forget one of the props costs the first years a crate of beer or two. So when we left the bollards (which we use to mark out the arena with) back in Blandford, when we needed them at Skipton, North Yorkshire the crates came in thick and fast. For the last ever Royal Tournament we remembered all the props, which was just as well because I don't think there would have been a brewery big enough to calm **Sgt Don Brebner** down. The Tournament was two and a half weeks long, with the first half week spent rehearsing. The rehearsals were not up to the teams usual high standards with many people falling off on the tricks and some riders getting too close in the fast cross over rides. Every person in the team was nervous to perform in front of over eleven thousand spectators twice daily, coupled along with royal dignitaries watching over was a daunting thought. Needless to say when it mattered the team produced the goods. The first show ran smoothly and the nerves subsided. The team continued to put on excellent shows to the very end, which in the second week proved harder and harder as time there was taking its toll. An up and coming show that the team were looking forward to was the South West motorcycle expo here at Blandford Camp. Performing alongside the team were **Gary Rothwell**, the Kangaroo Kid (**Matt Coulter**) and the Blue Flames childrens motorcycle display team. The crowds were probably the best we have seen understanding just how difficult the rides and the tricks are being mostly all motorcycle enthusiasts.

The final show of the season was not the best. On arrival to the Cotswold County Fair we were met with a quagmire. It was a challenge riding the bikes to the arena never mind putting on a display. As always we went out and produced the goods even if it was just a trick show. With the final show over, the team can now return to reality back in Blandford being able to enjoy weekends off, something last seen in April.



The Southwest Motorcycle Expo
(L-R): The Kangaroo Kid, LCpl 'Tonka' Richardson, Gary Rothwell
Fight it out for the best wheelie



From the bottom on the '4 Tees'
Sig 'Scotto' O'Neill on the handlebars, Sig 'Marcus' Fiddes,
LCpl 'Daz' Hankin, Sig 'Hodge' Hodgson

MUSICAL NOTES
THE CORPS BAND

Director of Music **Maj. D. F. Wall LTCL BBSM psm CA Mus**
Bandmaster **WO1 A. Booth BA(Music) LRSM CA Mus**

The Band's busy summer season began in May with a short tour of Northern Ireland. This was followed by engagements at the RMCS, Shrivenham, 3 UK Div Bulford and a Pass Off Parade in Lichfield. In June we were privileged to play at the RSA weekend here in Blandford, where we performed marching displays and paraded for the Master of Signals. These fairly routine engagements were followed by the tour of the decade, a six week tour of Canada. We were part of the Medman Exercise based at BATUS, supporting the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards. The band played to large and very appreciative crowds at the North American Showjumping Championships at Spruce Meadows.



Full Band conducted by WO1 Booth
performing at Spruce Meadows

We also gave a variety of concerts at the Calgary Stampede, the Stampede Parade and Downtown Calgary, and this was repeated for the Medicine Hat Stampede. We even managed a short slot on The Canadian Big Breakfast show on TV, ensuring that the British Army was well promoted in Canada. We were incredibly well looked after throughout the tour and special thanks must go to **Capt Gary Thompson** of the RLC who arranged the whole programme for us. The Band, as ever, were keen to do some local sightseeing and were able to organise a short spell of R & R. Many of us headed for the Rockies where we saw tremendous breathtaking scenery, spectacular ice fields and even caught sight of brown bears. Again, local hospitality was extremely friendly and the local brew - from the Big Rock Brewery in Calgary - was sampled!

We returned to UK in August - just in time to see the Eclipse and to bid a fond farewell to the Assistant Bandmaster, **WO2 Matt Brown,** who has picked up his promotion and flew off to Germany to take over as Bandmaster of The Dragoon Guards Band. We wish him every success in the future.

After annual leave, we travelled to old haunts in UKSC(G), playing for the local towns, service schools and military and Anglo German venues. The disbandment of 220 Sig Sqn (AS) at RAF Laarbruch sees the end of yet another era in Germany, with the last of its Harrier bases gone, and with it the Signallers deploying to 16 Sig Regt, JHQ and 21 Sig Regt (AS), at Colerne. The Band's favourite concert was for the ARRC at JHQ who held an International Food Fair and the Band were required to sample delicacies from 14 different countries. As well as various Mess Dinner Nights including one at SHAPE the band played at Dulken Hospital. Local to JHQ, it now takes service personnel and their families and has a good relationship with the military.

Upon our return we had a new musician join the band. We bid a warm welcome to **Musn Adam Scowen** and his wife **Jessica.** We draw to the end of the Millennium, having completed tours of Kenya, Hong Kong, Cyprus, Germany, France, Denmark, Sweden, America, Canada, as well as events throughout the UK. We look forward to continuing to represent the Royal Corps of Signals throughout the world during the 21st Century.

ROYAL SIGNALS MOBILE PRESENTATION TEAM

OC **Capt Jack Jennings**
WO **WO2 Bobby Snow**
JNCO **Cpl Billy Wardrope**
JNCO **Cpl Barry Hopgood**

The Royal Signals Mobile Presentation Team was formed in February 1999 with a view to touring Schools, Colleges and Trade Fairs and presenting the many different facets of the Corps to the 13-18 year age group with a view to recruiting. The Team consists of four volunteers from different Trade backgrounds who give presentations on the role of the Royal Signals; including Digitisation, Fibre-Optics, Satellite and Radio Communications and Command and Leadership Skills.



The Three 'wise' monkeys go for the hard sell

Since March 1999 we have toured many parts of the United Kingdom, including London, West Midlands, Yorkshire, Blackpool and Newcastle-upon-Tyne and have given our presentation to over 200 schools. The Team has been very well received everywhere we go and we have surprised many a school teacher and pupil by the fact that the Army is not just 'Guns and Bullets' but also offers many young people a satisfying and rewarding career in Telecommunications. The Team is equipped with three Wolf Land Rovers and a wide variety of Telecommunications Equipment that has been kindly donated or 'signed out' to us from CIS Group and civilian companies such as Racal Radio, British Aerospace and Marconi Communications. **Cpl Billy Wardrope** in his new found role as industrial liaison has managed to get civilian industry to fulfil their promises and deliver hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of equipment with the offer of some free PR, and a bit of 'pressure'. A normal presentation involves three members of the Team briefing around 30 to 40 students at a time, each member having 20 minutes to present to part of the group details of how to apply to join the Corps, what qualifications are needed, what the job involves and what rewards are in it for the student, all this at least 18 times at each school!

Whilst most people reading this will immediately form the opinion that we are on a 'swan' the opposite is actually true. A typical working week involves leaving Blandford early on a Sunday normally to stay in transit accommodation, each day working long hours with very early starts to be at the schools before the pupils and of course the inevitable school dinners. On many occasions **Capt Jennings** has been mothered by the school dinner ladies and is often to be found at the front of the dinner queue demanding seconds of 'spotted dick and custard'. When out on the road **Cpl Barry** 'Gym Queen' **Hopgood** is responsible for the physical training of the Team and has also been heard offering 20 press-ups to any students who don't pay attention to his Radio Brief. Indeed, recently we have been used as a model for trainee teachers on how to interact with young people and control the more unruly elements of the classroom**, Sgt Maj Snow,** having hung up his pace stick for a duster and some chalk, has been called upon many a time to sort out a playground dispute over who is the hardest guy in the school. All in all, life on the team is very interesting and we certainly get to see parts of the UK not normally visited by the Army. Anyone thinking of applying to join the team should take into account that we spend a lot of time on the road away from camp working long hours. Any one is welcome to volunteer, as we are now looking for suitable candidates for the 00/01 team. See your RAO for details.



Cpl Daz Hopgood seeks advice from a technical expert



No swearing, your hair's too long and your sleeves aren't shiney enough..... I mean this is the ATTacS....



The Team getting to grips with recruiting

KEEP IN TOUCH – PUBLISH IT IN *THE WIRE*

CENTENARIAN REG RANDALL VISITS THE MUSEUM

by Col (Retd) C. J. Walters, Museum Director

On 28 October 1999 **Reg Randall BEM** visited the Museum at the ripe age of 100 years and 2 months. **Reg** originally joined the Rifle Brigade in 1918 and saw service in the Great War as 6906814 Rifleman Randall. He went on to serve in India and Mesopotamia before his discharge.

At the outbreak of the Second World War he re-enlisted into the Royal Signals and spent most of his wartime service in the South of England providing communications for the gun defence and Royal Air Force communications systems. He reached the rank of Sergeant as a Technician before being accepted for a Commission; he went on to reach the rank of Lieutenant.

His early days in the Corps were involved with Radio Direction Finding, Searchlight and Anti-aircraft units in the gun defended areas of Portsmouth and Southampton. He recalls, 'In the early days, around the time of the Battle of Britain, I was sent to the Isle of Wight which we were told the Germans wanted as a re-supply location for the mainland for post-invasion operations. I was setting up comms for the guns and searchlights. After a short while I knew that someone was sabotaging my cables so one night I took a loaded rifle and lay in wait. It was not long before the culprit arrived on the scene so I prepared to shoot. To my dismay it was a female so, rather than shoot her, I apprehended her and handed her over to the RMPs. 50 years later I was invited to a ceremony on the Island at which the importance of this capture was announced by the Mayor. Apparently, this 'lady' had turned out to be one of the most effective spies ever to have been captured and my action had been far more important than I had ever known.' 'My other action that I regard of great technical innovation concerned the laying of an armoured cable across the Fareham Creek. We did not have the right vessel with which to lay the cable so I tasked my Sergeant with finding as many empty oil drums as he could. I then tied the cable to the drums and gradually we floated the cable across the deep water. Once it was across I cut all the ties and the cable sank gently to the seabed. Communications were soon 'THROUGH'.

Reg now lives near Exmouth and was brought to the Museum by **ex-Cpl Thomas May** 1961/72 who met **Reg** through the Torquay Branch of the RSA at his 100th Birthday Party. **Thomas** originally trained at Loughborough as a Special Operator (later Radio Op) and was one of the first to join the all regular Army. He saw service in East Africa as well as much of Europe before retiring from 7 Sig Regt. His father, **Jack** and two brothers, **John** and **Billy**, were all Royal Signals. We are thankful to him for bringing **Reg** to the Museum and we hope the day brought happy memories to you both.

Reg enjoyed a guided tour of the Museum and, after lunch in the Sergeants' Mess, was given a tour of Cable Systems Section, kindly hosted by **HIO Mr Peter Rossall** (**Reg** was once a Lineman).



Reg Randell with Cliff Walters and Thomas May
in the museum Medal Gallery
Which one is the Centenarian?



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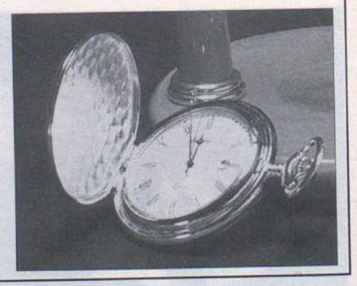

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MOVEMENTS

OCTOBER 1999

Rank and Name	*Unit to which posted*
Lt Col W. E. Brewin	Headquarters 5 Division
Lt Col T. J. P. Bryning	The Royal School of Signals
Lt Col T. W. Canham	SHAPE
Lt Col J. Dryburgh	ACCAP BN
Lt Col J. P. Hudson	SHAPE
Lt Col D. G. Proctor	Headquarters Royal Signals
Lt Col L. A. Relph	Headquarters 4 Division
Maj M. W. G. Adams	15 Signal Regiment
Maj K. E. Clark	21 Signal Regiment (Air Support)
Maj S. E. Felton	ASD2
Maj B. Greenwood	16 Signal Regiment
Maj P. A. Osment	Headquarters Royal Signals
Maj P. R. Smith	The Royal School of Signals
Capt R. J. Carter	19 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (209)
Capt A. D. Hawes	14 Signal Regiment (EW)
Capt G. B. Lamb	8 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (218)
Capt H. E. Murphy	15 Signal Regiment
Capt R. J. B. Spencer	CDL (DES) Implementation Team
Capt D. J. Williams	11 Signal Regiment

NOVEMBER 1999

Rank and Name	*Unit to which posted*
Col C. L. Le Gallais OBE	OCE HQ LAND
Lt Col I. W. Griffiths	HQ DCSA
Lt Col R. D. Symonds	Short Term Training Team
Maj T. J. S. Allen	RMCS Shrivenham
Maj M. D. Bailes	2 Signal Regiment
Maj F. J. Freely	JSCSC
Capt S. J. Abram	7 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (207)
Capt R. C. Chalmers	9 Regiment Army Air Corps
Capt G. M. Greenhill	3 Regiment Army Air Corps
Capt K. A. Jones	7 Signal Regiment
Capt G. J. H Maloney	HQ RG
Capt G. W. Wilson	Headquarters Royal Marines
Lt A. D. Clixby	ATR Bassingbourn
Lt P. J. Hale	21 Signal Regiment (Air Support)
Lt K. A. Jeeves	ATR Bassingbourn
Lt A. S. Wilson	238 Signal Squadron

OCTOBER 1999

WOs & SNCOs

Rank and Name	*Unit to which posted*
WO2 D. G. Jones	7 Signal Regiment
WO2 A. R. Dawson	20 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (200)
SSgt P. C. Mills	2 Signal Regiment
A/SSgt B. D. Gallacher	40 Signal Regiment (V)
Sgt P. D. Millington	1 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt
Sgt J. P. McNabb	R & LS (South)
Sgt G. Cullen	14 Signal Regiment (EW)
Sgt K. P. Overton	8 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (218)
Sgt J. Driver	259 Signal Squadron
Sgt T. C. McSween	2 Signal Regiment
Sgt P. Barnsfield	2 Signal Regiment
Sgt W. L. Calvert	3 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (203)
Sgt I. M. Moore	DISC Sp Unit
Sgt C. A. McGiffen	Army CIS SUO Div
Sgt V. E. Shaw	CIS Engr Regt
Sgt P. M. Brannon	19 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (209)
A/Sgt M. J. Eades	36 Signal Regiment (V)

NOVEMBER 1999

Rank and Name	*Unit to which posted*
WO2 S. P. Cowan	259 Signal Squadron
SSgt J. C. Goldsworthy	24 Airmob Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (210)
SSgt T. M. Pellett	3 (UK) Div HQ & Signal Regiment
SSgt G. Davies	1 (UK) Div HQ & Signal Regiment
A/SSgt J. Reid	7 Signal Regiment
A/SSgt R. S. Brown	35 Signal Regiment (Volunteers)
Sgt G. Welsh	Defence School of Transport
Sgt G. S. Tanner	16 Signal Regiment
Sgt L. Tobbell	Defence School of Transport
Sgt M. E. Harman	3 (UK) Div HQ & Signal Regiment
Sgt D. Kilgallon	225 Signal Squadron
Sgt C. Benson	225 Signal Squadron
Sgt D. M. Nichols	2 Signal Regiment
Sgt P. D. Green	600 Signal Troop
A/Sgt C. M. Ogg	3 (UK) Div HQ & Signal Regiment
A/Sgt D. J. Wilkinson	16 Signal Regiment
A/Sgt S. A. Pengelly	The Royal School of Signals
A/Sgt D. B. Bain	7 Signal Regiment

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NEWS FROM HEADQUARTERS

HEADQUARTERS
2ND (NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS) SIGNAL BRIGADE
& COTSWOLD GARRISON

Comd **Brig S. G. Hughes CBE**

THE MYSTERY OF FOEL GRACH - (or Where Has Fatty Gone?)
Foreword - Dear Readers, This is the story of the first adventure of the Five-Go-Doers of Basil Hill Preparatory School for Boys: **Davey, Dicky, Johnny, Jimmy** and **Fatty**. They all set out to have a whizzo time in Wales – three whole days of climbing really big hills, away from the clutches of their housemaster **Mr Kelly**, who had to stay behind to mark their latest homework instead…

Chapter 1 - It was excellent news for the boys of Basil Hill. **Mr Hughes** the Headmaster had very wisely decided to give them an additional holiday of three whole days! This was to make up for the cancelled school trip which should have taken place to the Peak District earlier in the year. 'What a super idea' exclaimed **Jimmy**, at the thought of walking up big hills in Wales. **Dicky** looked quite pensive however - after all, he was getting a little old for all this excitement! Meanwhile, in a quiet corner of the school library, **Johnny** and **Davey** were carefully drawing diagrams and maps with their best crayons on the back of an old cigarette carton which they had carefully concealed from **Mr Kelly**. Early the next morning our heroes met near the tennis courts, all ready to escape. Three days without having to listen to **Mr Kelly**'s accounts of Canadian exploits in the Great War or how his MG is the fastest car in the whole of Wiltshire promised to be such fun! With thoughts of their big adventure in mind, our friends soon arrived in the beautiful mountains of Snowdonia.



Dicky, Johnny, Davey and Jimmy
all prepared to start their big adventure

'Gosh, I'm jolly hungry,' proclaimed **Jimmy**, 'let's get some tuck before we start.' Just like his friend **Fatty**, **Jimmy** was always a little peckish! Having filled their knapsacks with lots of sticky-buns and ginger beer, our intrepid 'Go-Doers' headed into the mountains, happily following **Johnny** and his map. 'Come on **Dicky**, do hurry up!' shouted **Johnny**, **Davey** and **Jimmy**, who were already at the top of Pen Llithfig y Wrach – which is Welsh for Great Big Mountain, probably. Once **Dicky** had finally caught up, they all sat down together, had lashings of ginger beer and agreed that although it had been 'a beastly hard climb' it had also been 'such super fun!' **Fatty** incidentally, had already fallen way behind…



Laden down with sticky buns and ginger beer
Johnny and Jimmy take a well earned rest

'Bagsie my turn with the map', **Davey** exclaimed. Everyone agreed that **Davey** was terribly clever with a map, everyone except **Johnny**, **Dicky** and **Jimmy** in fact, but no one said anything! (**Fatty** still hadn't caught up by the way). As our young rag-a-muffins pushed their way along the ridgeline towards the ominous bulk of Carnedd Llewelyn, huge, dark, threatening clouds began to release buckets of rain and our intrepid adventurers soon became very, very wet. All except **Johnny** that is, who was by now clad head to foot in so many layers of top quality Lowe Alpine thermal and waterproof clothing that he'd been rendered quite deaf to the encouraging cries of his damp pals far ahead in the mist. They'd initially mistaken him for **Fatty**, so large and rotund had his silhouette become! Only the thought of scrummy Lancashire hotpot and tasty fruit pudding kept our boys looking up and driving on – especially poor **Jimmy**, whose tummy was now feeling very empty indeed.



Having conquered the 'beastly hard climb' of Pen Llithhg y Wrach,
Davey enjoys the view

Our intrepid adventurers scampered over the rocks on the top of Foel Grach and eventually reached a little cottage-like hut. Soon our champions had their pots bubbling with tuck, the wonderful smell of which began wafting its way round the hut, under the door and across the mountain tops. 'I wonder where **Fatty** is?' said **Dicky**, prompted to thoughts of their portly friend by the lovely aroma. 'I wonder?' said **Johnny**, as he cooked his dinner on his top quality Trangia stove, 'It really is a mystery!' As they climbed into their sleeping bags, **Jimmy** said 'I'm jolly full now and exceedingly sleepy!' They all agreed that their little resting-place was hardly like a cottage at all really, but that it was none-the-less, a very comfortable little abode and they were all very happy.

Chapter 2 - 'Is anyone awake?' whispered **Jimmy**, repeating the question a little louder but still with no response. 'IS ANYONE AWAKE?' he shouted in final desperation. The rest of the party groaned and **Johnny**, as spokesman, responded 'We are now, you noisy buffoon!' Poor **Jimmy** had not slept well and promised himself that he would remember his sleeping mat next time. Poor **Johnny** had also not slept well, as he had foolishly decided to lay his top quality down-filled Rab sleeping bag between his two pals **Jimmy** and **Dicky** and the damp, stone wall of the little hut; he spent the entire night trying to fend off **Jimmy**'s knees and **Dicky's** substantial backside, while at the same time avoiding being transformed into a plaster-cast of the wall. Soon enough, however, breakfast was being consumed, flasks were being filled and sleeping bags stowed in rucksacks. 'It seems so jolly strange without **Fatty**,' noted **Davey**. 'Yes it is,' said **Dicky**. (The fresh air and hard walking would have been so good for him he mused, in his usual honest approach to life.)



'Come on Dicky. Do hurry up!'
Poor Dicky shows he really is getting too old for all this excitement
as he ascends Cwm Tryfan

Through the thick, damp mist the boys trudged south along the ridgeline taking in Carnedd Llewelyn, Carnedd Dafydd and Pen yr Ole Wen, before scrambling down into the warm and sunny valley below. Under the hard and unforgiving northern face of Tryfan, our heroes then took respite for a short time. **Jimmy** and **Johnny** thought **Fatty** would have been too scared to go into the mountains alone and decided they would walk along the Afon Llwgwag Valley floor in search of him. Three miles to the east was the little village of Capel Curig and – more specifically - Joe Brown's Café, which was hungry **Jim's** main objective really! **Dicky** and **Davey** decided they would stick with the planned route instead. It was jolly hot work, but **Dicky** and **Davey** soon ascended Cwm Tryfan and reached the spectacular ridgeline. An easy and very pleasant walk east over Y Foel Goch and Cefn y Capel soon had them reunited with **Johnny** and **Jimmy**.

Inside the warm café, with big mugs of hot chocolate and wedges of cake, they soon began to forget about all the hardships of the past two days and agreed that they would all go hill walking again very soon. Once back at school, our famous foursome went to find **Fatty**. 'Oh **Fatty**, you aren't half a lazy bones,' they all proclaimed. 'Watching telly, drinking ginger beer and eating pies will do you no good at all!'
The End

THE CAST:

Mr Hughes, Headmaster	**Brig Hughes**
Mr Kelly, Housemaster	**Maj Paul Kelly**
Davey	**Maj David Drinkall**
Dicky	**Capt Dick Gamble**
Johnny	**Capt John Russell**
Jimmy	**WO2 (YofS) 'Jim' James**
Fatty	**A Fictitious Character… almost!**

Footnote: Dear Readers take note… There's a Fatty in every Prep School – just make sure it isn't you!

FAREWELLS AND GREETINGS

The HQ recently bade sad farewells to **Maj Frank Running, Mr Baz Hames** and **Mrs Val Craig.** In turn, the warmest of greetings were extended to **Maj Tony Shaw** (who joins the TA Staff to 'do a real soldier's job' at long last), **SSgt** 'Dek' **Painter** (who joins the ND gang on a free transfer from 39 Sig Regt (V)), **Mrs Sarah Pegler** (who joins the Tupperware club in the Registry) and **Miss Kate Westlake** (who probably joins us because the alternative of having to say 'Do you want fries with that Sir' for a living was just too awful to contemplate).

CONGRATULATIONS

Sincerest congratulations to **Capt (Retd) Ian Brownlee**, who can now call himself **Maj Brownlee** – but only at weekends. Oh yes, **Ian Brownlee** – who was Kitchener's heliograph operator at Omdurman – is still the mild mannered, grey-suited SO3 ND of old during the week, but on one Saturday of every month, he slips into a filing cabinet, spins himself around like Wonder Woman and reappears as the green-suited, dagger-badged superhero of old ladies' dreams, **Maj** 'No more making the coffee' **Brownlee** of the TA Staff! Congratulations also to similarly recently promoted **Maj Dave Drinkall**, now the most overpaid part-time Army Officer, part-time used car salesman in the Corps. **Dave** intends to get to the bottom of another packet of corn flakes next week, where he hopes to find a plastic toy and a badge saying, 'I'm in the Kelloggs Klub.'

STILL LOOKING UP AND DRIVING ON TO THE MILLENNIUM

By the time this particular edition of *The Wire* has been published, Ex Autumn Belle 1 - the FTX aimed at preparing the Brigade for its deployment over the Millennium - will have happened and preparations will be well under way towards Y2K itself. For further information on the involvement of 2 (NC) Sig Bde on Op Surety, please contact **Capt John Russell** on (9) 4382 4343.

HEADQUARTERS
11 SIGNAL BRIGADE

It might be apparent to the more observant *Wire* reader that it has become a little more difficult of late to find members of the Headquarters in their offices. The cynics amongst you might put this down to the recent rationalisation of our office space. An event achieved with such rapidity that we are still waiting for the change of telephone numbers to catch up! However, the reality is that many of the Headquarters Staff are deployed to or involved in the extra work that has come with the appointment of Comd 11 Sig Bde, as Comd pan-Balkans CIS Strategy. **Brig Cook** was last seen boarding a flight to Skopje whispering something about 'more air miles' to his driver.

DELIVERING THE PJHQ PAN-BALKANS CIS STRATEGY

The need for the rapid commercialisation and/or contractorisation of CIS support in both Kosovo and Bosnia will be known and appreciated by many. The recommendation that the Commander and elements of Headquarters 11 Sig Bde deploy in November this year to provide the expertise currently provided by both HQ 1 Sig Bde and HQ MND(SW) led to a period of recce and preparation. The SO2 Log, **Maj Rab Young,** managed a quick visit to ensure that the there were no logistic problems for the team; shortest deployment recce in history, two evening meals and a promise to return (and no medal of course!) Currently 50% of the Headquarters Ops staff, SO2 Ops CIS-**Maj Jim Foulkes**, SO3 Ops CIS-**Flt Lt Farid Khan** and our SO3 CEC-**Capt John Hiorns** are now deployed to theatre for what will be an interesting and busy period. Back in Shropshire we look forward to their return. Particularly, SO3 COMSEC-**Capt Jim Sykes**, who now wilts under his extra work load. What was that school exam maths problem, 'If it takes five men six months to plan an Exercise, then it takes one man…'. When is Ex Able Condor 2000?

EXERCISE STAFF SAUNTER - *a report by Maj Jean Payne TD*

Ex Staff Saunter is the annual Brigade HQ 'practical map reading exercise'. Usually organised to take place in an upland area of UK on a weekend during the summer months, participants are expected to camp overnight, do their own catering and walk up to 15 miles a day. A consequence of these rigorous requirements is that participation in the Exercise is usually limited to the TA element of the HQ. Add an appalling weather forecast of heavy rain and gale-force winds and Ex Staff Saunter '99 was no exception to the norm with excuses coming thick and fast (broken toe, painting the house, working on my hand-over notes etc etc). On the Friday evening the gallant band of navigators (all two of us, namely **Maj Jean Payne** and **Maj Catriona Millar** gathered at the campsite in Edale prior to ensuring full hydration at the local hostel. Saturday dawned windy but still dry and after an excellent breakfast produced by the hired help, **Maj (Retd) Andy Payne**, the Exercise participants departed on the day's chosen walk around the 'Edale Skyline'. The walk gave ample opportunities to practice our map and compass work, at one point narrowly avoiding heading off into the peat bogs of Kinder Scout, saved by the realisation that the rapidly disappearing fell runners were on the path that we should be on. Like all well trained soldiers, by avoiding all the tops of the hills our route carefully kept us from being sky-lined, this also had the additional benefit

of keeping us from being blown away by the rapidly increasing wind. By Sunday morning the promised rain arrived and it was time to implement Plan B, instead of further navigation on Kinder Scout, it was a chance to practice underground route choice, with the chosen vehicle being a boat. Speedwell Caverns were visited and we learnt all manner of useful information about lead mining and the cave systems of the Peak District, whilst travelling along the passages of a long abandoned Lead mine. After a short visit to Castleton we dispersed to home locations. Once again Ex Staff Saunter proved to be an enjoyable Exercise.

HAIL AND FAREWELL

The turnover of staff has continued with the arrival of four new majors and a chief clerk. August saw the departure of our DCOS, **Maj Mike Wise** who did not just leave the Headquarters but the Corps and Army as well. I give no credence to the rumour that the reason he gave for leaving is the boredom due to the short hours and numerous golfing days; it is amazing the way these rumours start. He leaves us for civilian life and will be missed for, amongst other things, his professionalism, his wide ranging abilities, his sense of humour and helpfulness. We wish him and Rebecca all the best in their new life and much happiness. His replacement **Maj Steve Johns** is now firmly in the chair. We wish him and **Nicole** an enjoyable tour. To **Maj Jim Foulkes**, who is our new SO2 Ops/CIS we offer our welcome; he had only been here five weeks when the Commander despatched him to Pristina; see you in six months **Jim**! We also hope that he and **Mandy** also enjoy their tour with us, and for the most part it remains accompanied.

We have also said our farewells to our COS, **Maj Paul Hudson** who has left us for Blandford and HQ R Signals. **Paul**'s capacity for working long hours is almost legendary, so we hope Blandford can cope! We hope both him and **Beth** have an enjoyable tour in Blandford and a return to normal family life! His replacement is **Maj Dick Sparshatt** and we welcome both him and **Louise** to Shropshire. Our SO1(V) **Lt Col Steve Potter** TD having decided he has learnt all that was on offer in the Headquarters in the six months he has been with us, has left to command 35 Sig Regt (V). There is no truth in the scurrilous remark that he has had more telephone calls from this Headquarters since taking Command than he ever did as SO1. But there is a more positive rumour that he is coming back to finish his staff tour when his tour in Command finishes! You all know how these rumours have a habit of coming true! We wish him a successful and prosperous Command. His replacement is **Lt Col Ian Puddy** who stays with the Headquarters on promotion

We have also said farewell to our Chief Clerk, **WO2 Kath Fenlon** AGC, who leaves us on retirement. Apart from her helpfulness, professionalism and 'Bon Vie', 'Q' will be remembered for her willingness to write wire notes and her request for a 'Jimmy' as a leaving present. Our new Chief Clerk, **WO2 Shaun Flannery**, joins us from 15 Regiment Royal Logistic Corps on its closure; 'same station different barracks'.



(L-R): Maj Mike Wise, Mrs Angie Robinson, Lt Col Chris Wakerley, Mr Brian Chambers, Brig Cook, Maj Catriona Millar and Lt Col Mike Lithgow

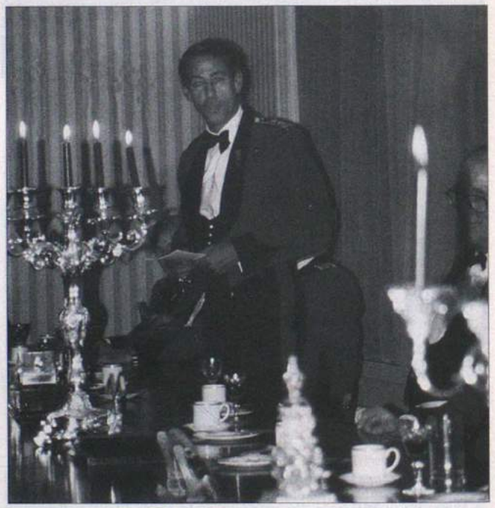
INVESTORS IN PEOPLE ACCREDITATION

The presentation of IIP plaques, flags and certificates in recognition of the Headquarters, 2 and 30 Signal Regiments achieving the Investors in People standard took place on Friday 22 October. The presentation was made by **Mrs Angie Robinson**, Chief Executive of the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce who expressed how delighted she was with our achievement, particularly in light of the heavy operational commitment throughout the Brigade during the assessment process. The presentation was followed by a lunch for the Headquarters military and civilian staff in the Officers Mess.

BRIGADE STUDY DAY 23 OCTOBER 1999

Friday the 22 October 1999 saw the Commander, hosting an informal fork supper in the Donnington Officers Mess for early arrivals. The theme for the weekend was **'Wherefore 11 Signal Brigade'** and in all some 120 officers, warrant officers and guest speakers attended. Interesting and informative presentations were given by the home team starting with our COS, **Maj Dick Sparshatt** , 'The Brigade in Barracks' and the COs of 2 and 30 Sig Regts, **Lt Col Chris Wakerley** MBE and **Lt Col Mike Lithgow** MBE 'The Brigade on Operations'. The final session of the morning was a very full presentation on 'TA Mobilisation' by CO 34 Sig Regt (V), **Lt Col David Hargreaves**. It was so full it led to accusations of stealing thunder (!) from our first guest speaker of the afternoon **Lt Gen Sir John Deverell** KCB OBE, who as DCinC in IGTA, gave a talk on 'The Utility of the TA'. Further presentations were given by **Brig James Shaw MBE**, ACOS G6 HQ LAND, and **Col Paul Acda**, Col TA R Signals and on 'The View from Land Command' and 'The TA'. **Brig David Lynam** MBE, DEC(CC&II), (quote a catchy little unquote!) turned what could have been a very dry subject, 'The Equipment Programme' into an attention grabbing session.

After a quick change into Mess kit the penultimate event of the evening was a Keynote address 'The Corps Vision', given with his normal panache, by the SOinC(A). From this we were led by a Gurkha piper, courtesy 30 Sig Regt, to a dinner, that had been organised by our DCOS, **Maj Steve Johns** and our SO2 Log, **Maj Rab Young**, and which proved an excellent reward for our labours!



The Commander closes the day

TRAINING

11 SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO's FAREWELL

Just about the last duty for the outgoing CO, **Lt Col Terry Canham**, was to start the final Commanders Run of the year which took place on Thursday 30 September 1999. The CO addressed the Regiment beforehand and awarded Regimental Sports Colours to **Sigs Greenhalgh** and **Lake** for Athletics, and **Sig Muir** for Swimming. He was then presented with a gift from the Junior Ranks by the youngest member of the Regiment, **Sig Smart** of Kohima Tp. She was to celebrate her 17th birthday the following day. The Regiment then formed a Guard of Honour for the CO, who was pulled along in the Regimental Boat, from RHQ to the race start area on the Craddock Playing Fields. This was a fitting occasion to say farewell to the CO who has been a strong supporter of the Commanders Run. He has been a leading light in the promotion of sport within the Garrison and his 'Sport for All' initiative has lit the 'Blue Touch Paper' for many individuals. The Corps sports teams will be reaping the benefits for many years to come. The Regiment thanks the CO for his dedication to duty throughout his tour and wish both him and **Frances** a more relaxing tour at SHAPE in Belgium.



Lt Col T. W. Canham receiving his farewell gift from the Junior Ranks of 11 Sig Regt from Sig Frances Smart

THE INTER-SQUADRON CROSS-COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS

This particular Commander's Run also doubled as the Harrogate Cup, Inter Squadron Cross Country Championships. The first 50 finishers from each Squadron would score towards the overall result. The running conditions were perfect for the 650 or so that lined up at the start. The CO started the race with the drop of a flag and only just escaped being run down by the mass of runners hoping for a good start. The competitors completed 15 laps of the Craddock and headed up the road towards Engineers Corner. The Permanent Staff were well represented in the leading pack, with **Maj Brown** (2IC), **WO2 (SSM) Thomas** (2 Sqn) and **Sgt Newman** (QM Dept). After three miles a group of three runners from 3 Sqn had forged clear and they managed to keep that advantage until the finish. In the last half mile the eventual winner, **Cpl Brown** (no relation to the 2IC), went clear to win by five seconds. The battle for Second place went right to the line when **Sig Ratna** managed to beat **Cpl Templeman** by one second. 3 Sqn went on to become the Inter Squadron Champions. The Runners Up were 2 Sqn followed closely by 1 Sqn. The race was a thrilling event, with the first 20 runners finishing within two minutes of the winner, the first 100 within four minutes. The Commanders Run is now mothballed for the winter and will be run again next March. Missing it already!!

1 SQUADRON - EXERCISE RAGING RHINO III

Ex Raging Rhino is a 1 Sqn Exercise for Phase 2 soldiers undergoing training at RSS. The aim of the Exercise is to instruct and reinforce basic soldiering skills and admin in the field. After the first timing amendment, the dogs of war arrived on area X. **SSgt** 'Beirut' **Butler** as IC Exercise split the troops into two groups. After some quick scoff and a map reading refresher it was out on the ground for a night navigation exercise. Pre-arranged timings were met by all but one section and on return some of the DS were heard to mutter something about 'officers, maps and geographical embarrassment' (sorry Ma'am). **Sgt** 'Twiggie' **Twigg** then dazzled the trainees with a noise and lights demo. Then off to bed for a quick five hour sleep unless you were the 2IC who allegedly was in bed for 2130hrs.

The next day took the form of a round robin with: Unarmed Combat, Section Attacks, Basha Building, Duties of a sentry and in spite of the bad (turning worse) weather, **Sgt** 'On ER ER Guard' **Copley** managed to keep their attention and enthusiasm with a little bayonet drill. Once this was finished it was kit on and into the harbour area that had been kindly organised by **Cpl** 'Mine's OK' **Gillman**. The position (appropriately named The Somme after the afternoon's rain) provided the setting for some strong character building. Shell scrapes looked like wading pools and bashas provided little respite from the horizontal rain. A change of socks, a warm meal, patrol orders and it was off for the tac night navigation to hone their skills. **Cpl** 'Compo' **Compton** is to be congratulated for managing to navigate between troop shelters on Warminster Ranges and returning his section less soaked than the others. Back in the harbour for night routine where the DS dispelled the rumours that sleeping in your wet kit 'ready for guard' was actually a good idea. The night passed without event apart from the odd soldier who needed slightly more encouragement to leave the comfort of their maggot for a turn on guard and the occasional interruption from **Cpl** 'AARRGGHH snakes' **Askin**.

The next day began at 0600hrs with a nice cup of tea brought round by the newly named **SSgt** 'Angry' **Butler**, except that he had forgotten the tea. Harbour routine continued with cooking, washing, weapon cleaning etc until they were crashed out by **SSgt** 'Very Angry' **Butler** for the navigation competition. Inspired by his encouragement, coerced by his threats (motivated by his promise of beer) the sections set off for the first leg of the competition. A good effort was made by all and in spite of (thanks to) the wettest weekend to date, many good lessons were learned.

2 SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj L . V. Tomkins**
Sqn SSM **WO2(SSM) Thomas**

EXERCISE CATTERICK CRUSADE

80 members of 2 Sq deployed to Salisbury Plain for a weekend of adventure and camping, under the label of Ex Catterick Crusade. The willing volunteers had been suspicious of the motives for the weekend jaunt, when they started to receive instructions in the art of packing a Bergen, navigation skills, ORP cooking, movement signals and how to put up a basha, by the Squadron cadre and section commanders during the build-up week. Their fears were finally realised as they were given a warning order on Wednesday evening culminating in orders on Friday before they deployed, given by **SSgt** 'Fran' **Graham** and **SSgt** 'Gaz' **Cole**.

The Section Commanders were a mixture of Tele Op (TG) and Tele Op (Sys) Upgraders who volunteered to give up their valuable free time to imbue the sections with the added bonus of their depth of knowledge and experience. The Squadron is indebted to their foresight and generosity. The two platoons (one from Iron Tp and one from Beaufighter Tp) were set down at the drop off point and had to make their way to the platoon harbour area. Beaufighter Tp managed to navigate with style and accuracy, however, Iron Tp made a few 'planned' diversions to admire the local flora and fauna. Eventually, both platoons were dug into their positions ready to deploy patrols during the hours of darkness. The patrols were successful, some even resulting in snap ambushes…

Maj 'Husky Voice' **Tomkins** deployed into the field at 0330hrs with the feeble excuse that she had had to preside as PMC at the COs dining-out. Her hip flask of port and marzipan petit fours went down extremely well - thanks Colonel! Saturday morning started with the traditional dawn attack by the enemy, masquerading as 2 Sqn cadre and assorted trainee SATTs. Bug-out skills were somewhat jaded, but **WO2 (SSM) Thomas** was floored by the mast guy ropes, before he managed to launch a smoke grenade into **LCpl Yeomans'** shell scrape.

The emphasis for the rest of the day was on teaching military skills to the trainees, on a round robin style circuit. All trainees and Lance Corporals alike hailed **SSgt** 'Gaz' **Cole**'s Defence of a Communications Site stand as very informative and useful. **Sgt** 'Bob' **Garlick**'s survival stand was popular to the non-squeamish, but not for **Sig Smith 066,** who turned white then green. **Sgt** 'Bob' **Garlick** would like to know if it was **Sig Newton** who took one of the rabbit's tails as a momento, as she certainly relished the gutting? The rumour concerning the black bag full of dead rabbits in the cleaner's cupboard, is true, but details will not be released to the press! **SSgt** 'Fran' **Graham** led the mine awareness stand and received avid attention from all trainees - aware that very soon they may be posted to a unit on tour in Bosnia, Croatia or Kosovo. **WO2 (SSM) Thomas** is to be congratulated for crawling through the mud 71 times to demonstrate how to throw a grenade, with **Sig** 'SAS' **Fitten** ably assisting behind the scenes (catching the grenades). **Cpl** 'Alfie' **Alford**'s recognition stand highlighted the need for those with eyesight problems to bring their glasses on exercise! Unarmed combat caused a few bruises for the 'victims' who then got their own back during the skits.

There was light at the end of the tunnel, at the end of the day there was the evening barbecue and skits. Fortunately these were held under canvas during the downpour that occured after setting up new basha sites. **LCpl Yeomans** is to be congratulated on persuading his section to strip to 'Mess-Tin Order' whilst remaining fully clothed himself. **Maj** 'Husky Voice' **Tomkins** thoroughly enjoyed inspecting the section and a special mention must go to **Sig Rich** for his excellent turnout on parade! **Sig Smith** was volunteered by his section to be the only one in 'Mess Tin Order' to be inspected by the OC. **Cpl Johnson**'s section performed an amusing take-off of Blind Date with three fine actors answering questions by the OC. The award for the best skit goes to **LCpl Olver**'s section with their take-off of **SSgt** 'Gaz' **Cole** and **Maj** 'Husky Voice' **Tomkins. Sig Norton** must ensure that he never goes in front of his Tp SSgt or OC on orders….. **WO2 (SSM) Thomas** had wanted to act out the White Helmets with coat hangers as handlebars for the cadre skit. This idea was squashed by the cadre and instead the OC and the SSM bravely performed the 'Day in the Life of ….' sketch, involving a poncho, cold baked beans and a bucket of cold water. Sunday was devoted to Command Tasks where the Geordies of section 5, **Sig Weallan** and **Sig Thomson,** managed to make themselves understood and **Sig Burke-Smith** proved to be a capable leader. The scores at the end of the weekend for the best section went to **LCpl Yeomans** and section 6 and the most improved trainee to **Sig Allan,** narrowly beating **Sig Fielding.**

TRIANGULAR CONFERENCE 'GOES TO THE DOGS'

The excellent hosting by ATR Bassingbourn prompted the need for 11 Sig Regt to prove their social skills. To this end **Maj** 'Lou' **Tomkins** instructed **Mr Elliott** to arrange 'A Night at the Dogs'. The night began in true officer and senior style in that most were late, and those who were not passed the time in their respective Messes. **Maj** 'Johnny' **Norris** was lucky to make it at all in his death trap, and apparently was photographed on numerous occasions along the way. He finally arrived and the group set off all virgins in Dog gambling ways. **Capt** 'Outdoor man' **Kenyon** was convinced that being the owner of two dogs himself automatically qualified him to judge the winners. As a result **SSM** 'Racing Snake' **Thomas** decided to bet on whatever **Capt Kenyon** did not – that decision proved to cost him at least £3.50! The novice group added insult to injury when **Capt** 'Boggy' **McAnulty** decided that the hostess was a Kiwi, only to find out that she was in fact an Essex girl, so much for accent detection, but she is Northern Irish!! **Maj** 'Johnny' **Norris** didn't help by

referring to the dogs continually as horses, nor did **SSM Harriott** when he stood up and dramatically announced 'There goes my mortgage' as his dog was losing, luckily **Major** 'thunderbird' **Drummond** saved him from the brink of disaster. **Mr Elliott** and **Maj** 'Lou' **Tomkins** proved to be the 'dark horses' of the evening whilst **SSM Thomas** proved to be the old 'nag', even after **Mr Elliott** advised that he bet on the hare. An excellent night was had by all, so it is now over to you Arborfield.

REGIMENTAL SPORTSMAN'S DINNER

Due to a strange amnesia phenomenon following the above event people experienced symptoms of sore heads, empty wallets and noise sensitivity. For that reason, this article is for the benefit of all those individuals who attended the Regimental Sportsman's Dinner as much as for those who did not attend. On the 15 September 1999 the inaugural 11 Sig Regt Sportsman's (any excuse for a party) Dinner was held in the function room of the Semaphore Arms. All food and drinks were free (which is always a bonus), as well as a target indicator that the event was extremely well organised by **WO1** 'Scouse' **Sartorius**. The food was prepared by our illustrious cookhouse staff who shocked us all by managing to prepare food which was hot, edible and even more surprisingly it wasn't pie and chips! In attendance were a host of Army, Corps and Regimental sportsmen and women including the Army drinking team elite in its field and other hangers on. There were also personalities from the regiment including, **Lt Col Canham, Maj Brown** himself an active sportsman and **WO1 (RSM) Stonier**. The dinner was held in order to acknowledge the sporting achievements of the Regiment's sportsmen and women after a very successful year of sporting endeavour. The main achievements for this year include:

ATHLETICS (Regimental Forrest Gumps)	Runners up Army Inter Unit Championships 5 Div Champions Morrison Cup Champions Highland Games winners of the team relay
BADMINTON (What can we say?)	3/5 Div Championship winners Army Championship winners
CRICKET (A bloke with big hands waiting for a tickle down the leg side)	3/5 Div Cricket Knockout Champions 3/5 Div League Cup Champions
HOCKEY (Umbrellas and white cricket balls)	Army Inter Unit Champions 3 Div Winter League winners
FENCING (Legal version)	Army Fencing Championships Aldershot: Inter Corp 3 man Team A – 3rd ,Team B - 3rd Inter Unit 3 man Team A – 2nd, Team B – 5t
BIATHLON (Blokes and gals good at two things)	5 Div Inter Unit Team Champions
TRIATHLON (As above but add one)	South West Modern Triathlon Masters Men and Open Team Winners Mens' National Open Champions
SWIMMING (Lycra clad Chicks, and less clad men)	Womens Army Inter Unit Swimming Championships
WATER POLO (You can lead a horse to water but you can't make it play polo)	Army Inter Unit Finals Runners Up
VOLLEYBALL (A sport for people who can't catch)	Div Womens' Champions Army Womens' Champions

These achievements and many more were highlighted in an address given by the CO, which also included specific individuals who excelled in their chosen sports. The speech culminated in the presentation of Regimental sporting colours and the awards for sportsman and sportswoman of the year. The Sportsman was **Sig Dyson** who represented the Corps and Regiment at cricket, played Regimental rugby and was a member of the team that won the British National Open Triathlon Championships. The Sportswoman was **Sig Davies** who represented the Army at rugby and athletics and was also a key member of the winning female Lanyard Trophy Team, unfortunately she was posted before we could get a photo. After the prize giving all those in attendance celebrated the Regiments sporting successes into the early hours, taking advantage of all the free lemonade! **Sig Dyson** was later taken ill with suspected Brasso poisoning after consuming copious amounts of the said lemonade from his sportsman of the year cup.



Sig Dyson 3 Sqn holding the Sportsman of the Year Cup

BRAEMAR GAMES 1999 - *by Cpl Karl Hannah*

After a very successful athletics season for 11 Sig Regt, there was only one thing left to do - to accept the challenge and go to the Royal Highland (Braemar) Games held annually in Scotland on the first Saturday in September, and win. Once at Braemar we found our accommodation, which we were to share with 17 Port and Maritime, RLC. Although only a scouts hut we found it to be a home from home. With no time to waste the sprint team donned their spikes and were off to check out the track. Not a tartan track in sight but a 300yard circular grass track with a grand and imposing arena lay before us.

The competition was an invitation medley relay for service units, consisting of a 150yd, two 300yds, and finishing with a 150yd sprint. The team was decided and training began. Apparently it was only a light session followed by a thorough warm down taken by ninja **WO2 SSM** ' I'll make you feel pain' **Pete Tasker.** On the Friday night in true soldier pre-event fashion we decided to see what the village had to offer, unfortunately there are photographs circulating to prove it. **WO2 Tasker** retired early, (he must have been worn out after beasting us!) and left the responsibility of care with **Cpl Karl** 'enjoy it' **Hannah**, who thought it necessary that we conduct a human relations exercise at the local disco before making it back to the accommodation.

The day of the big event arrived and all four sprinters were force fed breakfast cereal and toast ready for the big event. We qualified with a stylish 50yd lead and **Cpl Brett** 'Taz' **Spruce** was heard to say, 'That was easy and I only ran at 80%.' The afternoon brought the final with the stadium filled to its full capacity with 25,000 spectators. The patron of the games arrived and was none other than **Her Majesty the Queen**.

Adrenalin was pumping and nerves were high as the importance of the event came to light, our main opposition was a team from the RAF so we remained quietly confident. With the crack of the starting pistol, **Sig** 'Clint' **Martin** bolted like a startled rabbit and managed to pull away from the others before handing over to **Sig** 'Mike' **Lake**. A superb performance by **Lake** ensured a continuing lead before handing over to **Cpl Brett Spruce** who decided to give 100% this time. **Sig** 'Sid' **Siddell** then ran the final 150yds to a tremendous victory with an at least 100yd? lead over second place. Luckily the fabulous four had enough energy left for a lap of honour. The crowd went wild, especially their new found female fans. If it was good enough for the USA sprint team it was good enough for the Regiment, and it almost turned **Sig** 'Romeo' **Lake** into a pin up! The highlight of the day for **Sig Lake** the youngest member of the team was presented the Braemar shield by **Her Majesty the Queen** and **Prince Philip**. The shield itself dates back for many years and has only ever been won by the Corps on two other occasions. 11 Sig Regt now has made claim to it and with the Regiment's current record and determination to win, it is hoped that we will retain it next year.



Sig Mike Lake receiving the Invitation Relay Trophy
from Her Majesty the Queen
at the Royal Highland Games in Braemar

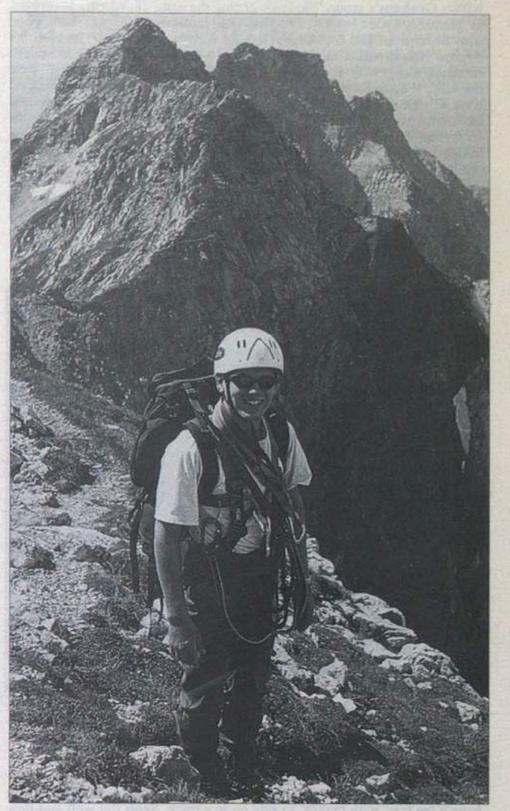
EXERCISE KLETTERSTEIG GRIDIRON 6–22 SEPTEMBER

Ex Kletttersteig Gridiron started off as an office escape plan for **Maj Graham McNeill** and before the Exercise was approved he had to promise to take 15 individuals with him to take in the sounds and sights of Bavaria and the Tyrol. **Capt David Drinkall** and **SSgt Steve Crawford** were his first two victims whom he persuaded to be instructors. The aim was to have three walking parties to complete as many klettersteigs, normally high ridge walking/scrambling paths which have plenty of protection secured to the mountain, in four locations and introduce soldiers to the alpine mountain hut system. At Blandford it is not that simple to find twelve volunteers who had the appropriate gap in their training programme to participate in the Exercise. So the various Troops worked well to provide a window of opportunity for 11 unsuspecting trainees and one volunteer, **Cpl** 'JR' **Whitmey** from the Tech Workshops who was into this mountaineering lark. To complete the team **Sgt Andy Lockie** or 'Admin Andy' who did a terrific job serving us tea and biscuits in bed first thing throughout the Exercise. I told them that technicians were useful for some things.

6 September - The escape from Blandford Camp did not start well, **Sig** 'Ski' **Korzeniewski** managed to fail his driving test that morning and faced the prospect of having to stay until he passed. Lucky for him that we were prepared to smuggle him out of camp at 1600hrs and finally the Exercise got under way.

7 September - The journey to BACB, Sonthofen was uneventful. Here we had arranged to collect vital climbing equipment which had not arrived. However, BACB did arrange an issue of their equipment which allowed us to travel on to Oberstdorf and set up camp ready for the next day. **Sigs Richie Lambert**, **Chris Lowe, Tony Clark** and **Jon Hodson** took quite some time to figure out how to erect an 8-man conquest tent. That effort proved to be easier than trying to cook their evening meal which resembled something I wouldn't feed the dog.

8 September - At last the first day climbing in the Alps. The Hindelanger klettersteig was the day's aim. All three groups decided that the cable car to the summit of the Nebelhorn was the only way to travel. **Graham, Sig Tony Clark, Sig** 'Ski' **Korzeniewski, Sig Tim Dennant** and **Sig Will Browning** started the day at the summit restaurant with 'kaffee and kuchen' taking in the clear views in brilliant sunshine. Once the sun block was applied it was time to make our way onto the klettersteig which was a short walk from the restaurant. **David** and his group, **Sig Paul Jones, Sig Andy Jordan-White, Sig Dennis Long** and **Chris Lowe** hit the rush hour traffic jam at the bottom of the first ladder which marks the start of the klettersteig, time to sit around and start to get nervous. Some individuals, like **Tim**, hid their nervousness by wearing dark sunglasses and making as much body contact with the rock as humanly possible. After a few cuts, scrapes and bruises a number of individuals decided that climbing properly might be a big help. There were no refusals at any point along the klettersteig, which was a surprise, and all three groups met up at the cable car station.



Sig Ski Korzeniewski at the end of the Hindelanger Klettersteig

At the Alpsee Station everyone volunteered to try the 'berg rollers', large adult sized scooters with industrial quality brakes, down to the valley bottom cable car station. All were warned to watch their speed at which **Steve, Andy** and **Paul** raced off. Half way down **Andy** had met a car coming up and had promptly crashed into the safety barrier breaking his collarbone, **Graham** had a blow-out in his rear wheel and had to walk most of the way down. The rest managed to make it down safely and without incident. That evening's entertainment was provided by Dennis at the indoor kartbahn. The electric go-karts easily reached 50kph and **Dennis** had to be reminded on numerous occasions that he was not in a dodgem, he was subsequently banned by the owner who was seen in tears when inspecting his wrecked go-kart.

9 September - It was a cold night and we were greeted with a superb weather to start our first two day walk. Unfortunately **Andy** had to remain at base camp with 'Admin Andy' and started practicing tasks single handed. Again it was up the cable car, this time the Kanzelwandbahn, and **Steve**'s group **Sig Richie Lambert, Sig Jon Hodson, Sig Scott Moran** and **Cpl** 'JR' **Whitmey** stopped at the restaurant for 'kaffee and kuchen'. Apparently this was to revive **Jon** who had decided that maybe next time he will walk up and down the mountains as he did not feel terribly well when the cable car moved over any of the pylons. After three hours walking the start of the Mindelheimer Klettersteig loomed. **Steve**'s group were leading and **Jon** had great problems persuading his hands to let go and grab the next rung up on the overhanging ladder. **Paul,** in **David**'s, group decided that he couldn't go up or down until offered some gentle encouragement by **David,** the exact words were never discovered, but who cares they worked. **Graham's** group made it to the Mindelheim hut first at 1800hrs and made the arrangements for that evening. During dinner there was a definite buzz of excitement as stories were told and re-told with ever increasing exaggeration. **Tony** did take great care to point out that this living in mountain huts is much better than camping and cooking for ones self in the valleys. As it was an early start everyone had crashed out by 8 o'clock.

10 September - An early breakfast and on our way again in brilliant sunshine again. **Dennis** was trying to persuade **David** that he was going

the wrong way, luckily the others in the group saw **Steve** venture off with his group following the sign for the Widderstein 2,500m, our next target. **Dennis** volunteered for more practice on map reading! On today's walk, within **Graham**'s group 'Ski' was getting the hang of ordering skiwasser, he gradually spoke louder in English until understood by the waiter, good man to have around for Anglo/German relations. From the Widderstein Alpine Hut it was a mad dash up the Widderstein 2,500m in superb sunshine along with about 300 Germans and Austrians whom all chose the same time to ascend the mountain. **Tim** was miffed that there was no book to sign at the top, the rest of us only wanted a space to sit down and have lunch before the long trek down into Baad only 1,600m below us. Everyone met up at the restaurant closest to the car park consuming kaffee and kuchen. 'JR' has decided to start a mountaineer's guide book on 'kaffee and kuchen' in the Northern Limestone Alps.

11 September - The first travel day and a move to Seefeld via the American PX in Garmisch-Partenkirchen for those essential items to keep the team running well. 'Admin Andy' was getting to grips with this shopping lark although there were a number of items which none of us had ever heard of or seen before. He was made to sample any strange purchases before anyone in the walking groups was sacrificed.

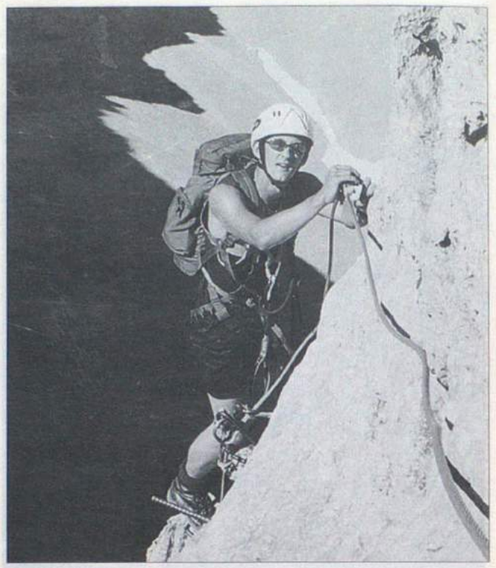


At Seefeld Camp site
(L-R): Sig Andy Jordan-White, Sig Scott Moran, Sig Paul Jones, Sig Jon Hodson, Sig Chris Lowe enjoying the expedition scoff!

A quick stop at Leutasch to introduce everyone to a sommer roddelbahn proved good fun. It is similar to a bobbahn except that you have a tea tray, with brakes, to ride on in a track. **Scott** did well and flew out of the track at the first bend, he then went around asking what 'bremsen' meant on the signs prior to the bend, (Brake!). **Andy** was feeling brave by this stage and managed a couple of runs without further injury. There were a couple more who did not understand what was written on the track-side notices.

12 September - No need to say but the sun was out yet again, and out came the sun-block. A straight forward walk which **Jon** would enjoy as it started with a funicular train ride up the mountain but I forgot to tell him about the cable car from the Rossehutte to the Seefelderjoch. By this stage all the groups were starting to really enjoy the kaffee and kuchen phase prior to any physical exercise. Steve's group also noted that you had more weight to carry and in future decided that 'kaffee and kuchen' was alright at the end of the day. The Frieyungs Hohenweg klettersteig proved to be relatively straight forward except for the detour to the Kuhlochspitze 2,300m which required sure footedness up some very loose scree. The Solsteinhaus was reached by all the groups in plenty of time which allowed all the admin to be sorted out for the next day. **Steve**'s group were all resting in the prone position when the other groups arrived and muttered something about 'kaffee and kuchen'.

13 September - It would take three hours hard walking to reach the start of the Innsbrucker Klettersteig which is marked by the Frau Hitt. **Tony** by this time was getting to grips with the map reading and was doing a good job of reading what was written on the signposts and following their advice, smart lad will go far. **Steve** led his group up the first climb on the klettersteig which looked relatively easy. However, **Jon** was still having problems making his hands let go and grab the rung above on the ladders especially the part which changed direction and went round a corner giving you a perfect view of the 1,500m drop onto the scree field below. Luckily **Steve** had thought ahead and loaned **Jon** the use of his bicycle clips which greatly improved 'JR's' sense of humour who was bringing up the rear. **Paul** also needed some of **David**'s kind thoughtful words to ensure that he made it up the first climb. The first part of the klettersteig took 1.5 hrs and at least another four hours to complete the entire route. To ensure that we met the last cable car down to the valley the route was cut short. The tired faces at the restaurant confirmed that the correct decision had been made. **Chris** was also starting to have problems gripping the rock properly due to strained tendons in his left arm.



Sig Tim Dennant on the Innsbrucher Klettersteig

14 September - Time to move on again, this time to Kufstein for a three day expedition in the Wilder Kaiser.

15 September - No surprises this morning, the sun came up again and no clouds in the sky. Out came the sun block and dark sunglasses. The Sheffeurer start point was the Wilder Kaiser chair-lift which caused a number of problems for some individuals. **Richie** tried to figure out how to carry his walking poles and rucksack whilst trying to plant his bottom on the chair lift, a very interesting sight. One armed **Andy** couldn't close the safety gate as it was on the wrong side for his good arm to operate, he did look rather white by the time he reached the top. 'JR' was the old hand at most of the activities and definitely led the way to the start of the Sheffeurer north face and the klettersteig. The climbing was easy but 800m of constant up began to wear after two hours. What goes up must come down followed by a rather long walk to the Grutten hut.

16 September - The Ellmauer Halt 2,300m summit was 2.5hrs from the mountain hut and the first morning that the sun was not around to greet us, but that did not last long. The mist very quickly burnt off and out came the sun block. **Dennis** was getting better at sign reading and **David**'s group started off in the correct direction. The other groups all had appointed map readers who appeared to just follow **Dennis**, dangerous! It wasn't long before we had to stop and don all our kit for the climb up the klettersteig. 'JR' had an interesting problem not far from the summit as to which route to take, up the gorge or along the open face with plenty of drop. **Steve** could rely on 'JR' to choose the long drop option and out came the bicycle clips again. As a direct result **Graham's** group who were following decided that the gorge would be far more interesting and cleaner. Once on the top all the Austrians seemed to be going back down the same way they had come up, what was wrong with the route along the ridge and down to the opposite valley? Well it did not take long to find out the answer, the klettersteig was seriously harder with limited protection. Tim by this time was gaining in confidence and preferred to lead **Graham**'s group. His one handed swinging rock moves really impressed everyone especially **Tim** when on one occasion it was pointed out afterwards that he had failed to clip into the protection. The groups didn't make the Stripsenjochhaus until late to find the Austrian Army on manoeuvres and using the mountain hut as a base. Their mountain troops get issued with some very nice equipment, none of it went missing, honest!

17 September - The climb to the Goring Halt klettersteig was relatively simple due mainly to the mist which prevented everyone from seeing exactly how high they were. That lasted until 1100hrs, by which time the sun had burnt off any mist. By comparison this was the easiest climb in the Wilder Kaiser and all groups quickly reach the assigned restaurant for 'kaffee and kuchen'.

18 September - Travelling time again, and a welcome rest day for the weary. The injury list was growing: **Andy** with a broken collarbone; **Chris** with severely strained wrist tendons: **Paul** who looked like a leopard except his spots were red; **Tim,** now known as 'MIB', who didn't know how to take his sunglasses off. Back to Erwald and the attempt on the Zugspitze, the highest mountain in Germany, and a stay at the Tiroller Zugspitzebahn Camping. Once at the camping site **Chris, Dennis, Jon, Paul, Will,** 'JR' and 'Admin Andy' all looked suspiciously clean and

well groomed. Upon investigation the cause was found to be the sauna, steam room, jacuzzi and rest room which was frequented by scantily dressed, no naked, women. This was the only time that individuals did not require hounding about their personal hygiene.

19 September - The first walk was a gentle stroll up a beautiful gorge to the Hollentalanger hut. **Dennis** was up to his old tricks again and caused all sorts of problems for **David** to sort out when trying to get his group through the turnstile into the gorge. His limited German of, 'Ein beer bitter,' wasn't getting him very far, he must learn another phrase



On the Zugspitze looking down the Hollental
(L-R): Sig Tim Dennant, Sig Will Browning and Sig Tony Clark

soon! Once at the hut the only activity was sun worshipping and sipping skiwasser. The only restful day walk of the entire exercise with the prospect of a 1,600m climb to the summit of the Zugspitze 2,964m to follow.

20 September - An early breakfast and another outstanding day on the weather front. **Jon** was leading **Steve**'s group with great confidence, no cable car to ruin the day, across some particularly difficult parts of the klettersteig. Everyone was very surprised at the permanent snow at the Hollentalferner which looked more like a small glacier with rather large crevasses. **Richie** was not very happy about the noises which the slow creeping glacier made, and would have raced ahead if he had not been grabbed by **Steve.** By this stage everyone had the confidence to move with ease on the klettersteig, a big difference from the first day on the Hindelanger. Once at the top **Will** realised that it was a little cold due to the altitude and wind, I think this was the first time he actually put a tee-shirt on while walking. The weather throughout the Exercise had greatly aided us in completing every walk planned in the ATFA, a very rare feat. The bad news for **Jon** dawned on him when he realised **Steve** wasn't going to walk down to the camp site. He did though manage to complete his last cable car ride sitting down staring at the floor which I am sure only made matters worse.

21 September - It was an early start yet again, but this was the last, and off to BACB to hand in the loaned equipment. Once that had been completed a programmed stop at Hiedelberg loomed and shopping at the PX. Both mini buses were packed but everyone seemed to squeeze in their latest acquisitions. Next came the dash for the 2100hrs ferry leaving Oostende for Dover, the next crossing was not until 0800hrs the following morning. After two traffic jams, one detour for petrol and an admin stop mini bus one driven by **Steve**, now known a 'Damon Hill' arrived at Oostende with 17 minutes to spare. 'Admin Andy' kept everyone guessing and cut things rather fine, leaving himself and seven worried passengers only three minutes to spare before the ferry set sail, lucky boy!

22 September - There were no further incidents and the expedition arrived back at Blandford Camp in the small hours of the morning. It was agreed to meet later once everyone had some sleep which proved a wise decision. There was a vast number of experiences packed into a short period which had been enjoyed by all, even the injured whom had plenty of alternative activities to keep themselves occupied.

THE ROYAL SCHOOL OF SIGNALS

AREA SYSTEMS GROUP

OC **Maj Adrian Pearce**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Tony Manktelow**
FofS **WO1 (FofS) Phil Cutforth MBE**

It has been sometime since this particular Group within RSS contributed anything to *The Wire* and certainly Area Systems Group as we are now called has never done so. We have set fingers to keyboard in order to assure you that we are not all in Blandford for a rest cure and to embarrass as many members in the Group as possible to get the beers in. Area Systems Group consists of four Troops:

Kukri Tp who were too busy running the Group to write anything for this edition.

Battleaxe Tp who instruct in tactical trunk and fixed communications systems.

Sysex Tp who push the trainees to the limit on Ptarmigan field exercises.

Combat Support Troop who missed out when they were giving out imaginative names……

BATTLEAXE TROOP

Tp Comd **Capt Phil** 'Ravinelli' **Day MBE**
Tp SSgt **SSgt** 'Harry' **Krishna** QGS

There has been a period of change in Battleaxe Tp with Fixed Systems Tp being integrated into Battleaxe Tp under command of **Capt Phil Day** who has recently arrived on commissioning, and has repeatedly emphasised that he is a technical Tfe Officer not a TOT! This makes Battleaxe the largest Troop of SNCO's in the Training Division. His technical team is close at hand and comprises of **WO2 (FofS) Robbie Windows** (this is my twilight period) and **SSgt (FofS) Karl Scaife** to ensure that he is not led astray, apart from the compulsory visit to the golf course.

RADIO RELAY SECTION

Starting with a farewell to **Sgt John** 'Baby Smurf' **Webber** on posting to 7 Sig Regt and a hello to **Sgt Max Wright**, posting in from Sysex Tp. The beginning of the year saw the first Gurkha Radio Relay operators passing through Blandford with some excellent training results. **Sgt Chas** 'Papa Smurf' **Cowell** was able to improve his Language skills (Ram Ram to the guys in York) at the same time as looking after the youths of Bournemouth and organising 11 Sig's and the Corps dinghy sailing. Congratulations to **Sgt Gaz** 'Skeletor' **Eastlake** for crossing the 'fine line' and passing his RSSC, also to **Sgt Mark** 'The Chin' **Tench** on passing his Skillys course at Brecon. **Sgts Shaun** 'Stavros' **Fleming** and **Mark** 'Danny Ken' **Yuill** have had a busy period with the RSA weekend as lollipop men assisting the trainees with crossing the road. Meanwhile back at the ranch **Sgt Andy** 'Del Boy' **Beel** has been applying his MEL skills trekking around the Purbeck area, with the odd sideline here and there. Taking a look to the future, the section is preparing for the first wave of Area systems operators, starting in autumn, and the end of an era (the radio relay op as we know it). **Sgt Chaz** 'Papa Smurf' **Cowell** is preparing for civilian life due to leave the Corps after serving 22 happy years with the colours, good luck **Chaz** with the resettlement and a big pat on the back from the section. (Beers in).

RADIO RELAY BASIC COURSE (RYBR 3/99)

The end of an era has happened, almost unnoticed the last Radio Relay Basic Course has passed through the doors of Catterick Building. With the implementation of the new trades RYBR 3/99 is the last Radio Relay Course. The king is dead long live the Area Systems Operator!

DRAKE SQUARE EAST – TRADE TRAINING COMPLEX

SNCO I/C **SSgt Mark Barrass**

Located in the old Bowman building at Engineers Corner, the facility was initially put in place 18 months ago to cope with the otherwise overwhelming pressure on the Group caused by an increase in throughput. At the moment the facility and the staff of four run the training of Class 1 Tele Op (Sys) and assists with Class 1 Tele Op (RR) and Tele Tech Sys and command courses. The team is looking forward to running the training of the new Area Systems Operator in the New Year. This has coincided with the arrival of **SSgt Mark** 'What's Ptarmigan?' **Barrass** who replaces **SSgt** (now Mr) **Terry Murrell** who is now working in the NVQ office on camp – we wish him well in his new career. We recently completed a good RSIT inspection on our 18 installations, mostly dismounted, under the guidance of our 'tech bloke' **Sgt Andy** 'Power tools' **Crabtree**. We are now completing the instruction on what we hope will be the final two Tele Op (Sys) Class 1 courses.



The last Tele Op Radio Relay Class 3 Course
with Radio Relay instructors

SAT COMM SECTION

Mr Richard Boyd has now taken over Satcom section and **Sgt Dave Davies** has been posted in from 24 (Airmobile) Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (210). The next year looks like a busy one with the possibility of expanding to cover the training of the Military off-the-shelf Satcom Terminal (MOST) and two new terminals coming into service. This has heralded the arrival of **Sgt Mary Hessell**, who has moved over to Satcom Section from Tech Section. The UK/VSC 501 Enhancement programme is now all but complete and the training detachment, 'Umber' is now fully auto-tracking, which has made life easier for all the students, who previously had to climb up and down ladders every twenty minutes. In the months leading up to Christmas, DCSA will be conducting IP over Satcom trials and the validation of the new enhancements will continue. Anyone seeking more information on UK.VSC 501 courses or Satellite Communications in general can get hold of us on Blandford (94371) 2835.

FIXED SYSTEM SECTION

The following personnel have been posted into Fixed Systems Section: **SSgt (FofS) Scaife,** after passing his Foreman of Signals course. (Nothing like being thrown in at the deep end.) The following have left Fixed Systems Section: **Maj (TOT) Doug Rackham -** on promotion to work in the headquarters, **WO2 (FofS) Overton -** on promotion to civvy street after 22 years hard effort. He has kept in contact with the Troop and says he is doing very nicely thank you. Finally **Sgt Bho** 'Joda' **Pradhan**, off to start his Foreman of Signals course and **Sgt Dharma** off to Nepal to be in charge of the Nepal exchanges. The section has been under lots of pressure to deliver new subjects for the imminent merger of radio and systems technicians. The Section has gained four new Realitis exchanges and four new ISDX's for training purposes. These are being used to deliver training for both up-graders and basic technicians on how to operate and configure the Army exchanges, not to mention Cyprus and Falklands specialist courses. Work has been revolving around the faithful instructor PC, with a stag roster being implemented by **Sgt Si** 'Hans Solo' **Welch** to give instructors a fair chance to produce their handouts. Another activity organised by members of the Troop, has been sponsored parachute jumping for Whiz Kidz. The charity parachute weekend was organised by **Sgt Dom** 'Skywalker' **Graham** and raised £2500. Whiz Kidz organise large charity events all over the UK and if anyone is thinking of organising an event, they should contact **Dom** on Blandford mil 2585 for details.

SYSTEM EXERCISE TROOP

Tp Comd **WO1 (FofS) Andy Owen**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Ian Lee**

Primarily the Troop is here to instruct and assess Phase 2 trainees on working Ptarmigan detachments. We are also tasked with providing installations for FofS, YofS and Troop Commanders courses and putting on demonstrations. We are busy adjusting to the new format being implemented for the Phase 2 trainees. Therefore, after some minor glitches, the students should now reach the field army in a good frame of mind and with quality training behind them. RSIT again rears its ugly head so it's a busy time for us all. It has not all been hard work though and managed to get away for an excellent summer camp in Wales. To top it all off Sysex Tp won the Inter Troop Football for the fourth year running.

SYSTEMS SECTION

SNCO IC **Sgt Dave Taylor**

It has been a busy time at the systems garage Firstly, we would like to welcome **Sgt Richie Morgan** and **Cpl Mick Heathcote** and say goodbye to **Cpl Rob Lyon** who has a posting to PJHQ. Congratulations go to **Cpl Daryl Tulk,** for passing his Yeoman's selection and good luck on his course, also to **Cpl Gill Ralley** for her selection for promotion to Sergeant.

RADIO RELAY SECTION

SNCO IC **Sgt Phil Cooper**

Many changes have occurred in the last few months, with new faces and a new exercise format for the Phase 2 trainees. First of all, congratulations to **Sgt Phil Cooper** on his promotion, to **Sgt Ian Strachan** on his promotion and his posting to 4 CTT to work with Cadets

(we all thought he was one anyway!) Welcome to **LCpl** 'Woz' **Wright** and congratulations on the birth of his daughter **Megan**. Goodbyes go to **Cpl Mark Gray, LCpl** 'Ant' **Morris** and **LCpl Gez Hinton** who have all decided to hang up their uniforms and move on to civvy street. Goodbye also to **LCpl Nelly Shillito** posted to 4 Armd Bde and **Cpl Daz Collins** who moves on to 34 Sig Regt.

COMBAT SUPPORT TROOP

Tp Comd **Capt (QGO) Navindra Bikramgurung**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Andy Craig**

In what seems to have been one of the busiest periods in recent history, the Troop has seen many personality changes. Much work has gone on preparing for the new trades, Power Section with preparation for 16th Edition wiring qualifications and CSS with more fibre optics, structured wiring and LAN training. Sadly, the last ever Tele Mech course is well under way and due to finish early in the next millennium, the first Tele Mech+ (sorry Installation Technician) course having already started. We wish to take this opportunity to bid farewell and congratulations to **Capt (QGO) Navindra Bikram Gurung** as he departs on his long leave prior to taking up his post as Ghurka Major in Bramcote.



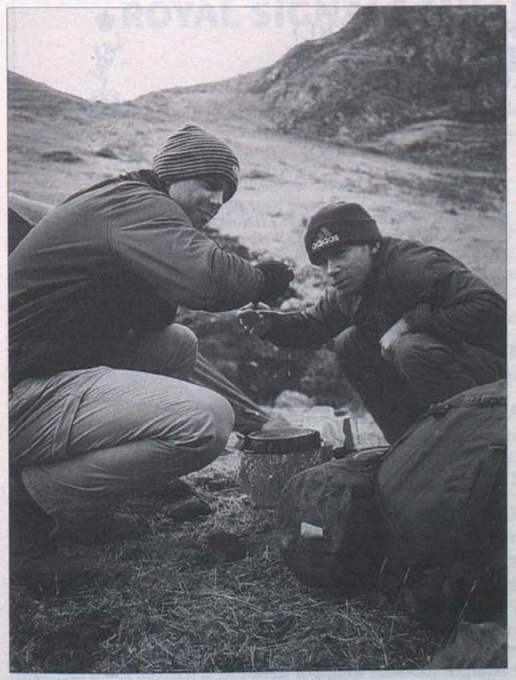
Cable

THE ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE OF SCIENCE SHRIVENHAM

EXERCISE CORDILLERA PHEONIX 1999

By Lt Alex Hutton

Having finished the second year at the Royal Military College of Science and needing to fill a rather long summer break, five undergraduates decided to shun the possibility of one week walking in Wales and head out further afield. Peru seemed to provide an excellent destination, principally because it has a wealth of mountain ranges, in which you can experience high altitude walking, whilst remaining below the snow line. Add to this, spectacular scenery, cheap prices, Inca ruins and you have a fantastic place to visit. Consequently, come August 15, a team consisting of, leader **Capt Andy Parfitt, Lt Alex Hutton, Capt Matt Everett RE, OCdt James King** and **OCdt Paul Stevens** boarded a plane for Lima via Houston. The aims of the Exercise were to complete a circuit of the Cordillera Huayhuash (pronounced 'Why-wash') and to complete the popular 'Inca Trail'. The Huayhuash circuit is a 160km route that circumnavigates Peru's second highest mountain, Yerupaja and its surrounding peaks. The route covers altitudes between 2900 and 5100 metres, including six passes all over 4500 metres. The Inca Trail by comparison is far shorter, a mere 50km, ending at the Inca city of 'Machu Picchu and is therefore more of a tourist trail. Prior to attempting the Huayhuash circuit, we needed to acclimatise to the altitude.



Capt Andy Parfitt (Right) and OCdt Paul Stevens
enjoy their daily dose of porridge

The perfect place to do this proved to be Huaraz, 3100 metres up in the Cordillera Blanca. The Cordillera Blanca is the home of Huascaran, the highest peak in Peru. With 32 other peaks above 6000m it is a magnet for climbers and as the largest town in the valley, Huaraz has its fair share of 'gringos'. Whilst in the capital Lima we had found the clubhouse of the South American Explorers Club. Aside from being a good source of free coffee, they are the oracle for all things of a South American nature and had provided a card for 'Jo's Place'. Originally from Southampton, **Jo** has lived in Huaraz for the last ten years and was a font of local knowledge. He was also quite happy for us to, drape washing all over his back garden, use all his hot water, steal his copy of the *Sunday Times* and sit in his kitchen with a liberal supply of marmite on toast. All this was provided for a decidedly reasonable price of £2 a night per person and he therefore has the thorough recommendation of all team members.

After four days of acclimatisation walks the home comforts of 'Jo's Place' were left for the five hour bus journey to Chiquian and the start of the Huayhuash circuit. The guide book quotes the time needed to complete the circuit as twelve days, although this is on the understanding that donkeys are hired to carry most of the equipment. This is indeed what most sane people do and would also explain why for the first two days every local we met offered to hire us donkeys. They all departed in bewilderment when we told them that we were quite happy carrying our kit and fourteen days of rations (two days spare just in case). The first and last two days were mainly in valleys, gaining or losing height respectively, and consequently it was not until end of Day Two that the first snowy peaks were sighted. Altitude acclimatisation clearly progresses at different speeds for different people and for this reason by day **2Lt Alex Hutton** had already earned the title of 'Team Railway Enthusiast' for a surprisingly realistic steam train impression, wheezing along at the back of the group. Day Three saw the first pass at 4700m and from here almost until the end of the circuit, it was a steady regime of a pass a day. Climbing up to the passes, however, affords some of the best views of the mountains and the scenery on these days was spectacular.



The team stops to admire the slopes of Yerapaja (6617m),
Peru's second highest mountain

By Day Four the daily diet of porridge for breakfast, soup with rice for lunch and a dehydrated meal for dinner was beginning to get somewhat dull. In fact for fast food freak **OCdt Paul** 'Burger and Fries' **Stevens** the situation was developing suicidal proportions. It was therefore no small celebration when on the evening of Day Four we found a local woman who was willing to sell us potatoes, which made an immeasurable difference to dehydrated shepherds pie. We were now on the Eastern side of the range which meant that all of the streams were principally snow-melt from the not too distant mountains and glaciers. This made for a rather chilly river crossing on Day Five, although most of the team were probably more concerned with staying upright and not going for a swim in the knee deep water. It was not unsurprising however, to find that **OCdt James King** 'cunning plan' to keep his boots dry by stepping into a plastic bin liner and attempting to shuffle his way across, proved to be a resounding failure. The water filter, which by Day Six was becoming increasingly difficult to pump water through, jammed defiantly by the end of the day. This put us onto our reserve method of purifying water using iodine, which makes for particularly foul tasting water. It was therefore decided to cut out two of the half days that we had planned to have and make a concerted effort to finish the circuit early. Consequently a longer than expected Day Seven made the possibility of using donkeys all the more appealing. The start of Day Eight entailed a 1200m climb over a distance of 6km up to a pass at 4800m and it had been decided before we set off that this factor alone made the climb a good candidate for our one try of what its like to be a civilian walker. We located an 'arriero' or 'man with donkeys' in the village at the bottom of the pass, paying him the equivalent of £13 to take three donkeys to carry four packs to the top of the pass. **OCdt James King** decided that using donkeys, even for 6km, was cheating and carried his pack to the top himself. The remainder of the team declined to join him in this feat, deciding that using donkeys for a morning was 'all part of the experience'.

Thankfully, Day Nine looked like a short day, beginning with what looked on the map like an easy 4km slope down to a river in the next valley. Three hours later we had part fallen, part hacked our way down to this river, having discovered that the path was a little more disused than we had anticipated. This put paid to our short day, although we consoled ourselves by stopping at the village of Pacllon and drinking their entire supply of coke. Naturally the sight of coke and some chocolate bars caused a crowd of children to quickly materialise. Unfortunately for them, we decided that we were too hungry and they looked to well fed to be able to prise any chocolate out of us. Finally on the last day, after the last 500m climb, the pain of which cannot be put into words, we arrived back at Chiquian.

The second part of the expedition was to walk the Inca Trail. This meant catching a flight from Lima to Cuzco in the centre of the country. Using a combination of bus and truck we made our way to the start of the trail and ran into our first group of tourists. Most tourists have no intention of carrying anything more than a day-sack and hire porters to carry their kit, pitch their tents and cook their food for them. We quickly discovered that for the best campsites we had to beat the porters to the day's resting place and pitch our tents first. Acclimatised though we were, racing porters who are exceptionally fit is quite a task. The cunning tactic we therefore employed was to get up and moving far earlier than the porters. This wasn't too difficult as of course they had to wait for their charges to wake up and have their breakfast first. The porters understandably have a counter tactic which we discovered as we arrived at 1030hrs on the penultimate day at the last campsite. Every piece of available ground had signs drawn in the dirt to reserve tent spaces. Naturally, all signs were duly ignored, a fact that launched **Capt Andy Parfitt**, into a heated debate with a porter on who should pitch whose tents where. Using a bit of pigeon Spanish, much gesticulation, some angry shouting and a bit of snappy tent erecting, the porter was 'persuaded' to pitch his tents elsewhere. Reputedly the best sight of Machu Picchu is at dawn from the 'Sun Gate', which is an hour's walking from the final campsite. Unfortunately, none of us can vouch for this as when we arrived just before 0600, the city was covered with cloud. This did lift later in the day allowing us some good views of the city. We were in agreement however, that Machu Picchu is a bit of an anticlimax after the Inca Trail . We all found that the most interesting and enjoyable part was the trail itself rather than the ruins at the end.

On return to Britain, it was universally agreed that the expedition had been both challenging and extremely enjoyable. Prior to the expedition all teams members, less **Capt Matt Everett,** had not gained any experience at high altitude. Peru provided the chance to ascend higher than is possible in Western Europe whilst not needing snow and ice skills. Peru is a country of fantastic scenery and friendly people. It is a great place to visit and can be thoroughly recommended as a excellent expedition destination.

NEWS FROM THE BALKANS

MULTI-NATIONAL BRIGADE (CENTRE) HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON OPERATION AGRICOLA 2

Sqn Comd **Maj P. D. Peel**
RSM **WO1(RSM) S. P. M. Mitchell**

19 MECH BDE HQ & SIG SQN HAVE LANDED!

The Squadron is now fully deployed in Kosovo with departments and detachments spread to the four winds. Support Tp is split between two locations, Brigade Main at the Engineering Faculty and Echelon at the Bread Factory (who ate all the pies!).

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY

Our arrival in theatre has coincided with the arrival of our new OC, **Maj Peel** and his wife **Kay** – welcome. We also welcome and congratulate **WO2 (YofS) John Wright** on his arrival and recent marriage to **Kate** (he is now spending a well-earned honeymoon in Pristina – nice!).

Life in the TECH/LAN/LAPD continues at a pace dealing with the numerous operational tasks that come our way. These tasks are wide ranging and include the laying of the cable infrastructure that supports the operation to soldering pairs of broken sunglasses! **LCpl Andy Langan** has managed to squeeze an entire tour's diseases into two weeks, firstly there was the case of tonsillitis then he stabbed himself in the hand before slipping into a mild case of food poisoning. He has now been removed from the 'sharp end' and is convalescing at ECH.....

BFBS are boosting the morale of all the soldiers within theatre by broadcasting requests from loved ones back home. The RSM is the latest recipient of one of these heart-warming messages – including the Boyzone song that accompanied it. The Foreman **WO2 Andy Williams** has been exercising his right of appeal under the Squadrons Equal Opportunities policy and categorically denies being a 'Welsh Git'. The 'teletubbies' fitness campaign is now in full swing but **Foreman Ian Outterson** has taken it a stage further as he has now enrolled on a Royal Marines 'Circus Strong-Man's' course. All he needs to do now is actually open the book.....

As a footnote the remainder of SHQ Troop would like to welcome **Sgt Mark Brundle** to the Operation, albeit late.....

HEADQUARTERS TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt J.** 'Chicken Chaser' **Griffiths**
Tp SSgt **SSgt J.** 'Puffing Billy' **Smithurst**

After four weeks well earned leave, the members of the newly formed HQ Tp returned to Catterick, ready to depart for some serious peacekeeping in the Balkans. Well most of them. Unfortunately **Sig** Tommo 'Gringo' **Thomas** and **Sig** Taff 'Tequila' **Lado**'s grasp of world time zones meant that whilst everyone else was shaving off their holiday goatees and donning their berets, these two international adventurers were still sporting sombreros and droopy moustaches in Mexico. Anyway after this little hiccup and several delayed flights, (that of course were nothing to do with the RAF) we all arrived in downtown Pristina to take over the engineering faculty of the University from 204 Sig Sqn. The Troop was soon split up ready to depart to their various locations. **LCpl Strasse** 'My' **Street** took his merry band of armoured warriors to their Ech location, **LCpl Chris** 'Is anyone going to the Canadian Rear Link?' **Bonham** eventually whipped **Sig Kate Addy** and the rest of the radio room into shape, and **Cpl Kev** 'Fireman Sam' **Kiff, LCpl** 'Taff' **Langley** and **LCpl Dave** 'The rave' **Moore** looked after the SAN's. It was then down to the serious business of sorting out all the staff officer requirements. From signposting drains, to satellite TV, to stopping the conference room door squeaking, there was nothing too complex or challenging for **SSgt J. Smithurst** and his gang of Mr Fixits (apart from **Sig** '21D' **Rakocevic** raising the Squadron pennant). There was also a bit of comms to sort out as well.

Everyone has now settled down into a routine that should last at least 48hrs, but is definitely likely to change on arrival of another 200 staff officers from the National Support Element. The whole Troop is obviously looking forward to this immensely, and is sure they will continue the tradition of filling up the 'puffing billys' after using them, and not leaving empty water bottles in the wash tent. Meanwhile **Sgt N.** 'Hill 209' **Hunt** has nominated himself for at least two purple hearts after deploying to a patrol base in a Serb village for 36hrs. At the same time back in camp, **SSgt J.** 'Widow Twankey' **Smithurst** has been ensuring that everyone has freshly laundered underwear, whilst the locally employed cleaners are capable of a full muster parade in the morning. Throughout all this, the Troop commander continues to try and compete against the Brigadier's ADC in the 'Dress like the Chief of Staff' competition.

On a different note, congratulations must go to **Cpl N.** 'Scooter' **Jones** and **Sgt A.** 'Do I really have to go to Paris on a two week course?' **Smith** on their recent promotions. Best wishes also go out to the recent throng of troop marriages, including **Sig G.** '21D' **Rakocevic, Sig** 'Just trying to improve my Albanian' **Cain** and **Cpl Gordon** ' Anyone for boiled cabbage?' **Alexander.** No doubt there will be more tidings from the HQ Tp as we prepare for the move of the Headquarters at the end of October, the Pristina Millennium dome tent party, and the never ending quest for toilet ducks for the VIP ablutions.

ROVER TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt J. E. Toze**
Tp SSgt **SSgt M.** 'Zero parcels' **O'Brien**

Welcome to the Rover Troop Kosovo Experience. We begin our magical mystery tour around this land of delight and discovery with tales of daring as the members of Rover Tp spread themselves across theatre, from the high mountains of Goles and the Dr Dolittle RRB crew to the slipper city SWEBAT boys. From the culinary delights of fish three times a day at FINBAT and the mixed sauna tag team, to the infamous cabbage patch kids at CZECHRECCE. Not forgetting the dets at NORBAT, CANBAT, CANRECCE and KRWAU (Kosovo Rotary Wing Aviation Unit). Special mention must go to the troops very own special forces armoured RRB crew at Suvi Bunar North, who continue to undergo the harsh training regime of daily snake identification lessons and beer and TV deprivation. Not surprisingly the operational strain has begun to show on some members of the Corps Northern Squadron. **Cpl** 'Can I have a goat boss?' **Mulligan**, continues to harass the troop commander, who has been heard muttering darkly about postings to Benbecula. **Sig** 'Shaggy' **Palmer** has begun hunting mice with a machete whilst **Sig Phil Moore** continues to make the worst scoff in theatre. However, the Troop must take its hat off to **Acting Field Marshall (Sig) Ayto** for the army surplus self promotion scheme, nice try son. Back at the ech bat cave, the intrepid re-sup team strive to supply every demand however small or large it may be, from fuel to fly spray, carpet to cash. **SSgt Mick O'Brien** is rapidly becoming the Balkan 'Del-boy', and all KFOR bases have been alerted to the 'Scotsman bearing gifts', or not as the case may be. Of particular note was the water melon salesman who short changed him the equivalent of a few pence, being blissfully unaware of the Scots thrifty reputation. **Sgt** 'Mac' **McGibbon** has started a devious campaign of dropping his partner in crime in the proverbial, particularly with RMP sergeant majors, and parading naked at every opportunity (especially on the bread factory roof). The boss **Lt Jez** ' Lets have a briefing at 0130hrs' **Toze** continues to receive more parcels than the UNHCR, and cruises the highways in the protective custody of **LCpl** 'I can do a tour with four pairs of pants' **Hankinson**, although any more incidents on route dog and he may need a couple more pairs.

Congratulations go to **Sig** 'Media Queen' **Knowles** and **Sig** 'I've never seen so many naked blokes in my life' **Kemp**, who have both got married (although not to each other). Also promotion celebrations for **Cpl Mulligan, Cpl** 'Elvis the beast-master' **Vickers, LCpl** 'Nearly a Siggy' **Langley** and **LCpl Thomas.** Finally we look forward to floppy hat PT on Goles on Xmas morning and more of **Cpl Kev Duggans** 'Turdis' funfair rides.



ROYAL SIGNALS MILLENNIUM CELEBRATIONS AT BLANDFORD 15-21 MAY

A programme of sporting and social activities will take place at Blandford over the week 15-21 May, 2000, to celebrate the new millennium. The events will be open to members of the serving Corps, both TA and Regular, and all units are encouraged to participate. The programme will comprise of:

SPORTING COMPETITIONS

A number of sporting competitions will take place at, or around, Blandford and will include:

SOCCER	RUGBY	HOCKEY	GOLF	WINDSURFING
BADMINTON	SQUASH	SWIMMING	NETBALL	CRICKET
SAILING	TENNIS	BASKETBALL	JUDO	10 PIN BOWLING

Full details will be published nearer the date. In the meantime, if further information is required unit sports representatives should contact the relevant Corps Sports Secretary as listed in The White List.

ATHLETICS

The annual Morrison Cup Competition will take place at the Blandford Sports Stadium on 18-19 May, 2000.

ALL RANKS PARTY, FUNFAIR AND FIREWORKS DISPLAY

There will be a huge all ranks party at Blandford Camp centre on the evening of Friday 19 May. Entertainment will include live bands, discos, bars, restaurants, fairground rides and a fireworks display. The party will be open to all military personnel competing in or watching the week's sporting and athletics competitions and to those who are based at Blandford.

FREEDOM OF BLANDFORD PARADE

On Sunday 21 May a representative contingent of LAND units, drawn primarily from 249 Signal Squadron, will exercise the Corps' Freedom of Blandford. The parade will also involve a drive past by The White Helmets and include participation by Standard Bearers from a number of Branches of The Royal Signals Association. Spectators from the serving and retired Corps will be most welcome.

INDIVIDUALS WISHING TO TAKE PART IN ANY OF THE ABOVE ACTIVITIES
SHOULD CONTACT THEIR UNIT ORDERLY ROOM AND ASK ABOUT

'THE CORPS MILLENNIUM CELEBRATIONS AT BLANDFORD'

7 SIGNAL REGIMENT
OPERATION AGRICOLA

SHQ/RAO DEPARTMENT, PRISTINA – *by Sig 'Stevie' Ware*

First and foremost we would like to say farewell to **WO2** 'Tony' **Barry** and wish him all the best in his posting to 11 Sig Regt as RQMS. **SSgt** 'Steve' **Behan** has taken on the role as Echelon SSM and is doing a sterling job, as also is **SSgt** 'Foggy' **Dewhurst** who is running the SQMS. We've recently acquired the company of **Cpl** 'Spike I've done Kosovo on my own' **Milliken** on our team after he has already worked out here with the Italian, French, US and at the Apod and HQ KFOR. **Sig** 'Virge' **Verrill** has returned from R and R and is still on/off with his cyber chick **Sonya** from Canada. Our department recently ran a bingo night, which went down very well. The chefs were run away winners with the 250-DM flyer. Everybody's still working very hard though, and we're all looking forward now to our Ever-nearing return from theatre back to Krefeld for some much needed time off.



The VOD GODs' HQ MT, Capt Clifford and his gang

QUARTERMASTER'S (TECHNICAL) DEPARTMENT
OPERATION AGRICOLA

QM **Capt (QM) Ray Cory**
RSM **WO2 Neil James**

Things in theatre have now entered the most hectic phase, the withdrawal of the Regimental assets to Krefeld. With stores stretched from one end of the country to the other, the task has at times seemed to be almost impossible. However, with the skills of the multi-regimental team that has evolved from this operation, things cannot possible go wrong (we hope). A fond farewell to **Sgt Simon** 'Gooner' **Booth** who is posted to 1 Div.

PS: Where is the real 0ET? PPS: Abbo will sort it out for you. Also goodbyes from theatre go to **Sig** 'Squeaky' **Johnston** (IV'd to Krefeld). **Sig** 'Chevron' **Nolan**, Good luck on your Tech course.

A warm welcome (picture the scene, its 40 in the shade) to new boy on the block **Des** 'Road Runner' **Lang. Des** who has just finished a marathon is now starting on his box of Mars Bars. Last and not least Hi to **Sig Claire Patton** and her mate **Sig Olive** 'Ginger' **MacLeod.** Oh, and **Sig Chris Musgrave. Capt Ray** 'I've been here longest' **Cory** has now returned back from R&R for a well deserved rest. **WO2 Neil James** who came out to cover the 14 days over the QMs R&R is still here seven weeks later. He's sorry now he only brought three pairs of pants. A mention must go to **Sgt.** 'The Gasman' **McDonald,** from 3 (UK) Div Sig Regt, who won the admiration and respect of the whole of Echelon for his ability to shoot the furthest in the great egg race. To close a thank you from all in the QM's to **Maj Pierre** 'allo allo' **Britton,** 1 Sig Bde, for the Photocopier and Hoover.



WO2 Bovan SSM in Brazda refugee camp, May '99

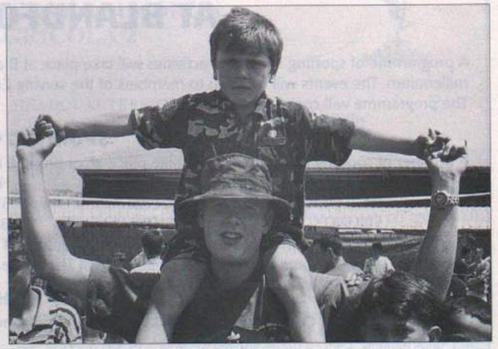
TECHNICAL MAINTENANCE TROOP

Well the 'Operational' Deployment is drawing to a close and whilst many peoples thoughts are on the impending return to civilisation and the pleasures that await i.e: Running HOT water and the like. TM Tp are still providing the highly competent and professional service which they have been providing since day one. To augment our strength there have been many new arrivals to help balance the gaps left by the departures to good old Krefeld. We would like to welcome **SSgt Shaun Cook -** straight from Northern Ireland and out to Theatre and his wife **Belinda** (who isn't in theatre!) Talk about out of the frying pan and into the fire! Also welcome to **Sgt Paul Newell** from AFCENT (about time he earned his T pay) and to **LCpl's Dan Stein** and **Kev Taylor,** both straight from the sausage factory. Welcome to one and all and we hope that you all enjoy your tours with The Flagship Regiment of the Corps!

With many elements of the Regiment now back in Krefeld several Troop members have left Kosovo to start the running of the Brand New workshops. After seven months of penance **Sgt Ian Middlemiss** (with a tear in his eye) bade a fond farewell to his 9 x 9 and is now as we speak (through forked tongues) trying to make sure that all the test equipment stays where it is (in the store room). Despite our hectic work schedule the morale of the Troop who remain to man the 'Thin Red Line' remains high, **Capt (TOT) Dave** 'Staff I need a Favour' **O'Brian** has recently been spotted wearing a rather natty pair of dessy wellies. 'It's what all the happening cats are wearing,' (Yeah OK). On the subject of Basha's **Sgt Colin** 'Save the black rat' **Forester** is nearing the end of his sponsored sleep out, 157 nights and still going strong, keep it up pal we know you can last out!

All work and no play as we all know makes Jack a dull boy so one Saturday evening the Troop organised an Inter-Departmental Games night. Due to the Two can rule several well known games had to be dropped. However, with a little bit of application and thought several new and untried games were put into the competition. The evening turned out very well. However, **Sgt John Brady** did have a few sticky moments explaining to the LAD that they couldn't get a double port as they had got the nail into the log first. (Two can rule lads!) The Stools was a favourite event for many people, **Cpl Bobby Hill** and **LCpl Dan Hine** were having quite an enjoyable time running the game especially when the QM got up to have his go. Everybody was rather impressed with the score he achieved (not bad for an old un) until it was pointed out that he was using the girlie weight!

Well if the movers can get it right we should be out of here very soon and we are all looking forward to our post Op Leave and Christmas at home with our families, to those of you out there in reader land who are deploying over here soon you can have it and ENJOY!



Sig Lockwood
in Brazda (Slankovatch 1) refugee camp and young recruit

**WHEN YOU MOVE,
ARE POSTED
OR LEAVE THE CORPS
LET US KNOW YOUR
NEW ADDRESS**

MULTI NATIONAL DIVISION (SOUTH WEST)
HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL REGIMENT
OPERATION PALATINE

CO **Lt Col Ian Griffiths**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) Terry Crane**

This current roulement of MND (SW) HQ and Sig Regt has seen the coming together of a variety of units from the Corps. It is a 20 Armd Bde deployment and 200 Sig Sqn are here in force with some 120 personnel deployed. Back-filling of the posts required has been provided by 249 Sig Sqn (AMF(L)), with 100 personnel deployed, and some 3 0 personnel from 1 (UK) Armd Div HQ and Sig Regt. There has a sizeable contribution from the TA, including 10 from 38 Sig Regt (V) - the CO's own unit.



Waiting for the off
The CO, RSM and others 'somewhere in Germany'

Despite the hectic state of affairs during the hand-over period and after, the Regiment has managed to keep up a steady run of events to break the 'ground hog day' syndrome in BLMF. First came the epic struggle between the Sgts' Mess and the Corporals. Events for the day ranged from basketball, football, rowing, volley ball and the obscure new Olympic sport of mat dragging. Sadly the event proved too much for some of the ageing SNCO's and the Corporals narrowly won the day which ended with a well deserved two cans. Next the Regiment played host to dignitaries from across Bosnia at the Multicultural Evening featuring the Royal Signals very own **Capt Chris Preston** blowing his own trumpet and a star impromptu appearance by **Sig** 'Elvis' **Gallagher.** Finally the All Ranks Vietnam Night which proved to be a huge success owed to the excellent enthusiasm shown by all in their fancy dress and the organisation of the event. The sangar style bar and the live band set the scene, and every one proceeded to have a brilliant night.



The Regimental teams hand-over

G5 PROJECTS - KULJAN1 SCHOOL

The G5 project at the Kuljani school has been handed over to the Regiment from the previous incumbents. The project has been well supported in the past and the efforts of **WO1 (RSM) Terry Crane** and **Maj Ian Dudding** have ensured that it has retained this level of support. Since our arrival in theatre there have been a number of visits to the school. These visits have involved the donation of outdoor furniture, painting of the school and the provision of a new roof. Most recently two new computers have been donated. Our resident PTI, **LCpl** 'Gym Queen' **Douglas** has also helped to run PT sessions with the pupils. Money for these projects has all been raised through the hard efforts of our predecessors and events run by soldiers now deployed with the Regiment. Soldiers from the Regiment have also willingly devoted their free time to help with projects at the school.



WO1 (RSM) Terry Crane and Maj Ian Dudding
with members of the school

MND (SW) SIG REGT FOOTBALL TEAM

Since the arrival of the Regiment a real effort has been made to form a team from the various units deployed in BLMF. The team has so far played three matches with varying degrees of success. We managed to beat the Dutch 13G 6-1 in the first match and then lost to the Czech 13G 5-3 in the second one. By far the most enjoyable match has been against one of the local teams. Played on a very difficult surface it was a hard match with the likes of the Adjt, **Capt Niall Stokoe** doing his bit up front and **Cpl** 'I've got the best body in Banja Luka' **Robertson** posing in the middle of the park. The match ended in a three-all draw, but only after the referee, **WO1 (RSM) Terry Crane,** had awarded a penalty to the Regimental side in dying seconds. More games and match reports to follow.



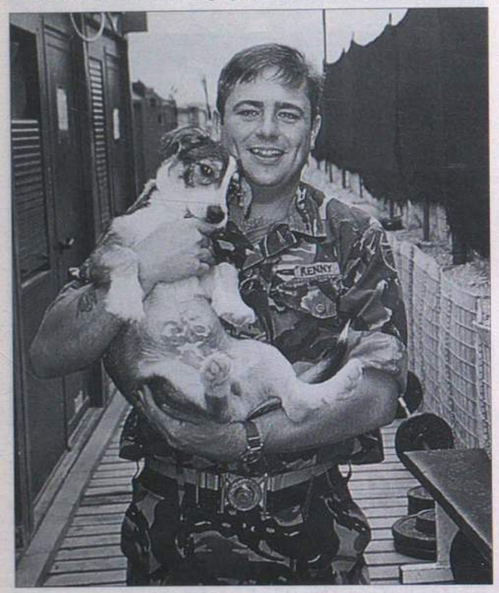
MND (SW) HQ & Sig Regt team prior to the match

MND (SW) SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj Iain Standen**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Ken Marsh**

Goodbyes and hellos for the Squadron go respectively to **WO2 (FofS) Andy** 'We are Warriors' **Forbes** (even from the non rugby players) who packs his bucket and spade and heads off for sunny Saudi, making space in the hot seat for **WO2 (FofS) Andy Dawson.**

COMMUNICATIONS TROOP - *by LCpl 'Smudge' Smith*
Tp Comd **Lt Rhidian Jones**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Jim Crabb**

It seemed like we had only been on our Hill Top Site for five minutes when the 12 Mech Recce team were on site checking it over, not that we were complaining. Most of the time here days just merge into a blur but we're already half way through the tour and the Golden Doss Bag Award could still be anyone's. The gym has recently been kitted out so when not asleep it's time to pump iron - Van Damme beware! As for the running routes there's more ups and downs than a David Ginola match. We have also acquired a Sat Phone system for calls to our loved ones. Being a cheap skate selling the phone cards and sticking to blueys is still the best option. The new additions to the det (Puppy and kitten) are growing fast and our weekly rubbish mountain has now been halved thanks to them. All that remains is for them to get properly det trained!



It's a dogs life! Cpl Simon Kenny and Boris at Banja Luka West hill top RRB

MOBILE TROOP - *by Cpl Chris Noviss*
Tp Comd **Lt Paul Randell**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Steve Griffiths**

Life on tour began at a frantic pace with **Cpl Dave Thompson** holding a runaway AFV 436 6km down treacherous mountain roads saving the life of the Troop OC - not quite important enough to earn another commendation! Not to be outdone the B Fleet sent forth **LCpl Daz Walker** who totalled the GOC's new Nissan Patrol, this all in week one! The carnage continued with **LCpl Kelly MacGregor** breaking her ankle and getting casevac'd. Once things quietened down the Troop embarked on Ex Mailed Fist, a brazen attempt to escape BLMF for 48hrs, deploying the Light HQ to Coralici and a RRB to Gola P. Things started to get interesting when the Troop OC became geographically embarrassed and we found ourselves in Croatia. After an hour spent trying to re-cross the border we were underway again, the HQ reaching Coralici and started comms testing under the guidance of **Cpl Mat** 'With Wings' **Witham.** Meanwhile the RRB crewed by **Sig Neil Heritage** and myself was still on the road. After coming across a JCO vehicle that had crashed, the opportunity to get off the Exercise was seized and we gave assistance until they were recovered, the RRB managing to reach Gola P before Endex.

The Troop returned to BLMF the following day and the escape committee is now planning for Ex Joint Resolve, a Div Exercise at the end of October. Aside from barbies, plastic palm trees, urinals, fire bells and the A Fleet's epic 360km road run to Drvar (with no breakdowns!!) life in the Troop continued to be a mundane existence with the exception of **Sig Jim** 'Elvis' **Gallagher**'s first prize in the 'Dancing a jig in front of the GOC and assembled dignitaries whilst waiting on' competition.

Finally a fond farewell to the outgoing 501 crew **Cpl Jase Beattie** and 'Mac' **MacDonald, LCpl Carl Turner** and **Sig** 'Toby Juggs' **Dudley** and welcome to the Christmas crew of **Cpl** 'Loddy' **Jones, LCpls** 'Taff' **Jenkins** and **Ben** 'Elton' **Whitley, Sigs** 'Scouse' **Bennet** and 'Jaffa' **Jefferson.** Congratulations to **LCpls Dave Haskell,** 'Golden Boy' **Samuel, Chris Noviss** and 'Loddy' **Jones** on being selected for promotion.

HEADQUARTERS TROOP
Tp Comd **2Lt Hannah Tacon**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Mark Yates**

On arrival in Banja Luka in August it was a case of, 'Oh no not again!' by the old sweats and 'What are we doing here?' by the first timers. **FofS** 'Just the man' **Forbes** started by explaining that he hates cowboys and the theatre Two Can Rule. The Troop quickly got to work on the discipline front with **Sgt** 'Where are my rounds' **Tye** gaining a mere £1000 fine. On the work front both maintenance teams have been out on the ground for several weeks on a winterisation programme which has proved to be highly successful on the communications side but not so good on the road runs as **Sgt Gill** 'I've got ANOTHER puncture' **Brown** can testify. With nearly half of the tour over everyone is now thinking where will we be this time next year and will **Cpl Leanne Barker** have tucked her shirt in by then or will **Cpl** 'Half a job' **Hill** actually complete a task. Finally hello to **Sigs** 'Basil Brush' **Keen** and 'Pochahontas' **Pidhajeckjz** (no this isn't a typing mistake!).

SUPPORT SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj I. D. Dudding**
Sqn SSM **WO2 (SSM) Andy Allan**

A special farewell from the Squadron, Regiment and all from 20 Bde goes to **WO2 (RQMS) Chris Drew** who jumps ship mid tour to join 16 Air Assault Bde on promotion.

MOTOR TRANSPORT - *by LCpl Mick Taylor*

Since arriving on a four month tour of Bosnia in the infamous BLMF we have been on a non-stop roller coaster ride. With **WO1 (TCWO) Dune** 'Where's your seatbelt' **Graham** at the helm and **Sgts Andy** 'Peter Pan' **Paling** and **Robbo** 'Mines are Us' **Robinson** at his side the challenge is to control a crew of assorted soldiers pulled in from all arms. Along with the usual handful of R Signals lads, there's the RLC contingent and even a couple of Engineers. After the usual few days tip toeing around new faces, everyone got on fine with the usual characters coming out after the strictly enforced two cans. **Sig** 'Cheeky cockney con man' **King** has developed a bad habit of taking on the form of Frank Butcher the moment beer touches his lips and **LCpl Mick Taylor** who looks like being the only person ever to come to theatre and not travel a mile. The TCWO seems to have glued him into the chair in the Transport Control Cell. With the getting to know you time out of the way it was time for work, sorting the MT from the clapped out steam engine it was to the fine smooth running operation it is now. The learning curve for some of the younger drivers has been a steep one with the road conditions and local drivers never failing to surprise us with their driving skills which can only be compared to fairground dodgems at times. That said the lads have all managed well with only a few close shaves to confess to. Other than that things are going well and our time here is fast coming to an end. We're all looking forward to a break at Xmas and for the 249 boys sunny Norway awaits us sometime in January.

LAD - *by WO2 (AQMS) Eddie McLellan*

20 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn have been deployed to the FRY for almost two months now. As lead unit the REME cover was to come from 20 Armd Bde REME LAD, and so to Bosnia I deployed 'pre-advance' with **Sgt Ricky Goss** of the URS, eagerly anticipating what was in store for us. Considering the last time I was in theatre was Op Grapple 1 (swing tilly light - pull up a sand bag!), I was to see a miraculous change in what I last saw as a war torn country! The hand-over was made easy by the outgoing unit having done much preparation (no big bones sticking too far out of the closet!). A few days of peace and it was time for the lads to arrive. No sooner was one flight in, than another followed and so on until all MND (SW) HQ & Sig Regt personnel were fully in barracks. It was noted that tradesmen had been attached from 249 Sig Sqn (AMF(L)), B Coy 1 Royal Scots, 6 RMP, 14 Sig Regt(EW), 1 Regt AAC, TA and Reservists. To top it all, the ED's have been attached to the LAD for administration purposes and God, did they need it! In their eagerness to get manpower into theatre, 249 had even cajoled their civilian fitter **Andy** 'Arthur' **Pendragon** into coming out as a reservist!! We are still trying to persuade him he's on holiday and when he gets back he should try for the 'Freebie' to Norway.

Joking apart, the lads have been magnificent, and have gelled together better than anyone would expect considering the widespread areas of expertise employed. Since arriving in theatre, they have reduced a large inherited workload (through stores demands - we're not slagging you off 1 Mech, honest!) and are finding more and more time to concentrate on the cosmetic side (No, not wearing make-up!). On average 300+ vehicles pass through the LAD per month with approximately another 70 for PRE. The URS lads are processing anything up to and above 1400 demands and the RSM is ordering more nut and bolt men and presentation pieces than we can cope with.

Life's not all hard work though. Being tasked as IC Adventure Training for the Regiment, most of the LAD Cfn and JNCO's have either been on or are going to BRAC to enjoy the rigours of manly outdoor pursuits. On top of this, we have been attending ES Leadership Training Days, EFP threshold tests, driver training for ED' ITD training, Regimental PT and much, much, more (Great sell, Q. Soon they'll all want to come here. NOT!).

20 ARMOURED BRIGADE
HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (200)
Sqn Comd **Capt N. J. O'Kelly**
Tp SSgt **SSgt H. Cappleman**

It has been a busy couple of weeks for the rear party, with everyone deploying in the middle of August on Op Palatine. Back in sunny Paderborn the OC, **Capt Nick O'Kelly,** and Tp SSgt, **SSgt Hank Capplenian** have kept the rear party busy. Watch out MT, his knee is nearly fixed and as soon as it is he'll be on the first flight out.

On the function side we have had a popular barbecue and a picnic for the wives of the Squadron and Brigade HQ. All of these proved very popular (especially the bouncy castle for the 'Big Kids' amongst us, thank you **Shelly** and **Sharon**) and plans are set in place to have a function every two weeks for the duration of the deployment. The next big bash is planned for Halloween, so all of your wives will have dusted of their broomsticks in time to make it a really successful event. On Saturday 22 and Friday 24 September the wives committee hosted 'The Big Brew' in aid of SAFFA Forces Help in the Families Room and raised DM200. A big thank you to **Anna Standen** and **Corrine Drew** and all those that assisted.

We would like to welcome some new members of the rear party and Squadron. **WO2 (RQMS) Beech** and his family join us for 16 Sig Regt. **Cpl Adele** and **LCpl Dave Robins** join us from 7 Sig Regt accompanied by their son **Lyndon.** Hello to **Sgt Jim Bean** and his wife **Tanya.** Welcome also to **Sgt Nigel Murray, Sigs Roy Brown, Bobby Hancock** and **Pte Leighton O'Callaghan.** A big congratulations from the rear party to **LCpls Si Harris, Dave Haskell** and **Dave Robins** on their selection for promotion to Corporal. Finally congratulations to **Sig Cath Blatcher** on her recent marriage, and from all the Squadron wives 'Keep up the good work, keep the letters coming and for those who haven't already had it, looking forward to R&R'.

249 SIGNAL SQUADRON - ACE MOBILE FORCE (LAND)
OC Rear Party **Capt(QM) Ray Patrickson**
Rear Party SSgt **SSgt Chris Martin**

With more than two thirds of the Squadron deployed and no vehicles, having cunningly off-loaded our entire 110 fleet prior to deployment, you might be forgiven for thinking that life in Bulford was a little quiet. Not so. Approximately 30 of the Squadron have deployed with 7 Armd Bde HQ and Sig Sqn to Poland on Ex Ulan Eagle. Norway preparation continues, as this years deployment will be a full FTX as well as the usual Ski and Survival courses. There has also been time for a little light-hearted activities - including the new policy of opening the Squadron bar on Thursday after work. This is of course for the good and benefit of the Squadron as it raises much needed PRI funds.

HELICOPTER DUNKING DRILLS - *by LCpl 'Johnny' Whitrow*

Since the deployment of the Squadron to Bosnia, **LCpl Nick** 'You ain't seen me right!' **Jenkins** has decided to put our lives at risk at every opportunity with his crazy activities. His latest brainchild was Helicopter Dunking Drills at RNAS Yeovilton. This idea was met with a range of emotions from excitement to pure fear. A good example of the latter being **Sig** 'PJ' **Lee** who felt it necessary to test his breath holding skills the night before, finding to his horror that 12 seconds was all he could muster. His nerves exploded when, in the briefing at Yeovilton, the instructor remarked, 'You would probably have ten seconds air time if the helicopter landed in a muddy puddle in the desert.' After a quick change of underwear he was ready to go. The main thrust of the day was the actual simulator drills, four dunks ranging from the straight drop to the, 'Oh....let's roll you upside down and turn the lights off!' Even though there was much apprehension most of the team escaped unharmed, much to the disappointment of Doctor Evil - **Nick Jenkins**.

There were only two disappointments that must be mentioned for the purposes of public ridicule. **Cpl** 'Nic-Nac' **Clifton** the Squadron PTI, who, apparently through no fault of his own had a mechanical failure with his armbands and decided that one dunk was enough for him. Secondly there was the infamous breath holding champion himself, **Sig Lee.** Who, after some gentle persuasion by **LCpl Johnny** 'Get in there or I'll drown you myself' **Whitrow,** completed two dunks successfully. Unfortunately it came to an end when **Sig** 'Houdini' **Robertson** decided to take an unscheduled NAAFI break when we were 10ft deep, upside down, and in the pitch black - the thought of drowning crossed more than **Sig Lee**'s mind. That said he did well, confronted his fears and survived. The day was an enjoyable break from the norm and we all took something away from the training - especially those who 'enjoyed' the near-death experience. A final mention for **Sig Lee** who managed to break his breath holding record by ten seconds. We eagerly await **LCpl Nick Jenkins**'s next plan to reduce Squadron manning.

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NEWS FROM NORTHERN IRELAND

XV HEADQUARTERS NORTHERN IRELAND & 15 SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO Lt Col G. J. T. Rafferty
RSM WO1 (RSM) Balsdon

JEANS FOR GENES DAY - 8 OCTOBER 1999
by Sig Stokoe

On Friday 8 October, 225 Sig Sqn held a fund raising day for the Great Ormond Street charity 'Jeans for Genes Day'. This worthwhile cause is raising money for research and to make a breakthrough in finding effective therapies and long term treatments for the many recognised genetic disorders, including cystic fibrosis, haemophilia, sickle cell and baby in the bubble syndrome. Unfortunately some of these illnesses are life threatening and some hold no treatment as yet. Our role simply entailed the whole Squadron coming to work in jeans and paying one pound toward the charity. Money was also raised by myself and **Cpl Cecil** selling a variety of doughnuts, cakes and buns in the foyer of HQNI. The total amount raised was £300. I would like to thank everybody for donating towards the charity and all those who helped out with the running of the day itself.

THE BRAEMAR GATHERING
THE 1999 HIGHLAND GAMES - *by Sig Grills*

I had just returned from a week in the Brecon Beacons, only to find that it was a quick turnaround then I was back on the road again to travel to Scotland, for the impressive Braemar gathering. We set off bright and early in the morning in search of the Larne Ferry and from there to a brief admin stop at **Sgt Jimmy Fox**'s house in Dundee, before arriving at our final destination of Barry Budden Training Camp. After we had quickly sorted out places to sleep and a quick change of clothes, we grabbed our best pulling kit and headed off to Dundee town centre for some hard training with a Dundee civilian team. After a couple of days of the Dundee 'Mardi Gras', we moved on along the long windy road to Braemar, encompassing some of the most beautiful views nature has to provide, ('Trigger' take note, drivers use both hands on the steering wheel whilst on roundabouts). After we established ourselves in a very Gucci campsite, with tents pitched, camp fire roaring and the team ready for some last minute training, we were disapprovingly informed that we were actually pitched in a car park. The bearer of the bad news just happened to be a bloke in a frock, (I'm told it's a kilt, but if it wasn't for the beard I think **Cpl** 'Dangerous Brian' **McLean,** would have tried to chat him up). So we moved again to a better spot just outside the village, next to the river and finally pitched our base camp there. That evening we went into Braemar for a route recce, during which time we had a look at the arena and the local hostelries. Whilst in town we met up again with two of the members of the Dundee training team. At this point we would like to express a big thank you to both **Stevie** and **Davey,** both from Dundee, for their help and the good festivities we all enjoyed whilst in Braemar. No doubt we will meet up again next year, so bring the beers lads. The day of the event fell upon many a sore head, as we upped sticks and moved to the venue for the games. The weigh-in was at about 9 o'clock, we weighed in about 20 kilo's short of the 640 mark. However, we naturally committed the team anyway.



Pre pull pep talk

Having been told to be back for 10.30, we strolled off as a team to make up for the missing weight by loading with big breakfasts and burgers, and sat outside a café watching the bands of the Pipes and Drums marching toward the arena. By this time, the town was alive with tourists and locals alike. We also met up with another friend of **Sgt Fox**'s friends, who had just walked approximately 29 miles across the Highlands heading for Aviemore - only to be told that he was slightly off route and actually in Braemar! We returned from our food boost to the arena ready for our prearranged 10.30 start, only to be told that the timings had been brought forward for the first end to start at 10.00, thus the ATOWO refused to let us pull. We were then entered into the Falling Plate pull off. When our time came we marched into the arena only to face the mighty wrath of 4 R1R. We had a very good pull, but were beaten by two pulls to nothing.



15 Signal Regiment's Tug O' War Team in action

So that was the rather sudden and unfortunate end to our Highland Games, so from there we moved back to Barry Budden Camp, grabbed our kit and began a night's commiserating. Then it was back to the Province and back to work. Rest assured we will be back next season, intent on victory. Team members were: **Lt** 'Performance and cocktails' **Balfour** (Manager), **Sgt** 'Honest John' **Fox** (Coach), **Cpl** 'Knuckles' **Nicholls, Cpl** 'Dangerous Leprechaun' **McLean, Cpl** 'Go on love, do it for mummy!' **Williams, LCpl** 'Boy Wonder' **Robson, LCpl** 'Parmesan Milkshake' **Wooton-Jones, Sig** 'Mad Irish Fiesta Driver' **Orr** and finally myself, **Sig** 'Paddy Pantsdown' **Grills.**

EXERCISE MOUNTAIN FINN - *by LCpl Milne*

At 0430hrs on a dark, dismal morning in late August, ten members of HQN1 and 15 Sig Regt left Lisburn heading for the Brecon Beacons National Park. Ex Mountain Finn was designed to practice and test individuals in basic navigation skill, and develop teamwork and leadership skills. That was the plan! What should have been a simple, uneventful journey turned out to be something of an epic. After arriving on the mainland, we began the tedious journey along the M6 to Brecon. As we reached Wigan, both vehicles were in need of a fuel re-sup, so the hunt was on for the mandatory 'Shell Garage'. After what seemed like an eternity (and with the help of several police patrol cars and locals) we managed to locate what must have been the only Shell garage in that part of the North of England. Fully re-fuelled (vehicles and occupants) we embarked again on our journey. The remainder of the day was fairly uneventful until we reached the Brecon Beacons. Having driven the entire length (and occasionally the breadth!) of the country and with only 15 miles to go, it all went horribly wrong. **Sig Jamie Goulty** decided he would attempt to place his vehicle inside the rear of the preceding Minibus, learning the hard way that two into one definitely does not go! His vehicle was totally immobilised, but thankfully there were no injuries, and the job of shuttling ten personnel along with kit and adventure training stores began. Finally, at around 2100hrs, we had established a base camp at Tal-Y-Bont, and we settled down (or at least some of us did) to a well deserved night's sleep.

The following day we set out on our first walk, which was to cover a distance of about 20kms. The weather was not good, (what would you expect in Brecon in August?) and there were many shouts of, 'If it's not raining, it's not training!' etc. At the end of our first walk, we all returned to our base camp in order to prepare for the real training: Brecon by moonlight! We all passed that phase with flying colours, and the following day we awoke to scorching weather, which definitely did NOT help our hangovers. However, a good walk was just what we needed to clear our heads. A special mention must go to **Sig Staple-Miles** (S&M?) for being the Worlds biggest lightweight. On Sunday we took a trip to Hay-On-Wye, and conquered Hay Bluff (might as well have been

Everest!) before attempting to educate ourselves in the town's bookshops and bookshops and bookshops.

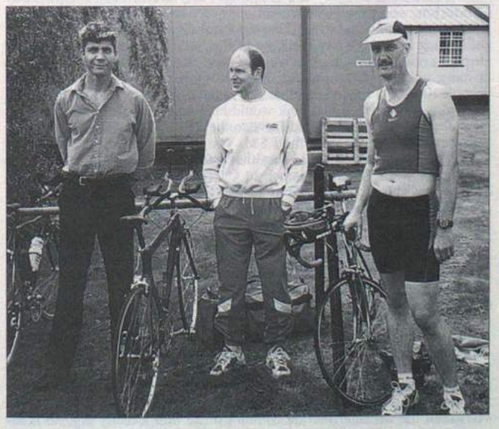
Monday saw the biggest challenge of the week: 'The Fan Dance'. We had decided to finish in style, and climb to the top of Pen-Y-Fan, the highest peak in the Brecon Beacons, not once, but twice. The route was very straightforward, start at the bottom on one side straight over the top to the bottom of the other side, turn around and do it all again! The weather was extremely kind to us, and the temperature soared making the walking quite difficult. However, we all managed to more or less complete the route, and the view from the top of The Fan was well worth the effort. The day finished with a relaxing swim in Brecon, before returning to our Base Camp for a good night's sleep before beginning the long trip, tired and aching, back to Lisburn. Special thanks must go to **SSgt Craig Marlowe, Sgt Nigel Smith** and **Sgt** 'Tug' **Wilson** for organising a few days away from the rigours of 'Data Entry' and to **Sig** 'Paddy' **Grills** for being the man at the back!

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON
MOTOR TRANSPORT TROOP

This last period has seen members of the Troop come and go in what has been a very busy time for those of us who are left. We welcome **LCpl** 'Laffs' **Lafferty** and **LCpl** 'Scouse' **Latham** who join us from 8 Bde and 3 Bde respectively. **LCpl Shawn Watson** and his lovely wife **Tina,** who have arrived from 21 Sig Regt, and then finally **Sig Charlie Lister** from 30 Sig Regt. May your tour be a happy one. Whilst **LCpl Mick Partridge** and **LCpl** 'Fitz' **Fitzpatrick** take it easy in Sunny Blandford on their trade reallocation course to Tele Mech. Congratulations and commiseration's go to **Sig** 'Huggs' **Huggett** for his commendable attempt at 264 selection - better luck next time. Impending postings are due for **Sig Ian Holmes** to 7 Bde, **Sig Keith Lovell** to 7 Sig Regt, **Sig** 'Huggs' **Huggett** to 249 Sig Sqn, **Sig** 'Tetley' **Crossley** to 11 Sig Regt and finally **LCpl Gaz Evans** to 2 Sig Regt. We all wish you well.

225 SIGNAL SQUADRON
NORTHERN IRELAND TRIATHLON CHAMPIONSHIPS 1999

Friday 10 September 1999, the big day. Had we trained enough? Had we packed all the kit? Would the bike hold together? All these questions and many more were running through our heads as we set off on a cold blustery morning. Ballykelly was our destination and with only three teams entered in the Minor Units competition the crack 225 triathlon team comprising **Capt Nick Yardley, Capt Robin Carpenter, Sgt Chris Benson** and **Sgt Stu Murray** had great aspirations of securing second place as news had filtered through that the ladies from 15 Sig Regt had pulled out. First into the pool was **Capt Robin** 'The fish' **Carpenter,** as he set off on the 500m swim everything was going according to plan. Then, after a strenuous three lengths he decided maybe swimming wasn't his thing after all and called it a day (how do Marines survive if they fall out of their boats?) The other three triathlon demigods successfully completed the swim and the 20km cycle ride, which turned out to be 20 miles with a gale thrown in for good measure. Next came the 5km run (Who measured this course?) and hopes were high of a good finish until **Chris** 'Omar' **Benson** ('Omar back, Omar leg') had to pull out with a bad back. Only kidding **Chris**. So only two of our legends finished but a good day was had by all and I think we have another convert to the sport in **Capt Nick Yardley** who appeared to enjoy himself no end.



(L-R): Capt Yardley, Sgt Benson and Sgt Murray

SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS - *by LCpl Quinn*

The Squadron has just seen the arrival of the new Officer Commanding, **Maj J. Tod,** and has also gone through a bit of a revamp of its orbat. The 'real workers' within the squadron have been given the brand new title of Squadron Headquarters, which is a great improvement on the former title of Alpha Tp, which didn't reflect the grandeur that we deserve. Things have been hectic in the RQMS department over the last few months, what with the arrival of a keen new RQMS and also a Board of Officers, the department has been rushed of its feet. Welcome to **WO2 (RQMS) Andy** 'Got any fags' **Hartley,** who had to move all of 500 metres from 39 Inf Bde and Sig Sqn, hope you enjoy time with us in the stores world. Also a sad farewell to **WO2 Paul** 'Saddam the Taxi Driver' **Downie,** the old RQMS who has had to walk up a flight of stairs to his new all important position of SSM. A small message from the department to the SSM - Sir, you've changed! As expected the Board of Officers ran smoothly, due to the preparation involved in the weeks beforehand. It was nice to see **Sgt Jimmy** 'Och no, call the RMPs' **Fox** in work for a week or two during the preparation, glad to see you had time between Tug O' War, resettling and leave! The real work was put in by the JNCOs, namely **Cpl Shane** 'Old Sweat' **Ackers, Cpl Ian** 'I don't want to go on a road trip' **Bennet** and **LCpl Jo** 'Don't stress me out, I'm giving in smoking' **Quinn.** Well done everyone. The Squadrons' two resident drivers, collectively known as Happy Meal are still working long hours, and more importantly keeping us entertained. **LCpl Kev** 'Chip on my shoulder' **James** has finally put in his paperwork to sign off after threatening to do so for the past year, and **LCpl Daz** 'Nugget' **Pullen** is trying very hard to get himself certified officially insane. **Capt** 'Chippy' **Carpenter** is still doing his 'thing' in the Security Office, although he has lost **WO2 Kev** 'Crusty Old Tart' **Connor,** who has gone back to join the real world of the Territorials! **Sgt Ian** 'I'm nicer than Bob Palmer' **Frame,** and our resident clerk **Alison** are still making sure our mail gets through, and doing all the other fine things that clerks do in the Squadron Office.

ECHO TROOP - *by Cpl Waites*

September saw the hosting of the annual 15 Sig Regt Sports Persons Dinner. Echo Tp was well represented with **SSgt Dunn, Cpl Waites** and **LCpl Halliday** all receiving Regimental Colours for football from the Commanding Officer and **Cpl Hill** receiving Colours for Tug o' War. The Tug o' War team deserves special mention, being built around a core of Echo Tp personnel and doing well despite the stiff competition at the prestigious Braemar Gathering. The Troop also provided the meat of 225 Sig Sqn's successful CO's Cup Football, **(SSgt Dunn, SSgt Piears, Cpl Waites, Cpl Hill, Cpl Burton, LCpl Halliday)** and partially successful CO's Cup Rugby, **(SSgt Dunn, SSgt Mars, Cpl Waites, Cpl Evans, Cpl Aldred, LCpl Marshall, LCpl Woodhouse)** teams. Congratulations must go to **LCpl Keen** and **LCpl Waites,** who both passed the Section Commander's FIBUA Instructor course. **LCpl Waites** is the first female of any rank in the British Army to have passed this course. A brief hello to the many who've arrived and an even briefer goodbye to those who have left us.

GOLF TROOP

The past few months have seen a change in the structure of the Troop, with the amalgamation of the projects department (SECO) and IT Support Group (ITSG) into the Troop. Our new Technical Adjutant, **Capt Ian Hargreaves** with his 21C, **WO2 (FofS) Tony Jenkins** now commands the newly formed Troop. This new structure gives greater cohesion of technical support for the Squadron allowing improved co-operation and planning for all operational tasks. The projects section is now headed up by the newly promoted **SSgt Gaz Walker** with help from **Cpl Phil Davies.** The Information Technology Support Group is headed by **WO2 George Murray** with **SSgt Paul Davey, Sgt Richie Gathercole, Cpl Dave Baldwin, Sgt Marie McChesney** and **Cpl Julie Phillips.** Our new head of the workshop is the newly arrived **SSgt (FofS) Simon Crowther** who is being broken in with the help of his 'Fluffer' **Sgt Stuart Murray** and **SSgt Bri Wilkins** our Troop Staff Sergeant. Well done to **Cpl Tony Cecil** for coming off the board at last another Telemech Sergeant made it into the mess. Farewell to **Cpl Tim Rigby** who has left us on promotion to RAF Bruggen we all miss you. Welcome to a new batch of Techs **Cpl Darren** 'Toon Army Fool' **Cranston, Cpl Matt** 'Stalker' **Williams, Sig Gaz** 'The General' **Stokoe** and **Sig Lee Stafford.**

233 SIGNAL SQUADRON - SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS

Hello's: A warm welcome to both **WO2 (SSM) Rob Dunseith** from 7 Sig Regt and **SSgt Kev Tierney** 259 Sig Sqn. **Sgt Robson** also joins SHQ from COMMCEN Tp, to assist the SSM in running the squadron training wing. Goodbye's: A fond farewell to both **WO2 (SSM) Shaun Day** who is off to 4 Armd Bde and **SSgt Jim Duncan** on his way to 259 Sig Sqn. We wish them and their families all the best for the future. Congratulations and best wishes from all the squadron to the 2IC Squadron, **Capt McColl** (nee Walster), on her recent marriage. Finally, a quick 'hello-goodbye' to **2Lts Heidi Hughes** and **Elizabeth Maclennan** who were attached to the Squadron for six weeks prior to starting their Troop Commander's course (lucky them!) Well, as **Heidi** managed to fit in two weeks in Andorra and **Elizabeth** a week in Scotland and a week patrolling with the QLR's, I think they both had an interesting and varied time. With the only low point being sea-sickness with the Navy (they were only on a loch!). Best of luck to you both.

MCKELVIE FOOTBALL - *by LCpl Allen*

COMMCEN Tp WIN! Yes COMMCEN Tp wins the McKelvie Cup 5-a-side football. It is true C Tp have won something, under the expert captaincy of **LCpl Allen** they won the title with a clean sweep beating all other teams in the Squadron. Now for the match reports (Highlights none bias?):

Game 1	C Tp vs TM Tp	1-0
Game 2	C Tp vs R Tp	4-1
Game 3	C Tp vs I Tp	2-0

Players that stood out and match facts:
Sig 'Cartman' **Rhodes** almost kept a clean sheet allowing only one goal past his goal-keeping talents (he was bigger than the goal!) Half-time came and words of encouragement were provided by **SSgt** 'I don't do losing' **Gratrick**, which had everyone too scared to lose. Other stars in the elite team (are you watching **Kev**) were **Sigs Stevenson, Simpson, Pennock, Rodwell, Gorman, Pallis** and **Neesam** the rumours that Gazza made a brief appearance have proven to be unfounded and finally congratulations to all. C Tp says bring on the next sporting challenge.

SUPERSTARS - *by LCpl Peters*
I, **LCpl** 'AX' **Peters** vow never to share a bright idea with anyone ever again, just one word to my old boss **SSgt** 'Jacko' **Jackson** on how we should hold a superstars competition. Next thing I know I've been told to organise a full day's competition, for the four Troops and SHQ, to commemorate 233 Sig Sqn 40th Anniversary on 1 September 1999. After two months of writing begging letters, tearing my hair out and harassing **Sgt** 'Robbo' **Robson,** the day of the event dawned. Regardless of the glitches and setbacks the entire day was a success. COMMCEN Troop won after competing in nine events which comprised of Golf, Football, Swimming, Basketball, Long Jump, Javelin, 200m Sprint and the piece-de-resistance a one and a half mile run followed by a gruelling gym test. The CO, **Lt Col Rafferty,** presented COMMCEN Tp with their well deserved trophy (another one yep hee), **Capt** 'Jules' **McColl** (OC C Tp) won an individual medal for best female over all. A good day was had by all.

THE HELLOS AND GOODBYES
Goodbye to **SSgt** 'Jacko' **Jackson** and **Sgt** 'Daisy' **Mundy** who leave NI smiling for the first time in 18 months. **Sig** 'Cartman' **Rhodes** who leaves us and is going to I Tp, to work on the help desk. Now we KNOW nothing is going to get done. Hello to **SSgt** 'Icky' **Gratrick** who arrives just in time to start a 'Save our Pegasus' Campaign with other Airborne members of the Regiment.

TECHNICAL MAINTENANCE TROOP
Once again we start with welcomes, goodbyes and congratulations to several members of the Troop, First of all a big welcome to **WO2 Rick Gorman** and wife **Sharyn** (yet someone else from 3 Div) taking over as Troop OC as well as Squadron Foreman, which should keep him busy what with sixty odd CR's to write! Next but by no way least is SSgt **Flo Jarvis** as the new workshops Staff Sergeant along with **SSgt Kev Teirney** who takes over as BTLO and Sqn Trg SSgt. Next in line are **Cpls Al Walsh** and **Lee Rotherforth, LCpls Daz Flay, Steve Boyd, Lee Khair, Steve Perkins** and **Louise Parker** (Pinky and Perky), **Danni Tutton** and **Jay Lowe. Sigs Michele Raynor** and **Kerry Stewart** follow up the rear (no pun intended). Welcome to the province we all hope that you have a safe and pleasant tour. Welcome also to **SSgt Daz Ware** on his return from yet another long period of absence. Just how he manages so much time off without even touching his leave is a mystery to us all. Recent escapees include **SSgt Shaun Cook** off to 7 Sig Regt via a Kosovo sightseeing tour. **SSgt** 'Bod' **McDonald** who once again managed to prove that records do occasionally get you what you want and went to AFCENT. **Sig** 'Hoss' **Cartwright** should have been on the beach in Cyprus along side **Cpl** 'Ant' **Tranter** and **Sgt Ind** but on the very day he was due to leave was posted to sunny Edinburgh instead! **Cpl Sharon Lothian** decided on a bit of greenery and went off to 1 Div and **Sgt Kelly** managed to find a sleepy hollow in the UK to finish off his service. Closer to home **LCpl** 'Aide' **Field** has moved the short distance across to India Tp so it'll be a while before we see him on PT again! Farewells on departure to civvy street go to **ex-Sgt Cleggy Cleghorn** and **Cpl Al Hayhurst,** we wish you both the very best of luck for the future. Congratulations go to **Cpl Andy Carter** and **LCpl Sharon Pillans** on promotion, and a well done and pat on the back to **Sgt Dede Watts** and wife **Liz,** on their new arrival **Christopher** (let the sleepless nights begin).
The Troop as ever has been heavily involved in the usual projects, activities and fastballs (which some say are to justify the extra pay) and on top of all this is the Squadron 'social activities'. The Troop has done rather well in the Squadron McKelvie Trophy sports competition coming second at the Football, Rugby, Softball and a first in the Hockey. More recently the All Stars Competition was not only a chance for everyone competing to embarrass themselves attempting the pull ups and dips, but also an opportunity for the SNCO's of the Troop to embarrass the JNCO's by beating them! After a bit of last minute rescheduling **SSgt Mann** has finally got the expedition to Andorra under way, and should hopefully be arriving in location as this is being written, details in the next edition.

40 (ULSTER) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO **Lt Col A. P. R. Roberts MBE**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) C. G. McGinley**



Congratulations to **SSgt Dave Watson** who was recently awarded his Long Service and Good Conduct Medal by the **Lord Lt of Co.Down**. Also congratulations to **WO1 Brotherston** and **SSgt Cassidy** who were awarded with their Territorial Army Efficiency Medals.

DEPARTURES & ARRIVALS
At long last the final round of departures and arrivals is complete and the CO now has his brand new train set that he can play with for the next two years. August saw the change over of Adjutants from **Capt Dominic Sharkey** to **Capt Andy Lucas** as well as the arrival of **Maj Graham Leyland** as Trg Maj. The Regiment also welcomed into its fold **WO1 Pete Hodson** as Regtl FofS and **SSgts Cassidy and Gallagher.** Welcome to you all and good luck at 40. As well as **Capt Sharkey** we say farewell to **SSgt Dave Watson, Sgt Brannon** and **LCpl Goodwin**. Good luck to you all and many thanks for all your efforts during your time with 40 Sig Regt (V).

EXERCISE PEMBROKE FINN
Ex Pembroke Finn was the annual PSIs Adventure Training Exercise for 1999 and this year we decided to leave the wind and rain of N.Ireland and swap it for some more of the same at 14 Sig Regt (EW) Adventure Training Centre in Brawdy.
On arrival at Brawdy the Advance Party were met by **Cpl Andy Anderton**, who would take care of our every needs (what a good bloke!). The training consisted of walking the Pembrokeshire Coastal Path, a day of Sailing at Dale, a day climbing at Porthclais and an overnight canoe trip from Solva to Newgale. We also tried our hand at water skiing, sea fishing, golf and power boating. As with any Exercise of this nature some people deserve a special mention as a result of their strenuous efforts. On arrival it was decided that rank would take no place on the Exercise, 'Is that alright with you Sir? said **Dave** to the RSM, **WO1 Chris McGinley**, 'Just call me Cheryl', said the RSM. The REME Tiffy, **SSgt John Voss** (alias Jeremy Clarkson) did just that and called him 'Cheryl' for the remainder of the Exercise, much to Cheryl's displeasure. The evenings were spent at various social venues and Haverfordwest has lots of them (Not!), however, the evening spent at Brawdy Lanes deserves a special mention.
SSgt Harry 'Tenner says it isn't' **Harrison** decided to bet his life away on a game with **SSgt Dave Watson**. He lost badly and never really recovered. For the rest of the week he was a broken man, but then we're used to that by now. **SSgt** 'BJ' **Finister** mistook the event for the world championships and was duly dealt with by **SSgt John Voss** and his 'no rules' marking system. This almost brought BJ to tears, but after a few quiet words from **LCpl John** 'Dangerous' **Dunwoody**, BJ regained his composure and with a fresh layer of lipstick and eye shadow BJ went on to win well. Once the bowling was completed it was time to join Cheryl who was by now propping up everything except the bar. **SSgt Harry Harrison** had by now decided to take his bets to the pizza bar, betting **Graham** the manager that he couldn't make him a really big, no holds barred pizza. **Graham** gladly took up the challenge and within 15 minutes produced a pizza of monstrous proportions. What **Harry** didn't know was that **Graham** had doctored the pizza with chillies and chilli sauce. Ah lost again **Harry**, well never mind there's always next year! As the remainder of the lads suffered eating the pizza, **Sgt Mick Simcock** stood by with a fire extinguisher just in case. The team now led by Cheryl, decided to have a game of spoof. This was all new to **Sgt Matt Murray** who protested throughout the game that he didn't know the rules. The Exercise was extremely enjoyable and Brawdy really isn't that bad! Well, a week was okay.



(L-R): Sgt Simcock, Cpl Searles, Sgt Murray and SSgt Harrison

ANNUAL CRICKET MATCH
The Annual Cricket Match between the Officers/SNCOs and the JRC took place at Ballykelly on 1 August 1999. Surprisingly the weather conditions were perfect and it turned out to be one of the warmest days of the summer. Having won the toss the JRC elected to take full advantage of the excellent conditions and bat first. After a slow start the JRC rallied to 80 for 4 after 11 overs. They ended up with 128 runs off their allotted 20 overs after some clever bowling by **SSgt** 'Googly' **Harrison** who ended up with a bowling figure of 3 wickets at the cost of just 9 runs. Top batsman for the JRC was **Sig Trev Buchanan** who scored 33 runs. It was now the turn of the Officers/SNCOs. The batting was opened by **Maj Brian Houston** and **WO2 (SSM) McKnight** who scored a total of 8 runs. This dismal start continued and the Officers/SNCOs were soon 15 for 3 off 7 overs. The match was all but over, however, the JRC had not banked on the efforts of **SSgt** 'Poacher' **Cammack** and **Sgt Dave Evans** who put on a magnificent partnership of 88 runs. Sadly for the joint team the remaining batsman could only bring their score up to 125 thus leaving the JRC victors by a margin of 3 runs.



The victorious JRC Cricket Team

39 INFANTRY BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (213)

OC **Maj N. J. Borrill**
RSM **WO1(RSM) S. M. Lockwood**

SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS
It has been an extremely busy period within the Unit over the past two months. Many hours of work have gone into preparation for the Marching Season and the dreaded Y2K date of 9 September 1999. The Marching Season was very quiet and although, for the troops drafted in it was uneventful, the support elements of the Squadron worked all hours to ensure the Comms infrastructure was there 'Just in case'.

FAREWELLS & WELCOMES
Farewell goes to **WO1 (RSM) Lawes** and his family who have gone off to Sennelager to join 200 Sig Sqn and to **SSgt Leslie Skinner** who has left on promotion to WO2 to join 47 Regt RA as RAOWO,in Thorney Island. We wish them well. A warm welcome goes to **WO1 (RSM) Lockwood,** his wife **Dawn** and the new addition to the family, **Bradley**. Also to **SSgt Si Smart**, his wife **Rosheen** and children **Shannon, Keeleigh, Holly** and **Lucy** who has joined us from HQNI, as Squadron Chief Clerk. We hope you have a good tour.

REGIMENTAL QUARTERMASTER'S DEPARTMENT
by Sig Pack
We've been given a new RQMS in the form of **WO2 (RQMS) Kev** 'No nickname yet' **Belam,** and YET another friendly face from 1 ADSR, **LCpl Rik** 'Nick Nick Nick Whiskey' **Sherriff**, in addition we also welcome **Pte Keith** 'This is a dream come true' **Hardy** from the Brigade Commander's Rover Group. After only one week in the Department he went through an identity crisis and changed his name from 'Richie Valentino' back to **Keith Hardy** - Enough said!! As for the rest of the Department, hard work was shown by both **Sgt Sean** 'Yogi' **Hyland** and **Sig Faye** 'White water, I love it' **Edwards** on returning form Ex Bavaria Finn with excellent suntans, but meanwhile back at the ranch **Cpl John McGuinness** and I were busying ourselves with keeping the Squadron running (Logistically speaking that is).

HELLOS AND GOODBYES - OPERATING SECTION
After a hectic marching season with everyone working at least 20 hours a day and with the other four on pager, I've finally got time to put pen to paper to compose our list of 'Hellos and Goodbyes'. Firstly we would like to welcome **Lt** 'Annabel' **Taylor** from 7 Sig Regt who has taken over the best job in the Squadron of Operating Section OC, quite an easy job by all accounts with the class of soldier she has to look after. The Section also welcomes **Cpl** 'Chris' **Jones** from 3 Div, **Sig** 'Gordie' **Richardson** also from 3 Div, what are they trying to say?, **LCpl** 'Vicki' **Moran** from 24 Bde and **Sig** 'Jenny' **Sarsfield** from 280 Sig Sqn who have all been lucky enough to be posted to either SYSCON or the COMMCEN. It's not too bad really, you only have two years to do! Rover Group have also asked me to welcome **LCpl** 'Geordie' **Allinson** who has made the vast trek all the way from MT to the Group. The biggest loss to the Squadron is **Cpl** 'Arthur' **Buchan** who has made his sad departure from us to JCUNI on promotion to Sergeant, Friday nights and leaving Do's will never be the same again! A big Good Luck and farewell also goes to **Sig** (now Mr) 'Si' **Winchester** who has taken the big step into joining Civvy Street and finally to **Sig** 'Jase' **Manton** who is promoted to Lance Corporal and is posted to 11 EOD.

DRIVE ALIVE 1999
On Thursday 2 September 1999, 39 Bde's Drive Alive Competition was held at the Maze Prison. 39 Inf Bde HQ and Sig Sqn entered a team comprising of 3 x RLC drivers. The team comprised of **LCpl Allinson** (Team Capt) RLC, **LCpl Walsh** RLC, **Pte Wilkinson** RLC. We arrived and were briefed on the different stands: First Aid, Vehicle Accident Contact Drills and Skid Car Training, all the stands had driver orientated themes relating to Northern Ireland.
I think the stand that everyone enjoyed overall was the Skid Car on loan from the RUC and the aim of this was not to knock over the cones on the course. We all seemed to do quite well even though the instructor thought that **Pte Wilkinson** may have been a joy rider before he joined the Army because he was that good. We completed the rest of the stands and we headed over to the prize giving which was conducted by **Col Douglas** R IRISH, Deputy Commander, 39 Bde. Surprisingly enough 39 Inf Bde HQ and Sig Sqn had come third out of 12 teams. We were pleased with that considering we had little practice. The results were as follows:

1st 46 NI WkShps
2nd 5 Regt AAC
3rd 39 Inf Bde HQ and Sig Sqn (213)

EXERCISE PENHALE FINN
by Sig Jamie Buyers and Sig Jenny Sarsfield
05 00hrs and we were bound for Penhale Camp just ten minutes drive away from the sunny surf capital of Cornwall, Newquay. The life style at this end of the world was a definite contrast to the hectic and restrictive life in the Province, so it was the ideal location to kick back and enjoy some arduous adventure surfing, I mean training.
Climbing, canoeing, trekking and of course surfing were on the menu for our ten days stay in Cornwall. The canoeing instructor being **Cpl Wayne** 'Speedo trunks' **Addy** from 177 SPL. The climbing was taken by **SSM** 'Smudge' **Smith**, from 1 Staffords. The NITL instructor was **2Lt Lucy** 'Long Legs' **Pim**. Everybody was split down into two groups, my group being led by **WO2 (Yofs) Dave** 'Man from Atlantis' **Brudenall** and the other group being headed by **Cpl Ken** 'Milky Bar Kid' **Johnston**. The first day, for us, was canoeing the highlight of the day had to be when **SSgt Paul** 'Lycra boy' **Robinson** attempted to don the smallest wetsuit available, which proceeded to cut off the circulation to all major areas of his body. The day was spent mostly getting wet through, doing capsize drills and other escape methods. Once we had finished we were straight down to the beach for a bit of sunshine and surfing, where **Pte Addi** 'Water Baby' **Lavery** could not get enough on

her body board. Our groups climbing day was blisteringly hot and the object was the further up you go the better suntan you got. There were some very good climbs set up for us ranging from easy to moderately difficulty. We also did some abseiling down an 80ft cliff to guess where .....the beach where we chilled out for an hour. The other group attempted the larger and more dangerous abseil of 150ft no problems though as **LCpl Paul** 'Universal Soldier' **Wade** had three goes. Again the day's activity was rounded off by a trip down the beach to top up on sun and surf. The activities moved onto the trekking' where group one left for two days. This was a very traumatic time for **Pte Lee** 'Whots it al aboot?' **Bramwell** as he was separated from his sidekick **Pte Keith** 'Yellow beard cut throat' **Hardy**. The trekking was ten miles each day along a coastal path that seemed to have more ups than downs than was expected. The going was quite difficult due to the very hot weather and rocky terrain, there were a few sore feet and blisters after the walk even the NITL instructor was exhausted after the day's trek.

A big Happy Birthday goes out to two of the girls, **Sig Jenny** 'Wonderbra' **Sarsfield** and **LCpl Emma** 'Country Girl' **King**, plenty of celebrating to do there. We were all entertained in the night club by **Sig Jamie** 'I'm still in Ibiza' **Buyers** dancing on the podium. The ten days were finished off by a surfing lesson at Watergate Beach by 7 Bays Surf School from **Matt** and the rest of the Aussie lads. By the end of the day most of us were standing and riding them in just like on the telly. Well maybe not!

8 INFANTRY BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (218)

Sqn Comd **Maj Jake Thackray**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) Paul Flemming**

CRICKET SENIORS vs THE JUNIORS - *By Sig 'Gordie' Harrison*

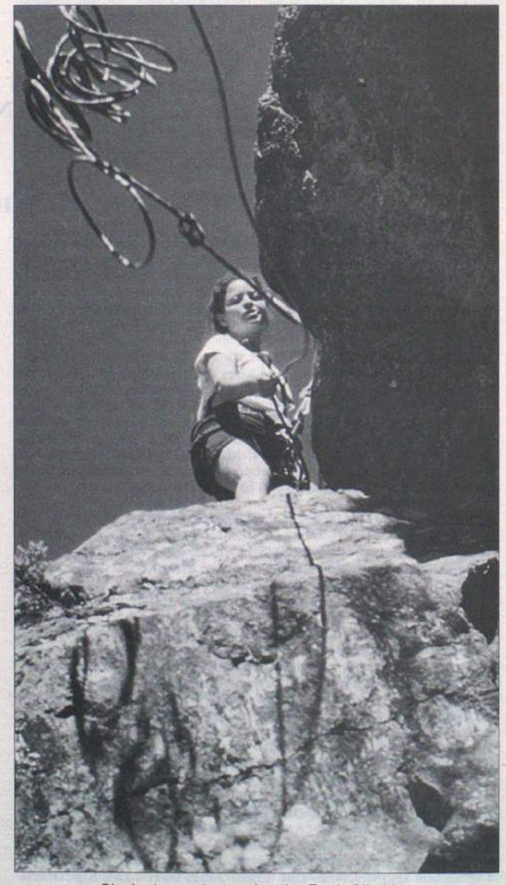
The pitch was marked out, the weather was booked and the deck chairs set out. The players and the crowd were all expecting a good day out and that is exactly what they got. The seniors turned up with their zimmer frames and shuffled on to take up their fielding positions. The juniors batted first with **Cpl Pete Mayhead** and **Cpl Paul Howe** showing the OAPs exactly how to knock the ball over the park. Eventually the seniors caught both of them out and **Pte Mark Shaw** and **LCpl James Bond** came on and started to pick the pace up a little. **LCpl James Bond** easily scored 30 not out and so it was then **Sig** 'Geordie' **Harrison's** turn. **Sig Harrison** was the juniors' secret weapon and scored 32 off 8 balls, 5 sixes and two singles. He made it look so easy. **Pte Mark Shaw** also scored 30 and it looked as if the juniors were heading for a huge score. All the other team members gave it their all adding to the total score. The seniors at this stage were bowling well, especially **Sgt Dan Coles**. They were gaining a steady amount of wickets so eventually the opening batters were back in. This is when the juniors really began to show their style. The seniors started to bowl 'dogs' dinners' so the juniors took advantage. The pairing of the game has to go to **Sig Harrison** and **LCpl Bond**. **Sig Harrison** scored 81 not out and **LCpl Bond** scored 56 not out. The juniors' score was tremendous. The seniors' innings was a shameful performance. They started confidently, well for the first ball anyway. They had all the gear but they certainly had no idea. The assembled crowd had a great laugh watching their weird and wonderful batting styles. None of the seniors made a lasting impression apart from the **OC** who was out for a duck. The best performance however came from **Mrs Vera Hair** who bravely stood in at the last moment. She made us crease with laughter and she will certainly be on the team next year. **WO2 (MTWO) Hair** also got a name for himself for not catching **Sig Harrison** out. A little piece of advice for the **MTWO** 'keep your eyes on the ball'. The score was a dismal 32 for the seniors to a fantastic one zillion to the juniors. It was a great day for all involved. A big thank-you to all that played and also to those who organised the event.

EXERCISE HIGHLAND FINN II 10 – 24 SEPTEMBER 1999

OIC Exercise **WO2 (RQMS) Kev Tunstall**
Instructors **Sgt Eddie Porter**
Sgt Pete Mills
Sig Mary Anderson

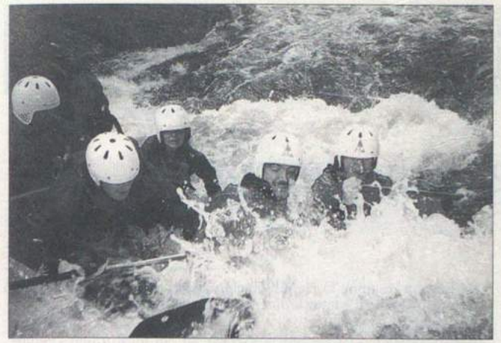
The Exercise was held in the Highlands of Scotland over a period of two one week blocks with twenty students attending each week. The DS set out early for Kingussie in order to take over the accommodation and set themselves up for the arrival of the first batch of students. The students arrived were briefed on the week's activities, and then unleashed on to the population of Aviemore. The RQMS and the remainder of the DS had an early night, as it was an early start the next day. Unfortunately they were woken by one of the eager students who stood at the end of the RQ's bed shouting 'S-M-A-S-H!' **Sig Phil Parish** was then told to go to bed and quickly.

Day One began with a nice gentle stroll around the base of the Cairn Gorm. **Sig** 'Flip Flop' **Fowler** decided that he would do the 10 mile walk in football socks and his disco moon boots. He finished the walk with blisters the size of Loch Ness and subsequently bought three pairs of walking socks for £30 but still took no further part in any of the mountaineering phase. The expedition on the Cairngorm mountain range took place over the next two days. **Sgt Eddie Porter** led the Group 1 and **Sgt Pete Mills** led Group 2. The OC joined this phase of the Exercise. The first group started at the Cafe beside Loch Morlich and proceeded uphill towards the ski centre at the bottom of Cairn Gorm where they stopped for refreshments. After a short rest they headed towards the top of the Cairn Gorm, a climb of approximately 600ft. At the top the group headed in a westerly direction skirting to the edge of Cairn Lochan, then headed to Ben Macdui, the highest peak in the Cairngorm range. Once at the top they had to work off compass bearings as the weather had closed in dramatically and the visibility was very poor. At one stage some other walkers on the mountain had to be rescued by Group 1. After the dramatic rescue Group 1 headed on to the westerly ridge of Ben Macdui then followed it down to Hutchinson's Memorial hut where they set up camp and waited for Group 2. Group 2 had set off from Braemar and followed the road to Victoria Bridge and then on to the bottom of Derry Hill. They then had a steady climb up to Derry Lodge and after a quick rest they continued the climb to Hutchinson's Lodge. The following morning both groups set out in the direction that the other group had taken the day before. Both had an extremely enjoyable expedition.



Sig Anderson instructing the Rock-Climbing

The following day the OC, after a hearty breakfast cooked by the RQ, headed back to Northern Ireland. The remainder set out for the Great Glen Waterpark for a day of watersports. The students were split in to two groups. Group 1 headed to the white water rafting on a local river.



The RQMS getting a little wet whilst on Ex Highland Finn II

The second Group stayed at the Loch side and had a go at jet skiing, banana rides, donut rides and canoeing. The first person to hit the cold water was **Sig Mary Anderson**, who was still dressed, keen or what? The white water rafting was enjoyed by everyone even the non-swimmers. After lunch both groups swopped over activities. At the end of the activities for the day the RQ and the DS provided the students with a barbecue and light refreshments. The last two days consisted of cycling or rock climbing. Group 1 headed out to Duntelchaig about 40mins away from Kingussie for a day of throwing oneself off a high rock face. The first route was a severe climb followed by an abseil. The three remaining climbs were top roping sessions, which allowed the students to participate in belaying and spotting. Group 2 set out from the ski centre at the bottom of Cairn Gorm on mountain bikes for a 40 mile cycle. The route was on and off road and extremely undulating. It was very arduous and the majority of the group found it particularly difficult to sit down that night. A big thank-you to the **RQMS** and all the instructors for organising an excellent two weeks adventure training. It was a great success and we all hope to attend again next year.

THE REGIMENTAL QUARTERMASTER'S DEPARTMENT
By LCpl Wardle

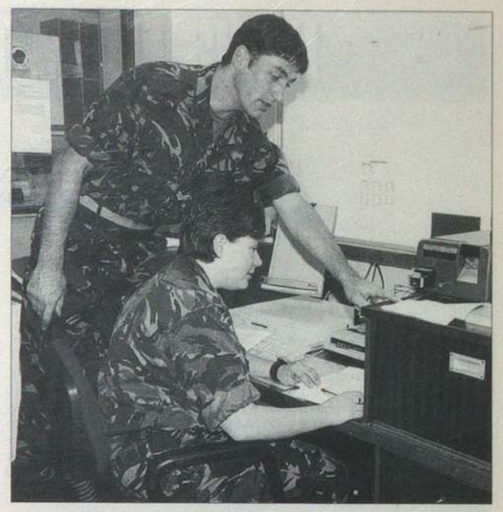
RQMS **WO2 Kev Tunstall**

It has been a relatively quiet period for the Department with only one sad farewell to **LCpl Ben Gallimore** who has seen the light and is heading off to Civ Div. Best of luck to you and your wife. Unfortunately no arrivals to replace him as yet. Since the last instalment of *The WIRE* not a great deal has happened apart from a mass exodus from the Department for a week's adventure training in the Highlands of Bonnie Scotland.

COMMUNICATIONS TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt Jo Stewart**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Tony Taylor**

Since the Marching Season is now over you would think that the frantic pace of work would settle down. However, this was when a large number of the Troop went away on leave, courses and adventure training. Unfortunately this has meant that for those left behind it has still been just as busy. Engineering Section have had worked piled on them by the FofS with antenna trawls on all the masts in the Brigade area. The technicians have been busy with the maintenance of the technical equipment in preparation for the next round of inspections. A large number of the Troop went on the Squadron adventure training in Scotland. In general they all returned very tired with a lot less money in their pockets. Now on to the hellos and goodbyes we have to say a very sad farewell to one of the key members of Engineering Section **LCpl** 'Noo Noo' **Mier**. He is off to University in Stirling to study Spanish and Education.....'Big Mac and fries please Noo Noo!' We also have to say good bye to **Sgt Pete Mills** who is of to 2 Sig Regt York where he was going to be the SQMS however now he is going to be in the MT or is it the Training wing?? Thanks for all your hard work. Also to **LCpl Zoe Gallimore** who is heading off to Civ Div with her hubby. Welcome to **Cpl Danny Adams**, **LCpl Steve Binks**, **LCpl Tony Hodgson**, and **LCpl Andy Law** we hope that you enjoy your tour.



Cpl Moore gives LCpl Glen a helping hand in the COMMCEN

SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS

Ops Offr **Capt Seymour**
YofS **WO2 (YofS) Barnes**
FofS **WO2 (FofS) Brown**

In the last few months there have been a few comings and goings in the Ops Plans and the AO of the Squadron. Firstly a sad and belated farewell to **WO2 (YofS) Nigel Donohue** who left the Squadron on promotion and to a place on the BOWMAN team at Blandford and welcome to his replacement **WO2 (YofS) Bill Barnes**. Also farewell to **SSgt Billy Redman** who has left the army for a career in civ div with a well-known telecommunications firm. Welcome to his replacement **SSgt Ian Burton** who has arrived from RSS. Good luck to the Squadron 2IC, **Capt Seymour** and his wife **Ely** in their move to the big smoke and Civvy Street. Good luck to **Cpl Al MacDonald** the ABTLO who is off to the better climate in the Falkland Islands. SHQ say a sad farewell to **Cpl** 'Brummi' **Flute** and **Cpl** 'Scouce' **Woosey** from the training wing and welcome to **Pte Steve Wilson** to the training wing from his short stint in the MT.

MOTOR TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT - *By WO2 (MTWO) Hair*

MTWO **WO2 (MTWO) Hair**
Tp Sgt **Sgt Stanley**

The last few weeks of the Marching Season were hectic for the MT so at the end of the last period of Increased Preparedness the troop wanted to scatter on leave and courses. Unfortunately the rest of the Brigade Headquarters and Signal Squadron had the same idea and it continued to be very busy with the normal shuttles to and from the airport. The MT have clocked up on average a staggering 70,000 to 80,000 miles a month. A huge thank you from the MTWO for all the hard work and commitment they have put into the MT for the last few months. It was good to see **Sgt Stanley** back from his four weeks sick leave after having his appendix removed. This baffled the MTWO who was on a life support machine and only got two weeks sick leave! Now on to the hellos and goodbyes. The Troop would like to welcome **LCpl Shane McFadden** from 21 Log Support, **Pte** 'Beefcake' **Philcock** from 3 CS we hope they both have an enjoyable tour of Londonderry. Farewell to **LCpl Paul Lawler** who arrived from 3 Inf Bde Sig Sqn and is now off to 21 Log Sup in Kinnegar, **Pte Richy Street** who is off to Bielefeld in Germany and finally **Sgt Mark Guest** who has left us for the sunnier climbs of Leconfield. Congratulations to **LCpl Paul Lawer** and **Pte** 'Strasse' **Street** and their wives for the two newest arrivals in the Troop, bouncing babies **Josh** and **Eleanor**.

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NEWS FROM THE REGIMENTS

1 (UNITED KINGDOM) ARMOURED DIVISION HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO **Lt Col E. M. Flint**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) Hymas**

201 SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj Colin Lawrence**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Kev Simmons**

The last couple of months have seen a break in the Squadron's busy regime with the emphasis being placed on leave and adventurous training. The aim being to have a bit of fun and enjoyment prior to embarking on two major exercises in October and November. Many Congratulations go to **WO2 Kev Simmons** whose wedding finally took place and to the many new arrivals in the Squadron (both babies and soldiers).

EAGLE TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt Michelle Hanlon**
Tp SSgt **Sgt Gerry McGachy**

The months of August and September were another two busy months for the boys and girls of Eagle Tp. After the hustle and bustle of RIST the Troop received many good reports, in particular **Sig** 'Birt' **Entwistle** for the best PV in the Regiment (which was only to be expected from **Cpl** 'Jasper' **Scarrott**, his mentor) the Troop then went on a well-deserved summer leave. On return from leave **SSgt Kev Greenwood** departed to 212 Sig Sqn as acting SSM and **Lt Michell Hanlon** returned from a six-month holiday in Canada. We also saw the safe return of **Sigs John Doran**, 'Smudge' **Smith** and 'Speedy' **Mann** from Kosovo along with their epic tales of war. The Troop spent the last week of September in Bavaria on adventure training under the watchful eyes of **Sgts Ian Conlan** and **Gerry** 'It's not canoeing, it's kayaking!!!' **McGachy**. Both kayaking and rock climbing went well. Congratulations and a number of slabs are in order for **Sgt Paul Garratt** on promotion to Sergeant again! Also on the list are **LCpls Paul Lomas**, **Chris** 'Disco King' **Glennard** and **Jenny Campbell** on selection for promotion to Corporal, and last but not least congratulations go to **Cpl** 'Jed' **Halliday** on receipt of his LS&GC.

FALCON TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt Chris Biddulph**
Tp SSgt **Sgt P. B.W. Hogg**

To start off with the Troop would like to say a sad farewell to **Sig** 'Butch' **Wimpenny**, the best relay operator **Cpl** 'Stevie' **Sparrow** could muster, who is off to civvy street. He will be sadly missed. And a big hello to **Cpl** 'Taff' **Thomas** who has to fill the boots of **Cpl** 'Stu' **Williamson** and boy are they big boots, good luck to you 'Taff'. The Troop just returned from adventure training in Bavaria, where a good time was had by all, despite **Lt Biddulph** wanting to take the hill walkers up the biggest and steepest hills he could find, what's wrong with that? It was during the water skiing sadly that **Lt Biddulph** learnt that even he couldn't walk on water but a few of his Troop could and were really quite good at it.

KESTREL TROOP - *by Sig Hearty*
Tp Comd **2Lt Foote**
Tp SSgt **SSgt** 'China' **Cooper**

On the 26 September members of the Squadron deployed to Bavaria for a week of adventurous training, not fully aware of what lay ahead. We arrived at approximately 1800hrs after a long drive where we were given the usual dos and don'ts of the area, one of these being the 0030hrs curfew with the bar closing at 2330hrs prompt. After the briefing it was time for the issue of kit for the relevant activity. Due to the long drive, fatigue began to set in therefore the remainder of the night was quiet in comparison to the forthcoming events. Monday morning 0700hrs reveille in time for breakfast at 0730hrs, where we also made out rolls for lunch. On this morning we were given a short brief by **LCpl** 'Wilf' **Warnes** and **Lt Biddulph** on the current climate conditions before embarking on our hill walking expedition for the day. We started with a gentle stroll down towards the foot of the hill where we realised what actually lay ahead. After setting off up the hill it wasn't long before certain members of the group including **Sig** 'The Slug' **Gallagher** began dropping back. The original climb set in the exhaustion which remained with many through the rest of the day. At the end everybody was glad to see the minibus back to camp knowing that in an hours time the bar would be open. Friday was a day of choice. Many people chose white water rafting and Hundelbahn which ended up being more dangerous than originally thought as **Sig** 'Fish' **Fisher** removed an area of skin off both his chin and forearm resulting in painful grazing. Saturday and time to return to Herford after a hard but rewarding week of adventurous training.

HAWK TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt Angela Aylward**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Pollitt** (when he eventually arrives!)

BAG vs RAF RUGBY LEAGUE - *by LCpl Mick Hepworth*

Despite the lack of enthusiasm for Rugby League in the British Army a squad of 19 players turned out for a two day trial for a game against the RAF. Trained by one of the Wiggan Warriors' coaches, **Gary Eklestone**, everyone put in 100%. **Gary** was very surprised by the hard work and knowledge of the game. I went along not expecting to gain a place in the team but just to gain some experience. To my disbelief only 19 turned up and **Gary** ended up playing us all. The training was hard but useful, we all learnt a lot about the game but it in the end all paid off. By the time Saturday came around my body was in bits. The nerves started to kick in but the excitement put the nerves to the back of my head. When the time came to enter the field we were all firing and ready to go to war. The game got under way and from the start we looked in control with a couple of early tries. By the second half the RAF looked tired and our fitness was showing with more tries. The RAF did manage to score two tries but never looked like winners. The final whistle came and the Army were the winners by a small margin, ARMY 72 RAF 8, but no one could take anything away from the RAF, they also have commitments and had to scrape a team together. If anyone is interested in starting a Rugby League team then I'm sure **Jim Aspinal** would be more than happy to give you any information on Herford 3699.

SUPPORT TROOP
Tp Comd **2Lt David Spencer**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Kev German**

During September various Squadron personnel deployed on a weeks adventurous in Bavaria. The journey down was fairly uneventful apart from the usual trolley dash at the PX where it was just one big dash to the bargains. For the elements of Support Tp climbing was their main choice, a choice which started fairly slowly with a long safety and instructional brief on the first morning. The afternoon went a lot quicker as we progressed into the climbing phase. The first day ended with a well-earned meal and a few drinks in the bar. As the days went by we all progressed quite well and were now climbing reasonably difficult climbs. This meant that **Sgt Conlan** had to put up some more difficult climbs. On our R&R day 15 people from the Squadron decided to go white water rafting in Austria. There was two boats from 201 Sig Sqn and two boats from another unit. As you can well imagine there was some fierce confrontations between the two units. On the whole though it would be fair to say that 201 Sqn did come out on top by successfully deflating the other boats. Roll on the skiing season.

PARACHUTING

The beginning of September saw members of 201 Signal Squadron embark on a week of parachute training at Bad Lippespringe Parachute Center. None of us had ever participated in an activity, which was as nerve wracking as this was sure to be. The first day and the ground training begins, with the tension mounting as we get introduced to the rigs and the plane. With the first day of training everybody is getting restless, half wanting to get up in the plane, and half wanting to be RTU'd. The second day and the waiting is over as we all suit up for the first jump at 3000ft, the nerves had definitely set in. In a matter of minutes we would be lunging out of a plane with many a thought rushing through our heads, will the chute open, will I remember my reserves, will I LIVE! Afterwards all had survived and the only thing on the minds for most was the bar for a beer. The third day and there was bad visibility therefore the ones who were anxious to get back up were getting annoyed whereas others were happy to have their feet firmly on the ground. However in the afternoon the fog had lifted and it was back up again for the second jump. For the first time there was a refusal in mid flight by **LCpl Ellis** who was adamant at the time he had had enough, whilst **Sig** 'Liz' **Brown** sacked all landing drills and decided the buttocks would be the best option, not so. For everybody else the jumps went reasonably well. Enough time to pack the chute's before heading to the bar for a few beers. On the Thursday it was personal choice on how many jumps you wished to get in along with the speed in which you packed your chute. **Cpl Chris Glennard** being cocky as per usual attempted a perfect landing on the mat in the middle of the drop zone and in his moment he broke one of the rules of the sky and therefore was grounded! **LCpl Ellis** managed to bring himself round to get back up for another jump and all went well. The night was the end of course beers with a barbecue, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Friday was clean up day then off back to Herford for a well-earned rest.

211 SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj J. R. C. Bunce**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Palmer**

The Squadron is now properly manned again after the return of the majority of personnel attached to Op Agricola. It is time to say a fond farewell to **SSM Angus Palmer** who is off to the wild terrain of West Wales to beast 14 Sig Regt into shape as the RSM. The emphasis for the Squadron is now the Exercise season, as we kick off with Ulan Eagle and then Rhino Charge.

COMMAND TROOP
Tp OC **Lt Karl Jeeves**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Kev Innes**

Another exciting couple of months as the remainder of the recalcitrant soldiers return from the far reaches of the globe. All the best to **Bdr Hoey**, who leaves us to go back to the Gunners and welcome back to **Sig Heap** and **Sig Robinson** from a successful attachment in Bosnia.

MY SPECIAL ATTACHMENT – *LCpl Lutkin*

After only just arriving back from Bosnia with the Squadron and looking forward to maintaining my 436 for the first time, I was asked if I would like to do a tour with the Regiment again. Unfortunately it wasn't my own Regiment but the tour would be three months in Kosovo. After signing a disclaimer, I was quickly rushed to a training camp in UK, where I was issued with sunglasses, baby oil and several pairs of shorts. I boarded the plane and arrived in Kosovo where I was welcomed to blistering heat, from there I was shown my first class accommodation with all the mod cons including air conditioning and an en-suite bathroom. My main duties included swimming pool attendant/bar entertainment's manager. My first main task was to organise a Bingo Night with barbecue which was a success and resulted in my first gold star. Surely this meant that the tour would go smoothly from there on in, or would it! Suddenly out of the blue **Capt Bland** tasked me with organising an Irish Night on a tough budget. Not a problem, I thought, and rang up **Cpl Danny Robinson**, who, I knew after two sniffs of a portaloo, would provide as much Irish entertainment as anyone could handle. The night was a blinder, the tour a rip roaring success and I'd like to thank my sponsors, Skopso Beer, Boots the Chemist and Adidas.

COMMS TROOP
Tp OC **Lt Morton**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Leach**

Following a well deserved period of summer leave, Comms Tp are back! September has been a particularly busy month during which **Lt Morton** and **Sgt Poyning** competed in the Inter Unit Badminton Tournament hosted by 21 Sig Regt. Well done to **Lt** 'Dark Horse' **Morton** who has subsequently been selected for the Corps Team and for Army Trials. **Sigs Hamilton, Waters** and **Gritt** also undertook a sailing course at Kiel Yacht Club earlier in the month, although will someone please buy **Sig Gritt** a new alarm clock! The Troop would like to welcome our new arrivals, **Sigs Brown, Hamilton, Kellett** and **Waters** fresh from Blandford. Also welcome back to **LCpl Royston** (congratulations on the promotion to full screw) and **LCpl Hutson** who are both returning from Bosnia. Unfortunately we must say farewell to **Sig McMahon** who is going to 2 Sig Regt and to the following who are promoted and posted: **Sgt Smith** is going to 4 Brigade, **Sgt Wilkinson** to 16 Sig Regt and **Sgt Howard** to the unknown. Many congratulations and good luck for the future. Finally a swift hello and goodbye to **2Lt Harriet Hebble** 'Roger so far over' **thwaite** who was attached to the Troop (for morale purposes if nothing else!). She returns to Blandford after two months where she is attending her Troop Commanders' Course.

REBRO TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt Shakespeare**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Cox**

During the last two months in RRB Tp, we have been lucky enough to deploy on a couple of exercises, one being the Y2K trials, which was in preparation for the millennium countdown. Four HF detachments deployed to various places including Paderborn and Gutersloh. The aim was to ensure and prove communications throughout the divisional area in preparation for the dreaded millennium bug. The second exercise was much less military orientated. Adventure training in Bavaria included climbing, canoeing, hill walking/beer drinking and white water rafting. These activities were enjoyed by all members of the troop including **Lt** 'Shakey' **Shakespeare** who put 100% in as usual. Not forgetting **Sig** 'Johnny la mule' **Carroll** who was doing his usual which is swamping after three pints (lightweight). Future months in the troop will be back to the busy schedule of preparing the vehicles for deployment on Ex Ulan Eagle in Poland during the months of October followed by a short break then on to Ex Rhino Charge in November. The Troop would like to welcome back **Sigs Stevie Kodakie** and 'Fordy' **Ford** who have just finished a tour in Kosovo and are not swinging the lamp much. Last of all we are unfortunate enough to have to say good-bye to **LCpl** 'The Bazzerker' **Bazzard** who's off to sunny Cyprus – Good luck. We'd also like to congratulate him along with **LCpls** 'Taff' **Williams,** 'Dangerous Dave' **Wallace** and 'Tomo' **Thomas** for their recent promotions to Corporal. Lastly we'd like to welcome **Sigs** 'Baz' **Maitland**, 'Jim' **Freear** and 'Grimace' **Grimsey** into the Troop.

212 SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Capt M. R. Purves**
SSM **SSgt (SSM) Greenwood**

The past few months at 212 Sig Sqn have been as busy as ever, with the Squadron deploying personnel to Bosnia, Kosovo and the Falkland Islands. The personnel left in Germany have reformed in to two troops, Divisional Support Group Tp and Support Tp. A hearty farewell and good luck to **Maj M. W. G. Adams** who has commanded the Squadron since 1997 and to **WO2 (SSM) Kemp**, all the best in your new posts. The whirlwind arrival and departure (temporarily to the Falkland Islands) of the new OC, **Maj C. MacIntosh** and **WO2 (SSM) Rook** took place in September. Both are due to return to Germany in March, so we will save the formal welcome until then. With the Divisional training cycle about to start Exercises are quickly filling up Year 2000 wall planners. As always we are still finding time to squeeze in a little adventurous training and sport. Most recently claiming the title of 'Armoured Squadron Football Champions 99'!

DSG TROOP
Tp Comd **2Lt S. Gunson**
Tp Sgt **Sgt Sims**

With the reformation of the Troop after the departure of the JCUFI crew, DSG Tp has started to come together. Work in the garages has continued, moving up to the highlights of the summer. The Troop Exercise was held on the driver training exercise at Minden North and introduced everyone to the thrills and spills of driving 436s. This was the first time the Troop had been together without detachments for driving courses and post tour leave. Everybody had a full and enjoyable two days with the emphasis on team building. **Sig Dave Vakalala** was the only person who managed to bog in a vehicle trying to drive a Landrover down a 436 track on the wrong side. **LCpl** 'Just pull harder' **Tiplady** did manage to recover it using his advanced DMI skills. The Troop Exercise had to be cut short to disappear down to Bavaria to provide Hunter Force for the Long Range Recce Patrol School in Pfullendorf. This involved flushing the enemy out of our AO. With the Troop split down into 4-man sections the competition was on for the Steely Eyed Killer award. This was won by **Sig** 'I'll get one of these idiots' **Cunnington**, who proved there is no substitute for hard patrolling skills (and a bit of luck). Most sections did encounter the enemy but the wooden spoon was won by **LBdr** 'Ex OP, trained killer' **Clark**. Moment of the exercise had to be **Sig** 'Helicopters' **Knight** and **Sig** 'Tea Cosy' **Davies**, who had a little chat with two enemy sections who walked through their ambush. The reason given for not engaging was that they were unsure whether or not it was the enemy and had a quick chat. This was despite the fact it was an 18-man patrol and friendly forces were no larger than five. Driving skills after the Troop Ex had definitely improved with **Sig** 'It's only a puddle' **Giltrow** and **Sig** 'What's the PIN' **Bufton** demonstrating that only the best drive for the Corps, certainly not these two! Finally hellos and goodbyes. Welcome to **Sig** 'Who' **Locke, Sig** 'Posh Birds' **Issitt, Sig** 'Community Service' **Wilkes** and back from Kosovo **Sgt** 'Tug' **Wilson** and **Cpl** 'Mac' **McCallum**. Farewell to **LCpl** 'Out with a bang' **Law** to 8 Brigade.

2 SIGNAL REGIMENT YORK

CO **Lt Col Wakerley MBE**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) S. C. Keilty**

HEADQUARTER SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj B. J. Dalton**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) P. V. McGarry**

Yet another busy period for HQ Sqn keeping the ship afloat whilst the rest of the Regiment go medal hunting. A warm welcome to the new SSM, **WO2 McGarry** all the way from the Training Wing and to **SSgt Morrison** the new SQMS who also travelled a very long way from 214 Sqn. We also welcome back all those who have been on deployment to Bosnia, Kosovo and the Falkland Islands even if the stay in York will be short lived for some. Just when we thought the Squadron were getting back together again the nominal roll for the deployment to Bosnia in December 1999 hit our in trays. We say farewell to **SSgt (SQMS) Al Yeaman** to civ div, best wishes to you and your family for the future.



Brig Cook presenting the Birtwistle Pennant of Merit for Recruiting Commendation to Lt Col Wakerley, Warrant Officers in attendance

QUARTERMASTERS DEPARTMENT

QM	**Maj B. J. Dalton**
RQMS(GEN)	**WO2 K. R. J. Smith**
RQMS(TECH)	**WO2 D. G. Simpson**

It is with much sadness that the Department's notes must open with the tragic death of **LCpl Tracey Stubbs**. **Tracey** was in the process of leaving the Army at the time and our sympathies go to her family and friends at this tragic time. She was an excellent soldier and she will be greatly missed.

Since the last *Wire* the pace has not changed in the department. 214 Sig Sqn are still deployed in Kosovo and 219 Sig Sqn have now returned to York to ready themselves for a Millennium Bosnia tour augmenting 228 Sig Sqn (nee 216 Para Sig Sqn). Welcome back to **Cpl** 'Rocky' **Mountain** (don't unpack you're posted to NI) from the Falklands, **LCpl** 'Chippy' **Williams** and **Sig** 'Ollie' **Oliver** from Kosovo. 'Chippy' has now left us for the special holiday firm in Hereford, don't worry we've blackened out your eyes in all the Squadron photos. We wish him all the best for the future. Warm hellos to the following personnel; from 217 Sig Sqn **SSgt Angus MacPherson**, from Hereford **LCpl Sarah Horton**, from the factory, **Sigs Louise Chandler** and **Roy Taylor**. Once again the RQMS (Tech), **WO2 Dave Simpson** has left us for a small holiday. This time he's off to Kosovo to expand his medal collection, we will see you in a few weeks.

REGIMENTAL MOTOR TRANSPORT

MTO	**Capt Hitman Gurung**
MT SNCO	**SSgt Swan**

Sig Tutton took part in Ex Monchengladbach (30km tab) and finished overall in 8th position. Well done and keep it up! **Sigs Wilkinson** and **Amar** are now back from their six month tour in the Falkland Islands. **Sig Mudd** will be going to Bosnia just in time for Xmas, and finally goodbye to **LCpl O'Mahony** who is returning to 219 Sqn.

TECHNICAL MAINTENANCE TROOP

It has been an extremely busy year so far which has seen most of the Troop on deployment in Kosovo, Bosnia or the Falklands. We say farewell to; **Sgt Mark Pryke** and **Cpl** 'BJ' **Jacobs** who have both been promoted to Mr, **Sgt John** 'ex-AT RSM' **Walsh** who is now on his Foreman's course (three cheers for **John**, one for every exam attempt). **Cpl Andy** 'Thunder Thighs' **Williams** to 1 (UK) Div and **Cpl Chris** 'Easy life' **Leggott** to Blandford. Welcome to; **SSgt Daz Evans**, **Sgt** 'Jim' **Davidson** (original), **Cpl Chris** 'Razor' **Stephen**, **LCpls Johnson, Bhawani, Brewington, Dodds, Edumundson** and **Gittins**. We would also like to say, 'Hello, farewell and congratulations' to **FofS Yam R** on his posting and commission. Finally, a big pat on the back to **SSgt Paul** 'Tie my kangaroo down sport' **Gardner** for surviving an arduous four month barbecue in Australia.

TRANS-ANDEAN CYCLE CHALLENGE IN AID OF SENSE (THE DEAF/BLIND AND RUBELLA ASSOCIATION)

by WO2 (RQMS) K. R. J. Smith

I was unfortunate to be sat next to the **RSM (WO1) S. C. Keilty** at morning coffee in the Sergeants' Mess in June when we noticed an advert in the *Daily Telegraph* (I know what you're thinking, 'That's a bit posh for the mess'.) The advert read 'Fancy cycling across the Andes mountains in South America?' We did a double take and the next thing we knew our sponsorship papers had arrived through the post. The challenge involves cycling 500km across the Andes into Patagonia next March in aid of SENSE which is the Deaf/Blind and Rubella Association. The Patron of the association is **Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal**. To compete we must individually raise through donation £2000. The summer saw us raise approx. £500 and we are now on our way, however, we still have a shortfall and any donations would be gratefully received. Cheques should be made payable to Central Bank 2 Signal Regiment and addressed to the RSM.



WO1 (RSM) S. Keilty and WO2 (RQMS) K. Smith

OOU TROOP - CAPABILITY DAY - *by LCpl Morris*

Well yet again 2 Sig Regt volunteered to help out on a charity event. Six members of HQ Sqn under the watchful eye of **Capt** 'Beanie' **Lloyd** helped set out a variety of fun games and activities in aid of Polio. Kohima Square was turned into a race track for the day and **LCpl** 'Mo' **Morris**, **Sig Sandeman** and **Sig Jim McEwan** performed their Formula 1 skills. Whilst the remainder helped with ten pin bowling, basketball and the obstacle course. **Sig** 'Scouse' **Laird** did his best to avoid getting chatted up by the members of the team whilst **Sig** 'Robbo' **Robinson** lapped it up. All in all the day went very well and all members of the team and the participants enjoyed themselves very much.

EXERCISE MONCHENGLADBACH MARCHES 1999 INTERNATIONAL MILITARY SKILLS COMPETITION

by Cpl Jobson, Sigs Clarke, Tinker, Sworowski, Scott & Pte Docherty

It all began at silly o'clock on the morning of Thursday 23 September. Eleven bleary eyed individuals met in the cookhouse at Imphal Barracks devoured a hearty breakfast and set off for JHQ Rheindahlen (which was nice!!). The drive was comparatively boring until arrival in JHQ when **WO2 (RQMS) Kev Smith** tried to get us killed by driving on the wrong side of the road. 2 Sig Regt entered three teams in this high calibre competition. Team 1 (male) consisted of **WO1 (RSM) Sean Keilty**, **Pte** 'Doc' **Docherty**, **Sigs Neil Tinker** and **Shaun Tutton**. Team 2 (mixed) consisted of **WO2 (RQMS) Kev Smith**, **Sgt (SI) Brenda Berry**, **Sigs Crawford Scott** and **Gary Clarke**.



Team 3 (mixed) Capt Georgina Tyndale, Sgt 'Bes' Beswick, Cpl Mark Jobson and Sig 'Ski' Sworowski

The first night involved team bonding in the historic city of Monchengladbach most notably the Gravel pit. Whilst explaining the historic value of certain establishments the **RSM**, **RQMS** and **Sgt Beswick** impressed us all with their vocal talents. Needless to say a good night was had by all as was the good name of the British Army. Friday was an administration day and pre-competition revision i.e: Tank and Aircraft recognition to name a few. Saturday arrived and with it the competition. Everyone was nervous yet excited and each team gave 100% throughout the day. The competition was long, hard and strenuous (which was nice!!), but the high morale was never shaken and rarely stirred. Activities through the day included: recognition to first aid, from grenade stalks through a forest to an assault course, from map reading to fire-fighting. Some of the stands were harder than others (the RSM shouting, 'A tank, and another one') on the recognition phase. Despite not knowing which stand was next the teams gave their very best, and it paid off. The three teams took home four trophies in total. These included 1st Male team, 1st Mixed team, 2nd and 3rd British teams. A long night of celebrations followed with the largest of the cups being put to good use. To cap it all we were made sole proprietors of the Gravel Pit (which was nice!!). The journey back was long and very quiet but all who participated thoroughly enjoyed themselves and have marked their calendar for next year.

219 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj Compston**
SSM	**SSM Neighbour**

219 Sqn have recently returned from the bleak conditions of the Falkland Islands in time to turn the vehicles around and prepare for another six month tour. This time to Bosnia where the weather is guaranteed to be no better than it was in the Falklands. Happy faces all round! The Squadron will be deploying with a number of new members, mainly the Squadron hierarchy; hello to the new OC, **Maj Jamie Compston**, the 2IC, **Capt Georgina Tyndale**, **SSgt (FofS) Owen Leyland, SSgt (YofS)** 'Stan' **Winstanley** and OC Falcon Tp, **2Lt David Haslewood.** JCUFI challenged 51 Engr Sqn to a friendly game of Rugby, JCUFI won with a final score of 25-15.



Back Row (L-R): Sgt Pagett, Sgt Humphries, SSgt Meek, WO2 (SSM) Neighbour, Lt Clixby, Sgt Ramus, Cpl Cadywold, Cpl Williams, SSgt Collins, Maj Gaul.
Front Row (L-R): Capt Eastman, Cpl Whitelock, Sgt Miller, LCpl Lawrence, OM(C) Slatter, Cpl Blakey, Sac Clarke

EAGLE TROOP

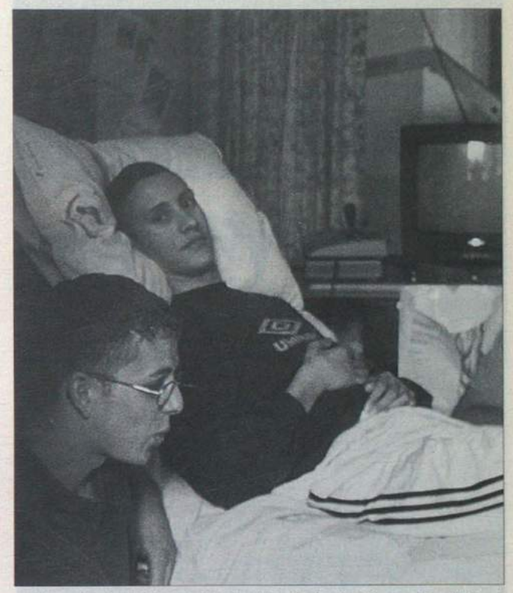
Tp Comd	**Lt Alex Clixby**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Roy Messenger**

'SOUTH ATLANTIC SADNESS' - *by Sig Mark Soraine*

The Falkland Islands is probably not the most exciting place to spend six months of your Army life. However soldiers from 219 Sig Sqn deployed from February to August 1999 to form part of the Joint Communications Unit Falkland Islands (JCUFI). Arriving in the Falkland Islands we soon found our feet, but we quickly realised that the work was going to be quite different from what we were used to in York; work in the Falklands was very much trade related and 'hands on' as opposed to maintaining vehicles in the garages on a daily basis. The change in scenery and the colder climate were also a shock to the system. For many of the Troop it was their first tour and definitely the first time that they had worked with the RAF and the Royal Navy - this was in many cases an eye opener.

Many friends were made during the tour, both at work and play. Many people came and left, so we had a good deal of farewell parties, as well as the regular parties and 'hangar bashes'. It was on one of these occasions that a tragic accident happened to my best friend and fellow soldier, **Sig Leon Creighton** of Eagle Tp. **Leon** broke his neck, which has left him paralysed from the chest downwards. This accident has thoroughly changed the life of the very popular 19-year old Signaller. In my short time in the Army I have learnt that your friends at work tend to stick together especially when times are hard. **Leon's** accident proved no exception and a massive £3,000 was raised by those members of 219 Sig Sqn serving with JCUFI. Numerous fund raising events were held, including a huge disco attended by a few hundred people. But the most memorable event (and certainly the hardest!) was the Hercules pull, which proved a massive success. Unfortunately JCUFI were pipped at the post and trailed in second place to a very impressive engineer side.

The Falklands tour is now completed but the support for **Leon** continues. On returning to 2 Sig Regt in York members of the Squadron have regularly visited **Leon**. Each time he is visited his enthusiasm, motivation and humour have got stronger and his progress is without doubt amazing. With **Leon's** efforts and the support of his friends and colleagues he should go a long way down the road to recovery.



Many thanks to all those involved in this fund raising and to all those who have given their support to **Leon**. If anyone has any ideas for raising money or wishes to help in any other way, then please do not hesitate to call **WO2 (SSM) Mark Neighbour** on York military 2257.

FALCON TROOP

Tp Comd	**2Lt Haslewood**
Tp Sgt	**Sgt Hartley**

TROOP NEWS - *by LCpl Lawrence and LCpl O'Mahony*

While most of the Squadron personnel were enjoying the cold winter of the Falkland Islands, other members of the Squadron deployed to Kosovo. The biggest talking point at this time was, 'If you have a Bosnia medal, will you get a different one for Kosovo?' Those left behind in York formed 'Out of Use Troop' and were mainly employed as the guard force for the majority of the summer months. Fortunately for **LCpl** 'Super Radio Relay Op' - (in his opinion) **O'Mahony**, he was able to escape this lifestyle by going to Mexico to get married. Meanwhile, for those in the South of the world the end of tour was in sight. Preparations for the handover/takeover to 1 (UK) Armd Div were under way and rumours of another tour in Bosnia began to emerge, something that was confirmed on arrival back from leave. The hand-over to the new JCUFI Sig Sqn was successful and 219 Sqn left the Islands in the hope that they would not be returning for a while. After what seemed a very quick four weeks leave, the troops arrived back to find plenty of new faces to increase the numbers for Bosnia including the new Troop Comd, **2Lt David Haslewood** and the Troop Sgt, **Sgt Hartley**. There are also goodbyes to **Cpl Purden** and **Sig Page**. With Bosnia training, leave and some form of adventure training, the Troops continue to be busy until their departure in December.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

from the Editor of THE WIRE and his staff

2 SIGNAL REGIMENT
SULTANATE OF OMAN

LOAN SERVICE IN DHOFAR
ROAD RUN IN SUPPORT OF CHILDREN

Background - The ten British Loan Service personnel in Dhofar are all members of the British Armed Forces working in the Sultanate of Oman. The Royal Signals element in the South consists of a Major (**Richard Sanders**) and a WO1 FofS (**Tony Woolaston**) and both work as advisors in the Second Regiment Force Signals. The Loan Service Team based in Salalah, thought that it would be a good idea to raise some funds in support of children. The plan was to run from the British School in Salalah to Mirbat and back again on the 14-15 September 1999. The aim of the run was to raise money to be given equally to the Children's Ward of the Sultan Qaboos Hospital and the British School, Salalah. Many of the local firms, businesses, shops and banks sponsored the event and the individual runners collected donations from the community in Salalah and as far afield as Muscat. The response was excellent, raising 3,750 Oman Rials - approximately £6,250.



The Runners pose in front of the Spinneys banner
(L-R): WO2 Graham Wood LI,
WO1 (FofS) Tony Woolaston R Signals,
Maj Richard Sanders R Signals, Sqn Ldr Jim Robinson RAF,
WO2 Phil Sorrell RM, Capt (now Maj) Simon Lloyd-Davis PWRR
and WO2 Russ Hillis RLC

The Run - The runners started from the British School on Tuesday 14 September, where a small crowd of supporters had gathered to wish them luck. The route followed the main road to Taqah and then onto Mirbat. Shortly after the start a police vehicle provided by the Royal Oman Police joined the runners to act as a safety vehicle and stayed throughout the night. This assistance from the local police was invaluable and very much appreciated by the Team - a flashing blue light seemed to slow the traffic much more quickly than the hazard warning lights on the Range Rover provided by Landrover Oman. Shortly past the statues of the Horses that mark the boundary of Mirbat the runners turned to retrace their steps back to Salalah. Just 150 metres away stands the Fort that was central to the defence of Mirbat by soldiers from 22 SAS and about 25 men from the Dhofar Gendarmerie in July 1972. The return leg was probably the hardest part of the route as the rising sun took the temperature to well over 30 degrees centigrade. The run finished back at the British School on Wednesday 15 September, a total distance of 135 kilometres. During the event team member **CSgt McCafferty** RGBW was called back to Salalah because his wife was giving birth - some people will do anything to get out of a run! Congratulations to **Tommy, Jackie** and baby daughter **Holly**. The seven runners were **WO1 Tony Woolaston** R Signals, **WO2 Graham Wood** LI, **WO2 Russ Hillis** RLC, **Maj Richard Sanders** R Signals, **Sqn Ldr Jim Robinson** RAF, **Capt Simon Lloyd-Davis** PWRR and **WO2 Phil Sorrell** RM and aerial rigger **Mick Bragg** from Airwork Ltd looked after the transport requirements. The Team were received at the finish by a welcoming committee which included a photographer/reporter from the Oman Observer, the children from the School and the Military Pipe Band from the Royal Air Force of Oman, Salalah. Refreshments were provided by Coca Cola and Spinneys. The proceedings concluded with a presentation of the proceeds of the charity event to the Sultan Qaboos Hospital and the British School, Salalah.



WO1 FofS Tony Woolaston
presents a cheque to the Administrator of Sultan Qaboos Hospital,
whilst Maj Selby McDuff-Duncan NIBE BW
prepares the next part of his speech
Maj Richard Sanders and WO2 Graham Wood LI look on

The Sponsors - The main sponsors for the fund raising effort were the HSBC, Zubair Enterprises LLC, Coca Cola, Landrover, and the Holiday Inn, Salalah. Many other firms made very generous donations including Shell Oman, BP Oman, Shanfari Automotive Company, the Sawadi Beach Resort, Muscat Insurance Services, Oman Air, Gulf Air, British Airways, Spinneys, Oman International Bank, Bank Muscat Al Ahli Al Oman, Bank Dhofar Al Omani Al Fransi, the Family Book Shop, Eastern Stores and National Panasonic. The Loan Service Team would like to thank all their sponsors for their kindness and generosity in supporting the venture. Thanks are also due to the Commander of 11th Infantry Brigade for his support and the Commanding Officer of the Dhofar Division Headquarters of the Royal Oman Police for his help and advice and providing an excellent Police escort.



Some of the Team posing with the children
and the Deputy Head of the British School, Mrs Terri Edwards

3 (UNITED KINGDOM) DIVISION HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL REGIMENT

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS
CO **Lt Col N. D. Couch**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) G. J. Stoker MBE**

The major recent event has been organising the annual Kiwi Half Marathon, a task carried out admirably by the Families Officer, **Capt Dave Stachini.** A record number of people took part raising over £2000 for SSAFA. Congratulations to the Adjutant, **Maj Al Long,** on his recent promotion, on the delivery of his daughter **Eleanor** and on winning the speed to weight ratio prize in the recent Kiwi Half Marathon. Congratulations also go to the MTO, **Maj** 'Blackie' **Widdows** on his promotion.

202 SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj R. J. Quinlan**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) J. McNaught**

The Squadron has had a fair amount of upheaval this autumn. We warmly welcome the new **SSM Jim McNaught** and his wife **Allison** to the Squadron, we hope you enjoy your time here with 202 Sqn.

Following the final arrival of Waterloo Tp personnel from Operations in Kosovo, we now look forward to reconstituting the Squadron completely in time for next year's Exercise season. Even during this hectic couple of months Squadron personnel have still been able to squeeze in an Exercise in Cyprus and a variety of adventurous training activities as covered in greater detail below.

OVERLOON TROOP
Tp Comd **2Lt K. Grice**
Tp SSgt **SSgt D. Oliver**

The busy Divisional Main Armoured Troop of the Squadron are pleased to welcome back into the fold the rest of their soldiers who have been away on operational and other commitments. This has been another extremely busy working period, the highlight being Ex Lion Sun in Cyprus during the month of August. In particular we would like to welcome new into the Troop **Cpl AJ** 'That's not a proper name' **Fazackerley** who joins us from warmer climes, also we welcome **LCpl** 'OJ' **Olejenik** and **Sig** 'Helly' **Anson** who have also recently arrived in an effort to keep our vehicles on the road. A special congratulations also goes out to **Sig Griffiths** who was married to **LCpl Marsh** over the summer leave period, we wish you both all the best for the future. The Troop is now consolidating its man power in an effort to start exercising in earnest for next year, which is anticipated to be a busy one. By no small miracle the panzers are still going strong with only a few mechanical failures here and there. Let's hope the weather stays sunny on Salisbury Plain from now up to Christmas!

BUSSACO TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt P. J. Simpson**
Tp SSgt **SSgt P. R. Howson**

With the return of personnel from operational tours, Bussaco Tp numbers have rocketed again to over sixty soldiers. We have said our tearful goodbyes to **LCpl Jamie Slade**, who is off swanning at 30 Sigs, **Sig** 'Who ate all my pies?' **Brown** who hopes for a thinner life in Civ Div, and **Sig** 'Troll' **Davies**, who is deserting his liney heritage to become a re-tread Tele Mech. Ex Lion Sun and the period after saw a fresh influx of new blood. **LCpl** 'Duke' **Newcomb**, **Sig** 'Vanessa' **Bird**, **Sig** 'Bob' **Wagstaff** and **Sig** 'Johnny' **Briggs**, fresh from the factory, were warmly welcomed to the garages. **Sig** 'Carrot Cruncher' **Liverton** joins us from Germany, **LCpl** 'Taff' **Morris** from Bramcote, and **Cpl** 'Don' **Brennan** from 16 Sig Regt. With the hectic on-the-bus off-the-bus of preparation for operations no longer looming, the Troop has managed to get a bit of quality time away from the barracks. Staff College Demo is always a tricky thing at the best of times, and it was a fortunate few who managed to escape to the Yorkshire Dales for Ex Iron Cavern. After walking over the hills (mountains!), the group then went wandering in the caves under them. The caving suits were so snazzy, **LCpl** 'Paintballs don't hurt' **Standing** didn't want to return his. From the Workshops, the Techs go armoured! Congratulations to **Cpl** 'Melted' **Dryden**, **Cpl** 'Max' **Maxwell**, **LCpl** 'Angry Little Man' **Annis** and **LCpl** 'Punchy' **Nicholls** on passing their armoured driving course. Better luck next time to **LCpl** 'Wheeled' **Lyon**. Welcome to **Sgt** 'Max' **Challis** who will be taking over shortly from **Sgt** 'Liquid Lunch' **Cheesman**, soon departing to 30 Sig Regt.

WATERLOO TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt Dave** 'Lumi-stick' **Jackson**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Tony** 'Where's my manpower' **Wringe**

This month sees Waterloo Tp form up once more after most of its members have been hiding in the Balkans for the last 6 months with either 1 Mech or KFOR. A big thank you goes to **Cpl** 'Barney' **Grumble** who has kept the stores in order and stopped the rest of the Regiment from nicking all our kit, (why does nobody ever want to steal our panzers?) Hellos to **LCpl Johnson** and **Sigs** 'Devo' **Devlin** and 'Herbie' **Hyde**, who are slowly getting to know just how much fun track bashing and trundling can be. A sad farewell must go to **Sgt Jim Watt** who has been selected from a cast of one to join the newly formed 60 Sigs and congratulations on his promotion. At least now he will be the focal point of everybody else's moans and whinges. The Troop is waiting to see what is in store for us but no doubt it will involve many sleepless nights and long hours in the Sportsman's. Oh well, the sacrifices we have to make to become the second best-armoured troop in the regiment!

EXERCISE LION SUN 9/99 10 JULY–5 AUGUST
by Capt Pat Pritchett

A composite Squadron based upon 202 Sig Sqn, 3 (UK) DSR deployed to Cyprus on Ex Lion Sun between 10 July and 5 August. The aim of the Exercise was to practise the defence of communication and headquarters sites in a contingency operation scenario, in order to enhance the ability of the Squadron to defend HQ 3 (UK) DIV on Operations. The military aspects of the Exercise were to focus on individual, section and troop military tactics and live firing attacks and a Squadron level dry training FTX – the Climax Exercise. To enhance individual and team working, adventurous, sporting and fitness activities were combined with short cultural visits on and off island.

The Exercise was an enormous success, due primarily to the detailed organisation provided by the Squadron planning team. For the participating soldiers the experience proved to be an extremely worthwhile one, as the majority of the soldiers deployed had relatively little military skills experience prior to the Exercise. The Exercise served as a fairly steep learning curve at times, which all participants endeavoured to travel along. During the Exercise, the military training was arduous not least because of the terrain and the climate but those who took part felt a sense of satisfaction.



The FofS shows the Squadron how it is really done

Interspersed with the military training were periods of physical and adventurous training, predominantly water based but which also included parachuting and rock climbing. Enormous amounts of fun was had by those who participated in the off island cultural visits to Egypt and Israel which each lasted for three days and included a cruise to and from Limassol.



The R and R package was superb

206 SIGNAL SQUADRON
SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS
Sqn Comd **Maj W. E. H. Adsett**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) S. T. Archer**

206 Sig Sqn have had more than their fair share of OCs over the past year. Firstly **Maj Paul Glibbery** then came **Maj Carole** (with an 'E') **Rankin** and now comes **Maj Bill Adsett**. A belated farewell to **Maj Glibbery** and his lovely wife **Tracey,** since departing the Squadron, **Tracey** has given birth to twin boys, **Louis** and **Jacques**, congratulations to the four of you! **Maj Rankin** arrived in April and left in June for Kosovo for an interesting tour with 3 (UK) Div. On arrival back in the UK it was only a matter of weeks until the next in line came to the Squadron. Good luck to **Maj Rankin** for the future and have a nice time at ARRC in your Tax Free Golf.

Welcome to **Maj Bill Adsett**, wife **Janet** and children **Jessie** and **Joe** who have arrived fresh faced from a small office in Malvern with DERA. The Squadron hopes that your tour goes well and (like the Chinese proverb 'May you live in interesting times') that your time with the Squadron will be memorable.

BATTLE CAMP - *by Mons Troop*

Sunday 12 September 1100hrs and 206 Sqn depart on the second battle camp of the year. This one was to be an ITD battle camp different to our previous battle camp which was a glorious week in Dartmoor! The mood was set on the coach on the way to Tregantle Fort when we watched the training videos 'Saving Private Ryan' and 'Lock, Stock and Two

Smoking Barrels!' We were all ready for our range work when we arrived. When I say all, that's not strictly true as **LCpl** 'Ned' **Needham** decided to stay longer than the rest at our service station stop and therefore had to find alternative means of getting to Tregantle!

Monday morning started rather rudely at 0630hrs with a 'gentle?!' SSM's lung busting session along the coast and near vertical hill sides. Deciding that most people's trainers were a little too dirty it was decided to do a spot of Sea Running. Luckily the sea was nice and warm, not! Monday and Tuesday were devoted to enhancing our already professional skills in NBC, First Aid, Map Reading and Weapon Training. **Sig** 'Casper' **Price** had his embarrassing moment of the week when, selected from a cast of thousands, he was chosen to treat a sucking chest wound on **Sgt** 'Mandy' **Korchel**. Needless to say the dressing was not attached as well as it could have been! NBC proved very interesting to both platoons, thanks must go to the instructors for dimming the lights as it really helped us to see the PowerPoint presentation! After some expert map reading instruction from **SSgt** 'Efficient' **Bartleet** and **Sgt** 'Phil' **Cooper**, Tuesday night saw the start of the Night Navigation Exercise. First back were **LCpl** 'Stevey' **Jay** and **Sig** 'Bracks' **Bracken**, not because of their map reading ability but because they conveniently lost all the grids of the checkpoints. **Lt** 'Olly' **Gardner** appeared to have booked himself into a crash 'Get fit' session when he was paired with **Lt** 'Fit as a Butcher's Dog' **Irwin**. They quashed any vicious rumours that officers and a map are a dangerous combination by coming in first and with all ten checkpoints. Other teams found that taking a short cut isn't always a good idea, when 'Barry' the Bull didn't take kindly to swarms of squaddies using his field to tramp through. Wednesday and Thursday were devoted to a round robin of ranges including the APWT, GPMG and Pistol Shoots. Much enjoyment was had by all, even if the weather did its best to put a literal dampener on things. **Sgt** 'SQMS for the Week' **Batts** did his bit by finding an endless supply of king-size Twixes, Fosters and John Smiths. Unfortunately, for him though, the Camp QM wasn't very happy that the lads had been playing as many games of pool for the price of one with strategically placed toilet paper in the pockets!

Finally the award for 'GOD'S TRADE' was awarded to the Tele Op Radio trade after completing an almost impossible task set by the OC, **Maj** 'Bill' **Adsett**. Special mention must go to the EDs on coming second even though they seemed to already know what the task was after some inside information (Does anyone know what trade the SSM is?). Special mention must also go to the Driver Linemen for their unique approach to the problem and the amusement they gave us!

INKERMAN TROOP

Following this year's deployments to Bosnia and Kosovo the Troop has finally re-established itself. Most of the Troop has spent the past five weeks on leave getting over their tours and putting on even more weight and topping up their sun tans. On returning we were given the good news of the Bulford Escape plan to the Falklands for six months starting next February. Oh the joys of 3 Div! The next few months will be spent turning around and sorting out vehicles from deployments along with a couple of Exercises on the Salisbury plain (as we've missed it so much this year). Congratulations go to **LCpl Shaun Thomas** on his selection to Corporal on the recent promotion board. Also well done to **LCpl Jim Kemp**, **Sig** 'Johno' **Johnson** and **Sig Dave Durward** who were sent on the leadership course with three days notice and all managed to come back in one piece. New arrivals to the Troop include **Lt Gary Irwin, Sig Sam Hunt, Sig Alex Clarke** and **Sig Daz Tully** who all join us from Blandford sausage factory.

222 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj R. S. Appleton**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) F. Roberts**

Once again it has been a turbulent time in SHQ Tp with many arrivals and people leaving. The first is a goodbye to **Maj Mark Billingham** off to Shrivenham to have no responsibility and get issued open toed sandals. **Maj Bert Appleton** has taken over and is already not making any changes what so ever. Ex Topham Hatt was run very successfully under **SSM Frank Roberts**. The OC and 2IC, **Capts Sellwood** and **Hawes**, decided that a visit was in order and manfully signed the visitors' book in the Purbeck Hotel after some strenuous drinking. An excellent week was had by all including the cable drum specialists **Cpl** 'Bodge it' **Boden** and **Cpl** 'Legit' **Walton**.

SHARJAH TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt A. S. Johnson**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Baker/SSgt R. Lang**

The Troop summer camp this year was Sharjah favourite, Weymouth. Although the camp was planned whilst deployment to Kosovo was ongoing, the Troop all got to partake in some or all of the activities. **Cpl** 'Drag Queen' **Ward** was the only disappointed man when he had to hand over a fully co-ordinated outfit complete with jewellery to return to camp. It has been an excellent time for promotions within the Troop with the recent promotion of **Sgt Stu Ireland**. In addition **LCpls Andy Morris, Ed Howard** and 'Mac' **McDougall** all selected for Corporal. Finally **SSgt Ray** 'Davros' **Lang** is handing over to **SSgt** 'Bru' **Baker** after 22 years in the Army, the very best of luck from the Troop in civvy street.

ADEN TROOP

Tp SSgt **SSgt S. E. Littlefield**

The Troop is starting to get back into the swing to Squadron life after it was placed in suspended animation for eight months. Lots of new faces are in the Troop, **LCpl Knowles** in from 1 Mech Bde and **Sig Danny Hollis** from Blandford.

OMAN TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt I.V. I. Mullholland**
Tp SSgt **Sgt A. Hayler**

The Troop has had a busy couple of months with the reformation of the Trunk Node as well as the odd Exercise as well. **Sigs** 'Suntan' **Lewis**, 'Heat stress' **Alcock** and 'Trig' **Jackson** all had the chance to show off their infantry skills, or lack of them in the Cyprus sun on Ex Lion Sun. Sig Alcock put on a star performance throughout the whole Exercise with his unconvincing impression of heat stress. In September a large part of the Troop took part in the Kiwi Half Marathon and the COs' winter sports competition with all putting in a great deal of effort and some skill. Congratulations to **Sgt Andy Hayler, LCpl Burgess** and **Sig Brewer** for completing the course. The Troop is glad to welcome back those just returned from Operations in Bosnia and Kosovo. It is about time that **Sigs** 'Old Lady' **Brady, Webster** and **Leach** got back in the garages and onto those Switches. Welcome to the Troop to **Cpl Dave Knapman** from 15 Sig Regt via Split. Congratulations to **Lt Mullholland** on her recent marriage and to **Sig Ross Barry** on his new born baby. A few beers are owed before the sleepless nights start to set in.

7 SIGNAL REGIMENT

SCOTS CELEBRATE AT SPA

David Coultard was not the only Scotsman to have thoroughly enjoyed the Belgian Grand Prix at Spa! Watching the race from a sponsor's hospitality lounge was another Scotsman, 25 year old **Sig Mark Learmouth**, from 7 Sig Regt, Krefeld, who had won a VIP Grand Prix weekend for two in a competition run by the Key Magazine. 'I couldn't have asked for any better prize,' said **Mark**, 'It's the best prize I'll ever have in my life.'

Mark and his wife, **Sarah**, drove from their home in Krefeld, to a luxury hotel on the Dutch/Belgian border. There they were treated to a champagne reception before a gourmet dinner in the hotel's restaurant in a 13th Century renovated chateau. On Sunday morning **Mark** and **Sarah** were taken to the circuit in time to see the final practice session and to soak in the atmosphere of Grand Prix Day. Only a few metres from the track, they had a perfect view of the morning's practice session over the heads of thousands of excited spectators who had paid a great deal of money for their seats! Of course, champagne was available throughout the morning and at the fabulous lunch the VIPs enjoyed just before the race began. Surrounded by Europe's glitterati and dressed in the sponsor's red Ferrari Tee shirts, **Mark** and **Sarah** finally made their way out on to the balcony to watch the Grand Prix. Luckily, **Sarah,** who first met **Mark** when she was also a serving soldier, is as keen on Formula1 as he is.

As their memorable weekend drew to a close, **Mark** and **Sarah** returned to the chateau for a candlelit dinner and one last glass of champagne. The next morning saw their feet returned to the ground as they set off for Bradbury Barracks and the real world of regimental life in Krefeld.



For two hours, Mark and Sarah Learmouth had been giving their full attention to the Belgian Grand Prix. As David Coultard was being mobbed by crowds in the pits, Mark and Sarah finally took their eyes off the track and came back to earth

NEARLY HOME

CO **Lt Col David Jones**
RSM **WO1 Smoothy**

At the time of writing one Squadron from the Regiment and a command team remains in Kosovo. Those who have returned have quickly settled into Barrack life and are preparing themselves for another set of tours (Bosnia and the Falklands in June and July next year).

ASCOT DAY

Once again on Sunday 12 September the picturesque Krefeld race-course was the setting for the Regiment's day at the races. The day began with an address by the town Mayor followed by one from the CO, **Lt Col David Jones**, who spoke in excellent German. The General Officer Commanding UKSC(G), **Maj Gen Elliot CBE** was the Regiment's guest and dined with Regimental Officers and their wives in the VIP box. The Corps Band played immediately after the address and added tremendously to the occasion, one could see the German people tapping their feet to the unfamiliar sound of a military band.

The event was a plush affair and corporate sponsors use the day to entertain guests. The military presence adds much to the occasion and creates great interest from the people of Krefeld. There was a joint Officers' and Sergeants' Mess, a bar and a fish and chip stand (which was especially popular). The Regiment sponsored the first race and gave prizes to the jockey, trainer and owner.



The GOC and CO look on as the decanter and glasses are presented to the winning Jockey

The Adjutant bet on horse No.7, all groaned when this was announced, the groans turned to dismay when, much to everyones' amazement he won!! Blind faith does pay off. The RSM, **WO1 Smoothy** bet on an outsider with his daughter's name and is now refusing to give her any of the money. By all accounts the betting went quite badly, the more extravagant gamblers were disappointed that they couldn't put the Barracks down as security for their bet. Clearly a change in Service Funds Accounts regulations is required.



WO2 Weaver elated as his 100 to 1 outsider comes first

THE SOinC's VISIT

The SOinC, **Brig Cedric Burton ADC** visited the Regiment during his tour of Germany. He visited a number of Station departments and sent an E-mail to the Regiment in Kosovo, a facility that the wives and families are able to use. The Pictures show his visit to 232 Sig Sqn.



The SOinC demonstrates the SA80s replacement to Sig Shillinglaw and Sig Williamson, whilst Cpl Murray reassures himself that the Safety catch is applied

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS AND LONG SERVICE AND GOOD CONDUCT MEDALS

On 15 September members of 7 Sig Regt were presented with their Long Service and Good Conduct Medals by the Signals Officer in Chief. Medals were presented to **SSgt** 'Taff' **Evans, SSgt Archie** 'If I ain't caught it, its not worth catching (fish)' **Gemmel, SSgt Vince Tipple, Sgt Jones** REME and **Sgt Lees**. **WO2 Pottinger** was presented with the Meritorious Service Medal and **Mrs Jackie Drain** received a commendation for her work with the families of Hohne and Krefeld Garrisons.



Presentation of Awards and LS&GC Medals
(L-R): Sgt Jones (REME), Sgt Lees, CO-Lt Col Jones, WO2 Pottinger, SSgt Evans, WO1 (RSM) Smoothy, wives and husbands, the SOinC centre front Row

CP 232 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj Alan Stringer**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Rick Hughes**

STOP ! News Flash the OC has just received his chest webbing, after waiting most of the Operation for it, at last the OC is hard as nails. Since deploying from Krefeld way back in February we have had on our books 241 soldiers from 9 Royal Signals Units serving in three countries. Up until 12 June our time was spent in Macedonia where our job was supporting the Brigade San Groups and TAC moving locations on numerous occasions waiting for the move to Kosovo. The CP lost the Yeoman, **SSgt Gaz Tabor,** for five weeks to Albania where his team did an excellent job supplying comms for the Albania Force. He returned just in time for R&R only to be recalled for the second time this Operation to help the Squadron move into Kosovo. The CP was also involved with providing comms for the talks between the Commander KFOR and the Serbs once the main agreement had been made with the OC Squadron and **SSgt Acting Foreman (no pay) Rick Hannah** and his team visiting the talks on numerous occasions. The white feather award goes to **Sgt** 'Taff' **John** who a couple of days before the rest of us moved into Kosovo on D Day decided to go home on R&R. Having lost the airport to the Russians the OC and the rest of the recce party decided to keep the main party hanging around on the road side over night. The **SSM Rick Hughes** being the big guy he is at about 0300hrs thought our armour protection had arrived only to get out of his vehicle and stop a convoy of Serbs in T55 tanks moving out (nice move **Rick**). For the first nine days of Operations in Kosovo the CP helped TAC support the Commander KFOR HQ as well as keeping tracks on the Brigade SANs moving up from Macedonia. On 20 June we handed over command to Main and 231 Sig Sqn. This has left us the SANs to look after with one SAN deploying to the airport with the Russians. We would like to say farewell to **Maj Stringer** on his posting to HQ 3 Div, thank goodness his farewell party has finished and our livers can recover. Congratulations to **SSgt (SQMS) Pete Griffiths** on being picked up for promotion to WO2, well done **Pete** and congratulations go to **LCpls Rhodes, Hepworth** and **Johnson** on being picked up for promotion to Corporal. We would like to say farewell to all members of the Squadron who have been posted in the last few months and welcome to the New Arrivals: **Cpl Taylor, LCpls Chandler, Robinson, Holland, Stanley, Porter** and **Thompson, Sigs Malcom, Manion, Wells Williams, Whatmough** and **Davies.**

Farewell to the departed: **Capt Andy Greenfield** - Blandford, **Cpl Spittles** - Blandford, **Cpl Jones** - NI, **LCpl Mears** - NI, **LCpl Bovey** -2 Sig Regt, **LCpl Ferguson** - 21 Sig Regt, **LCpl Fitzpatrick -Swallow** - NI, **LCpl Robins** - 200 Armd Bde & Sig Sqn, **Sig Penney** - 2 Sig Regt. We welcome the new OC, **Maj Phil Baker** and his wife **Collette** to 232 Sig Sqn we hope he settles in well and enjoys his stay at 7 Sig Regt.



The Cadets after being presented a plaque by Maj Phil Baker
Back Row (L-R): Uts Ross Mitchell, Murray Ingram, Colin Smith, Sig Claire Grant, Maj Cassidy, Maj Baker, Sgt: Atherton, Carolann Barr, Micheal McCallum, David Cant
Front Row (L-R): Gary Smith, Mark Ferrie, Lynn Fraser, Ilevin Seagrane

VISIT OF ANGUS AND DUNDEE CCF

A contingent from Angus and Dundee CCF visited the Regiment from the 1-11 October 1999 and were hosted by 232 Sig Sqn. They took part in many activities which were hosted by **Sig Claire Grant, LCpl Williams** and co-ordinated with precision by **Sgt Rob Atherton.** As well as some low level military activities, including the assault course and SAT range the Cadets visited Phantasia Land, Eindhoven and took part in a host of leisure activities. The visit was very successful and culminated in a gruelling orienteering competition.

229 (BERLIN) SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj Chris Robinson** Royal Australian Signals.
SSM **SSM Keane**

The Squadron have just returned from gruelling post tour leave.

CHARLIE TROOP - *by Lt Caroline Evans*

Charlottenburg Tp, part of 229 (Berlin) Sig Sqn are now safely back in camp, following a very successful tour in Macedonia and Kosovo. As Trunk Node 011, the hub for communications in Kosovo, we occupied the 'Goles Heights', a mountain overlooking the Pristina Bowl. We formed strong links with the local people, particularly those from the village of Vragolija, near Kosovo Polje. With the inspirational motivation of **Sgt Phil Davies**, a handful of intrepid volunteers arrived in the village to find the school had been badly burned. Within minutes, the whole village turned out to help clear the rubble and scrub soot from the walls. This project, that started with no money and no resources, snowballed into a highly successful mission, thanks entirely to the energy and enthusiasm of the soldiers. It was an extremely rewarding time, amidst so much destruction, to be able to leave feeling we had given something back.

14 SIGNAL REGIMENT (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj Harwood**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Newton**

TECHNICAL MAINTENANCE TROOP

Tp Comd **Capt (TOT) S. Johnston**
Tp SSgt **SSgt H. Evans**

The Troop has been somewhat busy these past few months with preparations for deployments to Bosnia and Kosovo. Of course it's not all work, we do play occasionally. As a Troop we often get together to have some fun. Most recently a trip to Heatherton Country Sports Park was organised by **Sgt** 'Dusty' **Miller,** who recently arrived in the Troop on promotion from his TI Upgraders Course. The theme for the day was 'wacky races'. Although it was only go-karts it was funny watching grown men and women locked in a battle of speed and wits to see who would come out the overall champion. There were a few minor crashes but thankfully nothing too serious. Come the end of the afternoon people were quite exhausted and ready to retire to the bar for the obligatory beer or two. The next Troop outing will again take place at Heatherton but this time for a paintball competition.

The Troop would like to take this opportunity to thank the following personnel, **Sgt** 'Alfie' **Davidson, Sgt** 'Dusty' **Miller, Cpl Chris Dicks** and **Sig** 'Dinger' **Bell** for taking part in the Regimental Assault Course Competition. As a result the HQ Sqn team finished in a very creditable third place. The Troop would also like to congratulate **SSgt Huw Evalls** who is now away on a four week expedition to Nepal, on becoming the British Army Alpine Paragliding Champion.

As usual, we have our fair share of 'hello's' and 'goodbyes'. We would like to welcome **Cpl** 'Gunny' **Gunn** who joins us from 1 (UK) Armd Div, **Sgt** 'Mac' **Macdonald** who joins us on promotion from his TI Upgraders Course, **Sgt Dave Evenden** from Gutersloh and finally **Sgt Glynne Kerr-Morgan** who joins us from 264 (SAS) Sig Sqn. The only person we've said goodbye to these past few months has been **Sgt** 'Smitty' **Smith** who left us for the TA.



Cpl 'Johnny Bravo' Teale - 'What do I do next?'

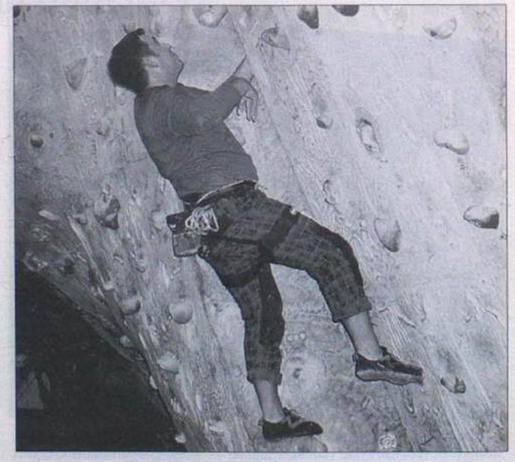
226 SIGNAL SQUADRON (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)

Sqn Comd **Maj Meinertzhagen**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Jenkins**

SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS TROOP

September has been a busy month for SHQ Tp with Exercises and Squadron Adventure Training. On behalf of the Troop I would like to say goodbye to the following people; **LCpl** 'Doc' **Dixon, LCpl Joe Gallagher**, and **Sig Rachel Wells** all leaving the Army for civvy street. **Sig** 'Webby' **Webster** on his really jammy posting to Berlardo Bridge, Scotland. **LCpl Col Twells** on his posting to 4 Bde. We wish you all the best in the future and extend a big welcome to **Cpl** 'Denny' **Denton** who has just arrived from 640 Tp.

Turning to other events, we see the return of the OC Sqn, **Maj MZ**, (no one can spell his name), **WO2 (SSM) Jenkins** and **WO2 (YofS) Rutherford** all returning from Op Agricola 1. The rest of us also managed to get away for some adventure training at Capel Curig in N. Wales, on Ex Whale Adventure This was fun yet demanding and challenging. I feel I should mention the efforts of the Sqn SQMS, **Sgt Titus Reene** for his excellent work in organising the Squadron adventure training. It really is amazing what can be done on a shoe string budget. Perhaps he should volunteer to run the Squadron fund.....



Cpl Piper demonstrates and instructs on the Plas-y-Brenin climbing wall



Appreciating more of the beautiful Welsh weather on top of Glyder Fach
(L-R): Sig Robert Abbey, Sig Adam Welton, Cpl Simon Green, Sig Graham Venn

ROMEO TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt Harvey Scott**
OPSWO **SSgt (Supvr R) White**

A fairly quiet period for the Troop with the main focus for the month being the preparation for Staff College Demonstration 1999 at SPTA. The Troop were briefing on the Deep Operations stand along with other elements from the Regiment, including a Wildcat Jammer (handled masterfully by **LCpl Young** and **Sig Woodrow** of 640 Sig Tp) and the new Odette platform provided by 245 Sig Sqn (EW). This demo provided an excellent chance for the operators to refresh their skills on the equipment as it has yet to come into service in the Regiment. The standard of the briefings were highly praised and one comment of note from a visiting VIP after seeing a demonstration of the equipment was, "Thank God you're on our side'. The Odette crew for the week were **Cpl John Winwood, Cpl Daz Whatmough, Cpl Kenny Smith** and **LCpl Karen Gunn.** A big thanks to the support crew which came down but had a relatively quite week, except for **Sig** 'I thought the PV would fit under that hangar door' **Jones** who was the butt of all the jokes for the week.

Of a more relaxed nature was the Squadron's Adventure Training Exercise to sunny Snowdonia, which was attended by the majority of the Troop. This consisted of the usual mixture of arduous activities interspersed by regular visits to the Cotswold Outdoor Shop (we should have shares by now). A enjoyable time was had by all with local hostelries reporting an unexpected upward turn in profits over this period.

Unfortunately, we have a lot of farewells to say. Goodbye and good-luck to **SSgt** 'Pav' **Burke** who leaves us to join the RAF, **Sgt Andy Ball** and his wife **Jane** off to NI and **Cpl Nicky Dawson** en route to instruct at Chicksands. Last but not least, **LCpl Ronnie Fardell** who is leaving for civvy street, you never know he may actually turn into work on time once before he leaves!

It was nice to see the return to the clan of **LCpl Hickenbotham** and **Sig** 'Crutch' **Crutchley** after returning from detachments in NI and Kosovo respectively. Also welcome to **SSgt Neil Sorley** and his family fresh in from 3 (UK) Div HQ and Sig Sqn just made it for the lovely Brawdy winter). Finally congratulations go to **Cpl Paul Browne** and his wife **Sarah** on the birth of their second son **Luke**.

640 TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt White**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Flaherty**

Welcome to **Sig Mark Watson** and **Sig Craig Rees** who arrived in 640 Sig Tp in early September from Blandford, and also to **Cpl Pete Byrnes** who has joined us from Romeo Tp. Goodbyes to **Cpl** 'Denny' **Denton** who is now in the SQMS Dept, **LCpl** 'Smudge' **Smith** who has left us to join 16 Air Assault Bde and **Sig Adam Welton** who will be transferring to the Int Corps in the near future. Congratulations are in order for a few members of the Troop, firstly to **Cpl Russ Ryan** and his wife **Donna** on the birth of their baby girl **Cerys** on 29 July. Also to **LCpl** 'Tin' **Foyle** who got married to **Beverly**, and to **Sig Gaz Robinson** who married **Samantha** on Friday 13th of all days!

The Troop has been busy of late due to the change-over of the wagons from Series 3 Land Rovers (yes we are the last unit in the British Army still to have them), to either Wolf Defenders or Pinzgauers. However, we did manage a welcome break, when we went down to Penhale Training Camp for a spot of 'adventurous training' organised by **Cpl** 'Denny' **Denton**. This coincided with the Eclipse and the British Surfing Championships (nice planning 'Denny'). The first night was one to remember. After sorting out our personal admin. and various other points we all took a wander down to Newquay for a night out and to give **LCpl** 'Tin' **Foyle** a stag party. The night started off well but nobody is quite sure how it ended, although there are a few malicious rumours which involve talk of a lamp-post, a pair of handcuffs and someone's clothes being distributed to the gathering crowds. The following day, deep sea fishing was on the agenda. When we eventually boarded the boat we received lots of, 'Alright me lovers,' and, 'What's up my handsomes.' from the Skipper (strange bloke), before we headed out for deeper water. After being baffled by technical talk about tides, depths and various different fish, we put the rods over the side and the fish just kept on coming. Everybody caught something whether it be a seagull or a dogfish. There were a number of activities laid on throughout the week, mountain biking, hill walking and surfing are just a few, but I think the highlight of the week for most, was the total eclipse of the sun. It was such a spectacle and a rare thing to see and to be in one of the best places in the world to view it was amazing.

COMMS TROOP

Tp Comd **2Lt Murray MacDonald**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Brown**

Comms Tp deployed in high spirits on Ex Whale Link on 9-15 August, to an unknown little training camp somewhere in Maidstone. We only had one minor hiccup on route which occurred at the RMAS POL point where **LCpls Chris John** and **Stu Kelly** took it upon themselves to give the Troop a lesson in how not to POL their trucks. 'Honest the head just fell off the end of the pipe!. Yeah OK, we believe you. After much emptying of jerry cans the Troop got on its way again. The aim of the Exercise was to refresh the Tele Op (TG)'s and teach the Tele Op (R) JMH which proved to be slightly more difficult than at first thought. The TG's were well educated in the ways of JMH (not!) but did manage to pass on a little of their knowledge to us Rad Ops.

When eventually the training phase was complete, Comms Tp scattered to the four winds with Dets deployed to Weymouth (mid season), Nottingham and Eastbourne to conduct an insecure RATT Ex. Once the Exercise proper commenced the Dets soon began to get their RATT and JMH skills down to a fine art, although the typing could have done with a little work. Overall the Exercise was a success, we all enjoyed ourselves whilst at the same time conducting valuable cross-training, gaining a good insight into JMH and RATT working.

EXERCISE WHALE ADVENTURE 1999
SUMMER MOUNTAINEERING PROFICIENCY COURSE
by LCpl Frost

Picture, if you will, sub-tropical heat, a warm sea breeze and an endless supply of hand prepared cocktails - then you would be as far from paradise as we were! Members of the course, **LCpls Steve Frost, Dave Grimes, Glenn Roberts** and **Sig Sue Shand** all had a rather wet time trudging around the welcoming, and gently rolling hills of Snowdonia with their ever smiling instructor **Lt Ben White**. Apart from the weather hampering attempts to conquer Snowdon and its outlying mountains everyone had a good time and enjoyed themselves, even when having to navigate the group through the thickest 'Pea soup' fog. The course itself was aimed at introducing the students to the basics of mountaineering. These included topics such as equipment selection., effects of altitude on temperature and wind, hyperthermia and hypothermia. The course also covered map reading practice and theory. If there are any budding mountaineers out there who are looking to do any Mountain Leader Training then this course is specifically aimed at helping you get a good knowledge of facts and figures that are needed at later stages in training.

EXERCISE LONG LOOK 1999
by LCpl Edwards

When I was informed that I was selected to participate in Ex Longlook 1999, I was very excited as I have never been to Australia before. The Exercise started mid April with a long flight half way round the world, arriving in Brisbane early on a Wednesday morning. After two days rest, I was out in the bush on battle camp. Once I had been trained on the Australian rifle, I was given a set of, 'Aussie' cams and told to join my section. The days were spent on section attacks and ambushes which proved to be great fun despite the few differences in the section drills.

After an excellent ANZAC Day, it was time for another exercise. This was a comms exercise and not another trek through the bush. The exercise was designed primarily to utilise both HF theory and practical skills. Much of it was familiar to me. However, there were one or two differences, the biggest of which was voice procedure. We were also fortunate enough to be given the opportunity to complete the obstacle course at a place called Ennoggra, which turned out to be very wet and muddy (good to see some things are the same in any army!).

It wasn't all work in Australia, however, I had the chance to visit Sydney, where I spent the day looking at all the sights. These included the Harbour Bridge, the Opera House and the Center Point. I also managed to see the Crown Casino in Melbourne, the Barossa wine valley in Adelaide and the very interesting war museum in Canberra. My 'home' during this phase was Toowoomba where the lads looked after me very well. I was always kept busy over the week-ends, going to fun parks like Dreamworld and Movieworld, and I also had a chance to go horse-riding at a friend's farm.

After another Comms Exercise I took a week's leave and went off to Alice Springs and Ayers Rock which was an amazing experience. The day at Ayers Rock started at seven in the morning, with a four hour journey (it takes ages to get any where in Australia). Once we had arrived I had a look around the cultural centre then came the climb to the top of Ayers Rock itself, which was totally exhilarating. To write about everything I did on Ex Longlook would take pages, these are just a few of the highlights and memories. Australia is a wonderful country and I am very fortunate to have been able to visit it. I would strongly advise anyone else, who gets offered the chance, to take it.

237 SIGNAL SQUADRON (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)
Sqn Comd **Maj Dakin**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Richardson**

SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS

The Squadron hierarchy continues to drive the Squadron into the Millennium, or is it into Kosovo, Bosnia, Egypt, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Canada or Salisbury Plain? We continue to be very busy, deploying men, women and equipment to all corners of the globe. Recruiting is not a problem, its keeping them in Brawdy that is proving the difficulty.

Congratulations to the OC and **Sarah** on the birth of **Daniel**. That should cut down the weekends away adventure training. Congratulations are due to **SSgt** 'Shuggie' **Hughes** for his impending marriage.

Welcome back from Kosovo to **SSgt Glen Kitchen**, soon to assume command of the SQMS department with relief in place from **Sgt** 'Stanley Botham' **Buxton** Int Corps, the present incumbent. Congratulations as well go to **SSgt, Kitchen** on your impending marriage, it doesn't seem two minutes since your last one.

VICTOR TROOP
Tp Comd **WO2 Matthews** Royal Australian Signals
Tp SSgt **SSgt Watters**

Many of the Troop are away on Ops and fortunately they have taken all the Troop's equipment with them. We wait in anticipation for the delivery of the new equipment and vehicles. Also recently departed from our establishment are the one tonne VAMPIRES which were last seen been driven off the cliffs at Newgale Beach by the old and bold Troop members.

Congratulations to **Cpl Mark Wright** who successfully passed P Company and who should now be able to keep up on Squadron PT. Welcomes to **SSgt** 'Beaky' **Newton Roberts, Sgt** 'Chopper' **Christopher, Sig Kerry Burrows** and **Sig** 'Speedy' **Tipple.** Farewells to those that have got away, **LCpl Al** 'Bay-Weaner' **Sharpe** to 225 Sig Sqn and to **Sgt Joyce Pankhurst** to a full time job as a mother.

Our Australian attached Troop Commander, **WO2 Bob Matthews,** continues to count the days to his return to his homeland, at a time to coincide with Xmas on the beach! Although not yet gone he is already preparing us for his absence by spending as much time as possible touring in Europe, Cyprus and the UK. Leave us your address **Bob** as we are all coming to visit.

KILO TROOP

For those who noticed in the last *Wire*, but were non-believers, BROMURE is no longer a Troop asset. Proof is produced and you see before you the farewell picture of the said communications asset and its trusty crew before hand-over to Light Care and Preservation Troop. Corps members with interesting historical anecdotes on these pieces of equipment are asked to forward them to the Corps Museum to be displayed along side the equipment and **Sgt Paul Woods** who will be soon there himself.



Bromures - The last salute
Back Row (L-R): Cpl Gronn, Sig Cox-Davies, Sig Leyland, Cpl Piper
Front Row (L-R): WO2 Speirs, Maj Dakin, Sgt Woods

5 AIRBORNE BRIGADE
RE-ROLING TO 12 MECHANISED BRIGADE

On 1 September 1999, 5 Airborne Brigade re-roled to 12 Mechanised Brigade. Those previous members of HQ 5 AB Bde WOs and Sgts Mess who have presented any memorabilia to the Mess between 1969 and 1999 are to contact **WO2 Wales** on Aldershot Military 4411, Civil 01252 349411 or **Karen Bramley** (4422 or 349422) if they wish to have their presentation pieces returned. If no replies are forthcoming by 7 February 2000, then the present Mess Members will decide if the item will be kept on the books of 12 Mech Bde Mess, donated to the new 16 Air Assault Mess in Colchester or donated to the Airborne Museum.

TANGO TROOP
Tp Comd **2Lt Waddell**
Tp SSgt **Sgt Woods**

The last two months has seen the Troop expand to something like its establishment size. No longer is it at fire team strength but now with the cast-offs from Kilo Tp and the returning heroes from Kosovo and Bosnia we can field a couple of section sized teams. Welcome back from Bosnia to **LCpl Drummond, Sig Wythes** and **Sig Magill**. Congratulations to **Sig** '727' **Clark** on the arrival of his first-born. Life will never be the same again.

MOTOR TRANSPORT SECTION
MT Sgt **Sgt Keenan**
MT Cpl **Cpl Stanley-Jones**

The Troop continues to provide a holding bay for the Regimental MT's cast-offs and we welcome **Sig Potter** into the fray. Congratulations **Sig Keith Barrows** for not having gone AWOL for over two months. Welcome back to **LCpl** 'Big Lad' **Campbell** who is now challenging **Sgt Dave Keenan** as the 'courses man'.

RUSS CUP X-COUNTRY

The fourth of the keenly contested Inter-Squadron Russ Cup competitions involved all Regimental personnel in station running six miles around the adjacent airfield. The only X-Country involved was a quick detour around the football field with the course being flatter than the proverbial pancake. It was a typical windy day and if you weren't in the first two you were caught in a thunderstorm. The results were as follows:

Male Individual	1st	**Sgt Bradley**
	2nd	**Cpl Green**
	3rd	**LCpl Grimes**
Over 35's		**WO2 Speirs**
Over 40's		**Capt Turnbull**
Ladies		**Sgt Pankhurst**
Russ Cup Cross Country 1999		
Winners		237 Sig Sqn (EW)
2nd		245 Sig Sqn (EW)
3rd		226 Sig Sqn (EW)
4th		HQ Sqn

VISIT OF ACOS G6
COMD COMMS LAND BRIG J. M. SHAW MBE

On 27 September 1999, Comd Comms LAND, **Brig J. M. Shaw MBE** visited the Regiment. During his visit he received a brief on the Regiment's commitment to Ops Palatine and Agricola, a progress report on future equipment procurements and presented Long Service & Good Conduct medals to six recipients.



Presentation of LS & GC medals
Back Row (L-R): Lt Col Meyer, LCpl Archibald, Sgt Crossley, Sgt Wattleworth, Sgt Roberts, SSgt Abson, WO2 (QMSI) Smith, WO1 (RSM) Hardwidge
Front Row (L-R): Mrs Wattleworth and family, Brig Shaw MBE, Ms Wattleworth, Mrs Abson, Mrs Smith

245 SIGNAL SQUADRON (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)
Sqn Comd **Maj J. M. Hodges**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) M. C. Fisher**

WHISKEY TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt Fi Stewart**
Tp SSgt: **SSgt Jez Clarke**

The Troop have coped admirably with continuous change over the last couple of months. The old kit has moved out, the new kit has yet to arrive. Building up our strength in anticipation of our new lease of life, it has been a quiet period for Exercises, although the majority have managed to complete a week's adventure training either in Scotland or Wales. An ITD week at Castle Martin was wet, hard work, good fun and an excellent opportunity for the new Sqn OC to meet the Troop in their element!

Welcome back from Bosnia to **Sig Nicolls,** and from Kosovo to **LCpl Fitzpatrick, LCpl Allen, LCpl Burns, LCpl Ellams** and **JT Jordan** RAF. Welcome also to **Sgt Andy Goodwin** RAF, **Sgt Kev Burn** RAF, and **Sgt Carl Elliot** Int Corps. Welcome also to **LCpl Gunn**, who joins us from 1 (UK) Div HQ and Sig Regt and 'goodbye' and 'good luck' to **Cpl Hirst**, on posting to NI and to **LCpl Lee Broughton** best of success in civvy street. Congratulations to **JT Russell** RAF on her recent marriage. Happy Christmas and Millennium greetings to **Sgt** 'Splitter' **Mortimer** Int Corps, **Sgt** 'Jock' **Marshalsey**, and **Sig** 'Weak at the knees' **Watson** in Kosovo.

ZULU TROOP
Tp Comd **2Lt I. G. Rodger**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Si Donnelly**

The last month has proved to be a busy time for the 'Zulu Warriors', with preparations for Ex Ulan Eagle in Poland and Squadron adventure training in the Snowdonia National Park. Within the first few days **Sig Abbey** and **Sig** 'Alton' **Towers** appreciated the finer points of trying to stay upright in a canoe, much to the amusement of the resident expert **LCpl Stu Green**. The ascent of Mt Snowdon was undertaken in heavy rain and low cloud, but that did not deter **Sig** 'Stretch' **Heathcote** switching to mountain goat mode and steaming off up the hillside. Just behind and at a reasonable pace **Sig** 'Winkypot' **Thomson** served as the team's 'ginger beacon' keeping everybody on the right course!!!

The second phase saw the arrival of even more Zulu's, led by **Cpl** 'Adonis' **McMullan** who provided some vital demonstrations on the best way to take corners whilst on a mountain bike. **Sig Coles** discovered the finer points of gravity on the indoor climbing wall, where his ability, to hang on that little bit longer improved dramatically. Running concurrently with adventure training was a Summer Mountaineering Proficiency Course, undertaken by **LCpl** 'Which Bearing?' **Grimes** and **Sig** 'Spot Height' **Shand** who say that it was the wettest summer days ever spent on the hills by either of them.

The Troop would like to welcome to the fold **Sigs Abbey, Coles, Cownie** and **Fox**. We would like to wish **Sig Lee Parry** all the best on his posting to civvy street. The Troop would like to congratulate **LCpl Dave Grimes** on coming top of the recently run Unit Cadre course and getting onto the first rung of the promotion ladder.

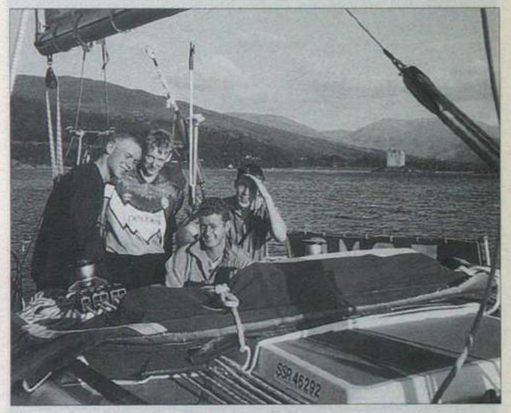
EXERCISE TALISKA DRAGON - ADVENTURE TRAINING
by SSgt Jez Clarke

This years adventure training for 245 Sig Sqn (EW) took place in the Kyle of Lochalshe on the west coast of Scotland. It was headed up by **Capt** 'Comd Comms' **Ingram** who spent the week on a yacht. His claim to always having comms wherever he has been, being maintained thanks to a Corporal from the LI who was there to switch on the set - a procedure beyond **Capt Ingram**. The UEL, instructor was **2Lt** 'Muffy Magellan' **MacDonald** who could have become geographically embarrassed had **Cpl** 'Hilton' **Smith** not put the group on the right track by turning everyone around through 180 degrees.

To vary the hills walked the groups went further south to the port of Oban, the home town of **Cpl** 'Hilton' **Smith** who promised everyone a bed for the night, but after travelling for three hours declared he could only accommodate himself leaving the rest to find a camp site. Whilst in the area it gave an ideal opportunity to climb Ben Nevis, a feat **Sgt** 'Roundabout' **Topham** and **Cpl** 'Buck' **Rodgers** wished they hadn't started. A few natural adventurers were found during the week in the guise of **Sig** 'Village' **Gregory** who put **SSgt** 'Ski' **Sharp** under pressure on the rock face and **LCpl** 'The Fat Whale Hunter' **Anslow** whose competitive streak allow him to win the 'Lag the Bag competition'.



Cpl 'Buck' Rogers, Cpl John Shriggley, 'Village' Gregory, LCpl Dave Anslow and Sgt Bernie Topham set sail from Portree, Isle of Skye on Ex Talisker Dragon



Sig Nunns, Cpl Waldron, LCpl Rees and Sig Cownie ponder the gale warnings in Rockall, Bailey and SE Iceland

16 SIGNAL REGIMENT

CHANGE OF COMMAND

On 31 August 1999 **Lt Col Gordon James**, Commanding Officer 16 Sig Regt handed over his command to **Lt Col Tony Morphet**. Throughout his two and a half years of command **Col James** has taken the Regiment forward in terms of communications support to HQ ARRC and the Army in Germany, its sporting success and wider Corps reputation. The pinnacle of his command has been the Regiment's collective performance on Op Agricola. **Col Gordon, Manuela** and the boys leave Germany on promotion for Spain where he will assume the new appointment of ACOS G6 in Madrid. The Regiment's best wishes go with them. A hearty welcome is offered to **Lt Col Tony Morphet**, his wife **Kathrin** and their family arriving from Glasgow where he has served the last 18 months as SO2 then SO1 Soldiers at R SIGNALS MCM Division. May you all enjoy Rheindahlen (again!)

UKSC(G) SKILL AT ARMS MEETING - *By LCpl Fatchett*

Following the CORPSAAM, 16 Sig Regt's next shooting competition was the UKSC(G) Skill At Arms Meeting. After returning to Germany from the CORPSAAM, training continued at Arsebeck ranges in preparation for the UKSC(G) competition. Yet again **SSgt Andy Dixon** put together an excellent training package preparing the team for the forthcoming event. The competition itself was spread over a two-day period, with the incentive that the top four shooters would qualify for the Queens Medal Competition at Bisley. 16 Sig Regt proved a team to be reckoned with, gaining three out of the top six places in the individual competition. The team also came first in the pistol match, second overall in the rifle match and third for the combined rifle and LSW shoots. The Commanding Officer seemed very pleased with the new addition of silver, which will help fill the Regimental trophy cabinet!



The Team
Back Row (L-R): SSgt Dixon, Sig McGrouther, Cpl Counter, Capt Hutchinson
Front Row (L-R): Sig Pearce, LCpl Fatchett, Sig Cole

As a result of the UKSC(G) competition and operational commitments, both **LCpl** 'Fatch' **Fatchett** and **SSgt Andy Dixon** qualified for the Queen's Medal Competition. **Sig Steve Pearce** also had

the opportunity of a place, but after his recent marriage his wife did not wish to spend her honeymoon on the ranges! **SSgt Dixon** and **LCpl Fatchett**, however, travelled to Pirbright where they joined the other Royal Signals and Queens Gurkha Signals qualifiers. **Capt Krishna** from the Queens Gurkha Signals led the training on the Pirbright and Century ranges where the competition itself was to be conducted. The Queens Medal Competition involved five matches which were spread over a two day period. The competition was tough and the shooting of a high standard, bearing in mind that some of the best shots in the Army and even a few of the best shots in the country were competing. Thankfully the rain stayed away but the wind proved a hinderance to all shooters.

The competition concluded well with **LCpl Fatchett** and **SSgt Dixon** coming in the top Army one hundred, both winning a Bisley one hundred medal and badge. As a result of this year's competition, there are now twelve Royal Signals soldiers with the Army one hundred badge. The intention next year is to improve the number of 'badge' holders, by enlisting more 'young blood' from the Regiment. The competition has shown the potential which exists within the Royal Corps of Signals to develop better 'shots' who, in the future, could qualify for the Army team, and who knows one day even a Queen's Medal winner.



The Team receiving prizes
from GOC UKSC(G) Maj Gen Elliot CBE

NIKUSTAK PRIMARY SCHOOL PROJECT - MACEDONIA
By Lt Connor

The Nikustak Primary School renovation project is still ongoing, but thankfully the end is now clearly in sight. This cannot come soon enough for **SSgt Rab** 'Not happy' **Marshall** and **Lt Phil** 'Not interested' **Connor**, who have remained in theatre to ensure its completion. The roof is now not only waterproof, but more importantly is pigeon proof, and the foot deep pile of feathers, pigeon corpses and droppings that had collected in the attic has now been relocated, albeit to the children's playground. A new tongue and groove ceiling has been fitted replacing the old one that was collapsing in several places, and showering its heady mix of pigeon detritus onto the children below. Work is still ongoing regards the new floor, but I can report the supporting joists have been laid and the floorboards have been delivered and should be down within the next couple of days. The builders are forever in a whirl of activity with all the other little jobs being done simultaneously. A new door has been hung, new windows fitted, walls prepared for painting and new electrics installed. It is all coming together nicely. A vast improvement on the original hovel and much to the satisfaction of the village president, who has made it his personal mission to ensure that the builders don't pinch anything - although I did see one get away with a sack full of pigeons destined for his oven. Within a few more days all work will be completed, plaque handed over, photos taken, and then back to JHQ for tea and medals.

16 SIGNAL REGIMENT SWIMMING TEAM - *by Sgt C. Smith*

During the recent BA(G) swimming championships the Regiment was lucky enough to enter a team under the illustrious leadership of **Capt Lee O'Rourke**. Due to operational commitments the male team consisted of a mixed bag of young hopefuls (**WO1 Gaz Tomlinson**) and old has beans (**Sgt Pete Taylor**), while the female team actually had individuals that could hardly swim. Still undeterred we set off for Hohne only stopping after we realised that we had left **LCpl Jim Crawley** in the guardroom drinking a cup of coffee. Fortunately we had *only* got as far as Herford when we realised he was missing! The morning of the championships came and whilst our leader was selecting who was swimming (and at the same time doing his best to avoid getting wet), the rest of the team was relaxing by the pool getting some kip following a hard training session the night before! The actual competition went well with a notable performance by **Sgt Pete Taylor** who won the 50m freestyle event. Every member of the squad gave 100% and in the end the female team gained a highly creditable place while the male team actually came second. The good news is that the team from 220 Sig Sqn that beat us are all moving to the Regiment later this year anyway! The highlight of the event came a week later with the publication of the Sixth Sense. The writing stated that the photo was of the captain of the winning 220 Sig Sqn side. That person, **Capt Gary Johnson**, has obviously put on weight and found the fountain of youth because in the photo was actually **Capt Lee O'Rourke** holding the water-polo cup that the organisers would not present to us because we were the only team to turn up!

HELLOS AND FAREWELLS

The last couple of months has seen a few old faithfuls disappear and some new faces appear in the Regiment. The most prominent of these, as already mentioned, is obviously the change in appointments of Commanding Officers. The Regiment is, however, also saying goodbye to **Maj Alistair Ross**, who will be sadly missed by all at 255 Sig Sqn - although as he has only moved to take up post in ARRC HQ, we still expect to see you from time to time in the Irish Bar sir! It is also appropriate at this point to congratulate **Maj Ross** on his recent marriage to **Joyce** and wish both of them our best. Farewells also go to **Sgt Danni Thwaite**, who is off to teach at sunny Blandford, **Capt Steve Hutchinson** who has become Squadron 2IC at 1Mech Bde, and **Capt Lee** 'I never get crated for being in *The Wire*' **Hawkes** who, after being OC Kowloon Troop and the Adjutant, is off to relax on JCSC at RMA Sandhurst! The hellos on the other hand go to **Maj Burgin** who has taken command of 255 Sig Sqn, **Lt Francis-McGann**, **WO2 (RQMS) Robinson**, **SSgt (FofS)Duff**, **Sgt Ramsay**, **Sgt Manley** and **Sgt Dennis**.

33 SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO **Lt Col R. J. Steed MBE**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) R. D. Cowan**

After the busy summer period of Brigade Exercises and Camp, the Regiment had hoped there would be a period of quiet. Unfortunately, it wasn't quite what we envisaged. A Regional Brigade Exercise, charity events, preparation for winter functions, along with the regular maintenance, training and recruit selection weekends all made for a very busy period. This was, of course, interspersed with one or two Brigade Commander's visits – all in the space of two months. Roll on Christmas block leave.

EXERCISE NORTHERN ROSE 1999

The Regiment was tasked to provide an EXCON HQ, mini TN and SCRA(T) coverage for 42 (NW) Bde's Ex Northern Rose 1999, which was taking place in the Kielder Forest area of the border region with Scotland. The first phase of the Exercise for the Regiment consisted of the centralisation of equipment and manpower required for the Exercise at Deysbrook Barracks, Liverpool. During this phase IBCP was carried out along with the establishment of a network to check out all equipments. For **Sgt Phil Price**, of 59 Sqn, this was the gentle introduction needed back to the field army after three years recruiting.

Friday 24 September, the day for deployment arrived and we all set off up the M6 to DM Longtown from where we would deploy to our Exercise locations. Leaving behind **Maj John Miller** (2IC Regiment) and his merry band of 'fresh rations only' Ops party to establish EXCON, the main body of field communicators moved to their locations on the exercise area. The mini-nodes were to be located in a quarry on the area of RAF Spadeadam, a radar teaching establishment. On arrival it was a hair raising experience for **SSgt Jim** 'Get off my train' **Eddowes** and his RR and Central crews to park their vehicles on the very edge of the quarry. Here we must mention **LCpl Kev Cailes** (Chef) and his admin crew for their speed in creating a warming and welcome meal.

Saturday morning saw comms established in double quick time and the SCRA(T)s were soon out and about the area checking out possible dead spots (local shops). Priorities on the Monday evening ran to the Merseyside Derby where many a friend was won and lost. All the MUFC members send their heartfelt commiserations to the Red side of the Regiment. With the Exercise in full flow many a low pass was made over our location by RAF and USAF planes which led to **LCpl Stu Green** getting somewhat excited. Even more so when tasked with establishing a HLS for an Apache helicopter which would visit the location. Due to its arrival in the dark and in 'whisper mode' **LCpl Green** would need to elevate his lights and then carry out the IR heat seeking drills (warm hands). Unfortunately it failed to find us. Special thanks to **Sigs** 'Lurch' **Wilkes** and **Sheila Stanley** for their Landrover acrobatics display. With a special mention in dispatches to **SSgt Paul Langley** who would like to talk to anyone who will listen to him. All in all a good and worthwhile Exercise for all the TA soldiers who participated.

55 (MERSEYSIDE) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)
Sqn Comd **Maj Micah Cummings**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Paul Williams**

The Squadron, together with elements of the LAD, completed an 'arduous' adventuring training exercise from Capel Curig in North Wales during the weekend 6 – 8 August 1999. Events included hill walking at Tryfan and dry slope skiing, canoeing and rock climbing at Plas-y-Brenin Outdoor Pursuits Centre. **Maj Micah Cummings** and **SSM Paul Williams** organised the aprés ski entertainment on the Saturday evening, to the satisfaction of all concerned. Who said 'the fun's gone out of the TA?' The Squadron was tasked with running the Autumn Regimental CMT weekend at Altcar Ranges. This was taken on with much gusto and fervour (sic), and culminated in an exceptionally good weekend. For a change the weather was fine, and all personnel attending managed to get round the various ITD stands and complete their Bounty Training objectives. The new CFT taken on the Saturday evening whetted everyone's' appetite for a drink later, and sorted out those who were fit from those who thought they were! **Sgt Bowers** and **Cpl Jefferson** (LAD) were the newly qualified CFT PTIs who 'pleasantly beasted' all and sundry to finish on time.

On the manning front the Regimental Assets of Radio Troop have been redeployed from 59 Sqn back in to 55 (HQ) Sqn as of 1 October 1999, and 711 Tp are deploying to Shrewsbury in the near future under the mantle of 35 Sig Regt (V). Personnel displaced by the move will be offered 'plum' positions in 55 (HQ) Sqn (if there are any) and if anybody out there has seen **Lt Lynn Reardon** 711 Troop Officer, please tell her.

42 (CITY OF MANCHESTER) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)
Sqn Comd **Maj Ian Kelly**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Graham Ward**

EXERCISE MANCUNIAN ENDEAVOUR 7– 8 AUGUST 1999

Forty members of the Squadron travelled to the Lake District for the summer Squadron Adventurous Training Camp. The venue was the same as last year, with Denton House in Keswick providing the accommodation and the training took place in and around the local area. Denton House, which has for years been owned by the King's Own Border Regiment, is now the property of The Adventure Company, a long established Adventurous Training Organisation operating out of Low Grove Farm at the foot of Skiddaw near Keswick. Training was carried out in trekking, mountain bike riding, canoeing, wind surfing, water skiing and dinghy sailing. Some activities were more successful than others with the OC, **Maj Ian Kelly** and the 2IC, **Capt Dave Titheridge**, accompanied by **Maj Tony Dowson** from HQ 42 (NW) Bde becoming totally becalmed on lake Windermere. **SSgt Maurice Aarons** who was towing skiers with his speed boat nearby claimed not to have noticed their predicament and ignored their pleas for help. He is now on a two-week drill course at Pirbright to see if that will improve his powers of observation as well as his turnout and marching!



42 Sqn members pictured outside Denton House
with the OC Sqn, Ian Kelly (with the white legs)
and 2IC, Dave Titheridge next to him with the shades



At the top of Grisedale Pike
(L-R): Sgt Dave Bowers, Cpl Phil Jennings, Cpl Spider Smith,
LCpl Sue Heaps, Cpl Dave Kerr, LCpl Andy Connell,
LCpl Sam Hickson, SSgt 'Rooster' Coburn, Sig Mike Brooks and
LCpl Paul Bennisson

The remainder of the weekend went without a hitch with the canoeists being particularly fortunate in having **WO2 Garry Wilson,** a PSI with the King's Regiment at Manchester UOTC, as an instructor to teach them the delights of underwater escape drills and Eskimo rolls. The walkers, under the control of UEL instructors **SSgt** 'Rooster' **Coburn** and **Cpl** 'Spider' **Smith**, enjoyed two days of good weather. During these days they traversed Skiddaw, Lonscale Fell, Little Man and Grisedale Pike among other features, before retiring to the PSAO's favourite pub in the village of Braithwaite for a few well earned pints of the local bitter.

THE KRYPTON FACTOR ASSAULT COURSE
19 – 20 SEPTEMBER 1999

The Regiment was tasked with providing support to the Krypton Factor Charity Obstacle Course taking place at Holcombe Moor over the weekend 18–19 September 1999. As the nearest Squadron to Holcombe Moor (Holcombe Moor is just north of Bury which is north of Manchester) 42 Sqn was nominated to organise this event on the Regiment's behalf.

Two charities were represented over the weekend, The National Heart Research Fund on the Saturday and The Cancer Research Campaign on the Sunday. The idea being for four male/female teams from across the North West and North Yorkshire to sponsor themselves to complete the famous (as seen many times on television) obstacle course. The Squadron, with a little help from 103 Regt RA (V), based in St Helens, was responsible for running the obstacle course as well as providing administration, equipment and communications support. As with every high profile event, all necessary precautions had to be thought of to ensure not only that the event was a great success and that lots of money was raised for charity, but also that the safety of the participants was paramount.



Teams negotiating the famous 'death slide' on the obstacle course
at Holcombe Moor supervised by Sqn PTIs

The enthusiasm level from the participating teams was tremendous with 52 teams taking part on the Saturday and a further 48 taking part on the Sunday. The oldest competitor, who insisted on being in the first team, was the Mayor of Salford, **Cllr Pennington**, a very sprightly 71 years old! Also taking part was the MP for Withington, **Cllr Goggins**. The teams were from all walks of life with teams comprising Scientists, doctors and nurses, school teachers, bank clerks and shop assistants to name but a few. Teams were paying £100 a team to the sponsored charity that gives some idea of the amount of money raised. As a proportion of the money raised is donated to the Army Benevolent Fund, the whole Exercise was extremely worthwhile.



The CO, Lt Col John Steed MBE, flanked by
the Mayor and Mayoress of Bury, Cllr and Mrs Costello,
and some of the participants and PTIs

REUNION DINNER 25 SEPTEMBER 1999

The Squadron held a dinner on 25 September for all members of the Squadron past and present. This is the second such dinner held and is now firmly fixed in the Squadron calendar as an annual event. As well as ex-Squadron members, members of the Manchester Branch of the Royal Signals Association and the 42 Sqn ex-Officers Club were in attendance. The evening proved a great success and as we go to print the date for next year's dinner is under consideration and will be promulgated shortly.

FAREWELL

Although they left in June, the Squadron would like to acknowledge, through the medium of *The Wire*, the long and sterling service that has been given by our caretaker **Mr Tony Holliss** and his wife **Maureen**. Unfortunately **Tony** fell victim to efficiency savings measures being carried out by 42 (NW) Bde earlier this year and had to take compulsory retirement. **Tony** had been the caretaker with 42 Sqn for over twenty years and **Maureen** ran the Sgts' Mess bar for a great deal of this time. Always cheerful and friendly, nothing to do with the running of the TA Centre was too much trouble and they contributed far more than was actually required of them. They have moved to their hometown of Bury and **Tony** has found employment with the Corps of Commissionaires. All ranks of the Squadron wish them the very best of fortune and good luck for the future.



The PSAO, Capt Gerry Whelan with Maureen and Tony at their farewell function in the Sgts' Mess

CONGRATULATIONS

Finally the Squadron would like to congratulate **Sgt Kevin Westall** and his wife **Helen** on the birth of their daughter **Helena** and **Cpl Ken Bryan** and his wife **Trish** on the birth of their son **Sean**.

80 (CHESHIRE YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)

Sqn Comd **Maj Stan Fitzgerald**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Frank Hale**

On the weekend of 17–19 September, members of 80 Sig Sqn embarked on a Troop Weekend. The aim of the weekend was to improve the map reading skills in a vehicle of our newer Signallers. It is all well and good to be able to map read on foot, but as we are a mounted unit (Landrover rather than horses!), it is a different thing using a 1:50,000 map in a rover around winding roads. This is something we get called upon to do very often; the newer soldiers do not get any practice at it, other than apologising for getting lost. The hope was they would learn to navigate with a few kind words from their SNCO driving for directing them down the wrong road.

The Pack was given a route card to Church Bay, near the end of the route, they passed 'The Church Bay', a local pub at which point they pulled in to the car park. Their hopes were short lived when they found out the field they were staying in was a further mile away, down the road in Church Bay, not at 'The Church Bay'. That would have been too much to camp in the pub, not such a bad idea when you come to think of it though! The idea of pitching the 12 x 12s next to the sea had been a 'nice' plan, but with a force 9–10 gale during the night, we had to use four bags of 18' spikes and two Bedfords to anchor the tents down. It worked well, as the tents didn't move and no one got wet!!

The Saturday was filled with a nine hour map course around the island of Anglesey, this was handy as long as they didn't cross the bridge back to the mainland, they couldn't be more than 20 miles away from the bivi area. There were two memorable points from the day's training. **LCpl Adams** and crew at one grid point went through a churchyard to find a clue, only to stumble into someone's wedding. The party were coming out of the church and getting ready for pictures as our gallant heroes came running through the church grounds, the vicar was notably bemused. In true army style, the passing soldiers gave their compliments to the blushing bridesmaids. That's one wedding with a touch of green, well DPM at least! Another task was to count the steps at South Stack Lighthouse, almost all commented that there were more coming up than going down, then again when you've just run down over 400 steps, going back up doesn't seem so appealing.

On Saturday evening we found time to hold a barbecue on the beach. **2Lt Cox** thought I was joking when I said people were to bring their swimming kit, yet no one bothered changing as over half ran half clothed into the sea. The storm had brought six foot waves and fun was had by all, even if they did look like drowned rats. The local welcomed this invasion from Runcorn, especially on Saturday evening; the pub didn't know what had hit them. People don't normally dance to the music, yet 80 got up and strutted their funky stuff. The weekend went well, it was enjoyed by all and everyone learned something from the map reading tasks. The TA needs some breaks from the endless workload Ptarmigan gives us, to be an effective unit, we must look at new and different ways to train.

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35 (SOUTH MIDLANDS) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

XXXV

THE MOVE TO CRAMLEY

The Summer months are usually a period of tranquillity and peace when well earned leave can be taken from the hustle and bustle of daily life in the TA and the daily routine takes on a more relaxed and sedate pace. Unfortunately the upheaval and turbulence of a major move from Sutton Coldfield of our Regimental Headquarters and Headquarter Squadron including LAD into a new TA Centre located at Canley a suburb of Coventry, quickly dashed any plans for a quiet restful period of recuperation. While the move went relatively smoothly, our worst fears were quickly realised that space was at a premium and Canley was quickly dubbed Cramley. Despite the best efforts of the Quartermaster, **Maj** 'I don't have a Tardis' **Rod Gladwin**, additional space could not be found to house all elements within the new TA Centre and some assets had to be re-deployed to other Squadron locations. This was much to the dismay of Mike Tp who found their designated workshop was still occupied by the Band of the RRF and defended by the RRF Regimental Mascot. The mascot has now thankfully been despatched to the Tower of London and on a lighter musical note the Regimental Techs because of their displacement and after some initial resistance from the 'Fourmost' Foreman, have now adopted a new theme tune, appropriately it's called 'Show me the way to go Ohm'. Nonetheless the hand-over take-over ceremony went smoothly and **Maj Tudor Hill** took over the reins of Centre Commander from **Lt Col Ian Kippen** under the watchful gaze of Comd 143 Bde, **Brig John King** and other special guests.



The flag raising ceremony
A scene from the hand-over/take-over parade

Sadly, even though the Regiment is now firmly established at Canley, our links and long association with Sutton Coldfield in particular will be missed. On a happier and positive note, despite the move many members of the TA recruited in Sutton Coldfield have chosen to continue serving with HQ Sqn and the LAD and the Regiment is already building a rapport with the local Community in Coventry as well as maintaining important historical and traditional links with the City of Birmingham. Finally a special thank you is once again extended to **WO2 Mick Kearney** and his intrepid team of Chefs for providing an excellent buffet enjoyed by all after the ceremony.



Farewell old friend – the outgoing Hon Col with new CO

ALL CHANGE AT THE TOP

The winds of change have blown through the Regiment and many familiar faces have now sadly departed; but changes while often unnerving are nevertheless a refreshing, necessary and familiar part of military life that tend to lead us in new directions and challenging situations. Leading the way a very special welcome is extended to our new CO, **Lt Col Steven Potter** and **Sally** his wife fresh from 11 Sig Bde. We wish the CO and his family a happy and rewarding tour with the Regiment and are confident that many achievements and new friendships will be forged along the way. The Regiment is also delighted to welcome back **Col Brian Foxon** as our Honorary Colonel. **Col Brian** and wife **Carolyn** have a long and esteemed history with the Regiment and we all look forward to renewing a strong and profitable partnership. Sadly we have said farewell to the outgoing Honorary Colonel, **Brig Ian Sim** and wife **Irene**. **Brig Ian** has been a tower of strength during his term of office and especially during the past few months where his wisdom, leadership and sensitivity have been inspirational and maintained morale in the most distressing circumstances. For that we will always be grateful and forever in his debt. At a special dinner held at Canley TAC on Saturday 25 September we bade a particular sad farewell to **Maj Colin Meikle** who leaves the Regiment after sixteen years of devoted service to the TA. The fact that his departure also coincided with the presentation of his TD made the event a little more sorrowful at the loss of another Regimental stalwart. During the dinner we also said farewell to the Adjt, **Capt Andy Talbot** whose sense of humour, tenacity and exuberance will be sorely missed and welcomed his replacement **Capt Bob Lovett** fresh from Staff College. Turning now to the other key figure in the Regiment our illustrious RSM, **WO1 (RSM) Kevin Winkles** and family have now left the Regiment and the Army and has now joined the legions of civilians. **Kevin** took the Regiment to heart and was much respected by all ranks who will miss his unique brand of leadership, direction and guidance. Fresh from God's country we have welcomed **WO1 (RSM) Geordie Marshall** and wish him like all other new arrivals a happy, fruitful and rewarding tour.



Under new management
the CO joined by the new Adjt and RSM at Swynnerton

OUT OF AFRICA

Sixteen members of the Regiment led by **Capt Dominique Hope**, took part in Ex Kwazulu Dragon, which took place between 21 August-6 September. This arduous trekking expedition took place in the Drakensberg Mountains, a rugged and spectacular region of the world, which are situated in the centre of South Africa on the Eastern border of

Lesotho and the Kwazulu Natal region. The aim of the expedition was for the expedition members to trek at altitude to see and enjoy as much of the Drakensberg mountains as time allowed while stretching them both mentally and physically both as individuals and team members what follows is **Dominique**'s account of the expedition.

The Exercise began with the advance party composed of **Capt Dom Hope**, **Sgt Bill Lambert** and **SSgt Rob Thomas** roughing it in Johannesburg. They ensured equipment, rations and other essentials were ready prior to arrival of the main party on Sunday 22 August. All was going accordingly to plan until it was discovered that the main party arrived less luggage, which was still at Heathrow and not due to arrive until a day later! Even though a critical day was lost we took advantage of the situation and visited Gold Reef City, a cultural centre on the outskirts of Johannesburg. Here we took the opportunity to explore an old gold mine and later watched some traditional Zulu dancing. When the luggage arrived the following day the expedition, which was split into three broad stages, set off in earnest - minus **SSgt Martin Thackers'** sleeping bag!

The first stage was an acclimatisation day in the Northern Drakensberg. This was achieved by walking up the Tugela Gorge to the spectacular falls. Unfortunately we were greeted by Snow rather than the blazing sunshine that we expected. The scenery though was breathtaking and the trek itself has some hair-raising moments, noticeably a 100m vertical metal ladder and pinned climb. As white as the snow **Sig Kate McNamara** even managed to smile about it eventually or was it a fixed grimace of horror!



The team taking a well earned rest along the Giants Cup Trail

The second stage was further South in the majestic splendour of Cathedral Park. Here we spent three days exploring key features in this magnificent landscape of dramatic and dangerous caves, gorges, peaks and ridges plus the wildlife including baboons and scavenging fox like creatures. Some of these nimble animals tried to steal rations from **LCpl Lorraine Cantrell** and **Sig Charlotte Alderhouse**'s tent but only managed to attack a couple of packets of extra strong mints. The highlight though of this stage was our ascent of the imposing Cathedral Peak which stood at 3004m the highest peak in the area. We climbed as far as possible without climbing equipment eventually reaching Orange Peel Gap at approx 2900m. I have to say that sitting in the clouds with all round views in complete silence is a most exhilarating experience.

For the final stage we moved to the Southern Drakenbergs to complete our 5-day trek along one of Southern Africa's most striking walks the Giant Cups Trail from Sani Pass near Lesotho to Bushmans Nek, over 80km away. Here we experienced the full gamut of South African wilderness. We trekked through native villages, saw original Bushman Cave paintings, viewed natural wildlife such as cobras, eland, baboons, bok and bright coloured proteas, but also slept under the stars. The trekking here was at times tough and we seemed to be the only people around. Each day different members of the group became the leaders to experience planning and plotting a phase of the trek which proved to be invaluable. Singled out for their special performance are **LCpl Brian Reid** on his gentle pacing that is until he confronted a menacing cobra! **Sig Steve Smith** who now has a reputation for finding the alternative route to any destination and finally **Sig's Lorraine Cantrell** and **Jo Kane** who insisted on us viewing a marauding pack of wild baboons who were careering down the valley closer and closer towards us..... Having survived this encounter and at the end of the five days everyone was aching and tired with sore joints, blisters and seized muscles but looking forward to the final R&R phase in Durban and plenty of cold beer! The expedition was an undoubted success but this is thanks in no small way to the support given by external JSMEL's in the shape of **Major Lorna Swinyard-Bain, AGC** and **SSgt Karl Cordiner,** RE.

SQUADRON ROUNDUP

As I said in the leading article there was little time for relaxation during the Summer months and many activities took place throughout the Regiment that are deserving of praise and mention. 89 Sqn lead the way as well as providing valuable support to HQ Sqn during the Birmingham Discovery Day on Sunday 8 August they were also busy running a survival weekend with 48 Sqn being tuned to survival techniques taught by **Sig Daniel** 'Boone' **Stacey,** the **Wright** brothers and **Cpl Kevin Bannigan.**

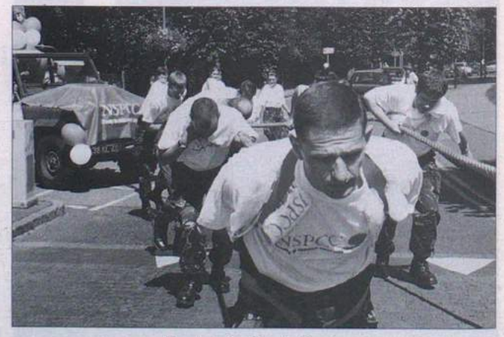


Meeting the younger elements of the community at the Birmingham Discovery Day



The survival of the fittest - where is my next meal coming from?

This same intrepid team of instructors also joined the NSPCC fundraising team led by **Cpl** 'Wink' **Watson** and **SSgt Andy Egan** in Rugby on Saturday 21 August when they were all roped into a Landrover pull and fundraising fête that raised a magnificent £800 for the charity. There is absolutely no truth in the rumour that the attractive Carnival Queen had anything to do with there enthusiastic participation and some team members were anxious to pull her rather than the Landrover!



Fundraising fun in Rugby

Meanwhile further North & West 58 Sqn carried out Ex Signaller's Surprise in the Peak District. The Exercise, which was the brainchild of **Sgt Jim Broomfield,** and held over the weekend 21-22 August was a combined comms and initiative and leadership exercise that was hugely successful. It included establishing HF comms over a wide area whilst static and mobile, map reading and driving, a variety of command tasks and throwing new and old members of the Squadron into surprise situations that involved rail travel without losing valuable HF dets! Those who attended said it was great fun and are now looking forward to a repeat exercise spread over a wider area - once you harness this enthusiasm it's hard to control it. Now we are progressing towards the Autumnal series of exercises and training which will feature in the next edition of *The Wire*.

37 SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO **Lt Col A. J. Whittle**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) A. Cox**

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS
ANNUAL CAMP 1999 - FREMINGTON CAMP

This year's Annual Camp was held in Fremington Camp in Devon and was to be a two-phase camp. The first phase was to be trade training and the second phase an Exercise to train both managers and soldiers in problems that they may encounter over the millennium period.

Exercise Paranoid Dragon - was the first week of camp and consisted of eight days' Trade and Recruit training. Saturday 21 August saw the Regiment arrive at Fremington Training Camp and begin a day of classroom builds and settling in with the Regimental YofS wondering if a deployment of a week earlier might have been a good idea after all. By sunrise of Day Two things looked a lot rosier. The two main operator trade streams led by **SSgt (YofS) Giles** and **Sgt Brookes** got off to a fine start and training commenced in earnest. Day Seven saw the start of the inevitable Trade Boards with some worried looks on a few soldiers faces, after the final results were produced it would appear the week for most was a success and a well done to all students and instructors deservedly given. The techs got stuck into NCRS training under the TOT, **Capt Dave Fraley** and the FofS, **SSgt Andy Burns**. Although it was old hat to some, it was the first time the Regiment had done any serious 'Secondary' training since the introduction of NCRS in 1995. Meeting the system for the first time and experiencing their first TA Annual Camp were **Sgts Steve Bibby** and **Jim Hawkins**, from JCUNI and JCUFI respectively. Needless to say all passed with flying colours (even **Sig Ronnie Cocker** hobbling around on crutches). The team spent a well-earned R&R day at Westward Ho fishing and surfing with **LCpl Kev Hall** catching the most (even if they were crabs) and **Sgt** 'Ski' **Skears** thinking he was really mimicking those 'Old Spice' ads.

Exercise Bug Muncher – was a conglomerate Squadron deployed into the field for three days to train in MACP and MACC type tasks whilst living and working within a field environment. The tasks ranged from building a support hospital to recovery tasks. An added touch of realism was given by **SSgt Phil Oliver** the Regt Tiffy who managed to get the 14 ton recovery vehicle bogged in and had to be manually dug out by the troops. Of course no comments were made about ten packs for the boys! Prizes should be given out for role playing, as we discovered that **WO1 Barry Weaver** the TWO seems to be a closet Padre; although he could not convince the Squadron in defence that they required counselling for their difficult task. Also to assist in the training were a number of subversives. Wanted posters plastered over the training area eventually led the troops to the discovery that they were in fact **Capt Carl Walker, WO1 (RSM) Joe Cox** and the evil terrorist **WO2 (SSM) Nigel Rees.** The latter seemed to be either spotted or arrested on a daily basis but due to lack of evidence had to be released almost immediately. The Regiment learnt a lot in the three days about possible tasks that they could face over the millennium, and are now prepared for the tasks that they may face over the millennium period.

93 SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)
Sqn Comd **Maj A. Unwin**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) N. Reid**

The New Year sees new starts for the officers and soldiers of 93 Sig Sqn (V) based in Blackburn. Officer Commanding, **Maj Ross Parsell** handed over the reins to newly appointed **Maj Alan Unwin,** now in his thirtieth year of service having attained every rank in the Squadron. A new Sergeant Major rose from the ranks in the new year promotions list. **WO2 Neil Reid** started out in the local Army Cadet Force and is every inch the determined, successful signaller which the Squadron is renowned for producing. He works for British Telecom in his civilian job. **SSgt Heather Kenny,** (a podiatrist) takes on the first female Troop Commanders role at the Manchester Tp, with **Sgts Geoff Small** (an expert welder) and **Paul Walsh** (an ex regular soldier who owns a white goods company) moving onto pastures new as Troop Second in Command at the Barracks.

The IT bug struck the soldiers of 93 Sig Sqn (V) recently as the Troops took on the latest advances in Information technology. Senior Squadron members, **Sgt Fitzpatrick, SSgt Graveson** and **Cpls Macgregor** and **Cornthwaite** taught Introduction to Computer Programming, Networks, PC Building and a beginners guide to the Internet. The guest speaker on Military Computer Security was **SSgt Phillips** from 42 Bde HQ in Preston. Information Technology plays an integral part of the Squadrons' role alongside Radio and Data Communications. Many of the troops use IT in their civilian employment and the training proved very useful.

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj J. Riley**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) J. Krikorian**

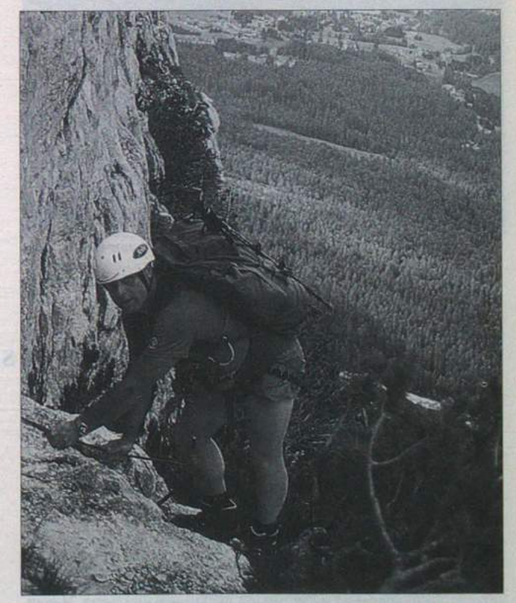
Ex Bug Muncher took place on Fremington Training Area during annual camp. This Exercise was designed to prepare the Regiment for Op Surety over the Millennium period.

HQ Squadron were tasked to provide the majority of the instructors, who carried out their tasks with enthusiasm, especially when it came to the issue of the new style 24hr ration packs. They ensured that the troops were not overburdened with weight and were only too eager to advise what to leave behind. Strange how many bars of chocolate and boil in the bag puddings were left for the instructors to carry. The QM is still trying to find out where they were put when the Exercise finished. It seemed that all the instructors had gained weight over Annual Camp and their wives have now put them on a diet!

EXERCISE DOLOMITE DRAGON 2

'Come to Italy for some gentle walking in the mountains of the South Tyrol' said the PSAO. 'I'll fly you out business class, with comfortable accommodation' he wheedled, how ***could*** we resist the carrot? Though I'll never admit to seeing the film 'Sound of Music' I've spotted odd snippets on TV and thought a 'holiday' in that area would be splendid, what was good enough for the Von Trapp family was certainly good enough for me - so I volunteered! One week away from the departure date and our final briefing. The PSAO, who just happened to be the JSMEL and OC of the party, was rattling on about 'kissers' with full harness and 11mm rope. Now me being slow on the uptake thought we were in for some lap dancing in the Italian night-spots, that is until he produced the said items and explained their use, 'My giddy Aunt, what have we let ourselves in for?'

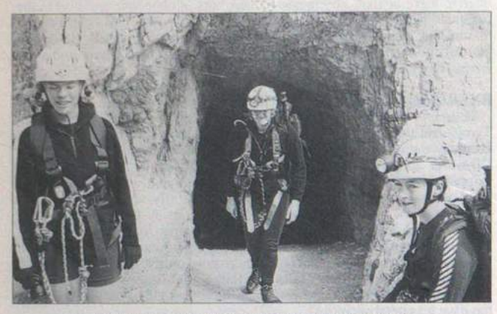
We travelled on 11 July. Business class he promised, and so it was - all the way to Munich. Good food, complimentary champagne and a stainless steel cutlery set thrown in (fits nicely in the sleeve pocket of the combat smock). Clean but basic hut accommodation in the forest he promised - that was a big fib. First class chalet in the Italian town of Dobbiaco no less. We took one look and thought, 'When does the bubble burst - this can't be real.' We'd had a splendid journey, lovely accommodation and we couldn't see any big mountains so there was this false sense of well-being and joie de vivre. On Monday morning rain and cloud greeted our intrepid group as we disembarked from the local bus. 'Where's the mountain?' The JSMEL smiled that enigmatic smile and his eyes twinkled. 'That one' he said pointing upward. The clouds parted and as if by magic 'Strudelkopf' appeared, that was if you could crane your neck back far enough to take in the whole height - 6500 feet of jagged granite. 'So that's Pudding Head eh!' My Adam's apple bobbed in apprehension but sure enough, three hours later we were on the summit. We trekked through a tunnel near the top and on emerging were subjected to views out over a sheer precipice.



WO1 Barry Weaver – 'Are we there yet?'

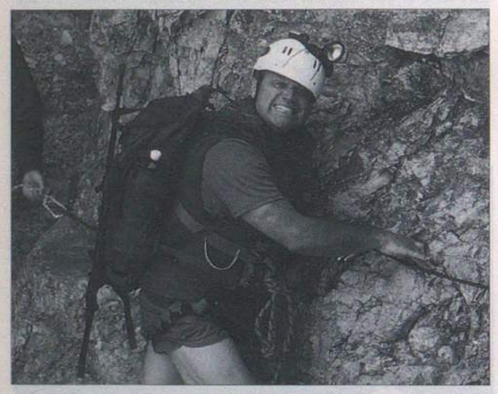
It was heart-stopping, with a ledge on the left and a 'confidence wire' to guide you. You tend to watch were you're putting your feet! Back at the bus stop and feeling elated with a mountain well conquered, we casually asked for the itinerary for the morrow. With a nod and a smile he pointed, 'There, that one, Monte Piano,' he said. 'No, he's joking,' we thought, as we gazed upward on all 7000ft of it with no apparent contouring path. 'Briefing at 1830 and practice fitting of harness,' said the man. Never has a mind been so concentrated on how to fit a harness and tie the kisser to it. Tuesday the weather had improved - so had our

nerves. Spectacular views and some decent photos were obtained. Still don't understand why Austria and Italy chose to fight on this mountain between 1915-17, the logistics must have been awesome. We used the Ferrata for the first time, (a wire and ladder route) to scale the summit and were feeling very proud of ourselves – two mountains climbed.



Entrance to the Paternkofel war-time tunnel
(L-R): Sig Tamsin Klinkenberg, SSgt Heather Kenna, LCpl Catherine Smith

The next day was the Paternkofel with its 600m tunnel blasted out by Sappers during the First World War. Those soldiers must have suffered terrible hardships, living, fighting and dying on that formidable piece of rock. The images were beyond the comprehension of this party and we were saddened by the graves dotted around.



WO1 Barry Weaver emerging from the Paternkofel war-time tunnel

Out of the tunnel and close to the summit with the inevitable cliff to the left. Straight down it was, 'Oh to be an Alpine Chough'! 'Up we go' he said. 'Flying then, are we?' we said, 'Because there's nothing to hold on to.' We duly scaled the summit and were making our way down when the weather closed in. Wind, rain, cloud and even the odd thunderclap. Holding on for dear life whilst trying to get into waterproofs is not to be recommended but we made it. Thursday saw the Sextender Rotwand and at 10,000ft was the challenge of the week. A very tough climb - scree, wire, ladders and always upwards. Seven of the group made the top and young **LCpl Tamsin Klinkenberg**, very respectful of heights, still managed a smile - or was it a grimace. We could barely hide our delight when the JSMEL complained of feeling knackered - he is human after all and to prove it, that night we were treated to an excellent dinner and birthday cake to celebrate **LCpl Catherine Smith**'s birthday. Sometimes life can be sweet. Friday would be a 'restful' day - he lied. Mount Strobel, a sheer face overlooking the Italian town of Cortina and although not the highest, quite the most difficult climb. Total exposure on some faces with the minimum of hand and foot holds and sometimes having to rely on the wire to pull ourselves up - awesome. The ladders and staples used to assist on some of the faces had been subjected to rock-fall so it did get a teeny bit hairy. Yours truly will take with him to the grave the panoramic view he got from between his spread feet of an athletics track 4000ft below and which he could have covered with his thumbnail - had he the nerve to prise his hand from the rock face. Now I know what its like to have disco legs without the music! The final day, a leisurely walk from Dobbiaco to Innichen and back, to stretch the legs and do some shopping. Sunday back home and sober reality.

In conclusion, would I do it again? Yes please. What a fantastic, humorous, heart-stopping, comradely eight days, led by a total professional who shared with us, quite unselfishly, his skill and knowledge of this outdoor pursuit and his love of a very beautiful piece of Italy.

HATS OFF TO RAMBLING 93

The start was early O'clock, the O standing for Oh my goodness it's early Sunday morning and it's still dark. After some extensive de-icing and gritting, walkers and safety crews from 93 Sig Sqn (V) left their frozen Barracks at Canterbury Street in Blackburn to wind their way across the Moors to Tottington near Bury. As part of Ex Two Towers, an HF communications and navigation exercise, the Squadron provided Land Rovers and safety crews for the Long Distance Walkers Association of Lancashire. Every January nearly 200 members sprint, jog, walk and sometimes crawl along the infamous and gruelling 25 mile boggy route which encompasses some barren, although tranquil scenery of Holcombe Moor and Tottington Reservoirs. Two teams of Signallers fought the elements and displayed great determination as they held their own, trudging through snow and peat, alongside the regular ramblers.

The route was marshy, up the knees in places and the weather held fine until crossing Bull Hill at Holcombe Moor Training Area. There it rained, rain turned into sleet, and sleet into snow, followed by a downpour of hail and a blast of icy cold wind. The teams were soaked, cold, aching and downright exhausted by the twenty fifth mile. The Squadrons Mobile Dets were in position at each of the seven checkpoints where they provided the walkers with a well earned cup of 'Squaddie' tea. Secretly sniggering at the walkers, they were not the least enviable. The walkers finally returned to Tottington to earn a certificate, a badge and two slices of Pizza. Next stop, the Pub! No doubt those who manned the Mobile Dets will be swapping with the walkers for the fun and games next year ..... Then again .....

38 (CITY OF SHEFFIELD) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS

CO	**Lt Col Nigel Harrison MBE**
RSM	**WO1 (RSM) Steve Carr**

EXERCISE BIG BREW

This year's Annual Camp consisted of a week of communications specialist training, and a second week of leadership, initiative and adventurous training. One of the second weeks' activities was a 24-hour Exercise consisting of three distinct phases. Phase One was a 15km march over Bodmin Moor collecting various items, which would enable the teams to drive a Landrover from the final checkpoint and take part in a number of initiative testing command tasks. Driving rain and 'pea soup' fog certainly tested the troops over marshland and difficult terrain.

Phase Two was a charity fund raising event called 'The Big Brew'. Our part in this SAAFA fund raising activity was to send ten teams, each to a supermarket in Cornwall and allow them two hours in which to raise as much cash as possible. The aim was to sell as many cups of tea as possible. On particular team based in Sheffield went to a supermarket in Helston, near Truro. They managed to get the local Mayor, the Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose 1st Lieutenant, and the Supermarket manager assisting in the event. After this charity event which raised over £1200, the teams completed a vehicle orienteering event/treasure hunt, and returned to camp. During Camp the Regiment said goodbye to **Lt Col I. W. Griffiths** and welcomed in, **Lt Col N. P. Harrison MBE**. We hope you enjoy your command of the Regiment. Sadly this was the last camp for two of the Squadron stalwarts, **WO2 (SSM) Nigel Caldicott** and **SSgt Roger Huckerby**. We maintain that **Roger**, at 61, is the oldest serving TA soldier in the world! The rest of the week entailed adventurous training of various sorts and everyone was well and truly tired by the end of the week.



64 Squadron Big Brew outside Tesco Store, Helston, Cornwall with The Lord Mayor of Helston, Lt Col Harrison MBE (CO), Maj Andy Smith (OC 64 Sig Sqn), Tesco Store Manager, the 1st Lieutenant of RNAS Culdrose and one of our teams. The members of the team are Lt Andy Middleton-Powell, SSgt Ken Ashcroft (US Army), LCpl Alex Derbyshire, LCpl Vinnie Shay, Sig Andy Newson, Sig Adrian Fox, Sig Pete Falmer and Sig Stephanie Robinson, and Lt Col Nigel Harrison

SPORT

Lt Col Ian Griffiths' final act as CO was to lead the officers in a gruelling test of football skills against the WO's and Sgt's Mess. It was 1-1 at half time. The Officers came out in the second half with the wind and fully refreshed. A potent 'it's only orange' punch for the seniors mess may have assisted them, but there was no disputing the final result. Officers 3 – WO's & Sgt's 1. An excellent performance from the Hon Col, **Maj Gen A. H. Boyle CB** for refereeing the match.



Lt Col Ian Griffiths leads the Officers Mess football team to victory over the WO's and Sgt's Mess

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON

Sqn Comd	**Maj Bill Evans TD**
SSM	**WO2 Clive Howland**

CAMP 1999 – PENHALE - EXERCISE TIN TRAIL

(A Ration Storeman's Nightmare)

Yes it was September 1999 and time for Annual Camp once again and getting off to a fine start with the MTWO pulling his hair out when convoys started coming at him instead of him overtaking them. We finally made camp at about 2000hrs on Saturday. The first couple of days were spent getting ready for Ex Tin Trail that was to take place over the period of 15-18 of September. A certain Ration Sergeant, who shall remain nameless, **Sgt** 'Barry' **Baldwin** was getting so excited he could hardly contain himself. There were others who got so carried away that one Master Chief actually thought he could fly, but failed miserably, broke his leg doing a Superman Impression. Seriously though, we hope you get better soon **Andy (WO (RCWO)) Medley** because we all look forward to some of that delightful cooking that keeps you GOING through the night.



LCpl Sykes dangerously near to the controls of a Gazelle

We deployed on Exercise to Predannack Airfield next to Lizard Point. Having very little cover and with the wind gusting from the coast we proceeded to set up HQ Sqn Echelon, and settled in for the next 48 hours. The rain, and plenty of it, did not dampen spirits. In fact I distinctly remember **Maj** 'Bill' **Evans** (OC HQ) saying he actually enjoyed his early morning dip, in his indoor swimming pool which he acquired overnight. On Day Two of the Exercise the calls came in to re-supply the Squadrons, the task was taken up by 'Dear old Barry' and his crew. He proceeded to go out and re-supply one of the Dets at one of the stunningly beautiful sites in Cornwall. He had taken a left hand drive Land Rover and was a couple of miles down the road when he noticed he was being followed. Unperturbed, he proceeded on, noticing that whenever he slowed down so did the car. Whenever he speeded up so did the car. After approx 30miles our **Barry** was suddenly ambushed by three of Cornwall's Finest (Boys in Blue) and shouts of, 'Get Out, Get Out, You have been Drink Driving' echoed around the trap which had been set for the vehicle. The man who was driving the car that had been following **Barry** jumped out of his car and was shouting, ' Yes that's him, I saw him falling all over the steering wheel, I have done my bit to stop crime'. **Barry** then took some time to explain that he had not. It was because it was a left-hand drive vehicle that the stranger had seen the passenger **(LCpl Jayne** 'Nodding Dog' **Lindley)**, who was feeling the effects of fatigue and had been trying to keep awake. Her head was swaying from side to side as if she had been on the gin again. The police realising the mistake that the citizen of Cornwall had made were last seen chuckling into their doughnuts and coffee. As for the citizen his Final statement was 'Can you give me directions? I seem to have got lost'

64 (CITY OF SHEFFIELD) SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

Sqn Comd	**Maj Andrew Smith**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Mick Rooney**

It has been a busy few months for 64 Sig Sqn. There have been a few changes to the ORBAT and new arrivals. We welcome **Maj Andy Smith** (OC), **Capt Les Jordan** BEM (PSAO), **2Lt Richard Grieve**, **2Lt Tom Howes**, **SSgt Stuart Couszins** (SPSI), **Sgt Warren Quinn**, **SSgt Dave Brown**, **SSgt Dave Bentley**, **Sgt Mark Marshall** and an influx of many other former members of 3 DWR who have swiftly integrated into the ranks. Welcome to 64 Sig Sqn and congratulations on your excellent choice of sub-unit.

Sadly a few stalwart characters have left the Squadron in recent months, **Capt Dave Poole** MBE (PSAO) has retired after serving as PSAO with the Squadron for well over a decade. All the Squadron have expressed their appreciation for his vast contribution and we wish him all the very best. We have also said a fond goodbye to **SSM Jimmy Mees**, who leaves the Squadron after serving over ten years with 64 Sqn and several years more with 3 DWR prior to that. We convey our best wishes to **Jimmy** and his wife **Mary** who, for many years, ran the Junior Ranks



Cover from the elements on Bodmin Moor

Club at Manor TAC. Other members of the Squadron to leave include **Maj David Tomlinson** (former OC) who moves to his new command at 87 Sig Sqn at Nottingham, **SSgt Stan Kelly** (former SPSI) who has finished his tour with the Squadron and moves to Germany on promotion. The Squadron also congratulates **Sfan** on his recent marriage to **Bob**, and to **LCpl Schofield** for successfully passing her PTI course earlier this year.

The Squadron deployed to Penhale in Cornwall for its annual camp. The main activities included the TARA Cup competition that 64 Sqn narrowly missed clinching the first prize, Ex Big Brew which 64 Sqn dominated, and the Orienteering Competition in which 64 Sqn again came first. Ex Tin Trail was the main comms Exercise of this year's camp. Ex Tin Trail was the Regimental Exercise phase of Camp that saw detachments deployed to various coastguard stations and Local Authority establishments to practice an ICP scenario. One such location included the Eclipse Control Centre underneath the Truro County Council Offices. This location was still set up for the recent eclipse activities and the facilities were outstanding. The Squadron appreciates the hospitality displayed by the authorities in Truro. The Exercise was a success and 64 Squadron detachments put in a quality performance. The Squadron performed extremely well throughout camp winning the vast majority of the silver available. A big thank you to all the team members and those who helped to train or run the events.

Maj Andrew Smith and all the management team at 64 Sig Sqn sincerely thanks all members of the Squadron who have contributed to such a successful year so far. A big thank you also goes out to the unsung heroes that support the efforts of soldiers namely; wives, husbands, partners and families that stay behind when we are away.

87 (CITY OF NOTTINGHAM) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)
Sqn Comd **Maj David Tomlinson**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Nigel Caldicott**

Camp 1999: Off we went to sunny, we hoped, Penhale Camp! As we approach Cornwall, surprise, surprise, it was raining. We began to wonder what the next two weeks would bring. The first week began with shakedown training that went quite well. We then deployed out on a communications exercise. This Exercise covered the whole of Cornwall and a fair amount of Devon. The other members could not believe some of the facilities that were offered. At RAF Portreath, **Cpl** 'I'm in the Sauna if needed' **Blair** is still trying to get the rust from her rifle!

The Squadron MIV (Mould) vehicles deployed in support of Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose, another Exercise that went very well. The main Comms Exercise went extremely well and integrated the new members of the Squadron with the existing members **LCpl** 'Reg' **Holdsworth** can now tell the time! During the exercise we were visited by the IGTA, **Lt Gen Sir John Deverell KCB OBE**. Our US National Guard visitor, **SSgt Cathy Waddler**, wondered how to salute this left-handed General, we were tempted! Saturday saw us back in Penhale Camp ready for the outgoing CO's final inspection. Yes, the heavens opened and the Squadron was inspected under a fire hydrant! The weather did clear, however, and an AAC Gazelle flew in and gave lots of covert recces and familiarisation flights. Pass the bag! The second week started with the TARA Cup. A multi-stand event, ably organised by **Capt** 'Gadget' **John Pearson**. The day went well, our visitors being **Brig (Retd) P. I. B. Stevenson**, the Secretary of the East Midlands TAVRA and **Col R. Merryweather**, County Chairman. Unfortunately the Squadron did not quite gain overall victory. Tuesday saw the sports competition. We came a close second in a lot of events but never quite managed to win. Better luck next year!

The Squadron party was held in the evening at Newquay, and as always everyone had a good time. **Capt** 'Tarquin' **Rustidge** even managed to find his way there unaided, and so back to Nottingham, and yes you're correct, it is raining. Roll on Camp 2000.

EXERCISE TURTLE REEF 1999 – GIBRALTAR
by Anon (Sig Gail Soar)

It's 4am in the morning. Bleary eyed, dirty and busting for the toilet. I emerge from my stony cold floor that, for me, was my bed for two hours that night. For the last twenty-ish years I had believed there was only one 4 o'clock in a day – how wrong could I be! As the sun forced its way over the horizon, once again reality hit me as to my surroundings. The dusty outline of the buildings came into view and the now too familiar smell of sweaty bodies hit me. A question I had often asked myself was, 'What was a Beauty Consultant from Nottingham doing in a showerless, toiletless, sweaty, hot dirty place such as this?' Many weeks ago I was overwhelmed with a sense of adventure and a desire to be 'one of the boys'. To be able to do things that no ordinary young lady would dare to do. And so through the gates of the TA Centre I went. Little did I know what they had in store for me. Five months as a recruit and I was lucky to be given a chance to be on what could be only described as an 'adventure of a lifetime'.

This adventure started two long weeks ago with an uneventful flight from Luton, arriving in a sunny Gibraltar. Ex Turtle Reef was truly underway. As we wound our way through the narrow streets to Camp, I pondered on what the Exercise would be like and how I would turn out, would they really throw me into a regime like 'GI Jane', or would I turn out more like 'Private Benjamin'. As our coach pulled through the gates a true sense of overwhelming excitement ran through me. Whatever was to happen to me in the next two weeks didn't matter, I was here, the sun was hot and I was raring to go. As the first week progressed I realised how little I knew and how much I had to learn. Day by day my understanding of army life grew, learning NBC, first aid, battle procedures, room clearance, FIBUA and tunnel fighting to name but a few. This intense training was hard, but incredibly enjoyable. During our initial brief I noted there were about 350 bars in 'Gib' and it became the mission of some to seek out each one. Although merriment was of paramount importance during these training sessions down the pub, some of us still insisted on physical activities during the evening. Not wanting to start any rumours, but I swear I saw **Sig** 'Sicknote' **Young** doing the 100 metres sprint down the road with a nubile Gibraltan Granny in hot pursuit! Did she get her man? Best ask **Simon**.

Tough, hard, mean and lean fighting machines took to the next phase of our training. 'Baywatch' style wetsuits in place, we took to the ocean waves for our adventure training, with a choice of banana boating, scuba diving, mountain climbing, ringo riding and many more. We all took turns in how wet and fast we could go, ending the day with a barbecue and a few beers – what a life! We prepared for the final mission: to attack the invading San Miguels and force their retreat back over the border. The mission started with an exciting beach landing, courtesy of the Navy (everybody loves a sailor, and now I know why!). Once the troops had regrouped they had to tab to caves and tunnels. I waited for the troops to start their assault on our village, as a recruit with such little military experience, I found this whole assault rather frightening but exciting too. The other people around me who were also playing enemy seemed so involved in their role that I found myself running around like a headless chicken. They kept telling me the horror stories trying to scare me even more. I was standing next to the window, and could see the troops coming closer. They were in range, but still couldn't see me. Another thunder flash went off and a cloud of green smoke enveloped the wall in front of my window. They had arrived. This was it – my heart was beating really fast, adrenaline flowed through my veins. All my training had come to this moment – what if I couldn't fire? What if I got a stoppage? As I saw a head over the wall my instincts took over and I blasted off a mag at the images to my front, squealing with delight. I'd done it! Overnight I'd turned into a mini-rambo. This was excellent, fear had gone and excitement had taken over. So much had happened during the exercise, blood, sweat and, definitely on my part, tears had been shed. But although I found myself out of my depth quite a lot of the time, I knew that the training I received had put me in good stead for the future. I hope that the guys who were with me enjoyed themselves as much as I did.

Our thanks go to all who organised Ex Turtle Reef 1999. We are grateful for all the hard work you put in, as we realise such an adventure could never have taken place without you all. My personal thanks to everyone who helped me through my many ups and downs and I apologise for being such a pain the ***!

PROMOTED BY DAD

Congratulations go to **Cpl Sally Burton** on her recent promotion to Sergeant. In what was rather an unusual occurrence, **Sally's** father presented her with her tape and welcomed her into the Mess. Congratulations also go to **Cpl Graham Blyth** and **LCpl** 'Mushroom' **Birch** on their well deserved extra tapes.



SSgt Burton presenting his daughter her Sergeant stripes and welcoming her into the Mess

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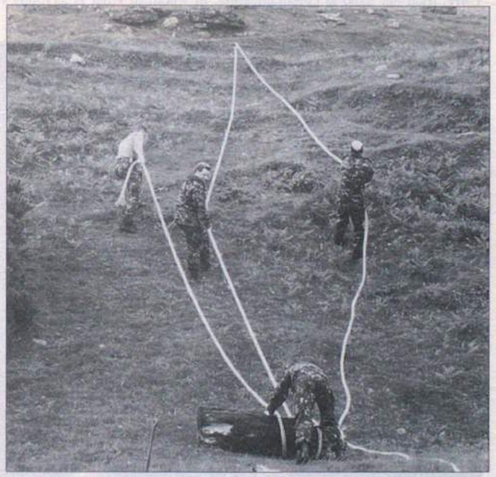
39 (SKINNERS) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS
CO **Lt Col J. Crackett TD**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) P. Anderson**

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON
OC **Maj R. H. Belbin**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) L. Carr**

SQUADRON TRAINING - DARTMOOR

The Squadron deployed to the moors on a sunny evening in late summer to practice Navigation and Communication skills. The night move carrying full kit proved to be quite eventful, and tiring for all those taking part. **LCpl Pete Rendall** managed to walk into a bog up to his knees (rumour control had it as chest deep), and **LCpl Sheena White** fell down a hole. Undaunted and uninjured all three teams made it to the bivi area, the last just after first light on a cold and misty morning. After a period of rest and feeding the teams set of via a series of checkpoints to visit the three stands. At Stand 1 (First Aid) they were met by **Sgt Rob James** with his customary smile and ever boiling kettle. Then it was on to Stand 2 (Command Task) with the Tech PSI, **Sgt Norman**, this appeared to be great fun.



Command Task - 'Don't push when I say pull!!'

Stand 3 was our own ex-Bootie, **Sgt** 'Scotty' **Doyle** and his observation area, the constant periods of mist and rain must have made this a challenge. Then it was on to the night time location, where after bivi-ing up and some food the Medics tent doubled up as the bar. Here the tired and footsore team members (**LCpl Mark Scaum** as always) had a chance to discuss the Exercise as they saw it with the OC and DS staff. Sunday morning saw the breaking of camp and the trip back to Bristol, miraculously the sun shone all the way home.

EXERCISE SILVER LYNX LONGMOOR

A Regimental Tactical exercise centred on the Longmoor Training Area, it was a tough weekend for those members of the Squadron that attended. There was a myriad of both real-time and Exercise play tasks to be carried out, along with all the guard and runner stags it is easy to see why many regarded the weekend as a sleep deprivation trial. Low points of the weekend, getting attacked whilst in possession of insufficient blank ammunition to have a decent fire fight. High points included the excellent standard of catering (as always) from the Chefs and Q staff and the LAD at Sunday lunch having a morale attack whilst watching 'Wacky Races' (57 Sqn and the RHQ elements) moving out of location.

SQUADRON ADVENTURE TRAINING (MOUNTAIN TREKKING)

Early on Saturday morning the Squadron met at the TAC in preparation for a day's walking in the Brecons. There were one or two rather thick heads from the Friday wedding of **LCpl Sheena Wicks** nee White (more to follow). Once all the kit was loaded and we were divided into two groups it was off to foreign lands. On arrival at the Storey Arms lay-by the local burger van was besieged by hungry troops looking for sustenance. The weather looked chilly and misty, but once more undeterred the groups set off along the mapped out route. There we were, all equipped with our kit including safety bergans, when we meet a group of Japanese tourists in trainers carrying nothing more than a camera and bottle of water each. They obviously knew what the plot was thought we, anyway after a good climb we reached the peak of Peny-Fan. Lo and behold the weather was glorious and allowed every body to enjoy the wonderful views, and to contemplate the route down to the pick-up point. On the way down both groups met up for a spot of lunch al fresco on a nice and sunny bank. The obligatory micky taking and the spot of sheep dung throwing ensued. Then like a troop of elephants (no offence Badders) all nose to tail we trudged along to the pick up point. Eventually the SQMS and his trusty side kick arrived to get us, and it was off to the camp site. Thanks to the two of them our tents had been erected, no mean feat considering all the different size and designs. Then followed an evening of relaxation, most people availed themselves of a basket meal and some beverages from the local hostelry (the 'Aberglais Inn'). It was here that we witnessed the strange trait of Saddle Napping by some local youths. The morning dawned with a change of weather, it was overcast and rainy, so it was back over the river Severn, with everybody feeling better for our spot of Adventure drinking OOPS training.

WELCOME

It is a good welcome to **Capt Dewar** the new OC LAD. She has come with lots of new ideas to improve on our already good LAD.

PROMOTION

Congratulations to **Sig Davies** on his promotion to Lance Corporal, this was well deserved for his work within the 'Q' stores.

BURMA STAR VJ PARADE IN BRISTOL

The SSM and **Sgt Clarke** along with three SNCOs from 57 Sqn acted as parade marshals for the Burma Star Association annual parade.

HONOUR GUARD

On the Friday morning prior to deploying on Adventurous training six members of the Squadron acted as an Honour Guard for **Sheena**'s Wedding, at the Registry Office. They were as follows **SSgts Sweetland** and **Smith, Sgts Clarke** and **Doyle, Cpl Cole** and **LCpl Davies**. We would all like to wish **Shaun** and **Sheena** all the best for the future. As this letter goes to print we are all eagerly anticipating Camp, plus several more weekends to fit in before the Millennium (Op Surety). So there will be plenty more to report.

5 (QUEEN'S OWN OXFORDSHIRE HUSSARS) SIGNAL SQUADRON
Sqn Comd **Maj R. D. Stone**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) R. E. Phillips**

WELCOMES AND FAREWELLS

Congratulations to **2Lt Simon Durtnal** for successfully completing his Commissioning Course and assuming the mantle of OC RRTT. Also to **Sigs Ben Kent** and **Daniel Wallace** who recently joined the Squadron having completed their initial recruit-training course at Cultybraggan. We would like to wish a warm welcome to **Sgt Robbie** 'The OC didn't say goodbye' **Hall** who has just made the transition from Regular to Territorial.

EXERCISE BONNIE LYNX 1999 (11 - 17 SEPTEMBER)

The Squadron deployed to sunny Garelochhead Training Camp in Scotland for the first phase of this year's annual camps. Sunday was spent preparing for the rest of the week's activities and included Local Cultural Acclimatisation Part 1, a visit to a local manufacturer to learn about their manufacturing processes and sample the product, if a bit old (between 17 and 30 years), however, it was very nice. It could be said that certain PSI's were culturally challenged later that evening. On to the serious stuff, the rest of the week involved military training, a comms exercise and adventure training. On Monday we discovered that the Squadron would need to be waterproof, the sun had gone south, we were on the ranges and it was raining (Local Acclimatisation Part 2). During the morning we undertook NBC training, which provided us with another layer to keep the water out and completed individual TOETs and zeroing of personal weapons. It turned out that the Squadron were indeed waterproof, all except for **Lt Cranston** who trusted his new combats to keep him dry and left his waterproofs back at camp. It was a very rare day indeed, it is not often that you get an OC, 2IC and Regimental Trg Maj 'stagging on' together in a sentry box made for one. After lunch, and just before we were about to implement the very wet weather programme, the rain stopped and the shiny thing in the sky returned. The Squadron carried out section defence drills, much ammunition was fired with gusto and enthusiasm, and many targets were hit (although not Fig 11s).



LCpl Lizzy Matthews and Sig Michael Cooper ready for action!!

Tuesday was the Adventure training day; activities included sailing, canoeing, power boating, hill walking and mountain biking. The water sports group had and excellent day with **Sigs Van Nie Kerk** and **Bayer** having mastered sailing lasers, tried something slightly more complicated, and learnt how to inspect the bottom of the boat whilst afloat. They hadn't quite grasped that both crew need to be on the same side of the boat.



Sigs Steven Van Nie Kerk and Michel Bayer,
What are you playing at? Get over this side now!!



The PSAO telling the OC and CO where the bank is!



Sgt Chris Minchella at home on the water



Sigs Maxine Sample and Lucy Corr power boating

On Wednesday we practised our primary role, communications. Even the Squadron Officers were let loose on the equipment whilst the PSI's watched with trepidation. Our recent transferee from the RGJS, **Sig Lucy Corr**, tried her hand at communicating, to whom or what is anybody's guess, but it looks painful.



Sig Lucy Corr ex-RGJ on the Comms Exercise

The Squadron also entered the Royal Navy Scottish Units Volleyball Championships, having survived naval broadsides (RN PTIs serving) we managed a creditable fifth place. A visit to HMS *Victorious* later that day was very interesting, accommodation onboard revealed that maybe the barrack rooms at Garclockhead Training Camp were not so cramped after all. No one has put their name forward for the submarine service yet!

EXERCISE HIGHLAND LYNX 1999

The Squadron then deployed to Cultybraggan Training Camp (Ex WW2 POW Camp 21) joining the rest of the Regiment prior to starting a Regt Ex Highland Lynx, a simulated Peace Keeping Exercise. The Squadron was joined by elements from HQ Sqn and two US National Guards.

On the Thursday following Exercise endex; the Regimental Sports Day got underway with the Assault Course and Shooting Competition. The Squadron Select Team was given the last slot to complete the competition, just as they were about to start the heavens opened again! No problem, 5 Sqn's waterproofing and previous experience in such conditions paid off, the team beat all previous contenders over the course by a safe margin and to finish off in style, four out of five lads selected to shoot, scored 100%. 5 Sqn won the competition. After lunch the Squadron's sports teams performed excellently and came second overall. However, this was not without casualties as **Sig Barnes** developed a self-inflating cheek following a clash of heads, the 2IC, **Capt Robertson**, lost and found a fingertip after allowing it to become trapped between two hockey sticks. There was also the SSM's, **WO2 Phillips** nose which had a close encounter with a hockey stick, and he wasn't even playing. We were so short of players that the PSAO, **Capt Bob Sheldon,** had to step in when it came to the hockey to ensure victory, he claims to have been instrumental in something, what I do not know as I had left for Stirling A & E by then.



The 5 Squadron Winning Assault Course and Shooting Team

The second week included Recruit Training and the Squadron had two successful candidates who passed out on Thursday 23 September 1999. Well done **Sigs Daniel Wallace** and **Ben Kent**.



Sig Joseph Kent with Brig John Powell, Eastern Wessex TAVRA

The Squadron held its annual camp party at the Pinewood Inn in Helensburgh on Wednesday 15 September 1999. A most hearty and hefty eating and drinking session was followed by a Karaoke in which every member of the Squadron and guest had to have a go. The winner without any doubt was **SSgt** 'Robbie Williams' **Kavanagh** singing 'Angels', give up your day job **Les**, if you can drink the ten beers it took you to perform on stage.

STOP PRESS

'Soldier from 5 Squadron to Represent Army Canoeing Team'

Sig Steven Van Nie Kerk was selected to represent the Army Canoeing Team at in the Inter Service Championships in Nottingham held in August 1999. **Sig Van Nie Kerk** was a member of the winning Army Team. He took part in the K4 6k and K4 500m races. Well done **Steven**, we will miss you when leave us in November to join the Royal Marines.

57 (CITY AND COUNTY OF BRISTOL) SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj Rosernary Tuhev**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Phil Packer**

A considerable change in the Squadrons PSI plot has occurred since the last article. It's a farewell to **SSgt Tony Bentley** (alias Big Flo, Boy Bentley and many other names), he will, however, still be around for sometime to pester us as he is on a combination of gardening and nursing leave! The Squadron will thank him properly for all the excellent work he has done for us closer to his final date (early next year). It's a welcome, however, to **SSgt Tony Ward**, who following a busy camp has already made his mark and been accepted by everyone in the squadron. A change has also been made with our Tech PSI, seeing **Sgt Tam** 'Head in the clouds) **Ewart** moving on to 63 (SAS) Sig Sqn (V) and the arrival of **Sgt Lee Perry** straight from his TI Course. **Sgt Perry** has in fact served with the Squadron before, in a TA capacity some ten years ago, on that occasion as an operator! Congratulations are given to **SSgt Dave Williams** on his well deserved promotion, and to the PSAO, **Capt John Cullen** on the birth of his grandson **Jack** (who he constantly talks about) both the promotion and the birth were overdue.

EXERCISE JUMP TO IT - *by LCpl Dave Smith*

Ex Jump To It, gave some members of 57 Sig Sqn, 39 Sig Regt (V) a chance to go parachuting under the watchful eye of our very own **Sgt Tam** '216 Para Sig Sqn' **Ewert**. The morning weather was excellent for parachuting jumping. All we had to do was wait for the appearance of the Bristol minibus. It was two hours late. When the minibus did arrive the excuse given was, 'We could see the place but could not get to it.' Said the map reader **Sig Helen Winterson**. We were introduced to our instructor, **Nigel**. He was a very experienced free-fall parachutist and a A330 airline pilot. The training was informal and interesting. During the day we learnt all about the canopy, the airfield, the aircraft, the exit drills and the emergency IA drills, if anything should go wrong. (Not a chance said **Nigel**). All topics are broken down into short lessons and are easily understood and picked up by everyone on the course. Once we had finished all the theory we had a short multiple choice test, which everyone passed even **Capt Bill Ruffiven.**

We were ready for our first jump, the radios were fitted to chests, bright orange boiler suits were put on, crash hats and finally our harnesses containing our parachutes. As soon as we were dressed we were checked and our equipment was checked also. We are now ready to board the aircraft. Five minutes later at 3500ft we were approaching the Drop Zone. 'Ready One and Two?' said **Nigel**. The door was shoved open and 'Number One in the door .... GO' roared **Nigel**. With that **LCpl Sam Estcourt** was gone. 'In the door.....GO' and **LCpl Ali MacGilp** was gone. All seven had gone then it was my turn. 'In the door .... GO' out I jumped. I tried to remember my 'one thousand, two thousand, three thousand, four thousand, check canopy' all I remember was thank goodness the damn thing opened. I grasped my toggles and I could fly, WOW this is something else. Pulling left to turn left, pulling right to turn right, I made my way to the play area. (The area you can manoeuvre safely in.) Once in the play area I turned left, right and right again, it was absolutely great. At 1500ft we had to make our way to the DZ. All too soon we were coming into land. The radio came into life, 'Number 8 10ft, 8ft, 6ft, Flair' I pulled both toggles in a downwards motion and touched down smoothly just like a pro, (so I thought).

I had a quick look round and made my way to the RV. Once we were all there, we crossed the runway, checked in, all out all in. Then the talking started, everybody talking nobody listening. Everyone thrilled and full of adrenaline, 'Lets do it again!!!!' someone said 'Too right I thought.' Unfortunately there was not enough time for another jump that day, but we were here all day on Sunday. On Sunday we woke and had breakfast and met our instructor. Before we could jump again we had to have a new lesson. How to pack our own parachute, (scary). The lessons are broken down into easy to follow steps. The instructors are always there to do the very important parts which students are not permitted to do. Once the canopy was packed we joined the Army Parachute Club for £10.00 and paid £4.00 for our next jump and we were ready to go again. Every 'static line' jump at 350011 will now cost us £4.00 the more jumps we do the more experience we gain, before you know it we will be free-falling at 1200ft, 'Can't wait.' Many thanks go to all instructors and helpful staff at Netheravon Camp. Many thanks to **Sgt Tam Ewart** for making it possible. The jumpers included:

Capt Bill Ruffiven	**LCpl Marlin Dyer**	**Sig Vicky Hawkins**
Sgt Tom Ewart	**LCpl Ali MacGilp**	**Sig Sam Baldwin**
LCpl Dave Smith	**LCpl Sam Estcourt**	**Pte Paul Vallis**
LCpl Kev May	**Sig Helen Winterson**	



Sig Helen Winterson and Pte Paul Vallis, all smiles following their first parachute jump

71 (YEOMANRY) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO **Lt Col C. H. Turner**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) M. Godwin**

REGIMENTAL NEWS

Hello's and Goodbye's - The Regiment would like to welcome **Cpl Ralf** and her husband **Paul** who recently joined us from Blandford, we wish you well and hope you enjoy your tour. A welcome back goes out to the Training Major, **Eric** 'E Mail' **Heritage** who has just returned from a very eventful tour in Banja Luka. Good to have you back. December will be a very busy period for the QM Dept, the RQMS, **WO2** 'JP' **Paterson** leaves on posting to 30 Sig Regt, we thank him for all his hard work throughout his tour, and wish him and his wife **Cheryl** all the best for the future. A warm welcome to his replacement who joins us on promotion from Blandford **WO2 Terry Parle**. All the best to you and your family, we hope you enjoy your stay with the Regiment. Finally we say a short farewell to the QM, **Maj** 'Chopper' **Aspinall MBE,** who has managed to tunnel his way out of the Regiment, if only for a tour in Bosnia. Good luck, we know you'll be back!!!

Belated Congratulations - Sincere congratulations to the RSM, **WO1** 'Blod' **Godwin** and his wife **Mandy Jayne** on the occasion of their Wedding which took place on 17 October at Blackheath, London in **1998**. At least we got the photo printed in time for the first anniversary.



WO1 (RSM) 'Blod' Godwin and his wife Mandy Jane on their wedding day 17 October 1998

HEADQUARTERS (KCLY) SQUADRON – BEXLEYHEATH
Sqn Com **Maj Barrie Corfield**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Micky Mustoe**

On 11/12 September members of HQ Sqn, took advantage of the late summer to explore the local countryside on a map reading exercise. Resisting the urge to linger at the first serial (the Red Lion Swanley village) they set out along seldom used footpaths to test their skills with map and compass. On the Saturday **WO2 (SSM) Mick Mustoe** and his group spent over four hours ambling around the four-mile course. The SSM insisted that they pace most of the route rather than adopt the age-old custom of 'winging' it. From a viewpoint in Farningham Woods they enjoyed Back Bearings and Bird Watching in equal measure. **Cpl Jackie Morse** (nee Smoker) was heard to say, 'We should do more of this,' and **Sigs Martin Gross** and **Paul Swaffield** nodded in enthusiastic agreement. 'Sad Anoraks' is a phrase that comes to mind…..

On the Sunday, **WO2 Andy Church**, formerly a CSM in 5 PWRR raced around the course in half the time. The course got off to a very quick start under **Cpl Charlie Woo,** but stalled somewhat when it was discovered that his son, **Sig** 'Baby2' **John Woo** had his map upside down. Later the team were tasked to find a large building on the edge of a field and were disappointed to discover that it consisted of nothing more than a pile of rubble and a rusting harrow. At this point **Cpl Jason Bontoft** voiced his displeasure at the age of the map; in fact it didn't even show the M25!

Meanwhile, back at the TAC, **Sgt Julia Davenport** led the Squadron Battlefield First Aid Training (just in case the Map Readers misread a grid and navigate off a cliff into the sea). All was going well, making full use of the new training package, until we came to the practical phase. **LCpl** 'Mad Dog' **Tony Williams** demonstrated how to put a casualty in the recovery position when he dislocated the shoulder of his victim – sorry casualty **Sgt Mick Conn**. Mick has long suffered from this old 'war wound' and fortunately recovered but we quickly switched from training mode to noduf mode. Inspite of all the simulated blood, we finished up with the customary testing even persuading the OC, **Maj Barrie Corfield** to participate.

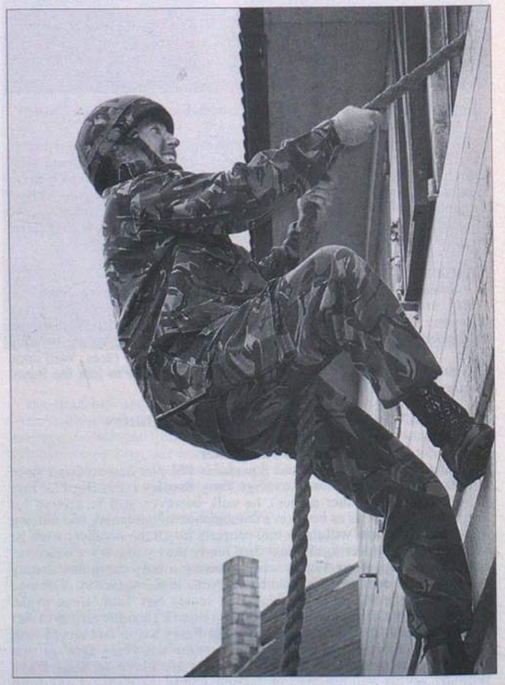
70 (EY) SIGNAL SQUADRON – CHEMLSFORD AND HARLOW
Sqn Comd **Maj Simon Palmer TD**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Paul Humphreys**

FAREWELL

The Squadron says a fond farewell to **LCpl Jackie Topley** who leaves the squadron after six years service to begin a career with the Essex Police. We thank her for her service and wish her every success in her new career.

EXERCISE SILENT HOUSE

Ex Silent House was a weekend military training exercise held in the FIBUA village at Thetford Training Area. The Exercise which included assaulting buildings, grenade throwing and internal building searches of the special effect houses was organised by the SPSI, **SSgt Jase Barsley**. Although the Squadron agreed the training was tough, they all thought it was well worth the effort put in and it's the type of training they hope will be repeated. **LCpl Richard Marsh**, a recently qualified APTI demonstrated his latest military skill qualification by warming up the Squadron with physical training. He later led the Squadron over the 'Confidence' course, finishing with a TACFT. The Squadron completed the training with a dawn assault on the village.



WO2 Mark Bell clearly enjoying climbing into a building in the FIBUA.



LCpl Richard Marsh putting the Squadron through their paces with a warm up drill.



LCpl Richard Marsh leads the Squadron sections over the 'Confidence Course'

EXERCISE REGAL TOWER

Ex Regal Tower was a R Signals Trade refresher weekend held at the Royal School of Signals Blandford. Training was held using Radio Group facilities, our thanks to **SSgt (YofS) Jim Hawkins** and COMCEN Practical using Data and Security Group, our thanks to **WO1 (YofS) Kev Essen**. Saturday evening the Squadron used the Bowling Alley on camp and then visited the 'Bright Lights' of Blandford. Sunday morning it was Trade Continuation training, concurrent activity was the use of the Command Tasks of the Leadership Course, courtesy of **Capt Todd** whom we thank for use of this excellent facility. Apart from the valuable training experience gained the weekend proved an excellent opportunity for the Essex Yeomanry Signal Squadron to visit and use the facilities of the Royal School of Signals.

265 (KCLY) SIGNAL SQUADRON
BEXLEYHEATH AND BRIGHTON
Sqn Comd **Maj Hugh Roberston**
SSM **WO2 Keith Wrate**
ANNUAL CAMP 1999 - (Continued)

Adventure Training - The second week of camp was to be spent Adventure Training combining, kayaking, mountain biking, rock climbing, abseiling and mountain walking

Kayaking - The coach journey to Ullswater flew by, mainly due to watching Con Air on video and taking in the coach driver's comments on other road users. On arrival, it was time to don wet suits, which in true military fashion were all either too big or too small, or for the fashion conscious just not the right colour. That done it was time to select a kayak, which was not too tricky as they were all the same size, shape and colour. Unfortunately, **Cpl Pete** 'Haystacks' **Allsop** was unable to find a kayak big enough to fit his frame, so he would have to sit this one out. There was the normal cross section of abilities ranging from **SSM Keith** 'Snoozy' **Wrate** in the, 'Should I really be here category?' to a few highly competent kayakers. As expected the day started off at a rather sedate pace and became a mutiny on the high seas by the end of play. Most participants receiving a ducking before they had finished. The journey back became interesting when **Sig Liz** 'Essex girl' **Blaber** chose Scream as the video choice for the journey, which rendered hardly an open eye in the house.

Cycling & Rock Climbing/Abseiling - Having recovered from the video extravaganza of the previous day the second day of adventure training was split into two, the choices being cycling and rock climbing/abseiling. The cycle involved a navigational exercise of approx 52km (depending on the route taken!) and the rock climbing/abseiling gave a choice of three ascents and three descents, all graded. The Squadron was split into two equal halves of no particular denomination. The morning cycle was a fine weathered affair with everyone kitted out with state of the art mountain bikes (NOT!!) and NASA designed aerodynamic tortoises to wear on our heads for protection. Certain personnel were selected to navigate certain legs of our journey. There were some fantastic navigational skills employed, which left the group strung out over the countryside, doing a poor impression of the Tour De France. **Sig Sean** 'Roadsign' **Walsh** ignoring conveniently placed road signs and taking us on 5km detours was particularly well received by all and sundry. It became painfully obvious that we should have indented for some 'stabilizer' wheels for some of the Squadron who had evidently not operated a bicycle since passing their Cycling Proficiency badges at school many years previous. Disaster struck 15km out when **SSM Keith** 'Snoozy' **Wrate** suffered a broken chain and was then forced to push his bike for the remainder of the journey. For some inexplicable reason this seemed to lift the spirits of the remaining cyclists. The cycling group soon arrived at the halfway point, for lunch and a change of activities.

It was soon discovered that the climbing had not been quite as easy as everyone had been expecting seeing as **Sgt Kevin** 'Spiderman' **Hancock** had been the only person able to scale the dizzy heights of the climb. Lunch was suitably devoured and it was time for the new cyclists to depart, after an in-depth explanation of how the bikes worked it was 'tortoises' on and time to go. True to form, five minutes into the ride convoy drills had gone to tatters and the group became split. After some hectic cycling from the 'Gang of Six' at the back, the group became reformed. Then, in true Lake District style, the heavens opened with a downpour from which there was no hiding. This certainly gave us a chance to test the brakes out. **Sgt Robert** 'Why me?' **Vincent** suffered a chain fracture halfway back, which resulted in him having to be pushed to the local hostelry to await recovery, for some reason this put a great big grin on his face. The remainder of the journey was fairly uneventful although **Cpl Pete** 'Are you sure this bike's big enough?' **Alsop** won the competition for the most faces pulled on a bike in one afternoon. The afternoon rock climbing and abseiling was a greater success with many bodies scaling great heights in particular **Sig Ian** 'Sticky Hands' **Liscoe.**

EXERCISE CAVALRY CRUSADE 17 – 19 SEPTEMBER 1999

The first of three build-up exercises for Op Surety (Communication Support over New Year period) saw 265 (KCLY) Signal Squadron deploying to the cinque ports training area. Firstly, 887 Troop providing the NMC located at North Court Farm near Folkstone, having just had the NMC role re-instated they provided excellent net-management throughout the weekend meanwhile 884 Troop provided three out-detachments under detachment commanders **Sgts Feather, Foy** and **Hancock**. They were sent to work in conjunction with other out-detachments throughout the South East (provided by both 68 and 70 Squadrons) to ensure that communications over the millennium will run smoothly.

After the inevitable problems with livestock (**Sgt** 'Cow-hand' **Feather** attempting to re-enact the opening 'cow charging; scene from Dallas) the detachments went on to communicate successfully, demonstrating that the NCRS system will be able to maintain military communications over the New Year period. The only 'net-stopping' moment occurred on 'Caravan' **Kev Hancock**'s detachment- **Sig** 'Mad Dog' **Parente** whilst chatting (in complete confidence) to **Sig B*A**R** let slip that he was an Essex boy and was at that precise moment wearing white socks under his army issue. SCANDAL!!!

The last two build up exercises (to be conducted over October and November) will see detachments being deployed to actual Op-Surety communications areas.

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NEWS FROM THE SQUADRONS

1 (ROYAL BUCKINGHAMSHIRE YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON (SPECIAL COMMUNICATIONS)

WONDERFUL COPENHAGEN
INTERNATIONAL SJAELSO MARCH 5– 8 AUGUST 1999
By LCpl Jay

1999 saw the 26th Annual Sjaelso March and Shoot Competition held in Denmark and hosted by the Danish Home Guard. This was our second visit to the March, held in Sjaelso Barracks, 25km north of Copenhagen. A total of 84 teams from nine countries took part, with RAF Benson fielding the only other British team.



The March and Shoot Team

After a good start in the pouring rain, with **Cpl Stu** 'Put the map away, I know where we are' **Searle** mistaking a Little Chef for the barracks, we arrived in Denmark in an uncharacteristic heat-wave. With seven hours before the greeting dinner it was decided to 'put a few warmers into the bank' and set off for the sights of Copenhagen. It was good to see some old friends at the get together but **Cpls Trev** 'Where's the Porn' **Jakeman** and **Jamie** 'I thought you liked booze' **Copeland** (our on-loan Aussie), persuaded us to revisit 'Copie'.

Friday saw us on the range firing the G3 'musket' 7.62, which was a welcome change to us 'old school' but a problem for **Cpl Lesley** 'I'm just under tall' **Jay**. After hitting some very respectable scores, an admin/zedding/catching some rays period was called for before an essential confirmatory CTR of 'Copie' later on. Saturday meant the march, only 20km, but 28C, on roads and the only hills in Denmark. Luckily we found two watering holes en-route and finished in 3hrs 31mins, overtaking five teams on the way. **LCpl** 'Rosy' **Roseveare** and **LCpl Al** 'My vest isn't suspect' **Shrewsbury** were delighted to find an all female marching band was quartered in the same block on our return, until common sense and good taste prevailed. That night the customary Gala dinner was an excellent 'feast up' with platters of steaks, pork steaks and ham a plenty. **LCpl Gareth Clarke** honoured us by lowering the Union Jack at the sunset parade, before persuading two unsuspecting 'crab' techs to join us on another 'soiree' into 'Copie'.

After the standard, packing, hand-backs and farewells we recovered to the UK, after some panic gift buying, and so concluded a very successful exercise. The team achieved a very creditable 28 out of 85 (the top 18 were Home Guard!) and prepared well for our next visit to Denmark, ie got soaked through!! Roll on Runnel Stone.

2 (CITY OF DUNDEE) SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

Since returning from Annual Camp in July, it has been business as usual for 2 (City of Dundee) Sig Sqn (V). The recently trained batch of B3 Tele Op (Radio) personnel and those who completed their Data module, along with the rest of the Squadron, have been kept extremely busy with a plethora of training weekends and comms exercises. The first of many weekends was to be a confirmatory Comms Ex in mid July for the newly qualified operators. This was not to be, however, as Barry Buddon was partially annexed due to the British Open Golf Championships being held at Carnoustie. The weekend did go ahead at an alternative location, but only after a spot of re-hashing of the training programme by the ever fluid **WO2 (YofS) George Hume**. The Exercise was a success, and the level of skills displayed by the new operators was a credit to the hard work carried out by the training team at Annual Camp.

A never ending trail of JOCOMMEX has been successfully completed since Annual Camp, indeed some of the HF Comms Detachments have clocked up more operators hours since Camp than in the past eighteen months. The Squadron has also been involved in training of a more tactical nature, with a trip to Otterburn Training Area, where a Military Skills weekend was carried out. Two Sections deployed from Dundee on Friday 13 August 1999 (unlucky for some as they were to find out) only to arrive into a fully tactical scenario at approx 1am the following morning. There followed an intense 24 hour period of training which culminated in two extremely well executed sect attacks upon enemy objectives, which were reached after a gruelling night of navigation.

It's not all been Comms, ranges and cam cream however! The Squadron was rewarded for its hard work over the past 12 months with a rock-climbing and trekking expedition to the Dolomites in Northern Italy, and a parachuting course for those with a head for heights. The parachuting course was run at Netheravon, and organised by our very own intrepid sky-walker OC, **Maj Eric Blyth**. The OC even managed to coax, persuade, bribe etc **Capt Bob Davidson** to take the Leap of Faith. The following is an extract from the aforementioned **Capt** 'You must be joking' **Davidson**'s diary of events:

It was to Netheravon, home of the Army Parachute Association (APA), that ten members of the Squadron travelled in order to cast themselves adrift from a perfectly serviceable aircraft. There were two courses on offer, the Ram Air Progression System (RAPS) (or perhaps in my case the Complete Ram Air Progression System !!) course and a tandem course. **Sgt** 'Fearless' **Forbes** was first up to the challenge of a skydive on the Tandem course. This involved a comprehensive training package – well 20mins, following by in depth emergency procedures from his Tandem Master. 'I wear the parachute, you wear me – if we have a problem, Trust Me!' So it was, armed with this info, that he ascended heavenwards to 12,000ft. For those of you unused to poking your parts out of an aircraft door at such altitudes, you would be amazed at the effect the experience can have on vital bodily functions. However, undeterred by the faint clapping noise in the background, **Sgt Forbes** launched (was launched) into the slipstream swiftly followed by a video cameraman. After plummeting for approx 40 seconds, it was time to apply the brakes and from 120mph it's down to 10mph down and 15 across as the main parachute deploys. The sights and views over Salisbury plain can be breathtaking at 5000ft and indeed **Sgt Forbes** was heard to shout, 'I can see meh hoose frae here.' Well done, a try skydiver. **Malcolm** will let you see the video for a nominal fee.

What about the remainder of the brave heroes (and heroines – sorry **Heather** and **Lesley**). As they were leaving the plane on their own, the training was lengthier – a whole day in fact. It covered every facet of their jump from Aircraft Emergencies, the Exit, canopy control emergencies, in flight drills and landings. Word on the street from the instructor was that all did very well during training and they were released from training ready to do Battle in the Bar in preparation for the jump the following day. I myself had three skydives that day and was waiting with interest to see them jump. Well imagine my excitement, nae joy, when it was announced that they could all jump in half an hour – laugh I nearly died. I was obviously the only one to see the humourous side to this as by the look on some of the faces they would have preferred to be somewhere else. Off they marched to the kit store and later reappeared resplendent in brand new state of the art parachutes. Each seamed to be mouthing a Buddhist chant 'Look, Locate, Peel, Punch, Pull'. So it was down to the Brittan Norman Islander – their jump aircraft. Once all were seated uncomfortably, it was off into the wide blue yonder and up to 3800ft. Tension onboard mounted as the jumpmaster is given the call 'Running In' from the pilot – the signal that they are approaching the Drop Zone (DZ). From here the jumpmaster gives visual corrections to the pilot, '5 left, 5 right – Cut!' Then engines are throttled back and then comes the words no one on board really wants to hear (especially No 1), 'Are you ready to skydive', a numbed nod – 'OK, in the door – standby – Go!' Into free air goes '**Pte Kelbie**' counting out the mandatory delay (one thousand, two thousand.' Oh happy day, a success, the canopy has opened and all is very quiet compared to the noise of the aircraft. Now, release the brakes, locate the DZ and take control of the canopy. All of our colleagues did very well on this course. It is nerve racking, it does take you out of the comfort zone, but the sense of achievement is immense. I asked **Capt Bob** 'I love this strut' **Davidson** for his comments prior to the jump. 'Help me,' came the reply, which I think reflects the level of commitment required. All in all a thoroughly exciting and worthwhile weekend enjoyed be everyone who took part. Indeed, two of the group have gone on to complete jumps at nearby Errol Airfield as continuation from the military system – Well Done **Rod Hamilton** and **Chris Kelbie**. If I receive enough names I will organise another vertically challenging weekend soon. Blue Skies!



Prior to deploying to Italy on Ex Tartan Dolomite, the expedition group had the opportunity to sample the delights of a thoroughly wet and windy weekend based at Dundonnell, as a preparatory weekend. The plan was to conquer An Teallach which boasts some of the most rewarding 'scrambling' in Scotland. The reality, however, was somewhat different from the Picture Postcard vision. The wind was fierce enough to drive the constant rain through the toughest of Goretex garments, and not many expected sleet in the middle of July. It was Scotland after all! The weekend did not turn out all wet as Sunday was spent climbing and scrambling over Stac Polly which is just a grown-ups' play area! The Exercise in Italy was a great success (well, almost) as the following paragraphs reveal.

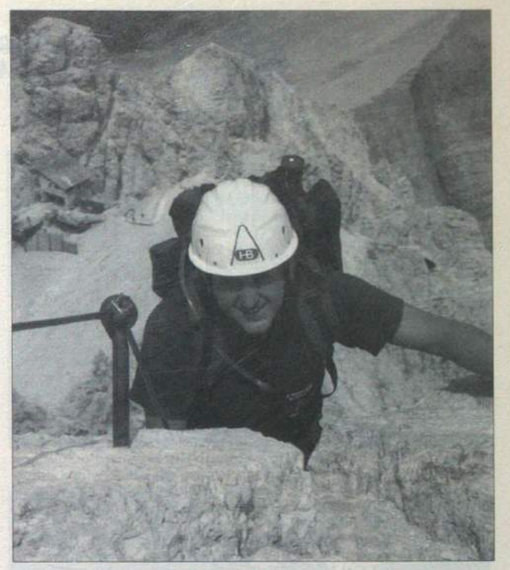
EXERCISE TARTAN DOLOMITE 22 – 31 AUGUST 1999

On 22 August 1999, ten members of 2 (CofD) Sig Sqn (V) set out for the Italian winter resort of Cortina D'Ampezzo, a village set in the midst of the Eastern Dolomite mountains of northern Italy. The expedition was the dream child of **WO2 (YofS) George Hume**, who having climbed in the region three years previously went on to convince the OC, **Maj Eric Blyth** that the Italian Dolomites was the place to go. Here lay a mountain environment where extreme exposure and vertically challenging moments were abundant not to mention the mountain scenery that helped take your mind off the sheer drops. A ten day expedition was put together by the YofS, Ex Tartan Dolomite had a very achievable aim, 'taking all expedition members out of their individual comfort zones and placing them in a physically and vertically challenging environment', all this whilst introducing them to Via Ferrata scrambling. With the OC and **Cpl Joe Wiggins** passing their JSMEL (S) award weeks before we were due to leave, the Squadron Expedition remained self-supportive in terms of qualified leaders.

The journey by minibus to Stanstead, flight to Venice and hire car to Cortina was eventful to say the least. On arrival at Venice airport the group discovered that seven items of essential gear had been left at Stanstead (bergans containing three of the four expedition tents). Our admin day turned into a day of phone calls and telex messages. All kit duly arrived at the airport nine hours after our flight had landed. We arrived in Cortina D'Ampezzo late on 23 August, and after an '*erect the tents in total darkness competition*' the group settled down for well earned night's rest in preparation for the week ahead.

Day 1 was a day of expedition admin, with a low cloud base Via Ferrata Michel Albino Storblel was chosen as the group's introduction to Via Ferrata scrambling. The campsite lying conveniently at the foot of the route which takes the most direct line up to the summit of Punta Fiames 2010mtrs.

Day 2 saw the group embark on the Ivan Dibona High Level Walk, the weather was magnificent with breathtaking views of the surrounding mountain scenery. This ridge walk took the group past old World War II remnants, and could be classed as a very strenuous battlefield tour, 'as long as you have a good head for heights'. All of the exciting sections are at the start of the ridge, and with the weather in the mid 30s the long walk of the ridge was not enjoyed at all, but the scenery made up for the pain.



LCpl Rod Hamilton climbing Via Ferrata Michel Strobel on Cristallo Central Summit



Day 2 Expedition Kodak moment on the sun terrace of Rifugio Lorenzi (8000ft) prior to climbing Via Ferrata Michel Bianchi

Days 3 and 4 saw Via Ferrata routes of varying degrees of difficulty overcome, in preparation for our expedition goal. The summit of Tofana di Mezzo lies at a height of 3244mtrs, and can be climbed by a number of routes. The expedition's choice of routes is described as one of the most difficult dolomite Via Ferrata, being long, extremely airy, and demanding both endurance and a familiarity with rock climbing. Six members of the Expedition set off from Rifgio Pomedes to climb Tofana di Mezzo by Via Ferrata Guiseppe Olivierie, class as a Group F ascent. Climbing up vertical walls, steep corners, exposed ledges all with nothing more than a guiding rope to clip onto this was truly a test of all our via ferrata skills which had been built up during the previous four days.

Maj Eric Blyth, Cpl Joe Wiggins and **LCpl Chris Kelbie** made up the first group and led off on this final day whilst **WO2 (YofS) George Hume, LCpl Rod Hamilton** and **Sgt Daz Collins** waited for a suitable gap to develop prior to climbing the first section. Less than two hours into the route and Group 2 were stopped in their tracks held up behind a couple of climbers. The 30min wait that followed was due to one of the climbers falling from this section in spectacular free-fall backward motion. Fortunately her protection held firm and with her husband breaking the fall she escaped badly shaken and bruised. Further up the climb **Cpl Joe Wiggins** also tested his gear and protection out on another vertical slab which surrendered nothing more that the protection in place as a means to surmounting this particular problem. The day provided a perfect culmination to a good expedition. The Expedition easily achieved the aims laid down prior to departure, and with Tofana di Mezzo being ascended by its hardest route all left with an immense feeling of self satisfaction, and a lot of mountain memories. Plans are already afoot to return next year. All in all, a hectic yet rewarding period of post Camp training which has been a resounding success for this latest chapter in the history of 2 (City of Dundee) Signal Squadron (Volunteers).

7 ARMOURED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (207)

Sqn Comd **Maj Andy Bristow**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) Colin Milne**

Post summer leave and the Squadron's emphasis is on preparing for another Exercise in Poland. This combined with the ongoing support to the Brigade HQ and the longer term vision of operations next year provides us with some interesting times and challenges.

ALPHA TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt Andy Hill**
Tp SSgt **SSgt James Runchman**

After a well deserved leave, Alpha Tp were once again ready to tackle anything the Squadron hierarchy could throw at them. The first task was a deployment to Senelager on CAST. As it was the last Exercise with the unit for **LCpl** 'Pork Pie' **Petty** and **Sig** 'Romeo' **Richardson**, both were given a suitable farewell! After CAST, Alpha Tp was augmented by two Signallers from 249; welcome to **Sigs Steve Hassett** and **Wayne Gibson** - what sins they've committed, we'll never know! In a quiet week (?) following CAST, **Lt Andy** 'Cross-dresser' **Hill** organised a Squadron Families Day. The many activities included a dunk tank with a pillow fighting pole above it. Most impressive bout of the day has to go to **Jenny Bisland** for her victory over the OC Sqn, **Maj Andy Bristow**. A select few from the Troop (were) volunteered to take part in a Beating the Retreat ceremony in Bergen which proved to be an interesting event. Finally, a last goodbye. In addition to those mentioned above, a farewell and good luck to **LCpl Mick O'Neill** on his promotion to Mr and civilian life!

BRAVO TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt Adam Corkery**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Dave Sloane**

Firstly, welcome to the newcomers to the Troop; **Sig Pam Dunkerly** straight from Blandford and also to the lucky three on attachment from 249 Sig Sqn, **Signallers Lawson**, **Nicholl** and **Cpl** 'Titch' **Meakin** (who only left the Squadron two months ago). On return from leave it was straight back into the thick of things with the Brigade CAST Exercise which for us was not just a test of our ability to perform but also a chance for the new members of the Troop to get an insight into the way the Squadron works. On return from CAST it was straight into a training week for the Squadron to practice what we had learned from CAST, the days were long, the work was hard, the jokes were running out, but we pulled through and gained a lot from the experience. In the ongoing Squadron Inter-Troop sports competition Bravo Tp are trailing in the points but we are determined to make them up in the next few events. The Troop has also recently started the Rock Rat Climbing club which got off to great start with venues ranging from an indoor climbing wall to local crags and cliffs. The Troop now looks forward to Ex Ulan Eagle in Poland and eventually Kosovo in February.

OPERATIONS/ ES TROOP
Tp Comd **Capt Jason Gray**
YofS **WO2 (YofS) Keith Parsons**
FofS **WO2 (FofS)** 'Mac' **McCallum**

Firstly, congratulations must go out to Ops ES for leading the Inter-Troop Competition from the start. This lead is created by the winning of the basketball, water-polo, Land-Rover push and by coming a close second in the football. We were all kept busy on a recent CAST Exercise, where our newest addition to the tech family, **Cpl Adi Worsdall** was shown the ropes in an Armoured Brigade Signal Squadron. It appears that he didn't like the ropes that he was shown and decided that the best course of action was to go to bed for the week! Welcome also to **Cpl Bas Park** who, unbeknown to him, has been allocated the task of playing Santa Claus at the Families Christmas function. In contrast to these welcome arrivals, we have had a devastating loss in having to say goodbye to the greatest living tech, **Cpl** 'Puke' **Thomas**, who has now returned to Blandford after only a year and a half out of training . . . sprog! Warmest congratulations go to **Cpl Richie Brown** and his wife **Corinna,** who have just had their first child, and their not too distant posting to Blandford on his Class 1 and also to **Sgt Jules** 'Johnny Bravo' **Thorne** on passing RSSC after putting it off for so many years. A final thanks must go to the Ops O, **Capt** 'Squeaky' **Gray** for inviting us all to South Africa with him . . . NOT!

SUPPORT TROOP
QM **Capt (QM) Dave Wilson**
RQMS **WO2 (RQMS) 'Eric' Udell**

As always, the Quartermaster's department has been busy with the usual round of non-stop paperwork. The main office has had a bit of a facelift and is now on the way to looking something like it should. In fact, **Sig** 'Blodwin' **Davies** on returning back from his stint in Canada was heard saying he didn't recognise the place. No change there then Blodders!! Congratulations to **LCpl** 'Robo' **Robinson** and **Karen** on the birth of baby **Joe.** Whilst on the subject of arrivals, we take this opportunity to say hello and welcome to **WO2 (RQMS)** 'Eric' **Udell** and family, to **Sig Ross Ardley** and family and to **Sig Allan** 'Frenchy' **Wilson**. We hope you all enjoy your tours with us. At present we are gearing up for Ex Ulan Eagle followed by preparations for next years deployment to Kosovo. We still have time, however, to reflect on good times past. Just the other day the QM, **Capt Dave Wilson** was passing on his experience of reliable cars to **Sig Ardley** and was heard to say that the 'best ride' he'd had since arriving in Hohne was 'in the back' of a Mercedes estate at which point **Cpl Carrick** reminded him he was meant to be talking about buying a car! Still, the extra duties should keep **Cpl Carrick** busy for a while!

SQUADRON CHARITY EVENT
EXERCISE TABBING RAT 15 - 20 SEPTEMBER 1999



The team at the start of the TAB
(R-L): Capt Dave Wilson, Sig Andy Barker, LCpl Daz Pickard, Sig Steve Sharman, Sig Gaz Davies, LCpl Si Pereira, Sig Steve Homer, Sig Danny Richardson, Sig Krissie Strain, Cpl Andy Allen, Sig Stu Hill, WO2 (RQMS) 'Eric' Udell, Sig Rob Castles

It all started with **Mrs Siobhan Peters,** the Hohne Station Homestart co-ordinator writing a begging letter to all of the units based in Hohne for financial aid. As anyone who has been involved in the non public finances of an independent signal squadron will know, there is no money to fund anything apart from adventure training exercises and to keep the PRI shop stocked - and afloat! So the QM, **Capt Dave Wilson**, had the bright idea of 'tabbing' from Herford to Hohne, calling in at various barracks, towns and cities to raise the much needed funds.

A team of 13 soldiers volunteered to take part in the 186km march, which started at I (UK) Armoured Division HQ and Signal Regiment who are based at Hammersmith Barracks in Herford on Wednesday 15 September 1999. The march was formally started by the SOinC (A) **Brig Cedric Burton OBE ADC** and the proceedings were watched by the hierarchy of both the Divisional Signal Regiment and 207 Sig Sqn. The march covered the following route: Herford, Vlotho, Rinteln, Hameln, Hanover, Celle, finishing at Hohne camp on Sunday 19 September 1999 to coincide with the Squadron Families Day. The object of the exercise was not to break speed marching records but to raise money for two charities: Homestart, which supports service families that are experiencing difficulties and SOS Kinderdorf 2000, which is a German based children's charity. During the march, a total exceeding DM 9800.- was raised and shared equally between the charities and cheques were presented to the representatives of the charities at a reception prior to a Beating Retreat Parade that the Squadron hosted, which was held in Bregen on Monday 20 September 1999.

The whole event was extremely enjoyable and was a resounding success, we would like to thank anyone who is reading this article, that supported the event in any way for their generosity of spirit!

Seasons Greetings

16 AIR ASSAULT BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (216)

OC **Maj I. Hooper**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) G. Hodgson**

Fresh from the Brigade launch at RAF Wattisham in Sepetember, the Squadron prepared and departed for the inaugural 16 Air Asslt Bde Exercise, Ex Gryphon's Eye. In addition to this, the Squadron deployment to Kosovo continued providing communications support to 102 Logistic Brigade and their return in November will bring the Squadron in Colchester back to full strength. Hello to **WO1(RSM) Chris Drew, SSgt Kev Read** from Aldershot, **SSgt Wheeler** who was already a Colchester resident, and **Sgt Frank Greenwood**. A fond farewell to **WO1(RSM) Geoff Hodgson** to his appointment as Corps RSM, **WO2(YofS) Mick Proud** off to civvyville, **SSgt Louise Spate** to RAF Lyneham, and **Sgt Aidie Watts** off to 21 Sig Regt via Split.

ALPHA TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt Jim Lambeth**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Chris McKenna**

INS AND OUTS

The month of September saw a great deal of changes, not only in the Brigade but at a more personal level within Alpha Tp. Firstly the Troop said goodbye to **Lt Dan Ashton** who went off to be educated at Shrivenham. The Troop wishes him, **Avril** and the boys the best and hopes that he doesn't forget his humble beginnings in the Alpha Tp garages. There were several other departures prior to Summer leave including the unforgettable **Tony** 'Tastic' **Taylor** who left to join the ranks of civvy street. The Troop also said goodbye to **Sig** 'OJ' **Olejnik** and **Sig Lavender** who were posted to Bulford and Aldershot on promotion. We raised a farewell glass to **LCpl** 'Gunny' **Williams** who departed for a new life away from uniform and went straight off to work in Kenya with a contract communications company. **Cpl** 'Taff' **Reed** returned to Germany and sunny Sennelager with the Commsec Monitoring team, best wishes to him and **Vanessa**. Only a matter of minutes ago **LCpl** 'Chapstick' **Chapman** finally left for a career in London's Docklands. Along with the departures there are hellos. Firstly to **Lt Jim Lambeth** who assumed the role of Troop Commander having arrived from Germany. Also posted in are **Cpl** 'Stretch' **Smith** from 14 Sig Regt(EW), **LCpl** '408' **Williams** and **Sig** 'Pid' **Downard** back from BATUS, and **Sigs Lawson, Kershaw** and **Bellamy** who returned from a tour in Northern Ireland with 1 Royal Scots. The Troop also said hello again to **SSgt** 'Geoffrey' **McKenna, LCpl** 'Orangey' **Wright, LCpl Chamberlain** and **Sig Crutchley** (who's now in C Tp) who all returned safely from Kosovo.

MY ATTACHMENT - by *2Lt Knightly Brown*

My attachment with 210 Sig Sqn began in April of this year with a baptism of fire. I arrived in Radio Sonde Camp, Cyprus at 0500hrs and by 0700hrs, was preparing orders for a platoon attack and then presenting them to 3Pl, my platoon for the next four weeks. Thank you **SSgt Fairfield** for all your help! As **Capt Rachel** 'Knowledgeable Ops' **Harvey** put it, it was just like final Exercise but with no command appointment change! Since my return to Colchester in May, I have been part of 210 Sig Sqn and saw the transition to 216 Sig Sqn in September. I have had the opportunity to visit Egypt, Cyprus, STANTA, SPTA and Otterburn. The latter as part of an escape and evasion exercise as the Hunter Force. My knowledge has increased through the help of **Lt** 'French Maid' **Hamilton** who is shortly back from his hero duties in Kosovo. There has also been endless advice from the troops, **Cpl Reed** and **LCpl Horton,** I have not signed off yet, despite your encouragement! Advice also came from all seeing, all knowing QM, **Capt Steve** 'Purple Pants' **Clarke** especially on squadron PT. As I've mentioned PT, I must also mention **Lt Jim Lambeth** and **2Lt Toby Courage,** people who go tabbing in their spare time. I must include the excellent horse riding trip to Larkhill with **LCpl Scadden, Sig Pye** (IT think of you on PT!) and **Sig** 'I want to get off now' **Williams.** I'm sure my time with the unit will be of great use to me in the future, and when I've passed P Coy, I'll be back!
(Good luck young man – you've been listening to the lads – You will be back! Ed)

CHARLIE TROOP - *by 2Lt Lumley*

Charlie Tp has taken its place in 216 Sig Sqn, and it's members include **Sgt** 'Big' **Al Combe**, **Cpl Ted** 'Airborne Teddy' **Page**, **Cpl** 'Spud' **Fawcett** and **Sig** 'Air' **Bourne**. The Troop is commanded by **2Lt Toby** 'The Press-up King' **Courage** who is on his first tour and is about to do his jumps course in November with **Sig Shields** and **Sig Crutchley**. The Troop has been on Ex Gryphon's Eye - the first 16 Air Asslt Bde Exercise -where they participated in practice jumps out of the Skyvan at South Cerney along with rigging vehicles and equipment on MSPs in preparation for the commencement of the Brigade Exercise where the Troop jumped as part of the Airborne Battle Group (ABBG) with the 1st Battalion the Parachute Regiment to set up signals as part of the test of the new Brigade's capabilities.



On edge



Stand to the door



Geronimooooooo.....

K TROOP - *by Cpl Smith*

K Tp is still defending the empire against evil tyranny and continues to provide communications to HQ (UK) NSE on Op Agricola. The co-location of the HQ with 19 Mech Bde freed up a number of personnel, so on 16 September 1999, 15 war dodgers left the Troop and headed back to Colchester. A few have left since, leaving a hardcore element of 16 young, illustrious warriors and **Sgt Owen** who can recall when POL points were haystacks.

A number of incidents have occurred recently, few of which have been of a dangerous nature other than **Cpl** 'Common sense of a potato' **Fernie** trying to frazzle himself on a 16/24 gene and **Sig Foster** being allowed behind the wheel of a Landrover. **LCpl** 'I'm going to be a dad' **Russell** had an epic adventure a few weeks ago. It took him 21/2hrs to find his way out of Thessaloniki before heading back to Pristina. Whilst driving up the motorway he was acutely aware that there were a serious lack of KFOR vehicles on the road. On reaching the border checkpoint, **LCpl Russell** jumped out, pointed and said to the guard, 'Macedonia?' The guard replied 'Macedonia that way, this Bulgaria.'

Prior to HQ (UK) NSE moving to 19 Bde's location, the HQ had been sited in the Bottle Top Factory, which in its day had also produced all of Kosovo's dust and had been involved in a huge mouse breeding programme. Comd NSE was keen that everybody helped keep the camp clean including all the staff officers. It was on one of these wombling patrols that the Tp OC found a ½ft spanner and came up with the bright idea that it would prove to be a great gift to give the person who did the stupidest thing for the day. This has backfired as he is rarely seen now without his spanner but the following are all worthy of mention for their antics:

1. *Lt Rob Hamilton - Missing a WOTAN briefing to the Brigadier because he couldn't lock his own crypto locker.*
2. *Sig Chris Butters - Reversing a vehicle over his own kit.*
3. *Sig 'Jack' Frost - Blowing five light bulbs on the trot before someone pointed out that 110V bulbs don't last too long with 240V mains*
4. *Sgt Dave Owen - For hiding the fact that it was his birthday because he was afraid that the Troop would fill him in.*
5. *Sig Shields and LCpl 'Rusty Roof' Wright - for picking up Euromux phones, forgetting to press the pressle, and getting all shirty with the Whitehall operators when they couldn't hear them and put the phone down on them.*

The 'Spanner' of the day has provided much amusement during its short life, but seems to have gone into semi-retirement of late. Rumour has it that it was last seen in the hands of the 2IC 209 Sig Sqn, aka 'Dr Evil' (to quote **Lt Jeremy Toze**) during a record-breaking flight, ably launched by **Cpl Scott Dernie.** Whoops! The Troop continues to deliver first class comms to the staff users and will hand over all their tasks to 209 Sig Sqn come November. The Troop personalities are still in good form and morale is high. **Lt Rob Hamilton** is still smiling whilst **Sgt Owen** still chunters on about the number of muppets and space monkeys there are out here. **Cpl Scott Dernie** remains as IC Happiness and **Cpl Smith** still threatens to bludgen to death every RLC radio operator he sees for constantly breaking his beloved WOTAN system. **LCpl Ted O'Donnell** and **Sig Gordon** remain the porn kings of Kosovo, and **Sig Bacon** can still be found stealing other units wheel hubs. Finally a big thank you to **Cpl** 'Jack' **Russell** and his crew on SAN 892 from 3DSR who have helped us out on numerous occasions on covering duties and providing extra manpower. Welcome to K Tp, join our infrastructure as there's no Troopies here from 3 Div looking after you!

12 MECHANIZED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS & SIGNAL SQUADRON (228)

SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS
OC **Maj S. R. Workman**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) S. Jackson**

For those of you that do not recognise the number 228, we should explain that we're the new boys in town! 12 Mechanized Brigade HQ and Signal Squadron (228) came into being on 1 September 1999. Previously, we had been known as 5 Airborne Brigade Headquarters and Signal Squadron. The birth of the new unit was marked by a parade before the SOinC. The Squadron received its pennant and promptly began removing all traces of the Pegasus. We are now the proud wearers of the symbol you see above – The Ace of Spades.

12 Mechanized Brigade HQ and Signal Squadron (228) has been incredibly busy since its inception. As well as re-roling, we are preparing to deploy to Bosnia on 1 December 1999. The lads were glad to learn that Sky Television is up and working in Banja Luka, so we will all have to make do with watching the Millennium celebrations in our CORIMECS.



Lt 'Doris' Day and Capt Gadget Wong before the drop

In early September, we did manage to 'take a break' in the village of Caythorpe for the annual Arnhem pilgrimage. A beautiful weekend provided the Squadron with an opportunity to take part in two parachute descents on consecutive days; a rare event, which the Old Comrades greatly appreciated. The Squadron's behaviour was impeccable and congratulations go out to all those that took part in and organised the last Caythorpe reunion to be organised by 216 Parachute Signal Squadron. Special thanks go out to the Officer Commanding, **Maj Scott Workman**, who, on the first descent of the weekend managed to land on the ambulance that eventually took him off the DZ with a broken ankle.

During the past few weeks, we have also had our fair share of entertainment. Bravo Troop was christened 'Barbecue Troop' as it nearly burnt to the ground as result of some frenzied works ticket cleaning. Not to be outdone, Alpha Troop earned themselves the nickname 'Aflame Troop' after an incident with four vehicle batteries, a cable, a Landrover chassis and a Signaller with the IQ of a haddock! The fact that the latter incident happened in front of the (by now wide-eyed) Officer Commanding and warranted an elaborate explanation from **Lt Tom Day** only made the audience's laughter all the more enthusiastic.

This month the Squadron says a fond farewell to **Cpl Roughton** on his posting to 264 (SAS) Signal Squadron. We also extend a warm welcome to the new 2IC **Capt** 'Jimmy' **Hendricks** and the new **RSM WO1** 'Action' **Jackson**.

ALPHA TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt Tom** 'Doris' **Day**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Dick** 'Magpie' **Dyer**

Septembers re-role of the Squadron, the arrival of six new panzers and preparation training for the now imminent deployment to Banja Luka, have ensured a frenzy of activity. It has been a busy period for Alpha Tp, with little time to reflect on the summer's deployment to Kosovo. The introduction of armour to Arnhem Barracks has been met with amusement and just a little bit of head scratching, many of the Troop familiar only with C-130 and well worn in boots as forms of transport. Warnings have been posted to police, camera, action, as **Sigs** 'Dangerous' **Armstrong**, 'Boff' **Walker**, **Dan Fallows**, **Chris McGeorge** and **Andy** 'Hitman-Gurung' **Allen** embark on their track licence course. Special mentions to **LCpl Paul Clancy** who is helping out at 16 AAsslt Bde for a month, **Cpl Nick Ions** on his Unit Fire NCOs course (made necessary by Barbecue Tp's recent fire-lighting spree) and to **Cpl Eddy** 'Judas' **Cochran** for abandoning ship and swimming to the Crypto Cell. Congratulations to **Cpl** 'I'm gonna sign off if I don't get promoted' **Clancy** for his recent selection for promotion. The Troop welcomes **Cpls Nick** 'Tracer' **Ions** and **Clay** 'Sick-chit' **Austin**, **LCpls** 'Phylis' **Green** and 'Tug' **Wilson** and **Sig Phillip** 'Chocolate' **Williams**. Hello also to **LCpl Rick Turner** who has defected from 'Bongo Troop' next door, and to **Sig** 'Ken/Big Daddy' **Dodd**, recently returned from his attachment in Colchester. Farewell to **LCpl** 'Crabby' **Crabb** as he heads for 7 Sig Regt and to **LCpl** 'Foxy' **Fox** now situated in Northern Ireland.

BRAVO TROOP
Tp Comd **Capt Wong**
Tp SSgt **Sgt** 'Toyah' **Wilcox**

The transition of the Squadron from the Parachute role to armour has been greeted with mixed emotions by Bravo Tp. Recently several members of the troop, the Aldershot four, led by **Cpl** 'Spud' **Fawcett** and aided by **LCpl** 'I was in the office' **Ford**, **Sig** 'Dime Bar' **Dine** and **Sig** 'Delbert' **McDowell** conspired to halt the proceedings by burning the building down, thereby preserving the memory forever. The plan was aborted only after **Sig** 'AAAAHHHHH!' **Dine** set himself alight, trapping **LCpl** 'The air was on fire' **Ford** in the MT office and the realisation that the stores were empty and none of their personal kit was available to 'disappear' in flames! Their case continues. Alpha Tp thought that this was a fantastic idea but thought that since we had done the building they would do the vehicles instead. They are awaiting summons! Meanwhile the refit proceeds along with some frantic redecorating, so much so that **Cpl** 'Lackey' **Barker** has considered starting a painting business and Alpha Tp are looking to the new 'BBQ Troop' for interior design ideas (its all in the labels luvvies!). Much amusement has greeted the arrival of the 'New' 43 series vehicles straight from the 1970's. All that is required now is the equipment to fill the hulls, although the new Troop Storeman, **LCpl** 'Trigger' **Hunter**, has been responsible for continual pressure on the FofS, **WO2 (FofS) Lance Marshall**, who is losing his mind! Meanwhile the stores sidekick, **Sig** 'Melly' **Melville**, has been dispatched to the Aldershot museum for AFV 436 spares. **LCpl Williams**, as the first 43 Det Comd, scoffs at all those who mocked him as they too depart for driver training. Those left in Aldershot commence hectic training for the deployment to MND (SW) where those refreshing challenges will be greeted with vitality and vigour! Well the handful that haven't been there before will, the remainder, 'Put those AF6848s back in the drawer, I tell you!' But seriously! Many congratulations to **Sig** 'I'll leave Roses on her pillow' **McDowell** on getting his Army Colours. Welcome to **2Lt** 'Clearly better than Mike' **Dickson**, **Cpl Langan, LCpl** 'Firestarter' **Ford** (who is also the Unit Fire NCO), **Sig Meecham** and **LCpl** 'Taff" **Davies** who also comes off the promotion board with **LCpl** 'Hattie' **Attwell**! Additional back slaps to **Sig Meecham** and **LCpl Sharp** for passing P Coy.

SUPPORT TROOP
Tp Comd **Capt G. R. Burrows QGM, BEM + BAR**
RQMS **WO2 (RQMS) S. Gorton**

Firstly we must say a farewell to **WO2** 'Pie Muncher' **(RQMS) Marshall** who is posted as WO1 RSM 35 (Ready and waiting) TA Signal Regiment. A warm welcome to the new RQMS, **WO2 (RQMS) Gorton**. A goodbye to **Sig** 'The Airborne George Clooney' **Cloney** who was lucky enough to be posted to 16 A Asslt Bde. Hello to the two new blokes straight from the factory **Sig** 'Flossy Taff' **Davies**, and **Sig** 'Crash Test Dummy' **Hunt**. With the new Brigade forming, the work has been endless closing down 216 Parachute Sig Sqn's account and issuing to 12 Mechanised Bde. Too busy even to do PT according to 'the big bloke who is to be obeyed' **Sgt** 'Beating stick' **Mullen**. Commiseration's to **SQMS** 'Spence' **Cave,** as he hasn't said a word since he was ordered to take his maroon beret and his Pegasus off.

238 (LONDON) SIGNAL SQUADRON

SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS
Sqn Comd **Maj Steve Hunt**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Ewan Hall**

COMINGS AND GOINGS

The Squadron welcomes back to the fold from their roulement in Bosnia **LCpl Mick Breydin, LCpl Daz Pond** and **Sig Lee Pearce**. We also say a hearty hello to **SSgt Andy Cannandine** from 38 Sig Regt (V) Sheffield, **SSgt Julie Strangways MBE** our new Barracks Master Chef, **LCpl Kara Hayhurst** welcome back **Kara**! (she left 238 in 1995 as **Sig Wright**) with husband **Al** (Ex Corps) and baby infant **Jamie** and **Sig Toby Green** fresh from Blandford. Last of all **Mr James Beaney** who arrives as the EO (IT) and works in the ACISG end of the Squadron - welcome to you all!

We say a sad farewell to the following people: **LCpl Gaz Winders** who has started a new career in Satellite installation, **Cpl Debs Walker** who recently gave birth to a 7lb PTI **William**! Good luck **Debbie** the Squadron is all the quieter without you! After 22 years service **SSgt Graham Owen** has now embarked on what seems to be a fruitful second career and **SSgt Paul Phippard**, our ex Master Chef, now working for Primary Management in Blandford Camp - watch out you thinnies! Finally many congratulations to **Cpl Steve Hook** on his recent marriage to **Jo**.

RADIO TROOP
Tp Comd **Capt Andy Carroll**
Tp Sgt **Sgt Simon Schofield**

EXCHANGE VISIT OF LT J. WRIGHT ROYAL AUSTRALIAN SIGNALS
by Cpl of The Gun Store, Viagra and Bar (Bart to friends)

Once again it's holiday time in the sleepy hollow of Radio Tp. For the few of us who are left here, all was peaceful and quiet, leaving me plenty of time to catch up on mundane jobs: issuing mobile phones, letching down the Kings Road and getting ready for the total eclipse of the sun. When all of a sudden, the silence was broken by the sound of the lesser-spotted colonial Aussie 'Good Day Cobblers.' I, in my capacity as old git with good looks was taken back by this strange looking creature from the depths of the Australian Outback, dressed in jeans and an Hawaiian shirt looking quite the ladies man, but half the weight of crocodile Dundee! With my ball and chain removed, I was tasked to escort **Lt Wright** around several sights of London which most British citizens who are eligible to vote would never achieve in a lifetime, unless they'd slipped their Member of Parliament a bung. What impressed me the most, which was quite amazing, was that he was not a Manchester United fan. Back to the story in hand. The week started by visiting all the departments in the Squadron and shown the role we have to play in the big chess game come the final hour.

Tuesday: We visited the National Army Museum that of course is free to serving members in the forces, that evening he visited relatives and friends (unlucky them) who didn't get deported to the colonies.

Wednesday: We visited Big Ben (Westminster Tower), and climbed the 300 and odd steps to the top to be deafened by the 196 decibels of its chimes at 1100hrs, quite a moving experience, and believe you me; I mean moving. We then proceeded to try and infiltrate Parliament, in order to have a nose around only to be escorted to the front door and told to, 'Bog off!' If I had studied my programme of events, I would have noticed that on Thursday morning we were due to visit the Palace of Westminster.

Thursday: We arrived to find that: our passes had not been left at St Stephen's Gate. Getting all agitated we did notice that if you were any nationality that didn't speak English it was easy to gain access. We eventually gained access and had a good tour by guiding ourselves around The House of Commons and Lords. The highlight of the day was sitting in the Prime Minister's seat in The Commons and promptly been told to stand up (It had to be done). We had such a tight schedule, we swiftly moved on to the Tower of London to meet the Chief Yeoman Warder, **Mr. John Keohane**. (ex-Corps you know!) Who kindly let us bypass the long tourist queue. I myself was quite amazed how much knowledge **Lt Wright** had regarding the Tower especially Traitors Gate where like deja vu he had been here before some time in the 1800's when he was a young child, being told he was going on a journey in a large boat. That night we were invited back at 2100hrs for the ceremony of the keys which again was quite a sight to be seen, then invited to the mess. It was a pleasure to escort **Lt Wright** around London, as the OC Squadron said on his de-brief ' I don't know who enjoyed it the most'. Personally I couldn't give a Castle Main XXXX, as the saying goes, he who thinks Australian, drinks Tetley's. Next challenge Lady Speakers chair ha ha!

SUMMER CAMP 1999
IN THE LAND OF SUN, SEA AND PASTIES
by Sig 'Mac' McGregor

On a cool bright day, we headed out from our little enclave of sanity in the nation's capital. To Cornwall we were headed; to taste the joys of sailing, surfing and gliding. Perhaps even to sample the local brewer's fayre?

Our outbound journey was interrupted by our arrival at the scene of a nasty road traffic accident. Without so much as a second's thought, the team all swung into action and started treating casualties as well as controlling the traffic, until the emergency services arrived. For some 45 minutes, **LCpls Pete Fagg** and **Lee Lester** performed Cardiac/Pulmanory Resuscitation. Despite their awesome efforts, it was not possible to revive the lady. Our thoughts go out to her family.

On arrival at Penhale Camp we found the advance party had not only prepared the camp but also performed a detailed recce of the centre of Newquay at night. This proved to have been a very worthwhile task for the conduct of **Cpl Steve Hook**'s stag night. Details of which are of course of a confidential nature.

Over the next week we variously sailed, canoed, glided, surfed, golfed, mountain biked, scuba dived and windsurfed ourselves into a very relaxed state. Congratulations go out to **Sig Jenny Mills** for conning a lift out of the Air Ambulance for a measly six stitches, **SSgt Hadley** for his hole in one and the Irish team for winning the sandcastle competition. Thanks to the Training Wing and DS who managed to turn a military run camp into a fun event. See you all next year.

MIKE TROOP
Tp Comd **Capt (TOT) Bob Nicol**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Andy Cannadine**

At last! Mike Tp have eventually got someone to carry out the Troop SSgt's responsibilities on a permanent basis. A big welcome is extended by all to **SSgt Andy Cannadine** who has just completed an arduous tour with 38th (City of Sheffield) Signal Regiment (Volunteers). Thanks to **Cpl Paul Bone** and **Sgt** 'Twiz' **Twizell** for standing in.

On a sad note, the Troop would like to say a big thank you and a fond farewell to **SSgt Graham Owen** who has left the army after completing his 22 years, falling on his feet as always, getting a well paid job with NTL. The Troop wishes him, and his family, every success. Thanks go to **Sgt Chris Jacobs** for organising **Graham**'s leaving do. He would like to quash any rumours that he is planning a new career on the after-dinner speech circuit.

Mike Tp is at present stretched covering many tasks. The task of making London District's IT equipment millennium compliant has fallen

on the ACISG department with **Cpl Dean Spiers, Sig Keith Ford** and **Mr Justin Watson** covering all units within the M25. The FRT is equally busy covering its usual assortment of (biscuits) tasks. The PA Section, headed by **Mr John Aked** and **Mr** 'Del' **Tyrrell**, has been keeping busy. A very demanding job of providing PA systems for the Royal Navy's 'Festival of the Sea' celebrations in Plymouth is their latest conquest. They should be congratulated on a tough job well done. At last! A smile comes to the face of **Mr** 'Del' **Tyrrell** having been informed that the fashion police are out to get him. Not to mention the posing question of 'where am I to put this now?'



Sig Piers Daw and 'Del Boy' Tyrell working out, what goes where?

Radio Sect comprising **Cpl's Paul Bone** and 'Gordy' **McNeillie** travelled to Bodney at the start of September to provide radio coverage to the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment during Ex Try Out - one of their more enjoyable annual taskings. We now look forward to the ceremonial season, and all that this brings. Good luck to **Sig Ayesha Muhammad** who is off on a six month detachment as a recruiter for the Minorities Recruiting Team (EMERT). Happy Hunting! Finally, congratulations to **Sgt Cory Pennicott** following his recent marriage to **Charlie**, all the best for the future.

OSCAR TROOP

Tp Comd **Maj Dave Gilchrist**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Karen Ripley**

Life continues at its usual frenetic pace for the 'engine room' Troop of 238 (London) Sig Sqn. COMMCEN rationalisation is now public and our military manning as well as civilian COMMCEN Officer grades have been reviewed. Yes you have guessed it we are further reducing in numbers and once the civil service interview board has taken place we will start to look something like fit for the new millennium. The main thrust of the Troop now being with the COMMCENs and ADA has meant of course the demise of the Operator Assistance Centres and the 30 staff that diligently manned them. Despite all the upheaval the Troop made an extra special effort to get away on Adventure Training this year and whilst only 12 members attended Ex Pembroke Cockney Relief in mid-August I believe a good; albeit exhausting time was had by all. The report by **LCpl Pete Fagg** follows:

Well, we departed on Sunday 15 August at 1000hrs heading for 14 Sig Regt down in deepest wild west Wales where we all arrived in Brawdy safe and sound under the organisation of **Sgt** 'Chalky' **White**. Upon arrival we set to work on the activities for the week, with the Troop split into three groups each group rotating around different activities each day. On day one we did a small coastal walk around Wales (sorry around the bay), the weather was fine and **Sig** 'I've got comms' **Ian Slight** proved that he could get Cellnet in Wales and was very happy!

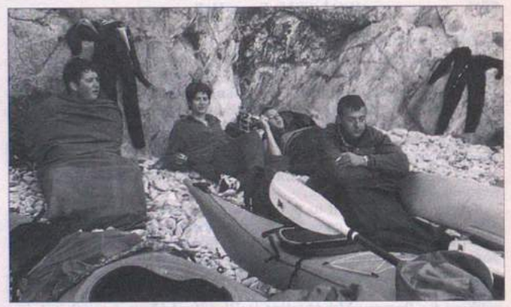
On Day Two we all split up. Group 1 did windsurfing under the command of **Maj** 'Surfs Up' **Dave Gilchrist** (a very wet affair by all accounts) whilst Group 2 did dinghy sailing under the command of **SSgt Si Hadley** who had come down specially from Sqn Trg Wing to help out. Another wet affair except that is for **Sgt** 'I'm not getting my feet wet' **Debbie Gosnell**. Group 3 did mountain biking under the command of **Sgt** 'Chalky 'My bum hurts' **White** and his 2IC, **Sgt Sandra Thompson**, this went well apart from a small problem with **Sig Jenny Mills** who won't be borrowing **Sig Ian Slights'** bike again in a hurry! Day Three we all swapped activities and on Day Four we did another shorter coastal path walk followed by a spot of rock-climbing. In the evening a number of adventurous Troop members headed up by the boss went on an overnight canoeing expedition. This entailed paddling around the coastline until they found a secluded very remote beach, set up camp, built a fire and had a barbecue. Slept under the stars overnight before paddling back the next morning! Day 5 we spent sight seeing and had the annual Troop bowling competition on the Brawdy Lanes that evening. **Sgt** 'Chalky' **White** had to relinquish his crown to **Maj** 'Surfs Up' **Dave Gilchrist** who managed to just beat **Sgt Fergie** 'I'm going on an expedition' **Anderson!** Another barbecue topped off with the local hostelry visit completed an excellent week away from work in busy London!

WINDSURFING - CORPS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Stop press item - the Sqn managed to retain its Minor Units Team Champion Title at the Corps Windsurfing Championships held in Portland Harbour in mid-September. The team of **Sigs Ben McFaul** and **Piers Daw** along with **Maj Dave Gilchrist** brought the trophies home again including runner-up novice and heavyweight! **Sig Ian Slight** also came along as a very new windsurfer and intends to pose a real threat next year by bringing home the Corps Novice title!



Under blue, sunny Welsh skies
the coastal walkers take a breather!
(L-R): Sgt 'Chalky' White, LCpl Pete Fagg, Maj Dave Gilchrist, Sgt Debbie Gosnell, SSgt Karen and LCpl Sally Patrick



0600hrs on a remote Welsh beach
in various states of 'arousal'
(L-R): LCpl Pete Fagg, Sig Jenny Mills, Cpl 'Boney' Bone and just returned from Bosnia, Sig Lee Pearce

CRICKET - *by the Chief Clerk Mr Tel Marsh*

Congratulations to the 238 Sig Sqn Cricket Team who were crowned London District Minor Units Champions for the 1999 season against HQ London District. After winning the toss, the team captain, **Sig Ford**, put HQ Londist in to bat and then saw the bowlers demolish the batting team for a paltry 64 runs inside 18 overs. **WO2 (YofS) Neil Stewart** was the pick of the bowlers, taking three wickets inside two overs of pure hostility, ably supported by some magnificent fielding by the rest of the team. Requiring 64 runs inside 30 overs, **Sig Ford** and **Sgt** 'Chalky' **White** steered the batting side home to the Championship title within 11 overs. Well done to what was a superb all round performance by the team after a long arduous season! A special mention must go to the newly promoted Chief Clerk, **Mr Terry Marsh**, whose valuable experience held the team together!



241 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj (Tfc) Dave Wright**
SSM/Ops Offr **WO2 (YOFS) Wilf Wedge** (Martin)

This has been a very busy period for the Squadron. We are two thirds of the way through closing the Operator Assistance Centres. Preston and Shrewsbury closed on 28 May and Brecon closed on 28 August 1999. The photograph shows Mr Vic King, OC CIS Troop, with staff both old and current from Shrewsbury OAC on their final day.



Exercise Mercury Dragon was an adventure training Exercise at Capel Curig Snowdonia. All the military staff and a number of the civilians spent three days walking the hills including Snowdon. **Mr Paul Walton,** the MET leading hand from Donnington, enjoyed it so much he has already volunteered to take leave for next year's yomp?



Maj (Tfc) Dave Wright

The Sqn Comd, **Maj Dave Wright,** seen here posing as Capt Birds Eye, had shingles on the face we are told and the MO said that he was excused shaving for six weeks. A likely story!

Presentation of the Imperial Service Medal to **Mr Des Taylor** look place at the Barracks Brecon. **Lt Col (Retd) John Billinghant** had the honour of presenting the medal to **Des** who had served for 26 years with the civil service before being medically retired.



Mr Des Taylor and Lt Col (Retd) John Billingham

Finally some hellos and goodbyes: Hi to: **LCpl Sheppard** (Now Cpl) from 259 Sig Sqn, **LCpl Leet** from 3 Inf Bde, **Mr Mark Lupo** as the CIS Response Team at 160 (W) Bde Brecon. Bye to: **Mrs Sue McCarles** who worked in Brecon COMMCEN for 29 years (many of them as the Supervisor) moved on to Corsham. **Miss Karen Hudson** also COMMCEN Brecon who is posted on promotion to CO3 to work in a RAF COMMCEN, **Sgt Donna Scaife** a sad loss from ADA Donnington to RSS, **Mrs Pauline Taylor** from our Civ Admin office retiring after 25+ years. Plus all the staff from OACs Preston and Shrewsbury we wish you all well in your new careers and Thank You for many years excellent service.

251 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Sqn Comd **Maj John Oakes**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Gary Smith**

HAIL AND FAREWELL

Departures and arrivals have certainly picked up again over the last few months, with eight new arrivals and four departures:
Welcome to the Tech Wksp, **SSgt Rick Owen** posted in from Royal School of Signals, Blandford **Sgt Loz** 'Jabba' **Moore** from 1 UK Div, **Sgt** 'Titch' **Webb** from 15 Sig Regt, **Sgt Stu Sanderson** from 200 Sig Sqn and **Sgt Stebbing** from 280 Sig Sqn. To the COMMCEN **Sgt Steve Gill** from 280 Sig Sqn, **Cpl Sarah Dyer** from 238 Sig Sqn and **LCpl Mark Sheath** from AFCENT. Farewell to **Sgt Ray Carter** posted to HQ LANDCENT, **Sgt Dai Rennison** to 242 Sig Sqn and **LCpl Sally Patrick** to 238 Sig Sqn. Also welcome back to **Sig Brett Merrick** back from Op Tour in Bosnia.

CONGRATULATIONS

The Squadron have seen a few well deserved promotions of late and our congratulations go to the following: **Sheena Coldwell** on promotion to Sergeant, **Mark Sheath** and **Julie Bateman** both of whom came off the Corporal's Board. Well done to one and all. Last but not least, congratulations to **Sgt Daphne Clash** for being selected to represent the Army in the Inter Service Triathlon Championship in August 1999. **Daphne** came a creditable third place for the Army and seventh overall.

HQ 4 DIV FUN DAY - *by Cpl Sue Neate*

251 Sig Sqn were once again invited to participate in HQ 4 Div's annual fun day, after walking away with the trophy last year our hopes were high to keep our sticky mitts on it again this year! So on Tuesday 6 July 1999 a merry bunch of Military and Civilian staff united together and were boldly led in our cops and robbers outfits by our team captain, **LCpl Jules Bateman** to face the strong competion.



A great day was had by all, not only did the sun shine all day and the barbecue and beer go down a treat, but the games and enthusiasm of all teams made it a day to remember. Spectators looked on in bemused interest - why were six players on each team wearing boxing gloves trying to play rugby?, and was it really necessary for the opposition to keep rugby tackling **Cpl Wendy Boardman** to the ground even when she was no where near the ball!!! As for **SSM Jim McNaught**, how he explained the whiplash marks all over his legs to the wife we will never know!! Mind you Sir, you have always been one to say, 'No pain no gain', and my god that must have hurt!! Sadly we did not retain the trophy but who cares there's always next year!!

251 SIGNAL SQUADRON DIG DEEP IN THEIR POCKETS

Trying to keep our PRI funds out of the red these days is a task and a half for the 2IC, **Capt (Retd) Katie Munnoch**. With the Military element of the Squadron dwindling by the month we have yet to manage to think of a reason why the civilian element should contribute. Anyway with the cries of, 'You have got to stop spending,' ringing in the PRI Committees ears, they have at last redeemed themselves with a couple of great fund raising events of late. The first being a car boot sale run by **Sgt Daphne Clash** back in August 1999. Most members of the Squadron rummaged through their attics and garages and came up with the most obscure items to sell! But sell they did, remember your junk is always someone else's gold! The grand total of £114 was raised. This coupled with a Squadron car wash day led by **Sig Dave Hunter** and his mottly crew, who braved the not so sunny elements early in September 1999 (actually it was almost monsoon weather!). They had a hard day's graft but always managed to keep a smile on their face even when the donation was no more than a couple of quid for washing something the size of a bus!! Thus another £104 was added to the PRI fund with a now very happy 2IC giving them all a well deserved pat on the back.

JEANS FOR GENES DAY - *by SSgt Glynis Watton*

The country wide charity Jeans for Genes Day was once again organised for our Squadron by **Mr Derek Keen** (CO1) Comms Tp. After last years fantastic effort of raising £869, a lot was riding on his pride to better this amount!! 'A THOUSAND POUNDS is what I want,' he was heard to say!, So to cries of 'You'll never do it **Derek**' ringing in his ears his sight was set on proving us all wrong, and prove us wrong he did. Once again the day was a resounding success. It was hard work for himself and his team to get the day organised, but of course the back ground work was done weeks before with numerous trips around all the shops of Aldershot to entice them into giving their support with generous donations of prizes, ranging from £50 donation (Rushmoor Taxis) to the more moderate contributions of £10 vouchers (Mothercare and M & S), not forgetting of course the 250 sausages donated by Iceland for our barbecue stand. There was also a widely popular 'Beanie Bear' donated and closed bids were offered through the Inter Net and phone calls, the highest bid was for £51.

The day arrived and **Derek** could be seen on his knees on 4 Div lawn praying that the rain would stay away..... it did. It was a great turn out by 4 Div and surrounding departments. The demand for the infamous 'bacon butty' stall was colossal, due to the fact that the NAAFI wagon had been threatened the day before by **WO2 (YofS) Billy Cardwell** not to make an appearance! The girls on the Tombola stall led by **Chris McKenzie** and **Susan Cameron** were exhausted by the end of the day and had made £147.90. Well all good things must come to an end and this brilliant day ended on a high with **Mr Derek Keen** announcing that a total of £1,250.60 had been raised and will be presented to the Jeans for Genes charity (medical research into blood disorders such as sickle cell) soonest. A big thank you to everyone who supported this worthwhile charity.

280 (UNITED KINGDOM) SIGNAL SQUADRON (LANDCENT)

The majority of the Squadron has now deployed as part of the HQ LANDCENT augmentation to KFOR2. Members of the Squadron have now deployed to various locations in Kosovo and Macedonia. There also remains a Squadron detachment in Bosnia.

BRAVO TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt Lindsey Calderhead**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Graeme Weavers**

It has been a hectic period for Bravo Tp as members of the Troop deployed to form part of KFOR2. Firstly we would like to welcome new Troop OC, **Lt Lindsey Calderhead** who arrives from Blandford. Congratulations and farewell go to **Sig Jeanette Lloyd** who will start her new post at 14 Sig Regt as Lance Corporal and we wish her all the best there. We must also say farewell to **Sgt Ivor Moore** who is due to start his new post in Chicksands in late October.



Peroxide blonde Sig 'Ski' attempting to win an Oscar for his world famous portrayal of 'casualty under trailer'

VISIT OF THE SOinC (A)

Preparations for the forthcoming Kosovo deployment provided the focus for activities within the Squadron in September during which **Brig Burton**, the SOinC (A), paid a visit. Alpha and Bravo Tps' pre-deployment training involved revision of mine awareness and battlefield first aid that culminated in a vehicle in a minefield scenario. Fun was had by the DS in 'modifying' a vehicle damaged two months previously thanks to **Cpl Keith Betts** performance during an afternoon of off-road driving. During the visit the SOinC (A) was treated to the troops impressive amateur dramatics, with Oscar nominations for **Sig** 'Ski' **Smiejkowski** who, very enthusiastically, played the part of a traumatised casualty. Artistic use of fake blood, smoke and thunder-flashes together with the help of **SSgt Tony Barker** and **Sgt** 'George' **Stebbing** completed the scene. The subsequent lunch in the Sergeants' Mess provided a good opportunity for a presentation of the LS&GC medal to **WO2 (YofS) Carley** and farewell presentation to departing **Sgt** 'George' **Stebbing**.



The SOinC(A) presents Yeoman Carley with his LS&GC Medal in order to remind the Yeoman he is getting old!

SQUADRON FIVE-A-SIDE FOOTBALL COMPETITION

Saturday 11 September saw virtually all the Squadron families attend a Five-A-Side Football Competition and Barbecue prior to the deployment to Kosovo. The excellent weather provided a good day out on the field in Francisca Barracks. In total, seven teams entered and, overall, a very high standard of play was achieved with some closely fought games. The female team, which included both females of the Squadron and some wives, proved not to be the walkover that people thought they would be. However, the semi-final contenders consisted of two Alpha Tp teams, the MT and an SHQ team. It was SHQ and Alpha Tp though, that lasted through to the final and after several near misses and some particularly competitive tackling, Alpha Tp eventually struck victory with a golden goal. During the games there was much competitive spirit displayed although unfortunately this resulted in **SSgt** 'Vinny' **Vincent** finishing the day with a broken leg from which the Squadron wish him a speedy recovery. It was an excellent day that was nicely finished off with a barbecue and a few drinks. 'Thanks must go to the Alpha Tp lads and lasses who set it up' (even if they did win in the end!).

RAF BRUGGEN 10 MILE ROAD RACE

The Bruggen 10 Mile Road Race was this year held on Saturday 11 September. The Squadron entered four competitors, **Lt Lindsey Calderhead, Sgt** 'Ned' **Kelly, Sig** 'Ossy' **Osbourne** and, in a typical military fashion, visiting **OCdt Oscar Holloway** found himself volunteered to make up the fourth team member. The race proved to be more gruelling than expected as the weather that day was particularly hot with temperatures of 31°C. Thus, competitors were generally prevented from achieving good times. Nevertheless **Sgt Kelly** was first from the Squadron over the finish line with a time of 1.09:30hrs. **Lt Calderhead** finished in a creditable seventh position in the females with a time of 1. 15:00hrs, **OCdt Holloway** completed the race in 1. 14:00hrs and **Sig Osbourne** in 1. 16:00hrs.

JOINT COMMUNICATIONS UNIT (FALKLAND ISLANDS)



Farewell 219, Welcome 212

The picture shows the outgoing OC and USM and incoming OC and USM. From Left to Right: **WO2 (USM) Mark Neighbour, Maj Dave Gaul, Maj Mark Adams** and **WO2 (USM) Dave Rook**.

OC **Maj M. G. W. Adams**
USM **WO2 D. Rook**

1 (UK) Armd Div HQ & Signal Regiment (208 Sig Sqn) returned from JCUFI in February 1999, having handed over the Army Element Roulement Squadron to 2 Sig Regt, (219 Sig Sqn). Amongst the other proposed deployments for 1 (UK) Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt were troops to Op Agricola and Op Palentine, so it came as a surprise for 212 Sig Sqn to be warned off to relieve 219 Sig Sqn. In May the Recce element comprising of **Capt Jason Nichols, SSgt Shean** (that's pronounced Sharn!) **Dewar** and **SSgt Mal Pavier** deployed to FI. A subsequent 'soggy' Recce by the new OC, **Maj Chris McIntosh** and new SSM, **WO2 Dave Rook** encountered the Rugby socialites of 219 Sig Sqn in the form of the **Maj Dave Gaul, WO2 (USM) Mark Neighbour, SSgt** 'Chalky' **Meek, Sgt** 'Rocky' **Mountain** and **Sgt Shaun Pargin.**

The advance party deployed with the OC, **Maj Mark** 'Can I just tell you I was there two years ago and I am only there for six weeks' **Adams** on 16 August. After saying goodbye to loved ones the ever so not enjoyable flight from Brize Norton went without a hitch, (well at least the OC remembered his passport this time!) We were all met by the happy smiling faces of the OC, USM and our 'Mr Contact' from the TA, **Sgt** 'Father of Spike' **Mason**. Once everyone was settled in to their accommodation a welcome party was held in the JCUFI Bar 'Sharkies'. **Cpl** 'Bam Bam' **Blakey** introduced the newly arrived power section led by **Cpl Dave** 'I give good haircuts, honest!' **Turton** to the 'Shackle'.

With the hand-over take-over complete and 219 Sig Sqn away safely enjoying their well-deserved R and R here we are. The out detachments are constantly visited to ensure that the RRB crews at Mount Adam and Campito plus the 'Siggy' at the RAF sites of Mounts Alice (**Cpl Duffy**), Byron (**Cpl Bartle**) and Kent (**Cpl Franklin**) have not gone 'RAF native'. On the sporting front we are aiming to keep up the good work started by 219, with the CBFFI Cup Badminton competition being held recently managing a semi-final place in the plate. Currently standing in third position out of the 12 units involved.

THE ROCK HOPPER CHALLENGE – *By LCpl Welsh*

The Rock Hopper challenge is an event organised by the Resident Rapier Squadron here in the not so sunny Falklands. The challenge is an orienteering course covering around 20 square miles situated around the Mount Pleasant Airfield area. Checkpoints were dotted around the countryside, from Pleasant Peak all the way down to Mare Harbour. Though only ten teams registered, JCUFI managed to provide three teams, the first team, 'View From' consisting of **WO2 (USM) Rook, SSgt Pavier, Sgt Arundel** and **Sig Sullivan**. The second team, 'Fourplay', was an all Officer affair consisting of **Capt Ball, Flt Lt Dique, Capt Emmerson** and a very hung over **Lt** 'I'm number 3 spot' **Henderson**. Last and definitely no means least were the 'The Stray Dogs', the Elite Telemechs from Line Section. This stalwart team was made up of **Cpl** 'Scratchy' **Lees, LCpl** 'Lethargic Les' **Welsh, LCpl** 'I am a PTI you know' **Farrow** and **Sig** 'Dreamboy' **Lake.**



Stray Dogs return to the Kennel

There were two classes of competitors The Racing Snakes and the Normal People, sorry I mean the Bimblers. At 0915hrs, maps in hand, both classes burst on to the moorland surrounding MPA like a bunch of blind lemmings desperately hoping to trip over a checkpoint. The checkpoints were some considerable distance apart and thus the key to success was to plan your route carefully. The first checkpoint we arrived at was at Poon Hill Rapier Site, we were the first team to arrive closely followed by the Fourplay team. Upon the arrival we got our stamp and were promptly presented with a questionnaire on sport general knowledge and.....Star Wars!. Our resident Jedi Master, **Chris Lees** finished off the question in quick time and before we knew it we were half a mile in front. Two Checkpoints later we were on the long road to Mare Harbour with a short stop at the Rapier Site for an Observation Test.....This consisted of studying 25 objects for 1 minute then writing down what we had observed. We were quite proud of our 20 out of 25 score until we heard that the View From team got full marks earning them the Brainy Trophy and the end of the day. By 1500hrs, We were all tired and poor lethargic **Les** had blisters and was struggling but urged his friends 'Leave me .... I'll be ok.....go on with out me, lads'. We arrived back at the RRS twenty minutes later and on time, having completed eight of the 12 checkpoints we waited for the results which were announced over a beer in the 'Dog and Badger' as follows;

1. 3rd in the Racing Snake class - View From.
2. 2nd in the Bimble class - Stray Dogs.
3. 7th place in the Bimble class – Fourplay.

It was a good hard day and everyone enjoyed it, Anyone coming to the Falklands should join in the next Rockhopper but be prepared for blisters. Finally I would like to thank **Capt Johnson** of the 'formally known as' 220 Sig Sqn of RAF Bruggen as if it wasn't for him we would not be here enjoying ourselves and nursing the blisters.

ALPHA TROOP

Tp Comd **Flt Lt A. Cooksley** RAF

Alpha Tp at has seen a new initiative of All Arms Signallers deployed with 212 Sig Sqn to the fill posts in RADCON and at the Rebro sites of Adam and Campito. So far a resounding success in that all cap badges from the RA, AAC, QRH, LD, RTR and RMP have shown their excellent trade skills in support of Ex Purple Strike, a live firing exercise for the Roulement Infantry Company. Although unfortunately at the time of going to press **Sgt Baz** 'Wot no box' **Lawson** RA and his crew of **LCpl Cowley, Tpr Porter** and **Gnr Boyle** are still stuck on West Falklands dependent upon the Chinooks' capability to lift the Rebro, or not. A Tp have waved farewell to the 212 Sig Sqn South Georgia crew in the shape of **Sgt** 'Billy' **Duggan, Cpl Brittain, Sig Sheidecker** and **Cpl Collier.** We welcomed back the 219 crew of **SSgt Messenger, LCpl Edmonson, Sig Mathews** and **Sig Samson.** Many thanks for their efforts and gods speed back to York.

BRAVO TROOP
Tp Comd **WORS P. Jackson** RN

Bravo Tp are responsible for running the theatre COMMCEN, with much varied ship to shore and ground to air circuits plus the ISDN network. With the R Signals operators split between the three Watches, a full integration under different service DSOs has ensued. It has not taken long for the new Army Element to be indoctrinated in to the Navy Speak of 'The Galley' - Kitchen, 'Wet' - Brew, 'Heads' – Toilets, 'Lost the Bubble' – Out of control, 'Deckhead' – Ceiling and 'Killick' – Full Screw. Further reports of Watch outings and functions are to follow.

CHARLIE TROOP
Tp Comd **Lt L Henderson** R Signals

Charlie Tp is responsible for a number of support elements to the Comms systems within the Falklands. The Falkland Island Trunk System (FITS) team are led by **Sgt** 'Kitch' **Kitchener** with **Cpl Cleary, LCpls Loates** and **Savage** usually being deployed at rather unsociable hours when the SYSCON team deem it necessary. The Falkland Island Trunk Exchange Network (FITEN) team is another rapidly deployable section of C Tp with **Cpl Buchanan, Cpl John**, and **LCpl Mountford**.

Power Section led by **Cpl Turton** and **LCpl** 'Slim' **Humphreys** are in the thick of the Generator refurbishment plan. **Sigs Philips, Sullivan, Ragni** and **Beazley** have all been deployed to Mount Moody to assist in the rolling generator swap that has begun now with the less hostile weather. Line section is comprised of 12 Telemechs from around the Corps, at present detached from 220 Sig Sqn and 259 Sig Sqn are very busy tradesmen with numerous improvement projects around the airfield.

DELTA TROOP
Tp Comd **Flt Lt Dique RAF**

Delta Tp is responsible for the Ground Radio Communications around the Airfield. The Aerial Maintenance Section which support the Island in its extensive variety of Aerials and Antennas for all three Services. Finally, the IT Section supports over 1200 PCs throughout the Islands. This includes the newly installed WRVS Internet connection, numerous WANS, LANS all supported by a combined R SIGNALS and RAF team of eight personnel.

JOINT SERVICE SIGNAL UNIT (AYIOS NIKOLAOS)

EXERCISE LEMMINGS LEAP 1999
By SSgt John Greenwood

ENGINEERING SQUADRON

As a newly arrived Staff Sergeant within Joint Service Signal Unit (Ayios Nikolaos) I was not particularly surprised when my OC remarked to me, 'Ahhh Staff, I may have a little job for you.' So it was that three months later, after a mountain of paperwork, humping and dumping, sweating and cursing, it was at 0700hrs on the morning of 28 June 1999 that I awaited the arrival of 23 participating troops at the Lemmings Scout hut, Happy Valley.

After a welcoming brief the troops were split into two main syndicates and dispatched to their mornings activities, rock-climbing and water-skiing. It was at Tunnel Beach that **Mr Demetrios**, of the Military Training Wing (M'rW), provided a morning of hi-speed thrills on water skis and a banana boat. After a couple of hours under the expert instruction of **Mr Demetrios** a few hardy souls finally mastered it and were even posing one handed as they screamed around the bay. Each session of water-skiing finished with an hour of mayhem on the banana boat. **Sgt Steve Robinson** appeared to be going for some kind of falling-off record and spent more time treading water than actually riding on the boat. Needless to say this proved to be an extremely enjoyable activity and many a story was told over a beer that night.



The other syndicate, at this time was negotiating the tricky climbs of the local crags. Happy Valley has two or three interesting rocky outcrops which, with the benefit of a couple of hundred metres of exposure to the sea behind them, are certainly capable of inducing a little bit of disco leg. **Sgt** (SI) **Nicky Pearce** and **Sgt Carl Elliot** who were instructing, managed to gain maximum training benefit from the most innocuous looking rock faces. **LCpl John Barber** was one of the few people who managed to tackle the second route that included a small overhang. Allegedly the belayer provided a little bit of assistance but this was never proven and **LCpl Barber** still holds the 'Spiderman' trophy for the week.

In the afternoon the first syndicate donned their buoyancy aids once again in order to sample the delights of sea canoeing. **Sgt Pearce** by now had quickly removed her rock-climbing hat and was joined by **Cpl Rick Watson** of GEE Flight, RAF Akrotiri in order to instruct in this next activity. The first group were hampered by rough water and forced to remain in the small harbour. Throughout the week other groups were blessed with more favourable conditions and achieved greater success out on the open water. Officer Commanding, Engineering Squadron, JSSU(AN) **Sqn Ldr Ian Virkwood** will not, however, be rushing to transfer to the Royal Navy for a life on the ocean wave! The following afternoon, after a repeat of the morning's activities we all boarded our transport and headed off to the Akrotiri peninsula in order to enjoy a try dive, courtesy of the RAF Akrotiri Sub Aqua Club. **Cpl Dave Flet**, greeted us as we arrived and the first group were briefed and squeezed into wetsuits - 'What do you mean this is a large?!' For those of us who were experiencing diving for the first time the experience was absolutely marvellous. Once you become used to the fact that unlike elephant seals, human beings do not become creatures of grace and elegance underwater, the 12-15 minutes spent following one of the experienced instructors around a marked route was superb. The route encompasses a submerged helicopter, speedboat, thousands of fish - including moray eels - and even a fire engine!

The next morning was time for change-round and after a brief introduction to archery, under the auspices of **Lt Col (Retd) John Drew**, with varying degrees of success being attained, Group 1 climbed onto the coach as Group 2 climbed off. The rest of the week followed suit in similar fashion. Many younger personnel were introduced, some for the first time, to some of the activities that are available on island and even 'The Old and Bold' joined in with equal enthusiasm. The Exercise was declared a success. Huge sighs of relief all round for the instructors - Safe and worthwhile adventurous training had been achieved and hopefully a precedent set for future camps. The problems of adventure training at unit level on island, whilst difficult are certainly not insurmountable and the end results certainly justified the hard work.

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NEWS FROM THE TROOPS & CADETS

608 SIGNAL TROOP

Tp Comd **Maj (QM) G. L. Hegarty**
Tp SSgt **SSgt J. M. Hamill**

There is something to be said for professional anonymity – it allows much to be achieved without the additional effort of being seen to achieve it. However, there is a limit to the number of times one can patiently answer the question, 'Who are they?' when the name 608 Signal Troop is mentioned. Hence, on a bright spring morning in 1998, this small band of quiet adventurers announced their presence to the world from the hallowed pages of this very publication. We explained who we were, what we did and introduced the individual members of the Troop to the interested reader. For a time there was some, slight, acknowledgement from the rest of the Corps, but all too soon the article was forgotten and the questions returned. With the Millennium approaching, we felt it a good time to remind the outside world of our existence and to inform the curious amongst you of all that has happened within this tiny unit.

It has been a very busy eighteen months within the Troop. We are tasked directly from QMG Andover and they certainly haven't forgotten who we are. Last year saw heavy involvement in the MAPPS project, with the Troop serving as an intermediary between the contractor and the rest of the Corps. This involvement finally over, we were plunged into the arduous struggle of the ERV modification programme, which has not yet released us from its demanding grip. This year has seen the Troop contributing, in common with many units, to the deployment in Kosovo - preparing and dispatching Troop assets out to theatre. All this against a background of our continuous task of preparing and maintaining a war maintenance reserve for the Ptarmigan fleet. The new millennium promises to be just as demanding and with the exciting developments within the Corps as a whole, things here are anything but tedious.

This time has also seen a great many changes in personnel – an unusual occurrence within the Troop – including a complete change in the Troop's management team. **Maj Don Holmes** was promoted and posted late last year to 37 Sig Regt and **SSgt Pete Farrington** left the Army at the same time upon completion of 22 years colour service. We wish them and their families all the best in the future. The current OC of the Troop is **Maj Gerry Hegarty** who joined us at the beginning of the year from Northern Ireland. His strong leadership and vast wealth of experience have been of great benefit to the Troop during this testing time. However, some of the more sedentary members of the unit were dismayed and confused at the amount of running that we suddenly seemed to be doing and we were even more astonished to find ourselves completing the Tewkesbury half marathon this summer. Joining the OC on the 608 management team we welcomed **SSgt Jim** 'No questions asked' **Hamill** who has proved a superb 'Mr. Fixit' during his time here. Sadly he has been short-toured and we will lose him in the new year. We must also say goodbye to **Sgt Neil** 'Cartman' **Shrimpton** who finally passed his RSJCC this year and leaves us for the bright lights of 11 Sig Regt.

The workshop side of the Troop continues to be headed up by **Sgt Neil** 'Scrapyard challenge' **Parkinson** intent on proving that, given the right tools, you can motorise anything. In this endeavor, he is aided by our extremely long serving ED, **LCpl** 'Taff 'Gippo' **Thomas** and our other technician, **Cpl Lee** 'Chatline' **Thompson**. In the stores, **Cpl Bill** 'Comfy Chair' **Edwards**, maintains an air of determined calm, despite the inherent stress of the job and the astonishing amount of caffeine in his bloodstream. When last we wrote, we welcomed **LCpl** 'Manic street preacher' **Efans** to the URS store. Unfortunately, we have now lost his sterling communication skills to civvy street and welcome in his place, **LCpl Bob** 'Social Secretary' **Paterson**. While she has adapted very well to this unique unit, we are bewildered by the amount of pot plants one desk can take and slightly concerned that we no longer need to answer the telephone. Completing the Troop personnel is our attached RLC vehicle specialist, **LCpl Andy** 'No Commitment' **Guild** whose annoyingly cheerful disposition belies the uphill struggle of maintaining 120 plus vehicles. The social and sporting life of the Troop continues out of all proportion to its size, and a most successful summer camp in August provided a perfect release from the pressures of work. This year also saw the Troop obtain its very own shady watering hole, and a great deal of time and effort have gone into making 'The Bodgit and Scarper' a wonderful focal point for the majority of our social functions. The unit continues to play a full role within the RLC depot and recently contributed to the DSDC Ashchurch Open Day by providing a delicious barbecue for the unsuspecting public.

In our last contribution, we issued a challenge to the rest of the Corps. We believed we could field a fairly strong golf team and were keen to test our mettle against any that might stand against us. To our lasting disappointment, not one reply did we receive. Therefore, at the risk of seeming confrontational, 608 Signal Troop reissue the challenge of a golf match, at any reasonable venue and against any caliber of team, in the hope that someone will finally accept.

In order that we may finally lay to rest the ghost of anonymity that has haunted the Troop in the past, let us be absolutely specific on this point. 608 Signal Troop is an independent signals unit located within the DSDA vehicle depot at Ashchurch. This is a small village to the east of Tewkesbury, itself a charming Gloucestershire town, north of Cheltenham, just off the M5. To allay any further confusion, one of the first things that the OC did upon arrival, was to ensure that the Troop itself was more than adequately sign-posted (in Corps colours) from the depot gates to the door of his office. (Whether this has more to do with his RD background or the nightmare he had finding the place on his first day, has yet to be determined.) In any case, that is who we are, and where we are and we can only hope that never again must we answer the question – 'Who on Earth are 608 Signal Troop?'



ROYAL SIGNALS MAINTENANCE TEAM SUPPORT BATTALION HEADQUARTERS ACE RAPID REACTION CORPS

Tp Comd **SSgt (FofS) Martin** 'Arry' **Arundel**
Tp Admin NCO **Sgt Chris** 'Kidney Punch' **White**
Tp Stores NCO **Sgt Lee** 'Wot trade?' **Harris**
Tp Wksps NCO **Sgt Simon** 'Dodgy Seam' **King**

Who are they you may be asking yourself .. well we are a small troop consisting of at present 13 Tele Technicians (Sys) of various ranks. Although we are only half a mile from 16 Sig Regt we are nothing to do with any of the Signals Regiments and work from within the ARRC. We have only been around for six years and having a Staff Sergeant (FofS) in charge we are not very high profile.

We are 'run' by the four SNCO's listed above. **FofS** 'Arry' **Arundel** has only just arrived at the unit along with his wife **Sally.** They arrived just before we deployed to Kosovo but this meant we had to say goodbye to the old FofS, **SSgt (FofS) Bill** 'Where are my glasses' **Johnson** and his wife **Janet.** To start with we have **Cpl Paul** 'During the war' **Barr** who has, I should mention, been in the Army longer than lightweights (in

fact he got his full Corporal in 1980!) He has been with the Troop since it formed! Next we have **Cpl Paul** 'Windup King' **Drysdale** who has an amazing knack of conjuring practical jokes and witty little windups. **Cpl** 'Burpees' **Boyle** and **Cpl Chris** 'Knees to cheek' **Healey** both see themselves as budding PTI's. Then we have the Troop Scouser, **Cpl Derick Daniel Joseph** 'Yeecha!' **Costello** who is always good to have a laugh with and **LCpl Dean** 'du-ean' **Chodan** who is always good to laugh at! Not forgetting **LCpl Mike** '40 a day' **Dawson, Cpl Gavin** 'Snakester' **McArthur** and **LCpl Rosslyn** 'Basketball Queen' **Beattie.**

Most of the Troop are out in Kosovo at the moment and those that aren't have nearly all been out there apart from **Cpl Paul Barr** who cannot be levered away from his stores and mainly his computer! **Cpl Healey** finally got out to Kosovo after being sent his white feather signed by the rest of the Troop!

Sgt Simon King who was at the Plastika (Yugo) factory, Pristina and **Cpl Paul Drysdale** who was at KFOR Main, Pristina have both just returned to JHQ (where we are based). After stopping off at Skopje to have a McDonalds or three and send one upcountry which I believe stank out the WRV when they opened the box and the smell of McDonalds was around for quite a while. There was a small Det of four of us at the Plastika (Yugo) factory, which dwindled slowly down to one man (**Sgt King**), and his Leatherman, not even a vehicle or stores. Whilst there were still three of us **LCpl Dean Chodan** gratefully accepted a present from the locals and started showing it off until he got told to put it down and slowly walk away. It was a loaded and extended Russian 64mm anti tank weapon, which he was very chuffed with!!! Luckily we work fairly close with the Royal Engineers (Another none RLC cap badge in a RLC unit) and they controlled the situation and cordoned the area off. Thanks **Dean**.

CITY OF EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY OFFICER TRAINING CORPS

TARTAN VANOISE

by 2Lt Bermingham, R Signals Cadetship

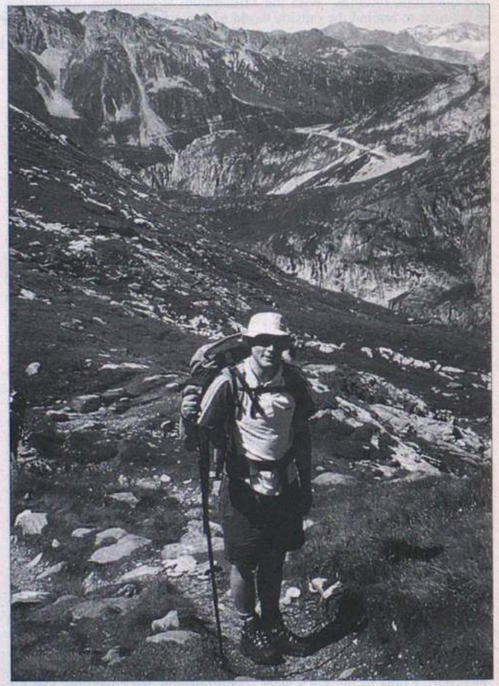
FUN, FROLICS AND FONDUE IN THE FRENCH ALPS

The CEUOTC rock climbing/hill walking expedition of 1999 was held from 12 to 26 August in the Vanoise National Park. Ten Officer Cadets were chosen to participate, from a healthy response within the unit, plus three instructors and myself. Our able rock climbing instructors came in the form of **Maj Fergus Murray** (MIA) and **WO2 Andy Evans** (JSRCI), hill walking was conducted by myself (a lowly UEL) whilst **2Lt Hart** had the best of both worlds being JSMEL(S) and RL(T).

As far as expedition planning went, I had organised participants, instructors, food, accommodation (albeit tented), travel, kit but I forgot the big one - I hadn't booked the weather. Fortunately we only lost a day and a half to torrential downpour, with one ensuite swimming pool cum tent. With devilish cunning we made the most of our soggy situation by transforming our vehicles into lounge/classroom with adjoining kitchen. As we now fully appreciate, the climate of August in the Alps works from one extreme to the other, so when the weather was fine even our token ginger managed to turn a hint of golden.

On to the agenda. The first four days were spent near Notre-Dame-du-Pre, a tiny village with roads to match. Rocher du Glaisy was the name of the climbing site which had 14 separate crags of varying grades which was perfect for our needs. The majority of the Officer Cadets had minimal previous experience but within three days were competently leading Grade 4's and top roping Grade 5's. The following six days were spent at Pralognan-la-Vanoise, the capital of the region, which held the Olympic Curling competition in 1992 and still has not forgotten it! Here a multi-pitch and hill walking rotation was organised. The multi-pitch routes at Falaise de la Fraiche were not as easy to identify as they might have been, an open mind was necessary when attempting to interpret the guide book. For the instructors it was a bit like and pick and mix, they were never quite sure what they would be climbing next. The walking routes were, in contrast, very well marked and afforded fantastic views of the surrounding area including that of Mont Blanc. Each walk covered approximately 17km with about 1200m of ascent, including ascents of Petit Mont Blanc (2677m) and Le Petit Marchet (2568m).

By the end of the expedition most people had been bitten by the Alpine bug and on the final day were seen raiding the multitude of climbing shops in search of kit. A very big thank you is to be extended to the instructors **Maj Murray, WO2 Evans** and **2Lt Hart** whose agility and style on the rock face gave us something to aspire to, even if not emulate at the time.



OCdt 'Bits' Moriarty enjoying his pleasant afternoon stroll

63 (SAS) Signal Squadron (Volunteers)

The Squadron is a R. Signals TA Unit providing communications support to 21 and 23 SAS (V) Regiments. We can offer interested individuals, leaving the Regular Army, the chance to continue using the many skills acquired during their service, whilst at the same time maintaining their links with the Corps.

You will be expected to train for a minimum of 27 days a year, this includes a 15-day camp and a number of selected weekends. You can also volunteer to parachute, should you wish. You will have an unrivalled opportunity to travel abroad, (last year we exercised in eight different countries). If you are interested and live in the South East or London area then telephone 0800 163925 for further details.



SITUATIONS VACANT!!

THE ROYAL SIGNALS Are recruiting new riders to fill vacancies which occur in the team. Two week selection courses will take place at Blandford.

MOTORCYCLE DISPLAY TEAM No previous experience is necessary – all you need is guts, determination, fitness and . . . a sense of humour.

Application forms are kept in your Orderly Room/Sqn Office. Get one.

Apply now and get on the next selection course.

HAMPSHIRE & ISLE OF WIGHT ARMY CADET FORCE

ANNUAL CAMP 1999

Despite some very poor weather conditions throughout, Signals training featured prominently at the 1999 Annual Camp of the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Army Cadet Force held in August at Knook Camp, near Warminster, Wiltshire. Two Cadet Signallers courses were held on successive weeks when at the end of the courses, 22 and 14 cadets respectively were awarded their 'crossed flags' badges.



Cadets from the Portsmouth area who passed their 'Crossed Flags' test, with their instructors



Cdt Cpl Samantha Breer from 4 Troop, Hythe

The Course organisers, **Maj Mike Vokes** - County Signals Officer, and his assistant, **2Lt Mark Davies**, received much valuable assistance in the running and testing of the courses from NCOs from at the Royal School of Signals.

During the first week, line training was provided by **Sgt Croxon** and **Cpl Bradley** of the Line and Systems Group and testing arrangements were arranged by **Cpls Parker** and **Vanadel** of Radex. During the second week, **Cpl Bradley** returned with his line training road-show, which was again much appreciated by the Cadets. **Sgt Render** from sponsor unit, 249 AMF (L) Sig, Sqn, visited Knook to adjudicate for the tests. During the first week a visit to the camp was made by **Col John Ewbank** and **Maj Andy Bowering.** of HQ Royal Signals, when the basic course was inspected, as was advanced HF training being organised by **SSgt Adrian Benson** of Hampshire & Isle of Wight ACF. Trained cadets used the PRC 320 sets to gain further HF experience operating on the ACF/CC17 National Radio Net.



Cdt LCpls Garside and Rannochan

GOOD NEWS TRAVELS FAST!
Publish it in The Wire
The Editor is always pleased to receive interesting articles

SPORT

ROUNDERS

LEYBURN GIRL IN ARMY CHAMPION ROUNDERS TEAM... BUT ONLY JUST!

LCpl Tracey Mills (26) is a member of the Army's championship-winning Rounders team! **Tracey**, who is serving with Headquarters 1 Signal Brigade, plays for the Rhine Area Support Unit who beat Winchester Garrison in the finals, held at Winchester in early September. She made it to the finals just in time - she returned from a two month tour of duty in Kosovo on the Sunday before the championships! In fact, she was officially on her post-Kosovo leave when she was playing for her unit team! 'The team did well even to get here,' said **Tracey**, 'But once we got here, we played really, really well and I think we've surprised a few people, including ourselves with our success!' In her three year Army career, **Tracey** has seen service in Northern Ireland, the Falklands, Macedonia and Kosovo. Whilst she was in Macedonia, she helped build the refugee camps and she was there when the first Kosovo refugees poured over the border. In a matter of days, **LCpl Tracey Mills** had moved from the horrors of Kosovo to being a member of the Army Rounders championship team. She's not short of variety in her life!



LCpl Tracey Mills

THE ROYAL SIGNALS ASSOCIATION

Patron: HRH The Princess Royal

President: The Master of Signals

Chairman: Major General A. Yeoman CB

Vice Chairmen: Brig C. T. Garton Area 1; Brig W. H. Backhouse Area 2; Brig S. G. M. Gordon Area 3; Brig K. H. Olds Area 4; Brig P. J. Evans CBE Area 5; Lt Col J. G. Billingham Wales; Maj R. Sampson CBE Scotland

General Secretary and Treasurer: Col A. R. Carter MBE
Welfare Secretary: Mrs J. Cornick

Assistant General Secretary: Lt Col I. J. Hamilton
Administrative Officer: Mr. P. J. Cuckow (Membership & Records)

Association Office, RHQ Royal Signals, Blandford Camp, Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 8RH. Telephone: Military System 737 2090 or 01258 48 2090. Welfare Secretary Telephone: Military System 737 2089 or 01258 48 2089.

All contributions for *The Wire* should be addressed to the Editor and any queries referred to him on extensions 2079 or 2085. Internet: www.royalsignals.army.org.uk/museum/rsa.htm

The Association communicates with its branches and individual members through the pages of The Wire, *which contains accounts of Branch affairs as well as a forecast of Association events.*

Branch Secretaries are asked to check that their Branch members receive sufficient copies of The Wire. *Association HQ can arrange for copies to be delivered in bulk to Branch Secretaries for further distribution if this is convenient: it helps us save on postage.*

Dates of Branch events can always be published in The Wire *and should be submitted to the Editor. We also welcome letters, requests to contact old comrades and announcements of births, marriages and deaths. We hope that each Branch will contribute a short account of its activities, preferably with photographs, at least once a year.*

THE REMARKABLE STORY OF SIGNALMAN OH

By Edward Hughes

I first heard about this story when my duties took me to Germany in the late Autumn of 1959. I was there on special service with the 6th Infantry Brigade under the command of the famous Brigadier, **Brig Michael Carver,** later to become **Field Marshall Lord Carver,** Chief of Imperial General Staff. My connection was with Brigade Intelligence, and I became involved in the translation of an amazing document concerning a mysterious character with the odd name of **Gin Oh**, who had apparently disappeared somewhere in Europe. I recall that a few days after I commenced work on the document, the man named **Gin Oh** was seen somewhere in Turkey, so my involvement was terminated swiftly, and with an air of secrecy. The document was returned post haste from whence it came and I was never told why a translation was required.

After many years, and some research, I have discovered that **Gin Oh** was a young Malaysian Chinese, born in Penang, who had done less than brilliantly at school - a mortal sin in the eyes of most Chinese parents - and had decided that his best chance in life was to run away and join the British Army. No doubt influenced by the presence of thousands of British troops in his homeland (Penang was a British settlement until 1957, when along with another territory, Malacca, it was ceded to the newly formed Malaysian Federation). **Gin Oh** became so obsessed with the idea of becoming a British soldier that he had packed his few belongings and set off to hitch-hike from Penang, in Northern Malaysia, to Catterick Camp in Yorkshire, where he had heard that the Royal Corps of Signals were looking for recruits. I believe it was his parents who alerted the authorities to his disappearance, but with the then paranoia about Communism which was rife throughout the whole of society, and the military in particular, an errant Chinese man on the loose and making his way to England was an obvious cause for concern. (I remember that at the time of my very brief involvement in the affair, no lesser personage than the Under Secretary of State for Defence, **Mr John Profumo** was to be seen at Brigade HQ, indeed, I saw him myself on the front steps).

Gin Oh had read in his newspaper that a certain man wanted someone to travel to Europe with him, so he left his job and went to meet the would-be traveller. They set off together, on route first to India, but **Gin Oh**'s new friend was arrested as a smuggler after only three days of their journey. From then on, the young Chinese man was on his own. With very little money and no idea which way to go, he managed to make his way to Madras, then Delhi, and on to Karachi, capital of Pakistan. The misery and deprivation he suffered along the way can only be imagined by us who were not there. Unable to find work in the capital and with very little money left, he eventually managed to get visas for Persia (now Iran), Greece and Turkey. Along with a new friend he had met in Karachi, our intrepid would-be soldier smuggled himself on a train to Quetta. They were soon thrown off the train, but managed to hitch a ride on another train to Zahidan (Iran), a most unpleasant journey cooped up in a goods van in the stifling heat. **Gin Oh** then met a Pakistani who advised him to travel to Teheran, via Meshed. He managed to swap his jacket for a ride on a bus to Meshed, and then again smuggled himself aboard a train bound for Teheran. Discovered during that train-ride by a ticket inspector he feared he would be sent off in the middle of nowhere. But this time the Gods were smiling and the kindly ticket collector staked him for a meal, one of the very few he was to eat during his amazing trip. On to Tabriz, Mount Ararat, Khoi and Banzangan, where he had trouble with the police because his papers were not in order to get him into the next country, Turkey. With the help of a young German tourist on his way round the world and a ten year old Greek urchin who stole him onto a bus, he made his way to Thessaloniki. He now went in desperation to the British Embassy because he was near starving. Mistake! The British were all set to send him home when he escaped and set off for Athens. Then came an arrest, but a kindly policeman gave him some money for food and he was off again, slipping away while no one was looking.

After many more weeks of hunger and misery. a sympathetic foreigner gave him ten pounds and he made his way through Switzerland and France where an English doctor took pity on him and paid for his aeroplane fare to England. Once in London he made his way, ragged and forlorn, to the army HQ in Whitehall and after many months of hunger, heat, cold and other miseries, like being eaten alive by mosquitoes, **Gin Oh** was sent to Catterick Camp where he joined the Royal Signals. I have now lost touch with the story and have no idea what has happened to him since, but if any ex-Royal Signals men can shed any light on the matter I would be very pleased to hear from you. You can contact me c/o **Keith Hind,** 36 Doncrest Road, Donwell, Washington, TYNE & Wear, NE37 1ED, Tel: 0191 417 1398.

Association HQ would close without the support of its Branches. Please support the Association by supporting your Local Branch. Don't be put off by believing that you have to attend every meeting - the Branch will be pleased to hear from you no matter how many or how few meetings you can attend. If lack of transport is a problem, perhaps the Hon. Secretary of your local Branch can help.

If responding to any advertisements in *The Wire* please mention that you saw it in your Corps magazine

NOTES FROM THE AO'S DESK

On behalf of everyone at Association Headquarters, may I wish all Life Members, Associate Members, and their families, all the very best for a Merry Christmas and a Happy, Safe New Year. May I also take this opportunity to thank all Branch committee members for their hard work during 1999. Association Headquarters could not function without the valuable contribution from Branches and their continued support is gratefully acknowledged and appreciated. If you do not belong to your local Branch, why not get in contact with them? I am sure that a warm welcome awaits you there - and you never know, a Branch member might just live near to you and you never even knew it. Contact the Association HQ for the details of the relevant Branch Hon Secretary. If you do belong to a Branch, perhaps you could volunteer to serve on the committee.

Branch News - Colin Bell has been elected to succeed **Ernie Cowan** as Hon Secretary of the Spennymoor Branch. **Colin** can be contact at: 13b Thorngate, Barnard Castle, Co. Durham, DL12 8PY, Tel: 01833-690 397. Our thanks go to **Ernie** for his hard work whilst in office. **Wilf Scurr,** Hon Secretary of the West London Branch has a new telephone number; 01932-457 521. **Col Cliff Walters** informs me that over 200 attended the Association of Harrogate Apprentices' inaugural Reunion at Harrogate in October. Ill health has forced **Brian Podmore** to stand down as secretary of the Shropshire Branch. Branch Chairman, **John Wall MBE** will hold office until a volunteer is found to succeed **Brian**. Anyone living in the Shropshire area, who would like details of the Branch's activities, should contact **John** on 01743-350 606. **Brian Overland** is holding the Peterborough reins whilst **Bob Rowland** recovers from his unfortunate accident. We wish **Bob** a speedy recovery and return to office. **Brig R. H. Borthwick** has contacted Assn HQ to say that the 'North Africa & Italy L of C Signals Reunion Club' recently held its last Reunion and has now 'closed for business'.

Branch Secretaries - A special thank you to those of you who send in their Branch newsletters. We do enjoy reading them and quite often we glean useful information about members from them. Keep up the good work. Thanks also go to all those Branch members and Standard Bearers who, over the past year, represented the Corps at the funerals of our former members.

Annual General Meeting - The next AGM of the RSA will be held in Chelsea Barracks, Chelsea Bridge Road, London starting at 1030hrs on Saturday 8 April, 2000. Nearest underground station is Sloane Square. All Life Members of the Association are cordially invited to attend. To assist catering needs, those who intend attending are asked to give their name and vehicle details (if applicable) to Assn HQ - Branch Secretaries are asked to consolidate returns from their members. Any points for the agenda must reach Assn HQ by 1 March 2000. All Branch Secretaries should, by now, have received the calling notice for the AGM/Branch Reps Meeting - if not let Assn HQ know.

REUNION 2000 - Is your name on Assn HQ's mailing list for details of the Annual Reunion to be held at Blandford on 24/25 June 2000? Ring 01258-482090 to find out. We hope to issue the instructions in March and they will be sent to those who have asked for their names to go on the mailing list - it should not be assumed that attendance at this year's Reunion will mean the details being automatically sent.

1999 Reunion Video - Thanks for their patience go to all those individuals and Branches who ordered a copy of the 1999 Reunion video. Having seen the production process, I can now well understand just how much time and effort goes into making a 20 minute tape. Copies are still available from Association HQ.

Junior Leaders, Denbury - Rumour control says that there might be a Reunion in 2000 for those who were Junior Leaders at Denbury. Other than that, I know nothing - if anyone has any further details, I would appreciate receiving them. Don't forget, my 'Register of Postings' has quite a list of those who were Junior Leaders.

Cenotaph Parade - Mrs Jacqueline Wood is researching the significance of the Festival of Remembrance ceremonies, in particular the Cenotaph Parade. She would like to hear from anyone who attends the Cenotaph Parade, who would be willing to share their experiences of this special day. She promises to reply to anyone who takes the trouble to get in touch. **Jacqueline** is at: 5 Forest Houses, Dunsop Bridge, Clitheroe, Lancs, BB7 3AZ, Tel: 01200 448 671. **Michael Aimable** has already contacted **Mrs Wood** with his experiences on the subject. Thank you **Michael** for again volunteering to act as 'right marker' on Horse Guards Parade.

Life Members - Amongst those Life Members, from whom we have recently heard for the first time in many, many years is **Mr G. H. Salmon**, who served 1930 - 1946. **Gordon** would be pleased to hear anyone who served with him in 'F Boys Coy' in 1930-34. 'Relay through Assn HQ'. We have also had the first contact since 1959 with **(Cpl) Michael J. Butler**, who was admitted to the Royal Star & Garter Home, Richmond in October.

New Life Members - A warm welcome is extended to those new Life Members of the Association listed below, we hope that those shown under 'RHQ Branch' will contact their local branch for details. To those recently discharged from the Corps, we wish every success in their second career and trust that they will stay in touch with their Association.

Rank	*Name*	*Branch*	*Service*
LCpl	J. C. Block	Bristol	1952-54
Sig	C. A. Jones	Bristol	1953-58
Sig	P. H. Lawrence	Bristol	1944-47
LCpl	C. D. Vowles	Bristol	1955-57
Lt Col	Ian Turner	RHQ	1962-97
LCpl	Bert Fry	South London	1943-47
LCpl	Ronald Moore	RHQ	1952-54
Maj	John Stuart	RHQ	1965-99
Sgt	Chris Cole	RHQ	1984-99
LCpl	Lee Lyon	RHQ	1990-99
Maj	John Botterill	RHQ	1986-date
Sig	Richard Templeman	RHQ	1991-99
Cpl	Keith Loney	East Kent	1954-56
WO2	Mike Duffin	RHQ	1967-90
Cpl	R.E.D. 'Taff' Webb	RHQ	1979-94
WO1	Martin Drake	RHQ	1977-99
LCpl	Charlie Eastwood	RHQ	1976-99
WO1	David Taylor	Spennymoor	1968-92
Cpl	Simon Haynes	RHQ	1983-99
WO1	Stevenn Pellant	RHQ	1974-99
Cpl	Tony Caban	RHQ	1993-99
WO2	Shane Overton	RHQ	1975-99
Cpl	Reg Rider	RHQ	1950-52
SSgt	Douglas McDonald	RHQ	1970-92
LCpl	Ken Davenport	West London	1949-51
LCpl	Ron Foulkes	RHQ	1950-53
Cpl	Reg Rider	RHQ	1950-52
Cpl	John Watkinson	RHQ(Canada)	1946-49
Sgt	Roy Emblen	RHQ	1977-99
SSgt	Dave Haley	RHQ	1976-99
SSgt	Sally Oldridge	RHQ	1982-99
Sgt	Ken Barker	RHQ	1976-99
LCpl	Dennis Cooper	In-pensioner, Chelsea	1952-66
Cpl	Roger Phelps	RHQ	1953-55
Sig	Paul McGee	RHQ	1993-99
SSgt	Terry Murrell	RHQ	1976-99
Sgt	Martyn Radzimierski	RHQ	1984-99
Sgt	Colin Roberts	RHQ	1985-99
Sig	Sydney Holmes	Brighton	1942-46
Sig	Sarah Mitchell	RHQ	1992-99
LCpl	B. R. Faulkner	Bristol	1942-45
Sig	Ernest Callaghan	Langeleben	1957-59
Maj	Roger Pickard	Poole	1955-85
Sig	Clive Wardle	RHQ	1960-62
Sig	Kerrie Haines	RHQ	1994-99
WO2	Stephen Johnson	RHQ	1977-99
WO2	David Murray	RHQ	1977-99
WO1	David Richards	RHQ	1976-99
WO2	Geoff Robinson	RHQ	1972-99
Cpl	Mark Smith	RHQ	1987-99
Sgt	Mike Toes	RHQ	1984-99
Sig	Gwyn Phillips	West Wales	1959-61

ALDERSHOT BRANCH

The day dawned warm and sunny and no doubt we were not the only ones relieved and delighted by the very agreeable turn the weather had taken. It was the occasion of our visit in August to the final rehearsal of the Sovereign's Parade at the RMA Sandhurst, very kindly arranged for us by **Col Paddy Verdon OBE** at Academy HQ. Friends came from East Kent, Reading and West London Branches to enjoy the parade and afterwards, the picnic in the cricket pavilion that had kindly been put at our disposal.

In September we visited the State Apartments at Windsor Castle. Again we had the pleasure of the company of Members of the West London and Reading Branches and the Aldershot Branch of the WRAC Association. The visit was ably organised for us by **Carole Thomas** who had arranged for the party to be conducted by one of the Military Knights. It was all very impressive and the occasion was not diminished by the downpour which accompanied our exit from the Castle to an establishment by the river for a good pub lunch.

EAST KENT BRANCH

WEDNESDAY 4 AUGUST, VISIT TO SANDHURST

East Kent (and in particular Stodmarsh Road) have had very little rain over the past five weeks but the threat of heavy thunderstorms coming from the West, whilst being needed here, merely increased the fear that the weather might be so bad at Sandhurst for the Sovereign's Parade that it would be cancelled and what would our 25 members do then. having travelled by bus all the way there? So the fact that the bus was twenty five minutes late in arriving at the Start Point was a minor inconvenience, though the Ballantynes at Rough Common feared the worst and the gallant Chairman's party standing forlornly on the roundabout at Junction 2A, on the M26 were on the brink of a heart attack. However, all aboard, we sailed on in brilliant sunshine to Sandhurst, calling in at Sainsbury's for a well needed cuppa or for those that had forgone breakfast, a welcome snack. It so happened that the tour operator (Hon Sec) had been an incumbent at the RMAS in years gone by and was able to give a commentary on life as he had seen it (nothing much changes at RMAS).

Walking across the lawns as Concorde flew over, we were soon in our seats overlooking the Old College Parade ground and it seemed that with the presence of the Aldershot Branch, most of the spectators were from

the Corps. Just before 1100hrs the 800 or so Officer Cadets (about a third ladies) dressed in Blues with white gloves and belts, marched on to the stirring music of the resident band. They were in two Divisions, the Senior and Junior, distinguished by the former carrying swords and the latter rifles. The Colours marched on and the Commandant took his place on the saluting dais. The Adjutant on his grey took command and the parade went through the inspection, the march past, in slow and quick time with some intricate manoeuvres at each corner. There then came the presentations a LS&GC to the Yeoman of Signals at the Signals Wing, Sandhurst and the Queen's Medal to a R. Signals Cadet.

The Junior Division presented Arms as the Senior Division inward turned and slow marched up the steps and through the massive doors of Old College to the strains of Old Lang Syne and as the volume decreased to a whisper, the Adjutant on his horse followed them up the steps and into the College before the doors closed behind them. The Parade marched off and we all walked back across the lawns to the Cricket Pavilion were we, along with members of the Aldershot Branch, spread our picnics on the tables and benches provided. Then it was back to the bus and home. It was probably one of the largest formal army parades that you will ever see anywhere these days and carried out with the precision and pride that the RMAS is renowned for, not only in this country but overseas from where many cadets come. Those that did not attend, really did miss an occasion.



SUNDAY 12 SEPTEMBER

Nearly seventy members brought their tables and chairs to Antrium Lodge for the barbecue and Photo Competition. The bar and barbecue were provided by the Tanners of Wingham and judged to be the best yet. **David** and **Sheila Geary** had planned the Photo Competition meticulously and there were about one hundred entries all anonymously posted on the atrium glass doors under four categories -Faraway Places, The Younger Generation, Fur & Feather, and a Pleasant View. There was also a display of early photographs of the ten Committee members, which members had to equate to the present day. At 1300hrs the entries closed and everyone then voted for what they considered to be the best. The **Geary's,** greatly helped by **Elizabeth Woodrow** worked out the winners. **Jimmy Hand** was the only one to get the Committee members right (insight or inside knowledge) winning an antique but working camera. By a stroke of genius, **Sheila Geary** won a £15 token with the best photograph. The raffle table organised by **Marion** and **Vincent de Rose** groaned under the weight of prizes and took over £100 from generous members. It was so nice to see so many of our older members such as **Robin** and **Irene Hood, Ted** and **Joan Carn, Eileen Woodcock, John Raymond** and others who have recovered from recent hospital sojourns such as **Pamela Hand** and **Dennis Murphy.**

NEWS OF MEMBERS

We congratulate **Charles** and **Gladys Baker** upon their recent Golden Wedding and **Robin** and **Irene Hood** for their Diamond Wedding. **Bob Mitchell** was back from Italy for a week or two in August. He is now living with his daughter who runs her own Ballet School there but he hopes to be back with the Branch for the Remembrance Day Parade in November. **Trevor Allison** has just come back from an international conference on the 'Y' Services operating during the Cold War in Berlin. There were representatives from the CIA, KGB and our own intelligence services and the conference took place at Teusdeisberg. He has, as can be imagined, a host of good stories and will be first on our list of speakers for future events. **Mike** and **Jo Barrett** have been on a cruise round the Baltic (without meeting a container ship) but did by chance meet up with **Maj Gen Alan Yeoman** (Chairman RSA) and **Barbara** on the same cruise.

NEW MEMBER

We are delighted to welcome **Mr** and **Mrs Keith** and **Valerie Loney** of Sevenoaks. **Keith** served as a National Serviceman from 1954-56 which was extended by the Suez Operation where he served with GHQ MELF having been with 2 Wireless in Cyprus.

VALE

It is with great sadness that we report the death of **Col John Francis** known to nearly everyone in the Corps. He died on 9 September after a long illness. **Col John** served from 1944 to 1978 and then as Regimental Secretary until 1987. Living in Maidstone he joined this Branch and became the Chairman until he and **Jean** moved to Dorset.

GLASGOW BRANCH

The photo shows **Ewing Duthie** presenting **Sid Soco** with a bottle of Scotch whisky. It has a specially printed label with **Sid's** name on it, on the occasion of **Sid's** retirement. The photo was taken when the Glasgow Branch attended the 1999 Reunion at Blandford. **Sgt L. Younger** and **WO1 RSM S. Stonier** are watching the presentation.



A total of 26 members, family and friends were on the coach on Sunday 15 August, to accept the invitation to see the Central Band, and the Massed Pipes and Drums of the Royal British Legion, Scotland, beating the retreat on the esplanade of Edinburgh Castle. Prior to the event the party had a meal at the Royal British Hotel on Prince's Street Edinburgh, where they were joined by the Branch's Honorary President, **Maj Gen A. A. G. Anderson CB** and his wife, **Margaret. Ivana Muir** the Branch Secretary, sold raffle tickets during the journey. The draw being made at the Hotel. **Annice McWaters** was pleased to have won the teddy bear as she recently become a grandmother, her husband **Eric**, the Branch Treasurer, is now a grandad. Congratulations to you both. Though it was cold the rain held off. The platforms erected for the tattoo are pretty high up and the cold wind required everyone to have windproof clothing. It was quite a spectacle to see the bands in all their different tartans and the standard bearers with the different Branch Standards, with the lone piper high up on the castle ramparts, playing the evening hymn, at the end of the show. The salute was taken by **Maj Gen Strudwick CBE,** General Officer Commanding the army in Scotland and Governor of Edinburgh Castle.

Our next venture was an invitation from 32 (Scottish) Sig Regt (V), to visit the Regiment at their Annual Camp in Cameron Barracks Inverness, on Tuesday 14 September. Originally ten members were going but two dropped out at the last minute due to illness. So in pouring rain, four cars left Glasgow on the Monday for the long journey, stopping at Pitlochry for a cup of tea and a sandwich. The billet was very comfortable and we were welcomed into the barracks by **SSM Karen Swan** and later by **WO1 RSM Angela Hillborn.** Then a meal and later the WO's and Sgt's Mess, for a little liquid refreshment. Next day the sun shone out of a cloudless sky, which allowed us to attend outdoor demonstrations, where we were shown the latest equipment in use in the field. Then we were allowed to fire the weapons in the static indoor laser simulator range. Incidentally, the female NCOs and soldiers acquitted themselves with excellent scores. The members also used the shortened version of the rifle, to fire and try to hit moving human targets out in the open. The target soldiers were kitted out with equipment which, when we hit the target, triggered a sound on their equipment telling them they had been hit and fall down to allow referees to count casualties. We then had a go at driving a 4-ton truck, with a trailer attached to the front by a metal pole to be manoeuvred into a space marked with cones, without knocking the cones over. I understand that the members all managed the task, especially **Monty Bryden** in our section, who had previous experience of driving these vehicles, and did it with aplomb. It was no easy task climbing into the vehicle for the older members. Later we were taken on a trip to Fort George. This was very interesting to those of us who had never seen it before. **Bobby Gillchrist,** who did his recruit training in World War II there, did not have fond memories of it, and told vivid tales of his experiences. This scribe was fortunate in being able to purchase from the museum, a Lledo model van, (which had been especially commissioned) by the Queens Own Highlanders, to add to my collection.

On the Tuesday evening we were invited to an informal evening in the WOs and Sgts Mess, where we met members of the Regiment from the other areas and those attached to the units. It was a very enjoyable evening, made so, by the hospitality of **WO1 RSM Angela Hillborn** and

members of the mess. The RSA Members wish to thank the Regiment for inviting them for the visit, and we appreciate the time and effort it takes to cater for us old 'uns, to find interesting things to occupy us during our visit, whilst keeping a busy schedule on Exercise. The journey home was the reverse of the journey to Inverness, the sun shone all the way and it was a fitting end to a worthwhile journey.

The members have an invitation from the city of Glasgow Royal Naval Association, to attend the dedication service of their Branch Standard, in Glasgow cathedral on Sunday 24 October, with a civic reception afterwards hosted by the **Rt Hon The Lord Provost Alex Mosson** and Glasgow City Council in the city chambers. Arrangements are already in hand for the annual St Andrew's dinner/dance on 27 November. The Burns Supper was also mentioned at our last meeting in August, for January 2000, and we haven't even had Halloween, Guy Fawkes Night or Christmas yet! But, I suppose it's good for the committee, that Branch Members take a forward interest, as long as the events arranged, are well supported.

GUERNSEY BRANCH

Our last contribution appeared in print in the June edition and sadly we have to start this update of our activities with the news of the death of three Branch Members. Our Founding Chairman, **Capt John Rudkin** passed away on 17 June 1999. His funeral Service, followed by private cremation, at the Castel Parish Church on 24 June 1999 was very well supported by Branch members led by Chairman, **Mike Brock** and his wife **Sue**. **John**'s coffin, draped with the Corps Flag, was accompanied by **Dave Bichard** bearing our Standard escorted in turn by **Tom Remfrey**. The faultless playing of the Last Post, which would have met with **John**'s wholehearted approval, proved a fitting finale. **Capt Tom Freeman** passed away on 23 August 1999. His funeral Service at the Vale Parish Church on 27 August was well attended by Branch Members led by **Mike** and **Sue Brock.** The Branch Standard was carried by **Dave Bichard** and escorted by **Tom Remfrey** and was lowered during a fine rendering of the Last Post which brought an end to the Service. We received a report, subsequently confirmed by his married daughter, that **Mr Bert Green** had passed away in July 1999. The loss of three of our members, in so short a space of time and in such a small Branch, has been felt keenly by all of us.

In April we paid a formal visit to Guernsey Telecoms which had been arranged by our Vice Chairman, **Alec Forty,** who at one time during his working life, had been the head of that particular organisation. Perhaps it was his influence but we were regally received and escorted through the various departments. It proved to be a real eye-opener and, for those not computer literate, a chance to access the World Wide Web for the first time. The Royal Signals site was accessed without difficulty and the whole evening was voted a great success. On 6 May we held our annual Liberation Day Dinner at St Margaret's Lodge Hotel. We were delighted to have the company of **Maj Gen Alan Yeoman** and **Barbara** who this year joined us in a private capacity. It was a pleasant opportunity to renew old friendships and to establish new ones. Once again we are indebted to **Dave Bichard** and **Kathy** who made all the necessary arrangements for what proved to be the usual success. So popular was the Bowls evening held last year that a repeat visit was rapidly proposed, carried and arranged for Friday 10 September. Once again the organisation, coaching and overall supervision was ably carried out by **Alvaro Salazar** and his wife **Betty** who ensured the evening went with a swing. A supper break was taken halfway through the evening, followed by a small knockout team competition with the winning pair being presented with a bottle of wine apiece. Modesty prevents me revealing the name of the winner (for the second year in succession) having been partnered with a charming lady guest as a safeguard against the same team winning. I understand that I am to be barred from playing next year! Thank you **Alvaro** and **Betty** for another fun evening. A Pub Lunch, held at La Favorita Hotel on Sunday 3 October, was well supported and thoroughly enjoyed. A very regular guest at Branch functions, **Mr Ernie Hobbs,** was missing having been admitted to hospital the night before. We wish him a speedy recovery and look forward to seeing him back with his partner ere long. Thank you again **Dave** and **Kathy Bichard** for another well organised function.

In summary a quiet but enjoyable social period but with much of the gloss dulled by our sad losses in the latter half of the year. On a more reassuring note we are pleased to report that **Vic Jinks,** who recently had to attend hospital treatment in the UK, is back at work and maintaining good progress. We are now looking ahead to our Committee Dinner at the end of November and our annual Christmas Dinner on 9 December. More about those functions in the New Year. Finally, the Chairman, Committee and Members of the Guernsey Branch wish you all a very Happy Christmas and the best of Good Health and Prosperity to see you through the first year of the new Millennium.

SHEFFIELD BRANCH

Ron Simmons

AN EVENTFUL YEAR

The AGM, a necessary evil, passed without controversy no one wants a job so the current team are in post until we become incapable, it seems. In April the Branch members were able to visit RAF Fylingdales for a superb audio/visual presentation given by **Sqn Ldr (Rtd) Chris Carvell,** followed by a tour of the facility. For those who have not crossed Fylingdales Moor recently, the 'Golf Balls' have gone but not before some organisation wanted to have them preserved as a national monument. Their replacement is not so imposing, looking like a cross between an Egyptian pyramid and a shipwreck. There are warning signs to beware of the rabbit holes, I don't know what size the bunnies grow to, but after 35 years of high levels of electromagnetic radiation they may be big enough to drag the unwary underground. This was followed by supper at the Fox and Rabbit. 'I'll tell you when it's closing time,' says the landlord, 'Never you mind.' Arrival back in Sheffield around 2am! The Annual Dinner as held in May in the WOs & Sgts' Mess of 38 (City of Sheffield) Sig Regt TA, to whom we are continuously grateful for the use of their facilities. June and the Annual Reunion always a problem with more bids than places available. This a perennial problem in Sheffield and we now recognise that a system needs to be agreed democratically of course. 'Pigs might fly!'

In September we were, after two or more years of planning, able to visit the Tower of London, courtesy of **Yeoman Gaoler Tom Trent,** to whom we are most grateful. (What a strange hobby - collecting dominoes). This was followed on Sunday morning with a visit to the Royal Hospital Chelsea, where together with the London Branches we took part in the annual Governor's parade and service in the Chapel, followed by refreshments and a curry lunch. A remarkable event took place during lunch, I was approached by an In Pensioner who asked, 'Was one of your members wearing a Sierra Leone Independence Medal?' I replied that if there was it would be **Harry Mercer,** we would go and find him. On finding **Harry** he looked up and said, ' Good Lord it's 'Taffy' **Griffiths.'** It transpired that they had not met since 1961 in Sierra Leone where they used to run the camp cinema, largely for their mutual benefit I gather. Let's hope we can organise a return visit soon to Chelsea. In October we hold our annual pie night, 'Desperate Dan Cow Pie' with mushy peas and mint sauce. 'Save some for the Chairman this year!' The year ends with the Christmas Social of course, and then it's the Millennium. How do we keep going.? Ideas for next year on a postcard please.



Sheffield Branch member Harry Mercer with In Pensioner John 'Taffy' Griffiths

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SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH

Our programme of events has continued through the summer. On 4 August about twenty members of the Branch attended the rehearsal of the Passing Out Parade at RMA Sandhurst. For those of you who have not witnessed this event, it is a most impressive spectacle, carried out with all the professionalism that we still expect and receive from today's army.

At our monthly evening meeting on 19August our Chairman, **George Packer**, presented a cheque on behalf of the members to **Wayne** and **Laura Broadhurst** who were to be married on 4 September at Rownhams parish church. Our programme of after lunch speakers continued when **Col Andrew Carter,** Regimental Secretary, paid a visit on 7 September. About thirty members and partners heard him talk about The Association and its Relationship with the Regular Army and the Benevolent Fund. This proved to be an interesting and enjoyable event as **Col Carter** has the ability to be both informative and humourous. It was reliably reported that not one member of the audience went to sleep!!



Mrs Debbie Carter, Col Andrew Carter
and Brig Johnny Clinch (Branch President)
relaxing before the event

On 16 September some of us paid our second visit to the White Hart at Cadnam to enjoy their excellent food and to play a few games of skittles. Prizes were awarded for the lady and gentleman with the highest score and also to the player with the lowest score. Everyone present agreed that the evening was a great success and would look forward to the next time. The social activity at the Branch has increased considerably during recent months and there have been a number of well attended and successful occasions to record. Unfortunately, our Social Secretary has had to stand down due to various pressures but hopes to remain an active member of the Branch.

TORBAY BRANCH

On 23 August 1999, the Branch had the honour of representing the RSA at the celebration at Exmouth, of the 100th birthday of **Mr Reginald Randall** BEM. The Branch held a small parade in **Reg**'s honour, who in turn inspected the group. **Reg** was then presented with a gift on behalf of Association Headquarters. Our photo shows **Reg** in the centre with (left to right) **Tom Evans, John Goodman, Norman West, Jack Livesey, Ossie Osbourne, Bernie Goodman, Hugh Cauldwell** and the Deputy Mayor, **Ron Mudge**.



Reg became of military age in 1917, where upon he joined the Infantry. After training he was sent to Mesopotamia, having been there some time he was transferred to India (Lucknow, Benares and Cawnpore) with his Regiment. He decided to leave the Army in 1923 and returned to England.

Soon after his return he joined the TA and as he was interested in Technology, he joined the 5th Ack Ack Division Signals and shortly before the Battle of Britain, was posted to the Isle of Wight, where he was put in command of a section which was operating at the RDF Station at Ventnor. During this time the section was attacked several times and was finally put out of action by Stukkas. **Reg** had a lucky escape whilst sheltering in his slit trench when a bomb landed next to him but having a delayed action, it exploded the next day.

During his time on the island, his section lost all communications and upon investigation it was found to be sabotage. In **Reg's** words, 'I could not tolerate this and laid in wait with a round up the spout of my rifle.' Eventually he observed a person attempting to cut wires and was about to shoot, when he realised it was a woman, because of this he did not shoot, but reported the matter to the MPs. They in turn arrested the woman (**Mrs O'Grady**) and on searching her home, found further evidence of her activities. She was charged and brought to trial at Winchester Crown Court. In **Reg**'s own words, 'I was sat in court and the Judge put on his black cap and sentenced her to death,' **Reg** was chief witness in the case. Later **Reg** was transferred to the Portsmouth/Southampton Area, where he was kept very busy. Again in **Reg**'s words, 'Command appeared quite pleased with my activities and recommended me for a medal, and subsequently I went to Buckingham Palace with my wife to receive the medal from King George VI.'

WEST LONDON BRANCH

On a fine sunny Sunday in September when we paraded for morning service at the Royal Hospital Chelsea we were joined by the Sheffield Branch who were on a visit to London. Their Standard Bearer was afforded the privilege of parading his Branch Standard and their Secretary, **Ron Simmons** commented on our large turnout, forty marchers led by **Col John Eversfield,** with non marchers waiting in the wings. The parade and gathering included Members of East London, North London and Reading Branches and 31st Signals Association. After the parade we retired for drinks with the InPensioners, followed by seventy five of the Corps family enjoying a very good curry lunch.

A few weeks after our Chelsea attendance we held an 'In Pensioners Evening' in Hounslow Barracks at which some of the In-Pensioners were our guests for a social evening with a lot of singing, dancing for the most nimble, and a buffet supper. The enclosed photograph taken at the Parade at the Royal Hospital Chelsea has been sent me by **Maj Ron Miller,** Chairman of the West London Branch with the request that I pass it to *The Wire*.



(L-R): Ron Simmons - Secretary Sheffield RSA,
Sgt Maj Peter Brain - Royal Hospital,
Alan Foot - Secretary Reading RSA,
Dusty Miller - Chairman West London RSA

THE MIDDLESEX YEOMANRY ASSOCIATION

A quiet summer period for the Association gave our Chairman-**George Key**, and Secretary-**Andrew Bridges**, the opportunity to catch up on their stamp collections. Can we also put the record straight, it was **Col Ted Scarlett,** (not **Tim**), who led the Association contingent at this year's Cavalry Memorial Parade at Hyde Park.

It is with great regret that we report the death of **Des Hall.** There is a history of **Des**'s career to be found in the *'LAST POST'*, he will be sadly missed.

The Association Band is still getting itself together after the upheaval of the move from Acton to the TA Centre, Flayes Bridge, Southall. They are always on the lookout for good military band musicians. If you know of one send them along. Rehearsals take place most Sunday mornings. The Band Sergeant Major is **Bob Lowe** and he can be contacted on 0181 904 6188. By the time you read this we will have had our Annual Dinner and paraded at St Paul's Cathedral, but more about that another time.

12th, 15th & 18th AIR FORMATION SIGNAL REGIMENT'S ASSOCIATION

We had another enjoyable meeting at the Delaware Pavilion in Bexhill on Thursday 7 October, despite a reduction in numbers. Five Members attended, and five more sent apologies for absence. **Tony Ranger,** who is unable to travel far, very kindly sent a generous donation, as did **Paul** and **Toby Stickley** who, unfortunately, had to attend a family funeral. After deductions for local expenses I am able to forward a cheque of £30 to **Dennis Egan** for Association expenses on behalf of our Branch. The expenses book was signed by the senior ex-NCO, **Bill Smith,** who, incidentally, made his first appearance at one of our meetings and said he thoroughly enjoyed himself.

Have you all got your 2000 diaries handy? Make a note for 13 April for our next get-together at the Delaware Pavilion in Bexhill at 1100hrs

and anyone being late will be placed on a charge! We're getting known by the staff there now, and the Assistant Manager has told me to ring up a few days before hand and he'll get a table organised in the big dining room for us, so that we don't have to sit in the cafeteria first before moving into the larger room later on. Has he, perhaps, had complaints from other customers that the ex-soldiers are monopolising the tables and covering them with photographs and maps? I'm still waiting for Members to send me amusing anecdotes about their service. Don't tell me there aren't any, because if you'd been at the last meeting you'd still be laughing at some of the stories told there. Come on, lads, share those tales with the rest of us. Don't worry if you're not an author; just jot down the relevant facts, with dates, places, and personnel I'll knock it into shape so that we can all have a good laugh at it. I refuse to put into writing, though, the time that I ran a three ton truck into the back of another one in the middle of miles and miles of desert, '…nuff said!'

Don't forget the date of the next meeting - Thursday, 13 April, 2000. That's next century, in case you don't know, and some of you chaps who've never attended one of our get togethers, please try to come. I promise you'll enjoy it.

31st SIGNAL REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

We are still very active, getting out and about. Regimental Camp Visitor's Day on 22 July saw Association members roughing it at Nescliffe Camp, Folkstone. Our Chairman, **Col Donald Crawford**, was heard to mutter that it was, '...tougher in his day.' Our thanks go to **WO1 (RSM) John Gibson** for his route-card and map, which prevented some members going through the Channel Tunnel. Sunday 1 August saw us having lunch on the Mid-Hants Watercress Line, steam railway. Good weather, good food, good wine and good company made it all worth while. Sunday 5 September saw us supporting the West London Branch at the Governor's Parade, at the Royal Hospital Chelsea. The Royal Signals contingent was led this year by **Col John Eversfield**.



Col John Eversfield in counting mode

Afterwards we had a chance to share a pint or two with members of the Sheffield Branch, who were visiting London. Our thanks to **Dave Thomas** (PSAO) for all his help with our Cheese and Wine Party on 9 October. On 17 December we will be back on the Watercress Line having Christmas Lunch with the Reading Branch.

Your starter for ten, on 15 April 2000 our Annual Dinner is somewhere in the London area? A small clue - it will not be at the Duke of York's HQ because Mercury House will be in the hands of the property developers. Our Secretary, **Henry Holman**, has been seen pulling his hair out in frustration! Our trip into Europe next year, organised by **Dusty** 'Plan B' **Miller** will be to Brussels on 26-28 May 2000. The visit will include the V2 Rocket sites at La Capole. It should be interesting, because we were very good at getting rockets?! There are many other goodies in next year's Social Calendar, but more about those in future issues.

The Committee wish all serving and ex-members of 31 Signals, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

19th SIGNAL REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

In a break with established tradition, the Association's seventh annual luncheon was held at the North Stafford Hotel, Stoke-on-Trent, on September 9th. This attracted some 52 members, a number from Scotland and the North of England who had not attended an Association Luncheon before - resulting in a brisk sale of regimental ties! After **Col Colin Gilbert,** the Association President had given a short address of welcome, **Mr George Brew**, the Chairman, sought members opinions for holding the annual luncheon on alternate years in the London area and in a venue in 'The North'. This suggestion met with almost universal approval. After lunch the 'Yorkshire Chapter' treated us to a slide show bringing back memories of the Singapore of old. For this we were joined by the ladies who had returned from their visit to the factory shops. For many of them this was a new view of the place where their husbands had spent their formative years.

REUNIONS

CALLING
ALL EX 1960S 16 SIGNAL REGIMENT
including
HQ BAOR SIGNAL TROOP

If the above applies to you then why not join the 60s 16ers, a thriving reunion club with 208 contacts to date. Reunions are held annually, for details contact **Chris Bartlett**:
45 Whitehouse Road, Leigh on Sea, Essex, SS9 5SR
E-mail: chris60s16er@tesco. net
Tel: 01702 524620

THE GENTLEMEN OF BEVERLEY, CATTERICK GARRISON 19 AUGUST 1999

Thursday 19 August 1999 dawned with typical Catterick weather, rain with a blustery wind for the First Reunion of the Gentlemen of Beverley 1950 to 1954. The rendezvous was at the Dalesman Families Club on Loos Road in Catterick Garrison. This was with the kind permission of the Army Welfare Services and **Mrs Boardman** the Community Worker who is also the Manageress of the Club, to whom we offer our thanks and best wishes. Thanks must also be expressed to **Mr Stan Perkins** who arranged the venue and the buffet lunch. Without his invaluable assistance the author would have had to make several trips to Catterick, 'Thanks Stan.'

Some twenty-one Ex Boys attended with their wives and partners, with five invited guests including **Maj Gen Archie Birtwistle, Brig Graeham Jackson** and **Maj Edinger** who was a very unhappy Troop Officer in the far off days of the fifties. After 49 years meeting each other again was a little strange, our minds were still set in the 50's and remembering each other as lads of 15 to 17 year old. Most of us looked a lot different from those days, being greyer/balder and somewhat stouter in girth but many mannerisms were still recognised from those far off days. Much catching up was done about who had been where and what we had been and what we were doing now. Many tall stories were re-told of Beverley and what had happened since we had left. The lamp was swung a time or two. Luckily steel helmets were not needed too often, although there was quite a lot of Blanco, and chalk dust in the air after lurid tales were recounted of **'Uncle Bob Humphries'**.

A raffle was organised by **Ray Toyne** and his good lady and £47 was raised and together with the profit from the catering bill a total sum of one hundred and six pounds was donated to the Ex Beverley Boys Association to assist the Secretary defray expenses accrued organising the 50th Anniversary Reunion at Beverley next year. The winning tickets were drawn by **Mrs Margaret Bishop** and **Mrs Cawthorne** the wife of a guest. This was accompanied by loud and prolonged shouts of fiddle (needless to say this was outside the jurisdiction of the author). The festivities started to close down about 1600hrs due to most of us wanting to beat the rush hour on the A1 but the consensus was everyone had enjoyed themselves and were looking forward to the next Reunion at Beverley.

The year 2000 marks the formation of 6 Boys Training Regiment Royal Corps of Signals and it is hoped to hold a longer event over two or three days. There are at present 91 members of the Beverley Ex Boys Association, SO COME ON LADS let's try and recruit many more by use of the bush telegraph, E Net, jungle drums and any other form of communication to establish contact with as many Ex Boys as possible, after all there were over three thousand of us who went through the gates at Beverley and lived to tell the tale of how we survived. We are supposed to be communicators remember?

The Scribe….. **Harry Bishop**
27 Dent View, Egremont, Cumbria,CA22 2ET
Tel: (01946) 822839



THE 1960s 16 SIGNAL REGIMENT REUNION CLUB
60'S 16ERS 1999 REUNION

Jackie Hurley reports

Friday 3rd September - The 1999 Annual Reunion was at the Lord Mayor Treloar College in Alton, Hampshire for the second year running, giving Krefeld a reprieve from the onslaught of ex-16 Signal Regiment members. After the usual, last minute 'short cut' I arrived at the College to the strains of 'REME' **Harper** in full voice entertaining the troops, (no change starting the party early then)! He was assisting the entertainer, **Peter Brennan** a professional singer/guitarist, hired for the evening, it was a late but good start to the week-end.

Saturday 4th - More members began arriving and the final total over the weekend was 52, not bad and increases with new faces each year - there are now 209 contacts on the list. **Bridget Wilson** (nee Smith) who had kept her one and only photo from 16 Signal Regiment, finally had the names of all those on it within minutes of passing it round. **Jim Brooks** and **Barrie Clerehugh** came from Germany but only after watching their first boat sail into the sunset. (At least we think that's what **Jim** said, still more Scottish than the Whisky), **Ray** 'Ginge' and **Pat Lyons** (nee Orris) made their mammoth journey from South Africa, fitting the reunion into their busy schedule. - Hope the video turned out OK, mine didn't. **Winston** 'Rocky' **Rock** another new face this year, who spends six months in the UK and six months in Barbados each year, now has lots of people wanting to visit him -wonder which part of the year? **Nick** and **Denise Nicholas** (nee Macrae), discovered **Nick** had worked with **Chris Cottam** for a while but never actually came across each other. By the way **Nick, John Farrell** said he will share his LS & GC with you - for a fee!

The weather was superb for the whole weekend and so with **Pete Weedon** placed on duty to welcome arrivals during Saturday - **Frank** and **Mrs Webber, Tom** and **Rose Bean, Lorraine Ward** (nee Laurie Torrie) and many others - the rest of the party set off for town or new watering holes. **Tom Thornton** whose sense of humour has not diminished held court at the White Hart and soon had everyone crying into their beer. **Tom** was a Funeral Director at some stage in his 16 Sigs after-life and the pictures conjured up by him were hilarious. In the evening, the now usual scramble for photo's occurred, some muttered about valuable drinking time lost! Perhaps with so many attending, we should go for group photograph only. After the photo-call, we were assembled away from the dining room and told the Master of Signals had arrived to say a few words. Shock, horror, yet more drinking time lost! When on centre stage steps **Tom Thornton** who proceeded to treat us to half-an-hour of great entertainment. We weren't quite sure if he'd adapted his jokes to personalities or if the stories were really true. Some tales had been heard in the pub that afternoon but were still hilarious second time around, although you forgot to re-tell the one about the knotted string **Tom**!

As we sat down for our evening meal, a disturbance look place as a policeman chased a thief round the dining room. All in a weekend's work for **Ian Radford** (the policeman in shorts and flashing helmet) and 'REME' **Harper** (A pirate with one leg and a parrot!) What will they come with next year, their double act is fast becoming a feature at reunions. Who needs paid entertainment when, as **Tom Thornton** had earlier noted, while most units had at least one 'character', 16 Sigs seemed to be full of them. The evening went very well with a 60's disco, 60's quiz (devised by **Lorraine Ward** and **John Farrell**) lots of laughter and swallowing of the grape juice. **Elizabeth Gibb** (nee Evans) and **Anne Ferrier Fossett** along with a few others rekindled memories of dancing round their handbags (though weren't the original bags Army issue?) I couldn't afford a 'civvy' one after paying for **John F**'s beer).

Sunday 5th - Recovery rates after a good night is a little slower these days but the AGM finally took place prior to everyone making their way home. The sad note to this year's reunion, was to hear of the death of **Bill Schofield** earlier in the year and **Dick Burt** who lost his battle with cancer just the week before our reunion weekend. **Dick** and **Audrey Grainge** (nee Branbrook) along with 'REME' **Harper** attended **Dick Burt**'s funeral to represent the reunion group. The staff at the College had once again made our weekend successful and so to show our gratitude, a collection was taken and placed in a beer-mug, meanwhile any subscriptions being paid were also collected in a beer-mug. **Evelyn Radford** (nee Bertie) stepped in to present beer mug of money to the staff - luckily it was realised fairly quickly that the staff had disappeared with the subs. **Evelyn** denied she was confused due to a hangover! Thanks to **Ricky Gordon** and his family for yet another great week-end and of course to **Chris Bartlett** for all the organisation, a hard task but much appreciated. **Chris** is hoping - dependant on commitments, for both 7 and 16 Signal Regiments - to hold the next reunion in Krefeld and is looking at around September 2000. Keep a space in your busy schedules for a confirmation of the date, as the attendance builds there may be some limit on numbers. Have a good year, keep in touch and let's look forward to our fifth reunion, but it will be the first of many in the new millennium.



Back Row (L-R): John Farrell, Chris Bartlett, Jeff Shergold, Barrie Clerehugh, Bill Higgs, Tom Thornton, Lorraine Ward (nee Laurie Torrie), Sandy Hanna, Noreen Dixon (nee Byrne), John 'Taff' Powell, Winston Rock
Centre Row (L-R): Anne Ferrier (nee Fossett), Jackie Farrell (nee Hurley), Jim Brooks, Chris Cottam, Judy Cottam (nee Watson), Tom Watts, Alex Leitch, Pete Weedon, Linda Leitch, Nick & Denise Nicholas (nee Macrae), Dick & Audrey Grainge (nee Branbrook), Mick & Chris Sheldon (nee Burton), Jan & Evelyn Radford (nee Bertie), John Turvey, Shirley Beillingham (nee Mackin), Rose & Tom Bean, Pat & Ray Lyons (nee Orris), Val Gordon (nee Thompson)
Seated (L-R): Gordon 'REME' & Sue Harper (nee Gallantree), Bill & Carol Birch (nee Liz Morris), Pat & Ian Cameron, Eve & Frank Webber, Pauline Jones, John Hamer, Bridget & Syd Wilson (nee Smith), Ray Gilks, Ricky Gordon
Seated on the grass: Trev Davies
The following also attended: John Dixon, Elizabeth Gibb (nee Evans), Celia Knill, Pete & Brenda Hughes

JUNIOR LEADERS ROYAL SIGNALS - DENBURY, NEWTON ABBOT

FINAL REUNION IN NEWTON ABBOT ON 29/30 SEPTEMBER 2000

All on the mailing list will receive details early in 2000, all other enquiries to:
Sam Ward - Egwood, 56 Seymour Road, Newton Abbot, DEVON, TQ12 2PV Tel: 01626 352101

BEVERLEY BOYS REUNION

Saturday 25 September 1999

David James-Bailey (22569039)

Down the curving stairway into the ballroom of the Victory Services Club in London they came, some on their own and others with their ladies, but without exception all showed a mix of expression, ranging from bewilderment to curiosity at the sight that was unfolding before their eyes. Gathered together for the first time, in many cases for 49 years, were 67 'boys' from what was known as 6th (Boys) Training Regiment, Royal Signals, which for some five years was based first in Richmond, Yorkshire as No.1 Boys Selection Squadron and then at its proper home in Victoria Barracks at Beverley in East Yorkshire, where it stayed until mid-1955.

They came from all over - as far north as Blythe in Northumberland to Southampton, from the Channel Islands and Germany. Australia even sent over one of its adopted sons in the form of **Pete Harris** although it is still uncertain whether they did so out of compassion or whether they were trying to tell him something! His determination to be there is worthy of a mention alone. What an inspiring sight and what an incredible experience to again see and speak to friends and colleagues only recently remembered fondly through the medium of photographs and other pieces of memorabilia. In many cases recognition came easily and overshadowed the fact that we had all 'aged little' - because of course we had aged together. It mattered not that some had little or no hair, or that others didn't seem to be as tall as we remembered them.

Tony Hull was the person responsible for this spectacle and for the next six hours the ballroom hummed with the hubbub of voices recalling and recounting experiences and memories of times held special to all those present. There was much laughter and it is quite possible that perhaps the odd tear wasn't far away either, but one thing shone out above all else and that was the sheer joy and delight of all those present at meeting again those others who had shared the two and a half years at Beverley - and survived to tell the tale! They were good years, tough mind you, but as someone put it, 'We were good at what we did', and the Corps was the richer for the many good Seniors, Warrant Officers and Officers that came off the 'production line'.

Certainly 'Col' **Keddie** would have been proud of the day had he been there, and it says a lot of the esteem in which that gentleman was held that he is still remembered with such affection by all who served in the Regiment.

It would be unfair not to mention the part played by the Victory Services Club. The lunch was excellent and we were all very impressed with the military precision with which the Function Manager controlled his Staff.

Next year is the 50th Anniversary of the formation of the 'boys' unit and it is fitting that if possible the venue should be in Beverley. To those of you who were unable, for whatever reason, to be with us on Saturday 25 September we extend a heartfelt wish that you may be with us at that meeting. We look forward to seeing you then and finally, none of the foregoing would have been possible without **Tony Hull** and his supportive wife, **Beryl.** The writer is well aware of the effort they have put into getting the day organised, as indeed they have done with everything else connected with the Beverley Ex-Boys Association, and on behalf of us all we ask you both to accept our sincere thanks for your tireless endeavours on our behalf.



KOREA - THE FORGOTTEN WAR
THE PERSONAL REMINISCENCE OF REG BRIGGS OF PETERBOROUGH RSA AND OF HIS PERSONAL REUNION AT THE KOREAN VETERANS ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL REUNION LONDON, JULY 1999

'The Korean War is one of the most important and dramatic conflicts of the twentieth century. United Nations troops suffered 142,000 casualties to restore the independence of South Korea after the Communist invasion of June 1950.' ***Max Hastings: The Korean War***

I joined the Royal Signals as a boy soldier aged 16½ and did my trade training at Harrogate and Catterick to become an OWL (Operator Wireless and Line). My first overseas posting was to be in N. Africa. Several months later in Tripoli one morning, the CO asked for volunteers to go to Benghazi where we would join the 28th Field Regiment RE. We would then go to a country called Korea where a war had broken out. If I remember correctly the entire Troop volunteered. We would be known as NAN Troop. I, like a lot more hardly knew where Korea was, joined Royal Signals to see as much of the world as possible and this was my chance to see the Far East.

We sailed from Tobruk many months later in the troopship *Empire Orwell*. There were other Royal Signals personnel already on board who soon joined up with us. One, a Radio Mechanic who became a very good friend, was called **Peter Clay**. Other names I remember were **Drabble, Tilley** and a Reservist called **Reg Minton.** I had a great respect for these Reservists who had served in the 1939/45 War and I learned a lot from them. Bonds were formed of the type that were never really broken. Arriving in Korea we waited for the equipment to arrive then started the move up to positions North of the capital, Seoul.



(L-R):Colin Clay and Reg Briggs

As very young soldiers we saw the first signs of war-knocked out Russian tanks, refugees and burnt-out towns and villages. Korea was then a very poor and rural country. We had several positions before the line became static and we were in position just South of the Imjin River. Several months later in January 1952 **Peter,** as I knew him, was posted to take charge of the Radio Mechanics up at 28 Brigade and I thought I would never see him again. I did know that **Peter** was planning to train for the priesthood on returning to UK. I spent almost two years in Korea before returning to the UK in April 1953. I had lost contact with **Peter** until, out of the blue, on the morning of Tuesday 8 May 1999, my wife **Margaret** gave me the mail containing information about the Korean International Reunion in London and a mysterious letter bearing Canadian stamps. I began to read it. I am not one to show emotion but I had tears in my eyes. It was a letter from **Peter Clay,** now called **Colin,** and he was now the **Rev Canon Colin Peter Clay** and is Chaplain at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon and had been in Canada for over 40 years.



(L-R): Margaret Briggs, Reg Briggs, Rev Cannon Colin Clay, Pat Clay and in the background can be seen some Korean Veterans

He was asking if I was the same **Reg Briggs** he had known in the Imjin valley some 47 years ago! He had seen my name and photograph in a copy of *The Wire* sent to him by a **Terry Wilkins**? Ex Royal Signals? **Colin** was planning to attend the International Reunion and would arrive in England on the following Friday. He would stay in Norfolk, not far from my home in Peterborough. It was a wonderful feeling knowing that someone you knew all those years ago in difficult circumstances was alive and well and coming to England!

Needless to say we met on Peterborough station and repaired to an old English pub with our respective wives for an enjoyable lunch. It did not seem 47 years since I had last seen **Colin**. We could chat to each other as if it had only been yesterday that we last met. Did I remember 'Bed Check Charlie', an old Chinese piston engine aircraft that used to come over the lines machine gunning and dropping small bombs at about 10oclock? Did I? Memories came flooding back. Crossing the Han River, the bridge blown and only a narrow track laid, the Yanks wanting to push the truck over the side, just because the engine had stopped, with me still inside! Getting stuck in a minefield with the Radio Vehicle. Out with the Colonel one night forward of the Leicesters, pitch black. 'Wait here!' Two hours later, a shadow, shoot? No! The CO's back. Climbing Kamak-San, over 2000ft, with the new radio 62 Set. It took 15 porters to get the equipment to the top. I was 'Tail end Charlie', a burst of gunfire behind me almost caused a change of underwear. Having set up the 62 Station I can remember standing almost on top of the mountain looking at the cloud below, a really beautiful sight, very still, Korea, The Land of the Morning Calm, then the 25 pounders opened up!

The first casualty in RHQ was a young Sapper shot, some did not return home. Many years later I revisited the area and the young Sapper's grave. The Korean people treated us like heroes. Remember the very cold winters, a biscuit tin with a diesel and water drip, get it wrong and there was quite a bang and a few Al Jolson look-a-likes. An American Field Hospital, new razors, toothpaste, toothbrush, great. R and R leave in Japan, Ebisu Leave Camp, a bath, clean clothes, beer halls down the Ginza.

INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION OF HARROGATE APPRENTICES

by Col (Retd) Cliff Walters, Chairman

The Association of Harrogate Apprentices (AOHA) recently reformed after a gap of about 30 years. The inaugural meeting took place at the Army Foundation College (AFC), in Uniacke Barracks, Harrogate on 8-9 October by kind permission of the CO, **Lt Col Ian Smith MBE** PARA. Membership of the AOHA has now reached over 300 and, including wives and guests, over 200 met on this occasion. The weekend reunion commenced on Friday evening with a very social evening in the WOs and Sergeants Mess. It was ever thus in the Sergeants Mess!

The brunt of our hard work at the Harrogate end had been done by **Bryan Maltby** (57B) and **Terry Cawthorn** (54A). **Maj Mick Davis**, currently serving at the AFC, gave us tremendous support in putting together an excellent programme. Those attending ranged from the early days of 1947/8 when the School was opened to the comparative newcomers, like myself, who did not arrive on the scene until the 1990's. The Secretary, **Dougie Dickason** (54A), was on hand to ensure that everyone received the correct coloured badge according to the decade in which you commenced at the College. **Chris Longmore** was checking his nominal roll to ensure that both subs and reunion fees had been paid. **Alan Lafferty** (60C) was looking for more new stories for the Newsletter. It was very noticeable and encouraging to see so many ties of Sappers, Gunners and the occasional Infantry unit. We hope not to see them too often because it was decided at the AGM that the AOHA tie should be resurrected - to be actioned by the Chairman! The morning church service was attended by over 150. One piece of nostalgia was the repeating of The Apprentices' Prayer that was introduced in 1949 and has been used on many occasions since then. Our tour of the AFC, which was conducted by six very bright Army Students (ASs), included firing on the indoor Skill at Arms Trainer (SAT). Most people found no problems in getting into the prone position but returning to the vertical was occasionally problematic! It was also noted that there was a distinct waste of 'ammunition'. We visited the education facilities only to find that not much has changed except that SUMS is now called Application of Numbers and English is Communication Skills.

Our reunion ended with an excellent lunch in the Sergeants Mess by kind permission of **WO1 (RSM) I. Hindley**. We all departed having discussed and reminisced with many old friends. After all, that's what it's all about. Anyone wishing to join AOHA should contact **Douglas Dickason**, 25 Cherry Waye, Eyethorne, Dover, KENT CT15 4BY. We are also on Internet: www.royalsignals.army.org.uk/museum. Our next reunions are Blandford 24-25 June 2000, and Harrogate 13-14 October 2000.



Brian Maltby, Alan Lafferty, Dougie Dickason, Maj Mick Davis, Chris Longmore, Terry Cawthorne and Cliff Walters on a typical windswept day at Uniacke Barracks

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LOST COMMUNICATIONS

'..... **FofS Bill Bodger** (Royal Australian Signals - Lt Col Ret'd)
FofS Art Blick (Royal Canadian Signals - Capt TMO Ret'd)
FofS George Cook (Royal Signals - SSgt Ret'd)

All of whom graduated from the FofS course Class of 53, and who have recently made contact with each other via the internet, as follows:

bill.bodger@bigpond.com.au - **Bill Bodger** in Australia
ve3ahu@king.igs.net - **Art Blick** in Ontario
cancomm@aol.com - **George Cook** in California

We are hoping to contact other FofS from the same class - some of whom are: **Weeks, Causer, Cordey, Tetlow, Harvey, Hudson** and the course Instructor, **Capt David Garnons-Williams** etc ... etc ....'

Hilary Cumming of Keymer Cottage, Buckland St Mary, Chard, Somerset TA20 3M, writes.....

'Can anyone help me in my quest to find relatives/descendants of the following men who died on 22 November 1945, when their plane, a Liberator KH126, crashed at White's Farm, Buckland St Mary, killing all 27 men on board. They were en route back to India after leave. The crew, an RAF pilot and four Polish airmen also perished in the crash. Signalmen: 14311867 **R. Anderson**, 14902515 **R. Anderson**, 14216739 **J. Attwood**, 14438298 **B. Benjamin**, 14621486 **A. Birch**, 14645020 **J. Brewis**, 14366015 **W. Charlton**, 14957077 **A. Clark** 2368080 **L. Currey**, 14646238 **H. Donovan**, 14622999 **L. Downs**, 14939236 **L. Dyer**, 14916092 **P. Fairburn**, 14945626 **M. Farrance**, 14394239 **F. Gent**, 14913071 **O. Williams**, 14948895 **R. E. C. Williams**, 1117 **Capt H. M. Z. Buck**, 7914 **Lt I. A. Byles**, 10780 **Lt E. C. Quick** 13494 **Maj H. Stainton**, 23922783 **Dvr B. Fox**. 'The local Parish Council have agreed a permanent mark of respect will be placed at the site and the RBL will list the names near their memorial in the Church of St Mary The Virgin, Buckland St Mary. Five of the victims were buried at Yeovil.' **Mrs Cumming** is seeking relatives/descendants in regard to attendance at a service of dedication in the summer of 2000. She can be contacted on 01460-234460.

Chris Edkins is seeking the present whereabouts of **Ken Metcalfe. Ken** was a Sergeant in Boys Coy, Catterick in 1943/44 and went on to reach Major. Anyone who can help is asked to call **Chris** on 01597-810360.

Margaret Harrison is trying to find **Cpl Gordon** 'Jock' **Hanson. Gordon** was the best friend of her late husband **Cpl Arthur Harrison** when they served together at 16 Signal Regiment during the 1960's. Any information in the first instance contact **Ronald Smith** on ronald@alansmith26.freeserve.co.uk or contact **Chris Bartlett** by snail mail: 45 Whitehouse Road, Leigh on Sea, Essex, SS9 5SR. Tel: 01702 524620.

Doug Belishaw would like to hear from anybody who served with him at the following units: 11 Sig Regt, 24 Sig Regt, 13 Sig Regt, 653 Sig Tp in Ty Cres, North Wales, 45 AYT in Shoeburyness and 7 Sig Regt. **Doug** Served from 1966 to 1986. He was a keen cross-country runner and athlete. He married WRAC **Elizabeth Nisbet**, from HQ Southern Command, Salisbury. Contact **Doug** at 13 Great Hall Close, Radcliffe, Manchester, M26 4DA.

Stewart Hedley Barker of 3 Clifton Terrace, South Shields, Tyne & Wear, NE33 4LD. Tel: 0191 454 7727 served, 1946-49 HQ Ismalia, 2nd Egypt Command Signal Regiment. He was a Despatch Rider and is seeking old mates. If you know **Stewart** please contact him.

Mr Brian Spragg would like to hear from anyone who remembers his late father; **Cpl Charles Albert Walter Spragg. Charles** enlisted in 1939 and served in the 18th (County of London) Royal Signals Regiment and with the Gurkhas. He served in Egypt and Lebanon and was part of the BEF at Dunkirk. Anyone who can help is asked to contact **Brian** at: 15 Cherry Close, Morden, SURREY, SM4 4HA.

Anyone who can help with the current whereabouts of **Kevin Stevens** (244 ...) or **Sgt R. L.** 'Bob' **Witherstone**, is asked to contact **Mrs Wright** at 32 St Andrews Crescent, Rokerby, Rugby, Warks CV22 5PH.

Adrian Streather is trying to contact anyone who remembers working with his father **Herbert Anselm Streather**, a civilian who worked with the Corps and the Army Air Corps in Middle Wallop from 1950 to 1972. **Herbert** spent many years at Southern Command, Wiltshire and at Aldershot. The only name that **Adrian** can remember, of the many people that worked with his father is **Capt Catchpole**. He realises that most of the people that worked with his father will now have retired and he is not sure whether he worked for the Post Office or a MOD Office of Communications. **Adrian** is writing a history of his family and would like to find out at what and with whom his father worked during those years. Unfortunately as his father passed away last year he can no longer ask him. One of the few clues he has is that his father was in charge of the modernisation of the army switchboard communications and he can also remember that he used to travel to and from work in a Signals Corps Mini or similar vehicle. Until he purchased his own car in about 1967/68, but he still tended to use an army car for work. In 1972 **Herbert** emigrated to Australia and did no more work in communications. If anyone can help please contact **Adrian** at either Güetli 1269, CH-9428, Walzenhausen AR, SWITZERLAND or Email: adrian.streather@rheintalflug.com

Shaun Wood is seeking the present whereabouts of his former pal, **Paul Howarth**, with whom he served in 1 Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt in the late 1980s. Anyone who can help is asked to contact **Shaun** at: Zum Bruchdeich 35, 28197 Bremen, GERMANY.

From: **Mrs J. Vickers**
56 Queens Drive
Wafton
LIVERPOOL
L4 6SH

Dear Sir,

I obtained your address from **Mr Horlington,** from Walton-on-Naze. I am writing on behalf of my brother **Matthew Kelly** who is blind. He is ex-Post Office and was called up in 1941 and sent to the Middle East. His number was 2378685 and he was with 4 Wing '1' Coy 3rd AFS MEF in 1944. He was in Greece and whilst there most of the men were taken prisoner in Kifissia. Luckily for him and a few others, they were on another airfield to the South of Kifissia. He has asked me many times to try and find out what happened to the men taken by the Communists.

By the way he met a young lady from Athens and they married in the Cathedralin 1946, sadly she died about 15 years ago. His address was: 4 Wing 'C'Y'-Coy AFS CMF when he was called up he was at Ossett Yorks, and most of the others were from Scotland.

I have written so many letters, and still hope someone can help to solve this problem, people are very kind and suggest sending letters to so and so. Should anybody be able to help please write to the above address. With best wishes .....

From: **J. W. Shillito**
Holme Lea, High Catton YO41 1EL

Dear Sir,

A recent visit to the Royal Corps of Signals Museum at Blandford Camp, which I greatly enjoyed and admired, has encouraged me to the point of endeavouring to locate the present whereabouts of a war-time friend who served with the Royal Corps of Signals.

At the relative time he was a Signalman serving with the Royal Corps of Signals and I was serving with the Royal Air Force. His name is **William Victor Smith** and he was stationed at Uxbridge during the period part 1943/1944. He hailed from the Kennington, Brixton area and beyond that I have little to work on.

There may well be a reader of your excellent magazine and journal who may have served at Uxbridge or elsewhere alongside **William Victor Smith** or even be aware of his, or any of his relatives, present whereabouts. I would be very appreciative of any help and information which you or your readers can give.

Yours truly .....

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CORRESPONDENCE

From: **George E. Eynon**
11 Rhind Street
Bodmin
CORNWALL PL31 2EL

Dear Sir,

On receipt of my copy of *The WIRE*, October 1999 and on turning to page 493, I was surprised to see photocopies of the photographs I had submitted to the 'Morning Calm' had been sent in by **Reg Briggs**.

Firstly, through your magazine, may I please thank **Reg** for submitting the photos, on my behalf, for inclusion. I rang **Reg** to tell him that I had now been able to recognise those in the photos. Me - rear left, **Jack Taylor, Toby Seymour, Gabriel, Dallimore** and front **Pat Johan**.

I am still in contact with **Pat Johan** and **Toby Seymour** but have not yet contacted the others. I thought, perhaps, through the auspices of *THE WIRE* contact might be made with the others. I have checked the BKVA membership roll and they are not recorded. Here's hoping that they are members of a Branch of the RSA.

Dallimore and **Gabriel** were from the South Wales area. **Jack,** I believe, came from the Midlands area. Should I hear from any of them I will let you know.

Thanking you once again .....

From: **J. O. Fisher**
63 Woodpark Drive
Knaresborough
N. YORKS HG5 9DL
Tel: 01423 868427

Dear Sir,

A RATHER UNUSUAL REUNION?

I noted the reunion of five Royal Signals Officers who were commissioned from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst on 12 July 1949. A somewhat similar reunion took place at the United Oxford and Cambridge University Club in Pall Mall, London on Monday 11 October 1999. On 30 July 1949, thirteen of Course 230 of the NSOTW (National Service Officer Training Wing) were commissioned into Royal Signals at Catterick with Emergency Commissions. Two of them **(Richard Muir** and **John Cunningham)** had the idea of a reunion and, thanks to their hard work, all but two of the thirteen were traced. They also managed to trace **Richard Rahilly** who was the Course Officer for Course 230. Finding a mutually convenient date for a meeting proved to be virtually impossible and we had to accept 11 October as the best compromise but still **Richard Rahilly** and **Nigel Sylvester** were unable to attend. **Bob Briggs** and **Dennis Oakley** have not been traced and, sadly, three **(John Billison, Norman Short** and **Tim Woodgate)** are believed to have died. The remaining seven were able to attend the excellent lunch arranged by **Richard Muir** and to enjoy an exchange of memories. Those present were: **Ken Chenneour, Roy Clifford, John Clifton, Tom Cunningham, John Fisher, Richard Muir** and **Robert Scaddon.**



Richard had arranged a poster-size blow-up of a picture taken during an escape and evasion exercise - unfortunately, most of us had changed too much for the picture to be of any great help but the name badges supplied proved a great help! It is hoped to arrange a repeat meeting in July 2000 - probably in the Catterick Area.

Yours faithfully .....

From: **Dennis Wilson**
35 Caistor Drive
HARTLEPOOL
TS25 2QG

Dear Sir,

The following is submitted for publication in *The WIRE*, if considered suitable. I fully agree with the contents of the letter by **Keith Hind** headed 'Happy New Millennium' in the October edition of *The WIRE*.

In March this year I had a letter published in my local newspaper which also stated that the next Millennium will begin on 1 January 2001. I also sent a copy of my letter to The Millennium Commission. An extract from the Commission's reply to me is as follows:

> *...when it established the Millennium Commission the Government of the day was quite clear that the third Millennium commenced on 1 January 2001, and the then Secretary of State for the National Heritage made a public statement to that effect. The year 2000 will see the close of the second Millennium and the year 2001 the start of the third.*

In January 1991 an earlier letter *of* mine published in the same newspaper concluded, 'When will the media decide the end of the 20th Century has arrived? Will it be, as I suggest, on 31 December, 1999 at midnight or at the correct time of midnight on 31 December, 2001?

Yours Sincerely .....

DONATIONS

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Collection made at the funeral of Rudolf Franz Josef Petschi	£270.02
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LAST POST

Aldridge - Lt Col G. Aldridge OBE	Served 1930/49	Died 18/08/99
Anderson - Capt K. Anderson	Served 1950/73	Died Circa 95
Baker - Sig M. A. Baker	Served	Died
Balch - WO2 R. A. Balch	Served 1972/86	Died
Barratt - WO1 W. Barrett	Served 1937/??	Died 04/07/99
Bennett - SSgt A. C. Bennett	Served 1942/45	Died Oct '99
Bound - Col C. O. Bound OBE	Served 1942/75	Died 22/10/99
Bowkett - Cpl M. J. Bowkett	Served 1959/77	Died 98/99
Bull - WO2 C. S. J. Bull	Served 1957/75	Died
Burkitt - Sgt K. N. Burkitt	Served 1956/64	Died 12/10/99
Butt - SSgt K. W. Butt	Served 1938/62	Died 02/11/99
Clarkson - Brig F. L. Clarkson MBE	Served 1939/76	Died 01/11/99
Dalziel - SSgt E. F. Dalziel	Served	Died 07/09/99
Dawson - WO2 J. R. Dawson	Served 1941/67	Died Jan '99
Dibbs - LCpl T. Dibbs	Served 1956/66	Died
Dunham - Cpl C. W. Dunham	Served 1937/41	Died 15/09/99
Francis - Col J. A. D. Francis	Served 1944/78	Died 11/09/99
Gaskell - Lt Col W. Gaskell	Served 1939/63	Died
Harris - Dvr J. Harris	Served 1939/45	Died
Holton - Maj H. W. Holton	Served 1939/65	Died 02/10/99
Hooper - Sgt A. Hooper	Served 1933/45	Died 13/05/99
Jamieson - SSgt E. J. Jamieson	Served 1942/46	Died 1999
Lawrie - Sig R. G. G. Lawrie	Served 1943/49	Died Sept '99
Lodge - Cpl W. Lodge	Served 1939/46	Died Sept '98
Manson - WO2 R. H. Manson	Served 1955/68	Died 05/03/98
Matassa - WO2 F. Matassa	Served 1940/46	Died 16/04/99
McCombie - W. N. McCombie	Served 1938/??	Died 24/08/99
McCormick - Sig W. T. McCormick	Served 1935/46	Died 25/10/99
McKenzie - D. McKenzie	Served 1940/46	Died 10/08/99
Mitchell - Dvr A. W. Mitchell	Served 1939/46	Died 17/07/99
Moat - WO1 D. Moat	Served 1956/84	Died April 98
Morgan - Capt J. I. Morgan	Served 1942/47	Died 03/09/99
Quick - Dvr R. J. Quick	Served 1939/46	Died Oct '97
Roy - J. Roy	Served	Died April 99
Rozier - Sgt D. G. Rozier	Served 1952/74	Died 1999
Searle - LCpl E. Searle	Served 1939/47	Died Sept '99
Smith - Cpl G. E. Smith	Served 1941/46	Died Dec '98
Smith - Cpl S. B. Smith	Served 1940/46	Died Nov '98
Staniforth - Sig E. Staniforth	Served 1946/48	Died
Stubbs - LCpl T. J. Stubbs	Served	Died 05/09/99
Taylor - Sgt A. Taylor	Served	Died 1999
Thompson - Col P. Thompson OBE TD	Served	Died 24/10/99
Wainwright - Lt Col F. Wainwright	Served 1939/74	Died 31/07/99
Wilkinson - Cpl A. J. Wilkinson	Served 1942/46	Died 13/12/98
Wright - Maj R. M. Wright	Served 1946/83	Died 17/09/99

Aldridge - TA Col George Aldridge OBE, was awarded a military OBE for his painstaking work breaking Japanese codes during the Burma Campaign of the Second World War. He joined the army at Woolwich and was commissioned into the Royal Signals in 1930. He served in Northern Ireland, on India's Northwest Frontier and was in the sub-continent at the outbreak of the Second World War. He was involved in the development of signalling systems and worked on intercepting and deciphering Japanese codes, during the Japanese advance through Burma towards India. He also saw service in Palestine and England and was sent to Belsen Concentration Camp soon after the German surrender. The sights he saw there horrified him. **George** worked in the War Office until 1949, when he felt that he should put his Christian beliefs into practice. Wherever he travelled, he attached himself to Anglican churches and lived the life of a charismatic Christian, a term he preferred to Evangelical. In 1974 he moved to Edinburgh, before moving to Peebles a year ago. In 1981 he and his wife heard about a young diabetic Romanian girl, whose health was at grave risk, under the conditions at that time. They made sure that she was supplied with insulin and were particularly proud when she became a senior doctor looking after diabetic patients. **George Aldridge** learned Romanian, undertook a correspondence course in gardening (with the Horticultural Society), studied science with the Open University and loved walking in the countryside. A tall, quiet man who loved God and wanted to share this with others. He is survived by **Claris** and two children from an earlier marriage.

Barratt – William 'Bill' **Barratt** who died on 4 July 1999, aged 85 years, served in the Royal Signals for a period of 22 years (1937-1959). Born in Newcastle-under-Lyme, the youngest of a large family, he left school to work in the potteries as a tile-maker. Like many of his peers, the 1930's recession hit hard and he found himself out of work and faced with the choice of unemployment benefit or military service. The latter offered him the greater challenge, as well as greater immediate benefits, plus, for **Bill** in particular, the opportunity to see the world.

This, indeed, was the case and Bill travelled far and wide over the next few years but without foreseeing a World War or the four years he subsequently had to endure as a prisoner of war under the Japanese in Malaya. Although he survived the cruelty, abuse and harsh living conditions which saw the demise of many of his compatriots, he emerged in 1945 never to be the same person again. During his time of internment, **Bill** maintained a diary, vividly portraying the difficulties, heartache and tragedy which took place as a matter of course in the mines in which he was forced to labour. Those diaries now provide a truly humbling insight into what he, and his fellow captives, endured at the time and serve to remind us all of mans inhumanity to man as well as explaining why **Bill** became the man he did in his later years. Despite **Bill**'s suffering he continued to serve in the Royal Signals after the War with his army service finally ending in 1959. He retired from Catterick, holding the rank of WO1 and subsequently relocated to Bristol and took a position in the Civil Service before finally retiring in 1978. His health diminished gradually after that, with the War and his captivity under the Japanese coming back to haunt him in later years.

Throughout **Bill**'s life, he remained a keen sportsman, willing to try his hand at any event but he particularly enjoyed swimming and football having once had trials as a goalkeeper with Stoke City after leaving school. A decent and dignified man to the last, he married **Gladys** in 1949, by whom he is survived, together with his daughter **Jean**, son **Alan** and two grandsons, **Dafydd** and **William.**

Atkinson - Brig A. L. 'Flags' **Atkinson OBE** who died on 16 August 1999, in the Nuffield Hospital aged 87, served the Corps with distinction for 30 years and was a Military Knight of Windsor from 1977 until his death when he was the Senior Knight. He was educated at Choriton High School and Manchester University where he obtained his BSc. He joined the Royal Signals in 1935 as a university entrant. He spent two years with 3 Divisional Signals in Bulford before being accepted for secondment to the King's African Rifles. For a few months in 1940 he commanded 12 (African) Divisional Signals, later reverting to Second in Command. During 1941-42 he continued to serve in African formations including 21 (EA) Brigade Signals and 11 (EA) Division. In 1942 he left Africa for India to become 2IC of 10 Indian Divisional Signals. After attending the Staff College in Quetta, in 1943 he commanded 19 Indian Divisional Signals in Burma before returning to England in early 1945 to join 47 Divisional Signals. In 1946 he was posted to Prague as GSO2 Liaison and 18 months later he returned to the Far East to become DAQMG HQ North Malaya Sub District where operations were in progress. In 1949 he returned to the UK to become Brigade Major of the Signal Training Centre. In 1951 he held the prize command of 1 Commonwealth Divisional Signals in Korea. It was his task to raise the headquarters elements and 1 Squadron in UK and, on arrival, to absorb the signal troops which had previously been in action. In his Corps history, **Gen Nalder** comments:

> *'The situation facing the Commander, Royal Signals was in some respect not unlike that on the Western Front in 1915. He had to take special measures, not only to protect the lines against enemy fire and the approaching winter conditions, but above all to tidy up battalion areas. Here a tangle of derelict cables was rapidly making orderly maintenance impossible. Eventually after order had been restored the division maintained between 3,000 and 4,000 twin cable miles'.*

After a year in Korea he returned to England to become the Commandant of the Signals Wing, School of Infantry. He attended the Joint Services Staff College in 1953 which led to his appointment as GSO1 Inter-Service Planning Team. He was then for a short time a GSO1 in the Signals Directorate before moving again to the Far East for yet another command appointment this time with the Hong Kong Signal Regiment in 1956. In 1958 he became GSO1 Signals Division at Allied Land Forces Central Europe and thence, following his promotion to Colonel, to the Chairmanship of the European Frequency Agency. In 1961-62 he was the Chairman of the Communications Electronics Committee NATO, in Washington DC. On promotion to Brigadier in 1962 he assumed his last appointment as CSO Southern Command. He retired from the Army in 1964. In November 1977 'Flags' was appointed as a Military Knight of Windsor where he was to spend the rest of his life. He undoubtedly became one of the characters of the Windsor scene. He regularly attended chapel and was not unknown to 'tell off' any cleric who chose to deviate from the strict rubrics of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. In his address during the interment of 'Flags' ashes in St George's Chapel, **Canon John White** commented:

> *'It was a sense of order and of discipline, which was a chief mark of Brig Atkinson's life amongst us here at this College. He was an ordered man, he believed in order, and sticking to the rules of the Military Knights, and also to those, now slightly old fashioned, rules of courtesy which oiled the military society in which he had lived out so many of his days. Nearly, despite himself 'Flags' engendered amongst us not simply respect, not simply quite justified admiration for his achievements in the past and his courage in the present, but essentially a* ***response of love.****'*



Francis – Col John Francis who died on 11 September 1999 was a most popular and capable officer who made a major contribution to the Corps both as a serving officer and as Regimental Secretary. **John Francis** was born on 2 June 1926. He followed both his grandfather and father by serving in the Indian Army. Following his commissioning at Mhow in December 1945 he spent three years with 2nd Indian Airborne Signals in Karachi, Lahore and Lucknow. After Indian Independence in 1947 he joined 235 British Independent Brigade which was involved in trying to keep the peace between the Hindus and Moslems in the Punjab. During this period. **John** attended a Regular Commissions Board in Madras. The train journey back to his Brigade in Karachi took nearly a month due to the chaos and fighting. **John** left Karachi in April 1948 on the *Empire Fowey*, the last troop ship to leave Pakistan.

In the 1950s **John** served as Adjutant to 3 Training Regiment in Catterick which expanded to a strength of 2500 at the start of the Korean war. He increased his experience as an adjutant with 21 North Midland Signal Regiment TA in Derby. This was the beginning of a long and happy association with the TA. Following this he was posted to the Commonwealth Brigade Signals in Korea only to be recalled after a few months to attend the Staff College, Camberley at the early age of 29, the youngest of his year. On graduation he was posted to the Intelligence Staff in Hong Kong as a Major, at 31 the youngest in the Corps. He thoroughly enjoyed the glamour and bright lights after years of the austerity and rationing of post-war Britain. In the 1960s **John** completed a number of postings in the UK and Germany, of particular note was the command of the Main Divisional Squadron of 4th Divisional Signal Regiment in Herford. In 1964 **John** spent a year at the US Army Staff College in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He found

this a pleasant sabbatical from regimental duty and an opportunity to make many friends amongst the 'allies'. Unlike the pressures of Camberley, the social life at Leavenworth was very demanding and great fun, and there was not much time, nor fortunately the need for much studying.

In 1967 **John** was posted to command 38 Signal Regiment TA in Sheffield which included many of his friends from his time as a TA adjutant. This was a time of a major reorganisation of the TA and he was faced with the challenge of recruiting and training some 400 'volunteers' to add to the less than 200 core of experienced TA soldiers. High Command was far away and he seized the chance to exercise his regiment all over the UK. **John** was a excellent CO. He loved the job and was able to imbue high morale and enthusiasm into all he commanded. In 1981 **John** felt very honoured when he was appointed Honorary Colonel to his Regiment. **John** spent two and a half years in Brussels as GSO1 UK MILREP, NATO before being promoted Colonel in 1973. He was then sent to Washington to be Liaison Officer to the US Army for communications, electronics and computers. He then returned to Brussels where he held two appointments before taking early retirement in May 1978, having served the Corps for 33 years.

In the same month he look up the appointment of Regimental Secretary Royal Signals. At that time **Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal** first became Colonel-in-Chief of the Corps. **John** made the detailed arrangements for over 50 Royal-visits, and always accompanied The Princess and the Master of Signals ensuring that HRH and the Corps enjoyed these special occasions to the full. At Regimental Headquarters he introduced computers to all activities. At the behest of the Corps Committee, he integrated the formerly separate parts of RHQ into one body, and in the process became General Secretary of the Association and Secretary of the Institution in addition to his role as Regimental Secretary. He was instrumental in finding the new and last location for RHQ in London in Regency Street having been evicted from the Duke of York's HQ. When he resigned in 1987 he was presented with the Silver Medal of the Royal Signals Institution, the Corps' highest award for services to HRH and the Corps; an unusual distinction for a retired officer. **John** was never a great sportsman, but following his early experience in the air with Airborne Forces he became a glider pilot and later obtained a private (power) flying licence in the USA where he enjoyed exploring the Mid West in light aircraft. In the early 1990s **John** moved from Kent to Tolpuddle in Dorset to his last home. He became very active in the local community and spent much of his time on DIY. He retained his links with the Corps as a very active and well respected President of the Dorset Branch of the Royal Signals Association. On 1 May 1948, on his return from India, he married **Jean**, his fiancée of three years. **John** was a great family man who look great pride in the success of their two sons, **Andrew** and **Julian** and great pleasure from their grandchildren.

John's funeral took place at the church of St John the Evangelist on 17 September. The large number of members of the Corps who attended was a just recognition of the esteem in which he was held and a fitting tribute to a man who served the Corps with energy and zeal in various capacities for over 54 years. He, was a true gentleman.



Dalziel - Sgt Edward Francis 'Ted' **Dalziel** Born 17 October 1910, died 8 September 1999. **Ted** joined the TA (Cardiff) at the age of 18 and the Royal Signals in September 1939. He achieved the rank of Sergeant and remained a non-commissioned officer through his own choice. He served in the 61 Medium Regiment RA and is listed under the OR Roll in the 'History of the 61 Medium Regiment, RA' published in 1950. He also served in the 52 Divisional Royal Signals. He was a member of the British Expeditionary Force and saw to the evacuation of his section from Dunkirk on a small fishing boat '*The Lord Gray*'. He later became a member of The Dunkirk Veterans' Association. He participated in football and was an excellent athlete, winning many trophies and medals during his years with the army. He continued with the TA after the war and served on the benevolent and social committees based at Park Street, Cardiff. He was made an Honour Member of the RSA in 1972. The Association provided an Honour guard at his funeral bearing colours from the RSA and the Dunkirk Veterans' Association all of which added greatly to the dignity of the occasion and was deeply appreciated by his family.

Butt – SSgt K. W. Butt Ken was born 16 June, 1922. Sadly he passed away 2 November, 1999, aged 77 years. He enlisted in 1938 and served in Burma, Mauritius, Egypt and France. After serving 24 years he was demobbed in Catterick. He leaves behind his wife **Queenie**, five sons, six daughters 29 Grandchildren and 47 Great Grandchildren.



Freeman - Capt Tom Freeman was born on 1 June 1921 in York. He joined Royal Signals on 16 April 1941 and trained as a Lineman. He was posted to N. Africa in December 1941 but the troopship was diverted, via Capetown, to Singapore. However, after the ship was bombed by the Japanese they eventually landed in Java and Sumatra and from there he was evacuated to Australia in February 1943. He then went on to India and Ceylon. **Tom** was commissioned in India in 1943 while serving in a SIGINT unit. He was posted to Burma in December 1943 from whence he was repatriated as 'time expired' (over 3yrs 8mths). The war was still on and **Tom** joined 1 Independent Admin. Coy (1IAC) as Adjutant and was in Minden, Germany at the time of the German surrender. He undertook Air Mobility training before his discharge in December, 1946, where he was still serving as Captain and Adjutant of 1IAC. His decorations included: 1939/45 Star, Pacific Star w/clasp 'Burma', The Defence Medal and the General Service Medal. Following his Army Service **Tom** took up employment as a civilian teacher and joined firstly the W. Yorkshire Regt TA in 1954 and subsequently the Army Cadet Corps in Tadcaster. He married **Carolyn** on 2 December, 1972 and the family moved to Guernsey in 1983. Following work in the Probation Service, **Tom** was sworn in as a Special Constable and retained his links with Royal Signals by becoming a staunch member of the local Branch of the Association. At various times **Tom** held office as Vice Chairman, Committee Member and *Wire Correspondent* and his interest in the Corps never waivered. It was whilst on holiday in France in August, 1986 that **Tom**, paying a visit to the camp toilet at night, fell into a ditch and broke his back. He was air evacuated to Odstock but had been paralysed from the neck down since then. He was particularly pleased to receive a visit at home, last year, from the Association Chairman, **Maj Gen Alan Yeoman. Tom** was an uncomplaining example to all of us of how to cope with adversity and he will be sadly missed by friends and colleagues throughout the island and beyond. We extend our sincere condolences to **Carolyn, Lucy** and **Simon.**

Hall – WO2 (RQMS) Desmond John Hall, MBE. Des Hall died on 13 June, 1999. He was 76 years of age. **Des** first saw Military Service when in May 1938 at the age of 15, he joined the 4th Battalion of the Queen's Regiment at the Barracks in Mitcham Road, Croydon. He joined as a Drummer Boy under the command of his father who was the Drum Major. He was mobilised for the duration of the Munich Crisis. In August 1939 he was again mobilised and posted to Avonmouth where his true age was discovered, and being too young for active service, he was sent home! **Des** waited a few months and then, putting up his age again, he went to the Recruiting Office in Poplar Walk, Croydon and this time volunteered for service with the Buffs (The Royal East Kent Regiment). There was a spot of bother when, having enlisted, his undeclared previous service was discovered but it would appear all was forgiven!

In 1943 the Young Soldiers Battalion in which he was serving disbanded and **Des** was posted to the Royal Signals. In July of that year he embarked from Liverpool for the Far East where he was to spend the next three years serving in India, Burma and Indonesia. He returned from Bombay in September 1946. His wartime enlistment ended in October 1948 when in the rank of Sergeant he transferred to the Territorial Army. He served with the Royal Signals TA in London firstly in Clapham with 2 Corps Signal Regiment TA and then at Fulham House with 47 Signal Regiment (London) TA. In 1961, at the Reorganisation, he went to 47 Signal Regiment (Middlesex Yeomanry) TA where he was promoted WO2 (RQMS) in 1962 serving in that capacity through the subsequent re-organisation and the formation of the TAVRA, with 31 (Greater London) Signal Regiment (V) until his retirement in 1972. His long and valued service was recognised both in 1962 with the presentation of a Certificate of Merit by **Field Marshal Earl Alexander of Tunis** and in 1971, he was invested with the Insignia of a Member of the Order of the British Empire by **Her Majesty the Queen.**

Immediately after his retirement from the Royal Signals, **Des** promptly joined the Sea Cadet Corps. He served as a Lieutenant, Communications Officer. As a Marksman, **Des** was a first class shot and won many trophies, being, at different times, Champion Shot in both London District and Eastern Command. He also held the Royal Signals 50 Years Badge in consideration of fifty years active membership of the Corps. In civilian life **Des** worked for the majority of his civilian career with the accountants Ernst and Young where he was Office Services Manager. He was also a hard working member of many organisations and associations allied to the various aspects of his long and distinguished military career, all represented at his Funeral Service at Worth Crematorium.

To his three sons, grand children, great grandchild, brother and all other members of his family we offer our sincerest condolences.

Hooper - Sgt Arthur Hooper - It is with deep regret that we inform you of the death of **Arthur Hooper,** ex-Sergeant of the Corps. He died on 13 May 1999 at the age of 82 years. **Arthur** was a founder member of the Chesterfield Branch of the Association. He will be sadly missed by his widow **Muriel** and his sons **Paul** and **John,** along with our Members. At his funeral on 21 May, members from the Local Branch of the Royal British Legion, Fellowship of Services and other Regimental Service Associations formed a Guard of Honour at the chapel and were led into the service by our Branch Standard and Standard Bearer.

Arthur joined the TA in 1933 at Chesterfield and trained as an Operator Wireless and Line with No. 2 Company of the 46th North Midlands Division, Royal Corps of Signals. 1939 saw him mobilised just before the outbreak of WWII and moved to Bakewell in Derbyshire. From there he drove to Mons Barracks in Aldershot, with a Rolls Royce previously owned by **Sarah Butt** from Bakewell. Whilst he was with the 236 Section, Royal Corps of Signals they joined 60th Field Regiment Royal Artillery and he embarked for France with the British Expeditionary Force. Later he look part in the evacuation from Dunkirk on the LNER cross Channel Ferry, 31 May 1940.

It was then off to the Middle East, via South Africa on Operations in Iraq, Syria and then Egypt. He then crossed the wire into Libya, with the 7th Armoured Brigade, as a part of Operation Crusader in the November. He fought at the airfield at Sidi Rezegh where several members of 236 Section were wounded, one fatal and others missing. Then he was taken out of the Line at Christmas 1941 and it was onto India where he landed in Bombay and then travelled on to Poona. Here he took part in the Jungle Training for the 2nd Chindit Expedition at Ranchi. It was whilst here that he was promoted to Sergeant at the Main Signal Office for the Rear Headquarters of the Wyngate Expedition.

Finally it was back to the UK and on a Pickfords draft to join the 52nd Lowland Division in Germany, after the surrender, before being demobbed on 21 December 1945. **Arthur** rejoined the Signals TA in the mid 1950s and served for several years in Chesterfield.

Jamieson - SSgt Edward John Jamieson. It is with regret that the Glasgow Branch announce the death of 22569295 (AER) **SSgt Edward John Jamieson** a life member of the RSA - although **Eddie** had not yet become a member of the Branch, due to circumstances of family illness and distance to travel, he was well known to some of the members. **Eddie** died suddenly in hospital after a short illness, in his 80th year. **Eddie** as he was known, was deferred for call up in 1940, due to his work with the GPO Engineering section, installing the Defence Teleprinter Network in various parts of the country. He was then called up in 1942 and served from 1942 to 1946 with London District Signals, No. 8 Multi-Channel Carrier Section, No. 2 War Office Signals, and was for a time stationed in the underground labyrinths of Whitehall, and the caves in the Cliffs of Dover. On the Normandy landings he was attached to a section aboard a cable ship, laying a submarine cable across the English Channel to Utah Beach, and relays to Dieppe. He finished his service in the rank of 2386759(13) Corporal.

Whilst serving in Dieppe shortly after the Normandy invasion, he met a French girl **Paulette** whom he married in France in 1946. After demobilisation in 1946, **Eddie** and his bride returned to Scotland, eventually settling down in Beith in Ayrshire. He had returned to his employment with the GPO Telephones, where he had started in 1934 as a Youth in Training (Engineer Apprentice). He worked in Pitt Street Glasgow and in Glasgow 'F' Repeater Station also in George Square Glasgow with the Circuit Provision Group. In 1952 **Eddie** joined the 50 L of C Regt (SR) where he was given a new number, 22569295. This unit was changed to 82nd Signal Regt (AER) where he served as a Staff Sergeant, until 1967 when the Regiment was disbanded at the re-organisation of the TVAR. **Eddie**'s decorations include the 1939/45 Star, France and Germany Star, the Defence Medal, the War Medal 1939/45 and the AER Efficiency Medal. He also held the Normandy Medal, Frontline Medal, Normandy 50th Anniversary Medal and a Medal for Faithful Service.

A service of Thanksgiving was held in Beith High Church, Beith, Ayrshire and the minister the **Rev Fiona Ross** also held a short service at the graveside in Dalry Cemetery. There was a large turnout of **Eddie**'s friends at the church and at the graveside. The Royal British Legion Scotland Standard and the RBLS Union Standard Bearers, escorted the coffin in and out of the church and to the graveside. The Standards were lowered in salute at the cemetery. The RBLS members laid a wreath of poppies, as a tribute to one of their most energetic workers, whose hard work for the RBLS local branch will be sadly missed. The Royal Signals Association Glasgow Branch Chairman, **Bill Taylor,** with three colleagues were also present, representing the RSA who laid a wreath of poppies with the Corps badge centrepiece, as a tribute to a life member of the RSA. The sincere condolences of the Glasgow Branch members, especially those members who knew him personally, are offered to **Eddie**'s widow **Paulette,** son **Robert,** twin daughters **Monique** and **Francoise,** their families and the ten grandchildren.

Rudkin - Captain John Barry Rudkin passed away peacefully on 17 June 1999 at Summerland House Nursing Home in Guernsey. **John** served in the Corps between 1943/1947 and during that time he led a military mission to Hungary. He suffered head injuries when he was thrown from his motorcycle while leading his men and was subsequently cared for by the Russians. He underwent extensive head surgery and subsequently suffered a mental breakdown but fought his way back to good health. At the end of the war he returned to the Wirral where he had been born, completed his training as an accountant and worked in the UK before moving to Jersey and partnership in an accountancy firm. Some 23 years ago **John** met **Anita** and moved to Guernsey to assist her in running her hotel. **John** was a gifted and cultured man who taught himself music and subsequently gave lessons to others, built his first organ himself and took flying lessons at the age of 52. He served as French liaison officer for the Guernsey Chamber of Commerce and served on the committee of Le Corcle Francais de Guernsey. **John** was a talented public speaker and in Jersey had assisted the local television staff to improve their performance. In Guernsey he became a reader for the audio news for the blind and at the time of his death was serving on the committee of the local Institute of Directors and as a non States member of the Electricity Board. **John** was the founding Chairman of the Guernsey Branch of the Royal Signals Association and remained in that post for 19 years before ill health prompted him to stand down. He was proud to have been awarded Honour Membership of the Association and the certificate was presented to him, together with a carriage clock to mark his years as our chairman, at our Dinner in May 1997. **John** continued his interest in the local Branch of the Association to the very end and always enjoyed visits from Branch members and the news which they brought. **John** was, in every sense, the epitome of an Officer and a Gentleman of the old school and he will be sadly missed by his colleagues and comrades and not least by his loving partner, **Anita** and her family, to whom we offer our most sincere condolences.

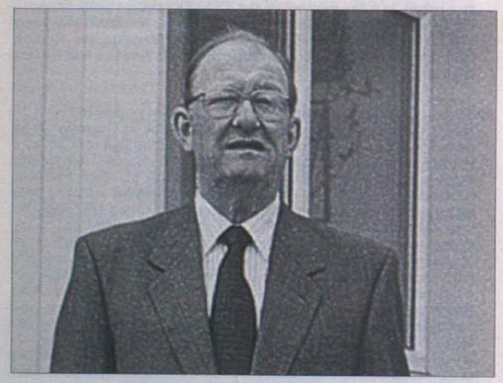
Stringer - Maj (Tfc) (Retd) A. 'Paddy' **Stringer** one of the Corps' longest serving Traffic Officers passed away in March 1999 after a brave battle against cancer. He was a true 'Signaller' who gave nearly 41 years of his life to the Corps. He was a fine Regimental soldier, an excellent Operator, Yeoman and Traffic Officer. In addition he was also a gentleman and great character who was fond of playing practical jokes on his contemporaries. 'Paddy' was born in Belfast in 1931 and joined Boys Training Company in September 1945 just three months after his 14th birthday. At the end of 1948, when Boys Training Company closed, 'Paddy' was sent to Harrogate. However, he escaped early in 1949 back to Catterick, to finish his training as a Keyboard Operator at 4 Training Regiment. Like most 'Ex Boys' his first adult posting was to War Office Signal Regiment. It was there during an A1 PT course at Kingston that he met **Phyllis** the future **Mrs Stringer.**

After that he rose steadily in rank as he went to Singapore, Catterick, Verden/Aller and back to Singapore. He returned to Blandford for Number 3 Yeoman of Signals Course in 1962. On qualifying he was posted to Malta where as the President of the WOs and Sgts Mess he was responsible for hosting **Bobby Moore** and members of the England football team fresh from their triumph in the World Cup. In 1966 he moved back to Gloucester staying there until Robinswood Barracks closed. At this time, September 1969, 'Paddy' was commissioned as a Captain (Traffic) and posted to the 3rd Division at Bulford. 1972 saw him off to 22 Regt at Lippstadt with a further move to SHAPE in Belgium. His next move came in 1978 to 7 Regiment at Herford where he was the Manager of a very successful 7 Regiment Soccer team. For what turned out to be his last posting 'Paddy' moved to HQ DCN at Rudloe Manor in 1981 where he stayed until retirement in March 1986.

On retirement 'Paddy' and **Phyllis** moved into the Gorsley Post Office and stores, Ross on Wye. where they quickly settled into the community. 'Paddy' became a member of the Parish Council and also Chairman of the Lea and District Branch of the Royal British Legion. During this period there was an attempted armed robbery at the Post Office and 'Paddy' was awarded a Certificate of Valour, for resourceful and courageous conduct, for his part in foiling the robbery attempt. During retirement he has been an enthusiastic member of the 254 'Ex Boys' club re-unions. Probably what best sums up 'Paddy' the man is a quote from a letter from the Group Captain commanding at HQ DCN.

'Only an Irishman would think of organising a Turkey Dinner in a Greek restaurant underneath an ancient Roman city.'

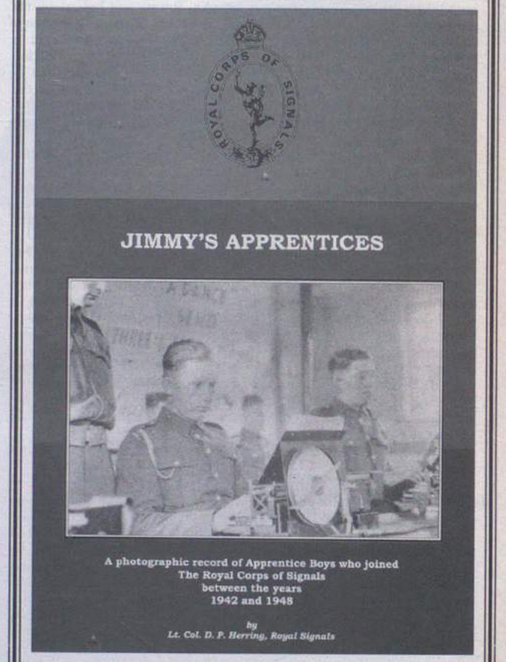
I was the NCO boy IC 'Paddy's recruit barrack room and well remember that his ambition then was to finish his Man's Service as a Sergeant. Meeting him nearly 35 years on as a Maj (Traffic Officer) shows that he far exceeded his initial ambition on joining the Army. An excellent example to all present and future apprentices. 'Paddy' leaves his widow **Phyllis,** a daughter and three sons, six grand children and one great grandson. At this difficult time we offer **Phyllis,** who supported 'Paddy' and the Corps for nearly forty years, our most sincere condolences.



Wainwright - It is with deep regret that we inform you of the death of **Lt Col F. A. Wainwright** on Saturday 31 July 1999 aged 80. He served with the Royal Signals from the 15 July 1939 until his retirement on 10 May 1974 aged 55. He then served at UKLF Wilton for the next ten years as a Retired Officer. He enjoyed good health for the next fifteen years of his retirement until February 1999 when he was diagnosed as having terminal liver cancer and passed away at the end of July this year. His is sadly missed by all his family, friends and former colleagues.

Whitfield - Sig Sydney Whitfield it is with great sadness that the Newcastle and District Branch announce the death of **Syd Whitfield** who died suddenly on 5 June 1999 although he had been fighting various health problems for the last two years. **Syd** who was born in 1919 in Saltburn by the Sea, lived for some time in the Lake District, which he never lost his love of, he then moved to Middlesbrough. He joined the Royal Signals in 1939 and served until 1946 seeing action in North Africa, Egypt, The Sudan, Abysinnia and India when he joined the Indian Signals. He was awarded the Africa Star, Defence Medal, European Medal and later the Territorial Long Service Medal. **Syd** had a great (and sometimes wicked) sense of humour and said he survived the war by not being in the wrong place at the wrong time. After the war he spent some time in Germany before returning to England and qualifying as an Electrical Engineer, working at BICC in Newcastle until his retirement in 1980. He then became a very active member of the Royal Signals Association, British Legion and the Fellowship of Services. Until he became less mobile in later years, **Syd** regularly attended the Catterick Re-unions and represented the Newcastle Branch at the Branch Reps meeting in London in April each year. In October last Year **Syd** presented a new Standard to the Branch. **Syd** married **Betty Deans** in 1947, had two children, **Ian** and **Wyn. Betty** died in 1989, something he never got over and he talked of her often. In 1995 **Wyn** died after a very long and determined fight against cancer. Ian has lived in Australia for a number of years. **Syd** was very easy to talk to and made friends easily. He was a lovely man and we miss him. We offer our condolences to his son **Ian.**

McCombie - William McCombie died on 24 August aged 78 years. **Bill** joined the regular army in about 1937/38. He enlisted in the Royal Signals. He served in North Africa as a dispatch rider, was wounded, served in Italy and Crete and later he served with 1 Airbourne Division Signals stationed in Caythorpe, Lincolnshire where he met and married a local girl. On discharge he worked for a local builder. He moved to London where he was a driver on London Transport. He leaves two sons to mourn his loss.



JIMMY'S APPRENTICES

This book which contains captioned photographs of some 800 Apprentice Tradesmen who joined the Royal Corps of Signals between the years of 1942 and 1948, together with a short history of the Boys since 1920 has been compiled by

LT COL D. P. HERRING

It will be of interest to all those and the families of persons who entered the Service at that time. Family historians will be interested to see just what their ancestors looked like at the age of 14 years.

This record is unique in that it covers a period, when the country was under threat of invasion and it is conceivable that these Boys could well have had to fight for their country should this have happened.

It is available from the author at:
5 Fishers Close, Blandford, Dorset DT11 7EL
price: £7.70 incl. P&P
Overseas: £10

LATE NEWS.....LATE NEWS.....LATE NEWS

243 SIGNAL SQUADRON

U TROOP NEWS – *by Cpl Jim Gray*

Arrivals - A big Hiya to **SSgt Marriosn Zaar** fresh from 38 Sig Regt (V). Is it me or are all U Tp Staffys supposed to have Dutch spouses!! How B'zaar.

Departures - Fond farewells to **SSgt** 'Taff' **Burdge** on promotion to 7 Sig Regt (watch out for his wicked laugh), **Cpl** 'Pinky' **Floyd** we will miss the 'crippler' and **Cpl Amanda Robertson** to Civ Div (Don't worry **Amanda,** your call up papers will be in the post). Soon to depart on their re-trade courses are **Cpl Jim Grey** and **LCpl** 'Taff - the druid' **Gibbard,** radios? - that'll be the box with knobs on lads!

Significant Events - Ex Bruno Warrior 1999, this year brought to you by 238 Sig Sqn, with the colourful team lead by **Capt** 'Don't tick me off I'm Ginger' **Carrol,** ably assisted by **SSgt SI** 'Innit' **Hadley** and **Sgt** 'Scoffs' **Schofield**. This year's theme was based around the 'battle shot', with some varied and interesting shoots conducted at Hyde & Lyde in Kent (wot no Sennybridge?) we surely missed the horizontal rain, wet bogs, wet kit etc. The shooting revolved around a fire team competition. The winners this year being **Cpl Rob Love** (again) and his team. Best overall shot of the week went to **Cpl Jim** 'The dirty sneaky sniper' **Gray** after a very tense 'shoot off' on the final day, he was chuffed to NAAFI breaks when **SSgt Hadley** magiced a trophy from his smock. U Tp personnel would like to thank 238 Sig Sqn for a Pukka Camp! Cappiche!?

MENCAP VISIT - *by WO2 (SSM) 'Paddy' Morrow*

On Wednesday 18 August 1999 the unit played host to a number of young people from the local MENCAP organisation. The day was put together by **WO2 (SSM)** 'Paddy' **Morrow** with the aim of providing an opportunity of a fun day out for a group of young people with learning difficulties and to present a cheque for the sum of £1161.11 to MENCAP. Our thanks go to 238, 241 and 251 Signal Squadrons for their efforts in assisting in the raffling of large cuddly toys, which raised a significant amount of the moneys presented on the day.



The visitors look on as the OC and SSM hand-over the cheque to Annette Abdouramane from MENCAP

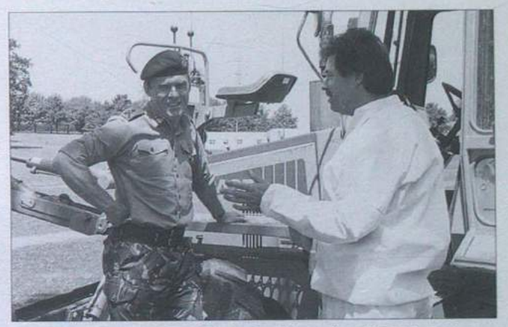


The visitors get to grips with a BV206

The day itself began with the SSM giving an impromptu interview with the local radio station (fame at last). On their arrival the visitors were issued with coveralls and helmets and after a round of photographs they set off to get involved in a series of activities which ranged from a ride in a BV206 supplied by 249 (AMFL) Sig Sqn to having a fun shoot on the SAT. The SSM undecided on what to give our guests for lunch, presented them all with a 'death pack' from the cookhouse which they all enjoyed. The day culminated in the SSM presenting the visitors with a framed group photograph as a reminder of their visit.

DCINC VISIT TO 2 (NC) SIGNAL BRIGADE

On Friday 2 July 1999 the OC, **Maj Andy Walker**, and two members of our Installation and Support Troop (I&S Tp) (formally our Signals Works Services Troop), **Mr Steve Ladd** and **Mr Bob Hastings** both Maintenance Electricians Telephone (MET's) were given the opportunity to brief **Lt Gen J. F. Deverell** who was visiting HQ 2 Sig Bde, on certain aspects of the work carried out by I&S Tp. The General was given a briefing on the workings of the K660 Trenching machine and an insight into Fibre Optic splicing. The team almost had to put the trenching machine to work for real, when a nearby gas pipe was ruptured by contractors working in the area fortunately their services were not required!



Mr Bob Hastings explains the workings of the K660 Trencher to Gen Deverell

DUNKIRK TO THE SOMME
CYCLE RIDE 2000

FRIENDS OF WAR MEMORIALS will be staging a sponsored cycle ride in Northern France from Dunkirk to the Somme

27 June – 1 July 2000

The purpose of the **150 MILE** ride will be to commemorate those lost in Northern France during this Millennium, and to raise much needed funds to help the restoration of War Memorials.
We ask that you pay an initial registration fee of £150, and raise a minimum amount of sponsorship. In return, we'll provide hotel accommodation for four nights, food, service support, and of course moral support. For further details, contact:

Sqn Ldr Dave Ayers
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